Trophies and one-off games in the spotlight

Good to see people are slowly calming down about the Crusaders damaging the Super Rugby Aotearoa Trophy.

Was it a silly thing to let happen? Absolutely, but it’s not a matter of cultural insensitivity even for those who thirst for such controversies.

The trophy has zero sporting history and while I’m sure it was lovingly carved, a level of perspective must be maintained.

Sports trophies have always had questionable roles in celebrations, the Ranfurly Shield has been left in taxi and Spooned by grown men in their beds for many years. Safe to say it’s seen its share of amber liquid poured on it over time as well.

In one province I worked in, their senior rugby trophy was rumoured to have been urinated on during a post-match celebration. How one celebrates like that I do not know.

In European football, trophies have been run over by buses as over-enthusiastic players, likely still suffering the effects of the previous nights’ antics, made poor choices during victory parades.

The trophy will be repaired, cultural advice sort and life will go on. The Crusaders have won 11 trophies, an accident is bound to happen at some point.

Of course with the sold out game against The Blues cancelled, there was no Scott Robertson breakdance to enjoy either.

Though, I often wonder if the rest of the country enjoys seeing that as much as the one-eyed Cantabs do?

Hopefully, the North versus South game can go ahead, if not in Auckland, then somewhere.

Not only is it a potentially good money spinner for the New Zealand Rugby Union but it may provide the public with the best level of players on the field at one time.

Test rugby seems a long way off at this point with the Coronavirus so an enticing game amongst ourselves might be the next best thing.

If the game cannot be hosted in Auckland, then I’m sure Wellington becomes an early favourite to host it because their Cake Tin is the next biggest stadium.

The contest is largely meaningless if played in front of no fans with the prospect of test rugby unlikely for this year.

It will be a money loser and will not be considered an All Blacks trial.

In that case, there’s little point playing the match.

All it will do is raise the risk of potential Covid-19 and pose the hazard of a player picking up a serious injury which takes months to recover from.

So the match is in a tough spot and short of the wait-and-see approach that we are all getting used to, there is not much more that can be done.

Fighters bring home gold and silver

By Celeste Alexander

A relatively new boxing team fighting under the umbrella of Picton’s Arapawa Boxing Club, has come away from a championship at the weekend with silver and gold medals.

Blenheim’s Wolfpack boxing team took six of its fighters to Christchurch for the two-day South Island Novice Championship event. It was their first time competing at this championship but each fought well and came away with top placings.

Winning gold were Cody Murrell and Elia Photo. Winning silver were Niko Frost, Mel King, Jarden Taikiri Waaka and Luke Radich.

For Luke who initially missed out on a fight, in order to secure one he had to move up 10kg to fight in a heavier weight division. With one loss and one win he achieved silver.

Overall it was an “amazing experience” for this relatively new team of fighters, trainer conditioner, Terry Agent says.

“I’d like to thank Eddie O’Brien and I it was great to see them do so well.”

“To know where these boys came from and to see them achieve what they did was humbling. I’d like to thank Eddie for the contribution of all his knowledge and the way he gives endlessly. It’s much appreciated by me and the boys,” he says.

The Wolfpack team formed seven months ago under the guidance of trainer Eddie O’Brien who runs the Arapawa club, and Terry.

The team currently has 19 members.

They first came together as friends looking for an outlet and found support in one another. With no official training facility as yet the Wolfpack trains outdoors at Athletic Park.

“The focus is friendship,” Terry says. “When you’re down you always have a mate there... it’s not just boxing we teach.”

According to member, Mel King, the team is more of a “brotherhood”.

“We are a group of friends that came from nothing; training at the park, trying to deal with the problems in our lives, and come together to help each other become better people all around,” he says.

Without Terry none of this could have happened... and also Eddie who helped us when no one else would, and came into our brotherhood not just as our coach but as a good friend.

“Thank you to everyone who followed us and showed us love through everything; we appreciate you all.”

The next challenge for the team is to find sponsorship and a permanent training facility in Blenheim, as well as training for the up and coming South Island Golden Gloves being held in October in Nelson.

The Wolfpack boxing team from Blenheim went to Christchurch at the weekend to compete at the Novice South Island Championship and all walked away with medal placings. Pictured are Niko Frost (silver), Mel King (silver), Terry Agent (trainer conditioner), Jarden Taikiri Waaka (silver), Cody Murrell (gold), Luke Radich (silver) and in front, Elia Polilo (gold) and Eddie O’Brien (trainer). Photo provided.
Sun WHAT'S ON IN MARLBOROUGH

Wednesday 4 November
Picton Mahjong Group: Every Wednesday 10am-12pm, Picton Harbour Park. All welcome. Contact Gyllyn (03) 573 5839

Marlborough Museum, Blenheim Park: 15 October to 10 November: Marlborough Docent Photo Competition. Entries to be in by 10 November for Awards presentation on 14 November. Request an entry form by emailing info@marlboroughmuseum.co.nz

Thursday 5 November
Ullswater Retreats Group: Meet Brashaw Park Thursdays 11.00am. Ride to various destinations for lunch. Come by bike, by walking, magic carpet van. Bring your laughing gear, a thermal to wear and a story to share.
Salvation Army Toy Library: Today 3.30 to 4.30pm,但在5th/2035 Marlborough Creative Exhibitions – 5 November: Marlborough Creative Exhibitions, 204 High St, Blenheim. Guest Exhibitionist Frank Graham, Porter. 12.30pm – 4.30pm. FREE ENTRY

Friday 6 November
Marlborough Quilters’ Exhibition: At Clubs of Marlborough, Alfred Street, Blenheim. 9am – 4pm. FREE ENTRY
Kickzoola: Fridays 3.30 to 5.30pm, Riverside Community House, 131 Ridge Road, Blenheim 82937. FREE ENTRY
Salvation Army Toy Library: Today 10am to 1pm. Vintage Farm Machinery: Open daily, 10am to 3pm, Blenheim Vintage Farm, John 577 642
Marlborough Museum, Blenheim Park: 6.30pm The Marlborough Antique Bottle Roadshow. Bring your bottles and help us identify the bottle to be displayed and learn more about their value and context with our resident Antiquarian Logan Code.

Saturday 7 November
Blenheim Chess Club: Meet at Delta Cafe, Scott Street, every Saturday 10am – 1pm. All welcome.

Sunday 8 November
Marlborough Museum at Riverlands Golf Course: 1pm – 4pm. Join us to experience a great little guided tour of the course, its history and related artefacts.

By Celeste Alexander

Despite initial plans to host the 2020 Golden Gloves South Island Championship being disrupted by COVID-19, Marlborough fighters still packed a punch at the tournament held in Nelson over Labour Weekend.

The premier amateur boxing tournament scheduled for earlier this year in May and was to be hosted by Royal Masons Marlborough Boxing Club. Instead, fighters from Marlborough Boxing Club, Art of Boxing (AOB) Academy, and Arapawa Boxing Club travelled to Thibodeau’s Boxing Club to compete.

Each of the eight fighters came away with a gold, silver or bronze as they went up against the South Island’s top amateur fighters.

Ruggerc
Marlborough Boxing Club Elevist Kaituki – Gold (91kg open)
Christian Kaloni – Silver (75kg open)
Tomasi Langi – Bronze (60kg open)

Arapawa Boxing Club
Epsi Polio – Gold (75kg elite novice)
Jardin Tukiri Waka – Gold (81kg elite novice)
Niko Frost – Silver (66kg elite novice)
Cody Murrell – Silver (70kg junior novice)

AOB Academy
Karlos Gennell – Silver (66kg junior novice)

According to Raymond he was “very happy” with how well Marlborough boxers fought, including his own fighters.

“I am very happy with how Christian and Tomasi were having our fighters against tough opponents as the boys fought they were having their fight.

“Elevist is growing stronger every fight with a record six fights and five wins, and two of those fights were on the podium.

“It’s had every fight in the open class against more experienced fighters and will be representing the South Island in our upcoming tournament later this year against the North Island Golden Gloves champion.”

Then in January he will be representing Marlborough Boxing Club at the NZ Boxing Championships.

“It was awesome to see all the boys from Arapawa Boxing Club do extremely well, they are all good guys. It was really good for everyone to see how much we can – getting our guys ready to do our province proud.”

In an online post following the Golden Gloves event, James Skipper of the AOB Academy congratulated his fighter Karlos Gennell for the way he fought and represented the Academy.

“After winning his semi-final by unanimous decision Karlos came up short losing his final. Everyone at AOB Academy is super proud of you not only because of your performance but also because of the way you represented our academy.

“Now tomorrow we are back into training as we prepare 10 of our young boxers to compete in the South Island novice boxing championship in March 2021.”

By Celeste Alexander

It’s been a fast and intense journey for local boxing group ‘Wolfpack’, which competed at the 2020 Golden Gloves South Island Championship over Labour Weekend, under the umbrella of Arapawa Boxing Club.

Four of the group’s members made the trip to Nelson with trainer Eddie O’Brien, manager Terry Agnew, and supporter to compete at the tournament – their successful second amateur boxing event since forming earlier this year.

Epi Polio has continued his winning streak which began with the South Island Novice Championship held back in August where he won gold.

Epi now adds another medal to his tally after winning both bouts at Nelson’s Golden Gloves in the 75kg elite novice, taking the title for his division.

“It’s busy what your body can do when you put it hard,” Epi says.

“I have learnt a lot about myself through boxing and I have made me feel I want to strive upwards, especially when you have a good team.

“I smashed a goal for 2020 and got the South Island Golden Gloves! If it wasn’t for Terry, Eddie and the brothers from the Wolfpack, and also my mum, I wouldn’t have reached my goal.

“ar confident and I will keep doing my best and see how far I can get,” he says.

Niko Frost, Jardin Tukiri Waka and Cody Murrell also added to their successes since the Novice Champs where Niko and Jarden won silver, while Cody has won gold so far.

At the Golden Gloves Niko fought in two bouts and came away with one win and one loss, taking out the silver in the 66kg elite novice.

“I felt like the fights went well, I was smiling the whole time,” Niko says.

“It was an amazing experience after months of hard training and preparation.

“I am feeling really good about it and now looking ahead to next year’s novice champs. Cheers to Terry, Eddie and the team for the support and the push to get to this point,” he says.

Jarden fought one bout in the 81kg elite novice and took the gold, and Cody fought both bouts in the 70kg junior novice and came away with silver.

For these three men it was a proud moment to see the culmination of months of training result in success.

“The preparation was perfect,” Jarden says. “Having the support to focus on things I needed to work on like strength and coordination was great, so I was able to go in feeling good.

“This fight was a little bit of make it or break it. My opponent was tough, I’ve come across and won from the Woodstock Club which is what I wanted.

“I am happy to say after all my losses I’ve won the Golden Gloves – that’s an amazing feeling.

“A big thanks to Terry, Eddie, Gare, Lake, all the boys and my way. It just shows us that if you train really hard it pays off,” he says.

Cody faced off against the same opponent he won gold against at the Novice Champs, and this time took the silver.

“I am a skilled boxers,” Cody says. “I’ve come out of it knowing I need to train harder so I can come back stronger next time.

“You learn more about yourself through boxing, and I think I’ve come out the other side after some first winning in February.

“Even though I thought I’d be fighting but now I’ve won a gold and silver so I’m keen to keep on fighting,” he says.

Trainer Eddie O’Brien, who is registered with Arapawa Boxing Club and later this year began training the Wolfpack group, says it was a “massive achievement” for the four fighters.

“Looking at how far these boys have come, and the entire group have come huge,” he says.

“When you look at what each of these fighters put up – I’m really proud of them all,” Eddie says.

Arapawa Boxing Club is the parent club of the Wolfpack which first came together as friends looking for an outlet for their own problems, and found support in boxing.

While they don’t have an official training facility or receive any funding, Cody says they do train once a week with a lot of support from the Arapawa Club.

“The club’s support has been really good. They’ve provided a nice venue to train three nights a week with me.

“Sunday mornings we train with [mixed martial arts fighter] Gose Santa and she takes us for fight conditioning; that’s been a massive help. We also have the support of trainer conditioner Terry Agnew and more recently Glen Cotson who is an ex-fighter and successful boxers.

“Everyone has come together to help these boys and while we don’t receive funding like other clubs and haven’t had a lot of outside support, I’m really proud that we’ve done this all on our own,” he says.

With the experience and success at two championships now under their belts Eddie says the next event on the cards is the South Island Novice Championships in March 2021.

“We will have a few of our fighters making their debut next year,” he says.

Wolfpack Boxing members Jarden Tukiri Waka, Cody Murrell, Niko Frost, Els Kaituki (front) pictured after receiving their medals at the 2020 Golden Gloves South Island Championship. Photo provided.