



NEW ZEALAND  
RUGBY LEAGUE

More than just a game  
[www.nzrl.co.nz](http://www.nzrl.co.nz)



# IN TOUCH

INTEGRITY | RESPECT | LEADERSHIP | COURAGE | PASSION



## TOP STORIES

- *Player Participation Numbers Continue to Rise*
- *Match Officials Benefit from Four Nations Experience*
- *Awards Winners from Around the Country*

November / December 2011



More than just a game

# IN THIS ISSUE

## FROM THE EDITOR

with Philippa Ivory



What a busy year its been for rugby league in NZ. Early in the year everyone in the office was shocked and saddened by the images of the February 22 earthquake in Christchurch. Like all New Zealanders we wanted to do something to help and

thanks to a massive effort from a number of well known league identities on both sides of the Tasman along with the staff here, we were able to host a Legends of League fundraiser at Mt Smart Stadium at very short notice. The game was played in great spirits and we made a significant donation to the earthquake fund thanks to gate donations, fundraising auctions, and the assistance of a number of sponsors.

A couple of months later we were able to take 250 people from Christchurch to the Gold Coast for a break, where they saw the Kiwis play the Kangaroos in the test match and the Warriors play the Titans. It was a wonderful weekend which gave some very deserving people a rest from the harsh realities at home. Once again it wouldn't have happened without a lot of hard work behind the scenes and the generous support of sponsors who provided flights, accommodation, match tickets, meals and events for free as their way of saying they cared. I know everyone who went was touched by the kindness they experienced from our Australian cousins who themselves had only recently had their own difficulties due to floods and hurricanes.

As the year continued we had a number of other positives; our CEO Jim was recognised with a SPARC award and later in the year our National Schools tournament and our NZRL Football Manager Tony Kemp were both recognised with national awards. At our own awards event we saw the future of the game acknowledged when Shaun Johnson was named Kiwi Rookie and Jason Taumalolo was named Junior Player of the year. The Junior teams at all levels provided some great entertainment and thrilling wins against Australia, while a golden point try by Otahuhu College final broke St Pauls stranglehold on the secondary schools title.

The National Competition was another success with the finals of the 15s and 17s being played in brilliant sunshine in front of a great crowd and screened live on TV as well.

As fans of Rugby League we were thrilled to see the Warriors club send three teams across the Tasman to compete in the Grand Finals day. Once again it was the future of our game that shone through, with the 20s winning their second Premiership and Shaun Johnson, Elijah Taylor and Kieran Foran all starring in the main game.

This year we expanded our communications network further through Facebook. Our two pages [www.facebook.com/NZLeague](http://www.facebook.com/NZLeague) and the other more informal [www.facebook.com/NZKiwis](http://www.facebook.com/NZKiwis) have been very popular. Our aim is to use a combination of the weekly Bulletin, regular website updates, Facebook and In Touch to keep you up to date with what's happening in league. There's always such a lot of interesting news to share.

Thanks for your support in 2011, have a great holiday and we look forward to keeping you in touch in 2012.

***The NZRL offices will be closed from Friday December 23, 2011 until Monday January 23, 2012.***



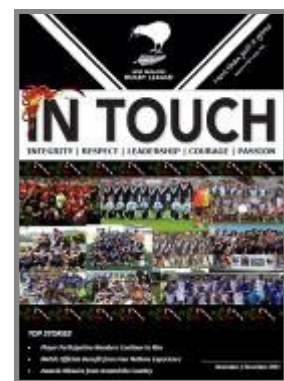
Maori Sports Award Winner page 6



West Coast Rugby League Copes with Flood page 19



Referees Benefit from Four Nations Experience page 8



Cover: Merry Christmas from us all.

**"I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."**



with Jim Doyle

When I look back on 2011, one of the most pleasing things for me is the way we have continued to progress against our strategic plan.

This progress has been reflected in our growing player participation numbers, increasing interest of rugby league in schools, the addition of new clubs and competitions across the country and the new staff which we have been able to put on the ground to help with growth and development.

It is especially pleasing to see the National Secondary Schools Tournament win an Innovation Award from the NZ Secondary Schools Sports Council. To be told that in our first year delivering this tournament we not only raised the standard but that other sports should look to us for an example of best practice is wonderful recognition of the commitment by the team to making sure that we are always 'More than just a game.' We are now the fastest growing sport in secondary schools, which reflects how much the new look NZRL is being accepted in the wider community.

As part of the review of the game in 2008 the Independent Review Committee wrote 'Imagine Rugby League in Five Years' which included being seen as a sport which has ethics and standards which the wider community (schools, regional sports trusts, Iwi, parents etc) would be proud to support. I believe we see that today, we consistently work with our players, clubs, volunteers & staff to deliver on our values – Integrity, Respect, Leadership, Courage & Passion in a variety of ways including our League 4 Life Club Development programme.

We will continue our work in this area as not only is it a very important part of our games

development but its also a way in which we can contribute positively to the wider community.

The vision was to have Kiwi kids from anywhere in NZ believe that they could wear the black and white jersey and become a Kiwi. The combined efforts of our Zones, Districts and our NZRL Football Department has seen a significant number of children from across NZ exposed to league through our various programmes.

In addition significant player pathways have been created through our National Competition, 16s and 18s Resident teams, our commitment to a NZ Residents game and games for the Junior Kiwis. Good progress has been made and anyone with both the talent and commitment to hard work required should by now be aware that the Kiwi jersey is a possibility if they are prepared to give it their all.

The future of the game looks bright, with the 16s and 18s Residents and Junior Kiwis setting a new standard against the Australians this year. The continued success of the Junior Warriors and the Warriors teams also helps to build a strong and positive profile for the game which benefits us all.

Much of what we have achieved has been possible thanks to the support of our many Partners and Sponsors. You can see the growing family on page 30. I ask you to support them whenever you can to show our gratitude for all they do to help foster and grow our game.

Lastly I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support this year, and to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please drive safely and enjoy your holiday and we look forward to working with you again in the New Year.

*Jim*

## INNOVATIVE TOURNAMENT RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

New Zealand Rugby League is delighted to have won one of the two inaugural NZ Secondary Schools Sports Council 'Innovation in School Sport' awards. Awarded for an initiative that is deemed to be exceptional in providing quality sporting opportunities for secondary school students it recognised the 2011 National Secondary Schools Rugby League tournament.

At the presentation of the award to NZRL staff today, Garry Carnachan, New Zealand Secondary Schools Sports Council Executive Director said that the decision by the Principals on the Board was unanimous. He said they are now speaking to other sports about ways they can add value to their tournaments. The award recognised that schools had been offered a range of off field development opportunities in addition to tournament play adding value to the experience for everyone involved.

In announcing the award the NZSSSC said "NZ Rugby League was awarded for an innovative and highly successful 2011 National Secondary Schools Rugby League Tournament in Papakura. In particular NZSSSC applauds NZ Rugby League for implementing initiatives which added value to the experience for students outside of the games themselves.

"These included a coaching clinic, leadership seminar, primary school visits for leaders talking to students about bullying being not ok, a formal awards evening and the "It's not OK" theme that was reinforced throughout the event."



NZRL Staff Members at the National Secondary Schools Awards night .



More than just a game

# INCREASED PARTICIPATION

Increased Participation

## LEAGUE PARTICIPATION NUMBERS CONTINUE TO CLIMB



New Zealand Rugby League Chief Executive Jim Doyle announced today that registered player numbers for 2011 are up more than 38% from those of 2010. Doyle said "For the second year in a row we've seen a significant increase in our player participation numbers. With our numbers now topping thirty three and a half thousand (33,500) there is no doubting that our efforts to grow the game are proving successful, and it's pleasing to see that we've not only retained those who joined us last year, but also added to them in such significant numbers."

Over the past two years, the NZRL have visited more than 17 towns and cities and had more than 4,500 children and 619 parents take part in a range of free league related activities. Youth participation numbers across the country are up 97% since the Community Camp programmes started.

Doyle said "In the past year alone we've had a 35% increase in the participation numbers of teenagers. The addition of our National Competition has offered our players in this all important age group meaningful competition and the opportunity to progress to elite level with the addition of 16s and 18s Resident teams this year. We've had excellent feedback about the value of this competition and it will continue in 2012."

A significant investment has been made by New Zealand Rugby League to ensure effective local representation at all levels through the Zone structure, further boosting capability to offer regional competitions.

A number of these got off the ground in 2011, including a very successful nines tournament in Tauranga, the Adam Blair Trophy Secondary Schools tournament and the Elijah Taylor 15s in Northland, along with continued growth in the North Harbour Secondary Schools tournament, Stephen Kearney Cup and the addition of the Johnny Lomax Cup in Wellington.

The South Island also experienced growing interest in rugby league with the playing of a new South Island Inter District Premier competition.

All Zones experienced double digit growth, both the Mid and Upper Central Zones saw more than 50% increases and were closely followed by Northland and Wellington (45%+).

Doyle continues, "The biggest percentage increase was actually Womens rugby league, and we are already working on programmes to further grow this area in 2012."

This year also saw the introduction of an NZRL run National Secondary Schools tournament, which recently received an Innovation award from the NZSSSC along with acknowledgment from Gary Carnachan, NZSSC Executive Director that Rugby League is the fastest growing sport in secondary schools.

This along with games for the Resident 16s and 18s against international opposition and a game for the NZ Residents against the NZ Maori Residents have all helped to build the games profile at this level.

In addition, in 2011 the 15s and 17s National Competition finals were screened live on Sky TV, and the Junior Kiwis beat the Junior Kangaroos in Newcastle.

Said Doyle, "Although the Kiwis were unable to back up their 2010 Four Nations success, our success at junior levels, including National Secondary Schools, National Competition, Residents and Junior Kiwis shows that the game is on the up and it is only a matter of time before we see this reflected regularly in the Kiwis results."



Maori Sports Administrator of the Year

# CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE



## FOOTBALL MANAGER RECOGNISED FOR CONTRIBUTION TO GAME

NZRL Football Manager Tony Kemp was named Maori Sports Administrator of the Year at the 2011 National Maori Sports Awards. The annual event - set up by the late Albie Pryor - fosters, promotes and encourages Maori sportspeople in their pursuit of excellence.

Kemp said "This is great recognition for the team at NZRL, and for all the work we've done building pathways for our tamariki." Previous league winners include Benji Marshall in 2009 and Kiwis Coach Stephen Kearney and past Kiwi player, now NRL referee, Henry Perenara in 2010.

In his role as Football Manager Tony is an integral member of the NZRL Management team and has played a crucial role in the development of a number of new initiatives including:

- Establishing pathways for players via National Competition from 15s - 18s including naming of 15s & 17s Merit teams and 16s & 18s Resident teams. Players are supported with camps, education programmes, linking with Its Not Ok! and Drug Free Sport and others, and have international games.
- Establishing a programme of Community Roots Camps which took the Rugby League World Cup and well known rugby league players to 13 locations in 2010 and 17 locations across NZ in 2011. There, some 700 parents were able to complete the free Mini Mod training course to help them develop as coaches. At the camps over 4,300 children got to take part in a range of age appropriate skills and drills sessions, meet their idols, learn about the importance of breakfast, have their photos taken with the RLWC, get autographs, and above all learn about how much fun sport can be.
- Established the Hearts camps for National Competition players, where they learn about the requirements of elite sport, and hear from speakers including NZ Police, Warriors Development staff and others.



Other nominees included Kevin Locke, Vodafone Warrior and Kiwi No 758 who was a finalist in the Maori Sportsman of the Year award. Kevin who has played four tests for the Kiwis, and despite being only 22 yrs old has already played more than 50 NRL first grade games and represented his country and NZ Maori at the highest level. In this category he was up against the category and eventual overall winner Piri Weepu.

The other was Tama Koopu who plays his national rugby league for the Waioa Bays Colts (representing the Upper Central Zone) and in 2010 and 2011 was named in the NZRL 17s Merit Team. He went on to represent his country in the 2011 NZ Resident 18s team (as Vice Captain) which played two games against the Australian Secondary Schools visiting team. Head Boy at Te Wharekura O Rakaumangamanga School, he has recently signed a two year development contract with the Warriors. The winner in his category was Trent Woodcock, a world champion BMX rider.

Sports awards Executive Director Dick Garratt said world, international, national and regional champions were among the finalists, and the outstanding calibre of nominations meant that four instead of three finalists were selected in the junior categories for the first time.

## RLIF BOARD MEETING UPDATE

### By Scott Carter, RLIF & NZRL Chairman

Alex Hayton and I recently had the pleasure of attending the Rugby League International Federation (RLIF) awards and board meeting held in London in early November.

The evening we arrived, the RLIF International Awards dinner was held at the Tower of London. In attendance were all four of the 2011 Four Nations teams and after a viewing of the Crown jewels the awards evening commenced. Amongst the awards were Billy Slater named International Player of the Year and former long-serving RFL administrator David Oxley receiving the Spirit of Rugby League Award. Kiwis captain Benji Marshall was named stand-off in the International Team of the Year.

The next morning the RLIF Board gathered for a Parliamentary visit with the Minister for Sport at Westminster, where talks centred on the 2013 Rugby League World Cup and there was a photo opportunity to promote the tournament.

The RLIF board meeting started after lunch and ran through until the evening, and all of the following day. A significant agenda was worked through successfully, with a number of key outcomes.

The board subcommittees (Audit & Risk, Rules of the Game, International Competitions, Business Development & Grant Aid, and Honours & Awards) were reformed, with nominations for additional people with the right skills and experience to sit on these committees to be received in coming weeks.

It is intended that once these committees can get down to work the RLIF will make considerable gains in improving the international rules, test calendars, development work and the promotion of rugby league around the world.



**L to R:** Tas Bateri, Aus; Herve Guiraud, France; Richard Lewis, Nigel Wood, UK; Greg Mulholland, UK MP; Scott Carter, NZ; RLWC; Hugh Roberston, Minister for Sport, UK; John Numapo, PNG; Andrew Hill, Aus; Alex Hayton, NZ; Mohamed Ali Chaabi, France; and Niel Wood, UK

## RLIF BOARD MEETING UPDATE

### By Scott Carter, RLIF & NZRL Chairman

The business arrangements for the 2013 Rugby League World Cup were discussed at length and agreement reached in principle on the broadcast and sponsorship rights tenders. As has now been officially announced, the RLWC will take place in England, Wales, Ireland and France, with a very good presentation made to the board on the prospective host cities and operational planning. The tournament promises to be a fantastic event!

The RLIF has now formally signed up to the World Anti Doping Agency. Further progress was made on tightening up the international eligibility rules. Most importantly, agreement was reached on undertaking a strategic review of the RLIF next year.

With the work done, we attended the Kiwis vs Wales and Australia vs England matches at Wembley Stadium. What a marvellous facility, a great atmosphere and some excellent test football.

Some of us then travelled across to France at our own cost to visit as many of the league clubs as we could in 6 days! We met with players and administrators from clubs in Toulouse, Limoux, Carcassonne and Perpignan – the home of the Catalan Dragons – as well as enjoying the stunning countryside and history on display in the south of France. The game of rugby league is very much alive in France with a good national competition and, like New Zealand, a single club playing in a fully professional competition. Our two countries have a lot in common and their clubs are keen to give more New Zealanders the opportunity of playing a season or two for them.

Then it was back across the English Channel in time to see the Kiwis vs England match at Hull before heading home. Once again, the stadium atmosphere was outstanding and the English gave rousing support to their team who ran out deserved winners. It is always good seeing our Kiwis talking the field, and even though they couldn't match last year's effort in this tournament there are some very good signs for the future.



Kiwis line up at Wembley before game v Wales



## FOUR NATIONS BENEFITS MATCH OFFICIALS DEVELOPMENT

NZ Match Officials Henry Perenara and Shane Rehm both featured at the recent Four Nations tournament in the UK, officiating in several matches over the course of the four weeks.

Five other Referees and Touch Judges from Australia and England were selected, with the squad of officials based in Leeds city centre and training at the Leeds Met University Headingley campus.

Perenara was appointed to referee the England vs Wales match at Leigh in the first round, while Rehm was appointed touch judge for the same game, which was won easily by England.

Perenara was then appointed to referee the England vs Australia game at Wembley Stadium the following weekend, with Rehm again on the sideline.

This appointment saw Perenara become only the fourth Kiwi to 'do the double' of playing for the Kiwis and becoming a NZ Test Referee, following in the footsteps of Albert House (Wellington) Kiwi 1909-13, Test Referee 1919-20, Maurice Wetherill (Auckland) Kiwi 1924-30, Test Referee 1935-37 and Vic Belsham (Auckland) Kiwi 1948, and Test Referee 1957-60.

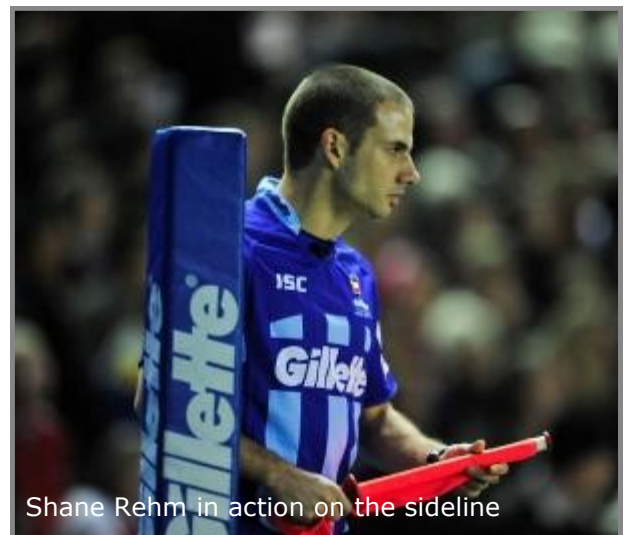
Perenara's second game was more of a challenge and no doubt a learning experience with a try disallowed, a player put on report and a small melee to deal with, along with a very loud and patriotic crowd. The match was won by Australia.

In the third round of the tournament, Rehm was appointed touch judge for the England vs NZ match in Hull (won by England), while Perenara was Reserve Referee. In the Australia vs Wales game (won by Australia), Perenara was again named Reserve Referee.

Rehm capped off a great tournament by being appointed as Touch Judge for the 2011 Four Nations final (Australia vs England) at Elland Road, with Perenara named as Reserve Referee.

Both officials performed very well across the course of the tournament, receiving positive feedback from the selection panel and adding to their international experience.

The tournament will put them both in good stead ahead of the 2013 World Cup, to be held in the UK.



Shane Rehm in action on the sideline



Henry Perenara Australia v England

## INTERNATIONAL TRAINER COURSE

The NZRL International Trainer Course can be cross credited to the Australian Rugby League First Aid Officer Level 2 Accreditation enabling trainers access to the NRL as a trainer.

**When:** Friday Feb 10 to Sunday February 12

**Where:** Hopu Hopu Sports Park, Ngaruawahia Waikato.

**Cost:** \$330 Per Person

### Includes:

- Basic Accommodation
- Meals
- Course Material
- Course costs
- NZRL course T Shirt

### Pre Requisites:

- Current NZRL National Trainer Accreditation:
  - Recognition of Prior Learning Available to this level.
  - If accreditation is expired the candidate must have a current First Aid Certificate.
- Demonstrated experience of at least three seasons within Rugby League as a International Rules Grade Coach or Trainer.
- Or relevant experience equivalent to three seasons of Rugby League.
- The NZRL will assess each application on its merits with priority given to current accredited National Trainers working within Rugby League.
- The NZRL decision on admission to the International Trainer Programme will be considered final.



**Places are limited and interest is strong so please register your interest now.**

**Contact:** [katie@nzrl.co.nz](mailto:katie@nzrl.co.nz)

## SCHOOLS GIVE CREDIT TO LEAGUE By Peter Woodman-Aldridge, KiwiSport

Wellington Rugby League (WRL) are due their credit having successfully delivered the 'Leadership Through League' programme in schools.

The programme has enabled 230 secondary school students to participate in the New Zealand Rugby League (NZRL) Mini Mod Coaching Accreditations programme (in order to gain NCEA credits) from eight colleges, nearly 3,000 pupils from 37 primary schools received Flag League and approximately 7,314 programme hours were delivered.

WRL development manager, Alex Smits says "the program shows what young people can achieve with the right support. Once the students got in front of the primary kids it was awe-inspiring.

"The students have been amazing; they have stepped up another level and taken control and coached with confidence, enthusiasm and a smile on their faces."

The Leadership Through League program has helped to bring about a real sense of community. It gives the older and younger children a chance to interact and is a great way to bring the primary schools and secondary schools together. Secondary school students are taught invaluable coaching skills which are then taught to the primary school children. A vast majority of the college coaches have really embraced the programme and have become very good ambassadors for their college as well as positive role models within the community, says Alex Smits.

Porirua College had recently completed its turn at the helm of the programme. Glenview, Windley, Holy Family, Porirua East, Maraeroa and Cannons Creek schools all took part in the five-week programme.

There were 18 Porirua College students involved, student Nicole Barriball said "while learning theory in the classroom is important, getting into schools and

teaching younger students sports skills and confidence, is just awesome."

Porirua College's director of the sports performance programme Dan Squire says "the students have enjoyed an innovative way to earn NCEA credits. They're enthusiastic and love going to the other schools and seeing the looks on the faces on some of the younger kids."

As Matt Everitt, WRL Development Officer says the scheme is a real winner. Not only do the senior students gain NCEA credits, they also learn coaching fundamentals whilst helping out in the community. 90% of the college students engaged as coaches are new to rugby league. The program has helped to bring communities together, connecting whanau through sport, from primary school through to tertiary education and beyond.



### *KiwiSport Impact To Date*

**47,357** kids provided opportunities to participate in sport  
**Enabled 37,502** primary students to participate in sport  
**Enabled 10,766** secondary students to participate in sport  
**265** participants received sports coaching  
**Created and trained 151** volunteers in sport  
**Enlisted 249** coaches in accredited coaching courses  
**Provided 170** schools with KiwiSport programmes  
**153,172** hours of KiwiSport programmes delivered

## LOCAL CHAMPIONSHIP COACH APPOINTED TO DEVELOPMENT ROLE

### By Steve Martin, Zone GM

The Southern Zone of New Zealand Rugby League and West Coast Rugby League are delighted to announce the appointment of Patrick (Paddy) Byrne to the newly created position of Rugby League Development Officer for the West Coast.

The position has been created with the assistance of Sport Canterbury West Coast and New Zealand Rugby League.

This role is a first for the West Coast and will drive the continued development of the game and build on the great work already achieved by the rugby league community there.

The position caps off a tremendous year for rugby league on the West Coast, following major fixtures earlier this year including the three NZRL National Competition matches played between the South Island Scorpions and the Auckland Pride and the pre season Newcastle Knights v Vodafone Warriors game.

Byrne has a long history in the game having played representative rugby league for the Coast, and as a championship winning coach at all levels including Premiers. He has also refereed at Premier and representative level including having refereed a junior test match between Australia and NZ.

He has a huge passion for the game and is looking forward to delivering programmes that will foster the sport of Rugby League on the West Coast. Paddy takes up his position at the start of November.

West Coast Rugby League Chairman Peter Kerridge (below right with Paddy) said that "the appointment of a Rugby League Development Officer has been a long standing goal of the West Coast Rugby League. Paddy Byrne's personal and professional qualities make him an ideal appointee to this new role which I am confident will be warmly welcomed by the local rugby league community".



## DOWN MEMORY LANE

### By Jack Fagan, Kiwi No. 401

Some readers may remember Chris Jordan, an accomplished back who played for the Kiwis way back in 1977 -78.

I coached Chris when he played for University in the 1970' s and back then he showed plenty of dash, but this is an update about Chris's father and former Kiwi No 287, Len Jordan a 1946 Kiwi.

I first became acquainted with Len in the 1970's and 1980's when we used to travel in a shuttle to the Kiwi re-unions together.

Len has had a pretty hard row to hoe in the last few years and has just recently ended up as a resident at Northbridge Retirement facility in Akaranga Drive North Shore.

He has had a leg amputated above the knee owing to vein's collapsing over a period of time. He no longer lives alone but his positive outlook on life is amazing. One wonders if he has this amazing fortitude because of his rugby league background or if this is the reason he was such a grand footballer. Len is now 91 years old and to my knowledge is the oldest living Kiwi.

He played in the Kiwis from 1946 to 1949. He played 29 times and accumulated many points. He played in Scotty McClymont's team that year when the Great Britain team came to NZ in the Royal Naval Aircraft Carrier, Ark Royal.

He toured Britain and France in 1947 with such legends as Travis Hardwick, Jimmy Haigh, and Tommy Baxter. He scored 19 tries for N.Z. He was dragged out of retirement in 1949 to play stand off inside Morrie Robertson against Australia at Carlaw Park.

Len was a Northcote boy through and through. He played all his senior football for Ponsonby as the Northcote Club had not then reached senior status.

Last week Tommy Hadfield, Keith Bell and myself spent sometime with Len and as most of our conversation was spoken with plenty of volume to assist his partial deafness all at Northbridge Retirement facility now know most of Lens Football pedigree.

Len's coach Scotty McClymont had a rally cry to inspire greater effort and to allay fear. His battle cry was "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog" which I think epitomises Len Jordan.



LEONARD ROY JORDAN

In the Northcote Club (Auckland) School and Junior teams Jordan soon appeared as a lad with ability beyond usual, and when, in 1939, he reached the top team of that Club, Senior B, it was inevitable that a Senior Club would be seeking his services for a First thirteen. To Ponsonby went Jordan, naturally to continue going up to the Auckland thirteen of 1941 and eventually the select New Zealand side of 1946. Jordan has remarkable ability in filling practically any position in the rearguard and very quickly summing up any opponent.

## GUTSY SOUTHLAND HOLD OFF OTAGO IN GRUDGE MATCH

By Logan Savory, The Southland Times

Southland have won the inaugural Southland-Otago secondary schools league showdown. For the first time at secondary school level they squared-off at Elles Rd in Invercargill in what league officials hope will become an annual grudge match.

The Southland and Otago school teams were selected from their respective college grade competitions this year and for many of them it was their first introduction to representative rugby league.

Southland made the perfect start to the game, played in cold, wintry conditions, when wing Nathan Frisby latched on to an intercept and scored within the first five or so minutes of play. They kept the pressure on and went into the halftime break with a 12-6 lead before scoring again to stretch it out to a 18-6 lead.

Halfback Ben McKercher put the game beyond doubt when he landed a late field goal to make it 19-6, the final score. McKercher, who is better known as a New Zealand touch representative, was probably Southland's standout in the win. He directed play well and even in the horrible conditions showed some nice touches with ball in hand.

Southland coach Dennis Thompson said the ball skills throughout the game were at a high standard considering the cold and wet weather the players had to deal with.

He added it was very important to get this game off the ground as they look to ensure it becomes a permanent and popular fixture on the southern league calendar.

Thompson said there was certainly the talent in Southland and interest in league within the schools. He said the next step was to give the promising players more exposure to progress to the top level league grades.

There was a plan being looked at where Southland, Otago, Canterbury and a combined Tasman-West Coast team may take part in a school competition. Thompson said something like this would provide the Southland players a chance to impress in front of various scouts.

It is likely to come down to time whether a South Island schools competition like that could get off the ground next year.

"I guess the problem we have is we are competing with rugby and we have a very small window to fit what we want to in," he said.

The schools game was the last fixture for the Southland District Rugby League 2011 season, a season that would have to be regarded a successful one for the small but growing sport.

It started with debut club the Lonestar Cowboys winning the Southland club competition.

The Southland Rams were winless but got the chance to play in a South Island provincial competition.

The development of a schools competition and the Southland-Otago showdown were also popular additions this year.



Southland's Tuki Hiko tries to evade Otago's Alex Faulkner

Doug Field / Southland Times



More than just a game

# GAME DEVELOPMENT

Game Development

# ORCAS TAKE ON WARRIORS TOYOTA CUP CHAMPIONS



VODAFONE



**NZ Warriors Wellington Challenge**  
in association with Hutt City Council

**NZ Warriors NYC team v WRL ORCAS 20s**  
**Sunday 5th February, Hutt Rec**  
**Woburn, Lower Hutt**  
**5:00pm kick off**

Tickets available on the day  
Adults \$5 entry - Kids Under 15 gold coin Koha entry

For more information: Wellington Rugby League 560 0361 wrl@wrl.org.nz www.wrl.org.nz  
Smoke free and alcohol free event



## RICHMOND RABBITS LET LOOSE IN LEAGUE

By Wayne Martin, Nelson Mail

The South Sydney Rabbitohs' famous red and green NRL strip will be seen around Nelson's league fields next season following the arrival of a new club on the Tasman scene. Or at least a version of it.

The Richmond Rabbits are set to become the sixth team in the fledgling Tasman Rugby League's developing club competition, and will join this year's champion Stoke Cobras, Tahuna Tigers, Victory Vikings, Wanderers Wolves and Motueka Tigers in next season's Smokefree Bin Inn Cup championship.

The idea for the new club was born at the end of last season when several friends, primarily from rugby union roots, expressed an interest in trying something different. "There was a lot [of interest], particularly with guys from union, I found," said new club president Lucas Bennett, who previously played with the Marist & Stoke rugby clubs. "A lot of guys I'd played with during the season were quite keen on something different, giving something else a crack.

"I've played rugby most of my life and never tried league, and just wanted to try something different ... and it was an ideal opportunity for them to come on board."

The club is still working through the legalities involved and is expected to become an official club soon. The Tasman Rugby League ratified the Rabbits' inclusion last month, pending completion of those legal processes.

New club chairman Ryan Charles is a former Waimea Old Boys and Marist club rugby player. While the club has obviously modelled itself on the Russell Crowe co-owned South Sydney franchise, secretary Mark Vinsen stressed one major point of difference.

"We're the Rabbits, not the Rabbitohs," he said. "We actually [approached] the Rabbitohs over in Sydney, and they're OK with us using their [colours], but it's long-term we're looking at. We're not one-season

wonders – we're going for mega seasons. So we basically had to get our own identity.

"We've always wanted these colours, and that rabbit's a pretty feral-looking unit, so we're quite happy with it," he joked in reference to the club's new logo. Although primarily Richmond-based, Vinsen said the club's catchment area was "pretty much the top of the south."

The club doesn't have a home ground yet, but "30 to 40" players had already shown interest in joining. Charles said it hadn't been difficult harnessing that support, and news of the club's formation had caused quite a buzz around the town.

Lafotanoa said Richmond's emergence was "fantastic news for our game". "I think it's a clear indication of the popularity of rugby league, not just locally, but you can see it across the country, the growth in the game," he said.

"These guys have gone away with criteria that we've given them to form a club ... the last thing we want is clubs who come and go, but they've been very proactive and professional, ticked all the boxes to date. These guys have a long-term vision ... now it's about building the depth in the club."

Richmond Rabbits club president Lucas Bennett (L) chairman Ryan Charles with Tasman Rugby League chairman Paul Lafotanoa (right).



Martin De Ruyter/Fairfax NZ



## TAURANGA WHALERS WIN LOCAL AWARD

### By Maggie Russell, Club Secretary

Tauranga Whalers United Sports Club recently attended the annual Regional BOP Sports Awards where they became the winners of the top Club Award for 2011 making them the 'BOP Sports Club of the Year'.

This is a result of two years of hard work by the Club Board, the members, players, supporters and sponsors. The club went through an amalgamation just over two years ago in order to achieve higher standards and better outcomes for the new look club. This restructure resulted in a revamp of its club governance body, with a focus on its strategic direction, its image and its sports codes, particularly our core sport rugby league.

Two years ago the senior teams were whipping boys for the regional competitions. This year the Premier team won the 2011 BOP Premier Rugby League Competition for the first time in 25 years.

The school boys and junior grades were also very competitive throughout their competition, with the U10s being undefeated for the season.

Other codes of Softball, Kiwi tag and an inaugural Netball team also participated in local competitions. The Netball team won their division in the local competition being a new code to the club this year.

This award is an honour bestowed on the club, which has reaped the rewards of hard work and dedication by its Board, club members, supporters, players and sponsors. A truly tremendous effort that will continue on into 2012.

We especially dedicate this to our precious Nan Peata McLeod our patron for many years who recently passed. Nan will always be in our hearts and never forgotten.



Tony Lajpold, Club Chairman accepts the trophy on behalf of the club, with Maggie Russell, Secretary and Whetu McLeod, Board Member.

## WEST COAST LEAGUE STALWART RECOGNISED

Peter Kerridge, NZRL Life Member was acknowledged for his tireless efforts on behalf of rugby league at the West Coast Sports Awards in November.

As President of the West Coast Rugby Football League, Peter is credited with organising an upgrade of Wingham Park and being responsible for a National Rugby League Vodofone Warriors / Newcastle Knights game played there in the wake of the Pike River Mine disaster.

The match, played on February 5, a 'Miners Solidarity Day' attracted a crowd of 5500 and raised \$60,000 shared between the Pike River Miners Trust and the West Coast Rugby League.

A further \$6000 was raised at a charity dinner, also organised by Peter and attended by both NRL teams the night before the game. That money was earmarked for player development.

Peter is a life member of both NZRL and the West Coast Rugby League. He serves on a number of committees and selection panels and has been responsible for organising many and varied fundraising functions, including a dinner attended by then Governor General Sir Anand Satyanand who accepted a role as patron of the West Coast Rugby League.

In the 2007 New Year Honours list Peter was awarded the Member NZ Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to sport and the community.

At the awards dinner held at Shantytown in Greymouth, Peter was named Administrator of the Year and received the G Cooper trophy. The award was presented to him by Grey District Council Mayor Tony Kokshoorn (on left). Also in the picture (far right) is the awards chairman John Sturgeon. Peter and John are the only administrators to win the award twice, Peter first won in 2001.



Photo courtesy of Greymouth Star.

## NATIONAL COMPETITION REPRESENTATIVE VACANCIES

Following the success of the 2010 and 2011 National Competition we are now seeking applications for Management team members for the seven Zones for 2012. Applications are being sought for positions as Coaches, Managers, Trainers and Selectors in all three National Competition grades -15s, 17s and Premiers. If you have a passion for player development and wish to progress in your chosen area then you should visit our website About Us / Careers Page for all details.

Applications should be sent directly to the relevant Zone Managers and must clearly state

- The position you are applying for i.e. Coach, Manager, Trainer or Selector
- The team or teams you wish to be considered for i.e. 15s, 17s or Premiers
- The Zone or Zones you wish to be considered for i.e. Northland, Auckland, Counties Manukau, Upper Central, Mid Central, Wellington and/or South Island.

A full rugby league CV should be submitted, and needs to include all your relevant training and qualifications.



**NORTHERN SWORDS**



**CENTRAL VIPERS  
(Mid Central)**



**AUCKLAND PRIDE**



**NEW ZEALAND  
RUGBY LEAGUE®  
NATIONAL COMPETITION**



**WELLINGTON ORCAS**



**COUNTIES MANUKAU  
STINGRAYS**



**WAICOA BAYS  
(Upper Central)**



**SOUTH ISLAND  
SCORPIONS**

## LOTS OF FUN AT MASTERS TOURNAMENT GOLD COAST



Members of the Masters of Rugby League NZ joined their Australian counterparts on the Gold Coast recently for a week of rugby league for those over 35 years who have retired from all competitive football. All games end in a draw, with one player reporting "The games were very physical, but great games and the Gold shorts showed they're not dead and buried with some very physical 'removal of tags'."

Along with the football, a lot of fun was had off field with the following NZ prize winners:

Best Banner - Midland Mammoths, Tokoroa

Supporters Cup - G I Falcons, Auckland

Best Dressed Team - Halswell Hobbits Christchurch

Karaoke Cup - Glenfield Conzs, Ponsonby Masters, Auckland

Best Halloween Theme Costume - Jackie, Richard, Chiqkie  
Auckland

Best 60s,70s,80s, Theme Costume - Portland Panthers - as Kiss,  
Northland (right)

Referee of the Tournament - Sharleen Strawbridge, Manawatu

Player of the Day for the International Representative Games

- 35 till 39 years - Travis Abraham, Pt Chev. Auckland
- 40 till 49 years - Craig McClintock, Halswell Hobbits, Christchurch
- 50 till 59 - Rodney Knapp Glenfeild Conzs/ Ponsonby, Auckland
- 60 plus - Thomas Roberts, (Bubbles) GI Falcons, Auckland



## RYAN GIBBONS MEMORIAL TOUCH TOURNAMENT

Ryan Gibbons was tragically killed in a car crash on 5 January at Red Beach at 19 years of age.

He grew up in Whangaparaoa, attending Stanmore Bay Kindergarten and School, Hibiscus Coast Intermediate and then Westlake Boys High School.

At an early age Ryan was very active and loved sport. When he was 4 years old he played his first game of rugby league in the Under 6 grade for Hibiscus Coast Raiders. Each year through the junior grades he either won Player of the Year or Sportsman of the Year.

He played in North Harbour Representative teams winning a North Harbour Most Valuable Player award.

In the Senior grades he won Best Back 2009 and 2010 and was the Clubs Top Points Scorer for all seniors in 2009.

2010 was his last season in the Under 20s team and he was awarded his 15 years tankard for Contribution to HBC Raiders.

Ryan's other great love was touch which he started in 1999, playing in modules at Hibiscus Coast Raiders and Sharks at Orewa. In his second year in the game he was selected for North Harbour who he represented consecutively for the next 10 years.

He also attained his Elementary Referees badge and made the Pirates squad 2007-8 (made up of players from North Harbour, Auckland & Counties Manukau). He represented his schools at inter school days and Westlake Boys at the NZ Nationals.

Ryan represented New Zealand U19 Men's Youth Team in 2008-9 where he played one test against South Africa and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tests against Australia. They beat the South Africans by a large score but for Ryan beating the Aussies in the first test was great.

Over the years he put his hand up at school for basketball, hockey, rugby, kapa haka, cross country, athletics – whatever was going.

Ryan had good sportsmanship both on and off the field. He gave it all because he wanted to win but was a good loser also. When the 2010 season ended he was working out a lot at the gym, the goal to get to an Aussie club by the end of 2011. A popular person who had 1,300 people at his funeral, his league coach said he had a bright future in the game.

Touch North Harbour are hosting a tournament in Ryan's name on 14 January 2012 at his second home Hibiscus Coast Raiders. Eventually it would be great if it became an annual event where everyone can have a good game of touch, and like Ryan be competitive but have fun too.

Please see page 28 for details of the tournament.



## FLOODS HIT GREYMOOUTH AND WINGHAM PARK



Monday November 21 at 7pm, Peter Kerridge, NZRL Life Member and chair of West Coast Rugby League took these photos of Wingham Park which had been hit by a massive storm front.

The red `legs` are upturned bench seats floating near the top of the perimeter fence.

## AFTERMATH OF FLOODS WHICH HIT GREYMOUTH



Above: The morning after the flood.

Left: Incredibly by late Tuesday afternoon Peter reports "The sun is out and we could play footy on the park, as usual no ground damage. All the water has gone, just the small matter of cleaning up the grandstand and the dressing rooms. All the goal post pads and tackle gear saturated. About 1.5m water through the place. Lost some of the red bench seats but recovered others from the highways and byways. The 50m and 20m ground signs were found in a drain about 100m from the park. Considerable damage to the perimeter fences. No insurance cover for obvious historical reasons. Started the year with a flood and finished with one. More a nuisance than anything."

## PROGRAMME COLLECTOR SHARES HIS PASSION

Mark Newbound caught our attention when bought 24 Four Nations programmes last year. Our email discussions lead us to discover that he has been a passionate collector of Rugby League programmes for years. His main collection and interest is Rugby League, he's from England and Leeds is his team so even though he is now living in Australia he still has all the Leeds and big game programmes sent over each season.

He says "I've got every Leeds programme since November 1 1958 and from the 1947/1948 season to that date. Now I just need 98 programmes to complete the set - doubt I ever will, but you never know. My oldest Leeds programme is from 1911, the oldest programme in my collection is a Huddersfield programme from 1909."

He stores them carefully in groups: Leeds programmes – Home and Away; other league Programmes including 2010 Four Nations and NZRL National Competition programmes; Rugby League Magazines including much older ones like Open Rugby from England along with Rugby League World and Week and NZ Super League; then Soccer, Union, Cricket and others.

His Kiwi programme collection includes every tour programme to England from late in the 1955/56 tour, a selection of others before that and tours to Australia.

He has a France v New Zealand test programme (in newspaper style) from the 1947/48 tour, a Leeds v NZ programme from 1947, plus a Hunslet one from the same tour, which his Great-Uncle played in for Hunslet.

Although he has been to New Zealand a few times, last year's Four Nations was the first time he'd had a

proper stay in Auckland, so he took a trip to the old Carlaw Park,

having quite a few of the Rugby League news programmes from that venue, both from domestic games and tests.

He estimates his collection to be 10,000–11,000 league programmes of one description or another - some at home, some in a storage bay. He reads the programmes, and then they are stored away.

He has programmes from: England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France (for the 1999 Championship Final, a comic book with no connection to the game with a sticker advertising the game across the front), Spain (a Catalan Dragons programme), Russia, PNG, Australia, New Zealand, USA and South Africa.

His favourite Kiwi programmes are the tests from Christchurch and Carlaw Park, plus some tour games at Wellington, played at Rugby League Park and the Basin Reserve.





## YOUNG FAN BATTLES ILLNESS

### From Sarah Thomas

At only just 3 years old Lewis spontaneously suffered an unexplained brain aneurism and stroke. The stroke left him fully paralysed on the right side of his body, and after being airlifted to Starship in the Westpac Helicopter, he spent two weeks on the critical list in the High Dependency Unit. For three weeks our family stayed at Ronald McDonald house and Andrew and I took shifts at Lewis' bedside and looking after his twin brother Cohan.

Due to the extent of Lewis' paralysis, he was discharged to the Wilson Home - Child Rehabilitation Centre. Here we have undergone eight weeks of intensive therapy (with another two to go) with physio's, speech, and occupational therapists, as well as paediatricians and psychologists, dieticians and social workers.

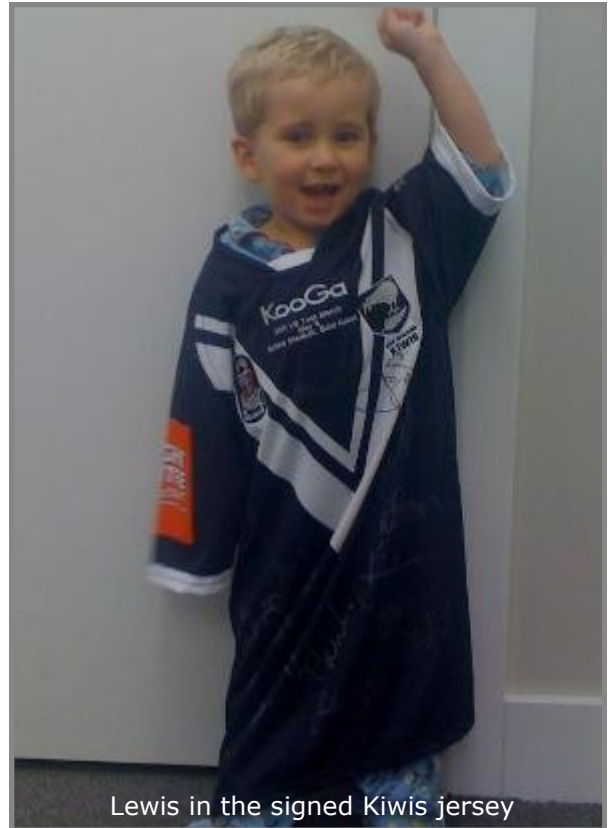
We have had to split the family in two, with Andrew and Cohan living in Whakatane and Lewis and I in Auckland. Its not been the easiest situation.

We are due to come home permanently at the end of November which is fantastic, but also concerning due to the lack of community therapy support Lewis will receive. Through the Ministry of Health, Lewis gets one physiotherapy session and one occupational therapy session per month, and two speech language therapy session per month. For a 3 year old boy who has the ability to come close to a full recovery we believe that's not enough to reach that goal.

For a stroke victim, the first year is the most important in terms of rehabilitation and as Lewis' parents, Andrew and I are committed to getting him as close to his identical twin brother again as we possibly can. We are prepared to pay for private sessions as long as the money is there to support this. As a young family we can cover some of it, but not enough to cover all that he needs. The lack of therapy is not an Eastern Bay issue, but an National issue, there just are not enough therapists in these sectors to go around.

Lewis' family are huge rugby league supporters and League 4 Life have donated a signed Kiwis jersey for us to auction off as part of our Monster Garage Sale on December 11 in Whakatane.

"Every parent will do everything in their power to ensure their child grows up to the best of their ability, that's no different for Lewis and Cohan. My goal is that one day people will still confuse our identical twins, that their physical differences are minimal and that both children grow up with as normal life as possible." Thank you NZRL. Sarah Thomas and Andrew Railton



Lewis in the signed Kiwis jersey



## FOUNDATION WALL

The new fundraising initiative for League 4 Life is up and running and gives you the opportunity to have your name or that of your family, club, or business up on the League 4 Life Foundation Wall. All the money raised from the Wall will go to the League 4 Life Foundation which supports people involved with Rugby League in New Zealand who have met with hardship in their lives.

The Wall will be at Rugby League House outside the NZRL Museum doors and will be taken to various NZRL events for extra exposure.

Some **key points** about buying a ball (or two, or three...) are below:

- \$195.00 buys one ball for two years.
- A small name plaque will be put on each ball. The donor can choose what name they would like on it (ie. a person, company, family, etc).
- The donor keeps the ball after the two years elapses and can buy another if they wish.
- Ball numbers are sold on a first come, first served basis.
- A receipt will be issued once payment is made.

**If you would like to purchase a ball** then you need to:

1. Make a deposit of \$195.00 directly to the L4L Foundation account with the BNZ, 02-0100-0106590-000 New Zealand Rugby League Inc. Please make sure that in the Reference you put your Surname followed by L4L; **or**
2. Write a cheque for \$195.00 made out to the League 4 Life Foundation and send to NZRL.
3. Call the office and advise Katie of the name (s) to go on the ball and the number position on the wall you would prefer.  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. The Smith Family)  
Number: \_\_\_\_\_
4. A receipt will be issued once payment is made.

*The balls with a red X have already been sold, to avoid disappointment please ring the office to check number availability and have a back up option ready.*





More than just a game

# NOTICEBOARD

## BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED

Auckland Rugby League Appointments Panel is seeking applications for two Independent Directors. The Appointments Panel will be assessing candidates against a range of criteria including:

- Clear understanding of governance functions and principles;
- Knowledge of and interest in the development of Rugby League;
- Knowledge of how community based programmes are run;
- Occupational skills that add value to the Board business;
- A strong network across the business and /or League community.

Please visit the NZRL website About Us / Careers page for details on how to apply. Applications close Dec 30, 2011.

## SPONSORS WANTED Kiwis Association Golf Day

The Kiwis Association is seeking hole sponsors for its 2012 golf day. To be held at Helensville Golf Course on Sunday February 12, this popular event is always fully booked.

Sponsors will get to play alongside Kiwi legends and be a part of a very special day.

Only \$150 for the 1st and 18th hole, all others are \$100 each.

If you are interested please contact Graeme Coutts [graemecoutts@xtra.co.nz](mailto:graemecoutts@xtra.co.nz) for more information.



## SPORTING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Congratulations to Karen Gibbons, winner of an AUT Sport Acknowledgement Award at the recent Harbour Sport awards.

Aaron Heremaia and Shaun Johnson were nominees for Sportsman of the Year and Hibiscus Coast Raiders and Kevin Locke were both finalists in their categories, Club of the Year and Sportsman of the Year respectively.

## MANUKAU MAGPIES PREMIERS MUSTER

When: Sunday 18th December 2011

At: 10am

Where: Moyle Park clubrooms,  
48R Bader Drive, Mangere

Contact: Andrew Waipouri (Coach)  
on: 021-02306172 or  
Harry Williams (Manager)  
ph: 09-2561844



## MASTERS OF RUGBY LEAGUE

Will be hosting their next tournament in Wellington in October, 2012. In 2013 to celebrate 20 years of Masters RL in NZ they will hold their tournament in Christchurch. For all details please visit their website [www.mastersofrugbyleague.co.nz](http://www.mastersofrugbyleague.co.nz).

## TASMAN RUGBY LEAGUE

Have a new range of playing and supporters gear available for purchase online at [here](http://www.tasmanrugbyleague.co.nz) [www.tasmanrugbyleague.co.nz](http://www.tasmanrugbyleague.co.nz). If you're a Nelsonian living elsewhere and you'd like to buy something from home please visit the website.



More than just a game

# NOTICEBOARD

## INTERNATIONAL NINES

**Location:** Hawke's Bay  
**Date:** 28 January 2011  
**Cost:** \$300 per team  
**Prizes:** \$1500 first place,  
 \$500 2<sup>nd</sup>  
 \$250 for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>

Accommodation available at Omahu Marae.

Tournament contact: Henry Heke,  
[henry.heke@tpk.govt.nz](mailto:henry.heke@tpk.govt.nz) or  
 ph 0800 020 003 or 027 255 8865.

## TAUPO PHOENIX RUGBY LEAGUE

Taupo Phoenix Rugby League Club is looking for 2012 Coaches (voluntary) for:

- Premiere Grade
- Reserve Grade

Please send CV to  
[taupophoenix@hotmail.co.nz](mailto:taupophoenix@hotmail.co.nz) or  
 Phone Craig Hiha 0274868112

## LAST CHANCE!

# Xmas Sale



Purchase any  
 3 items from  
 the same age  
 group & receive  
 the 4th item  
**FREE\***

\*Free item to be the same or lesser  
 value as the lowest priced item.

**KIWI'S KooGa Gear and Kids  
 supporter apparel heavily reduced**

Open Friday 16th & Saturday 17th December  
 Time: 10.00am - 2.30pm

**CLOTHING BRANDS** 10 Te Kea Place, Albany

## RYAN GIBBONS MEMORIAL TOUCH TOURNAMENT

### Saturday January 14th 2012

Raiders Rugby League Club  
 Stanmore Bay

### 9.00am - 3.00pm



**ALL TNZ AFFILIATED TEAMS ARE INVITED TO ENTER**

**MENS OPEN/SOCIAL ♦ WOMENS OPEN/SOCIAL ♦ MIXED OPEN/SOCIAL**

**TEAM ENTRY FEE IS \$150 PER TEAM AND REGISTRATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SAT 31ST DEC 2011  
 (CHEQUES TO BE MADE OUT TO TOUCH NORTH HARBOUR)**

**FOR QUERIES OR AN ENTRY PACK CONTACT:**

**RUSSELL AMOS 027 284 7059  
 KAREN GIBBONS 021 164 4810  
 ISY STEVENSON isy9@vodafone.co.nz**

SUPPORTED BY:



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# PARTNERS



NZRL would like to thank the following organisations for their on-going support and encourage you to support them whenever possible :



AUTEX



**RUGBY LEAGUE MUSEUM**  
*More than just a game*

**7 Beasley Ave, Penrose**

HOME OF THE RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP  
Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
11am - 3pm Entry only \$2



*School Groups, Probus and Other Interested Groups Welcome*

Contact Don Hammond, Museum Curator on (09) 571 3857 for holiday period opening hours.

**Bring the Kids. Try the new Museum Explorer Quiz!**