

New Zealand Rugby



Giving It A Try

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And Kirwin is streaking up on the outside, showing all the form we've come to expect from him, can anything stop this man, but no, his fellow team mate Fitzpatrick is streaking down from above in a desperate bid to stop Kirwin reaching his goal, wait a minute 'streaking down from above'. Has rugby taken a strange turn we don't know about?

It almost seemed it had with the two All Blacks showing their winning style but with a big difference. Both these likely lads were on the bottom of a swimming pool playing the great game in slow motion with the aid of scuba tanks.

When John Kirwin and Sean Fitzpatrick fronted up at Sportways Waterworld with the intention of learning to dive there was lots of interest to see if these heroes of the field would be denizens of the deep.

And from the start they proved they had it in the pool as well. Not that you have to be an All Black to learn to dive though, but when the Spot On One television cameras turned up we knew they weren't here to take pictures of the wonderful Sportways staff.

And in charge of all of this was TelevisionOne news and sport presenter Cathy Campbell, herself a recent graduate of the Sportways diving school. And though it might be a bit off to call them 'Frog' men this is just what they were, frolicking happily in the limelight and putting their new found skills to use in an improvised game of rugger on the bottom of the pool.

It's a whole new ball game underwater, those stylish tackles and fancy footwork don't count for an awful lot when you're tucked inside a wetsuit with a tank strapped to your back, but they turned it on for the cameras and made a good show of looking graceful though we wouldn't really want to call it underwater ballet.

And right about now I'd bet they are trying to talk Grizz Wylie into making it part of the team training schedule.

It's like that, the diving bug. (By Bruce Davis-Goff)



above left to right: John Kirwin, Sean Fitzpatrick, course instructor Keith Cardwell and Ric Salizzo in various states of undress. Guess who has the most experience of getting out of dive gear fast!

left, left to right Ric Salizzo, (TVNZ sports presenter), John Kirwin, (All Black), Cathy Campbell (TVNZ news and sports presenter) Sean Fitzpatrick (All Black) and Peter Thompson (TVNZ cameraman).

Photos by Dave Moran.

Legends Learn to Play



All Blacks John Kirwin and Sean Fitzpatrick show their winning style but with a big difference. Both these likely lads were on the bottom of a swimming pool playing the great game in slow motion with the aid of scuba tanks. (footage aired on Sports Night, TVNZ 1991)

story continues overleaf

the Great Game Underwater!

Training the All Blacks

by Keith Cardwell
www.fnqdive.com

What can I say? They were just marvelous – and probably still are!

Ten years earlier I'd assisted with the production of a Television New Zealand (TVNZ) documentary on what it takes to learn to dive but when, in 1991, an opportunity came up to train a couple of the most famous All Blacks of all time, it seemed to be the perfect way to celebrate that earlier programme's 10th anniversary in fairly much the same manner.

Although at the time I was more enthusiastic about soccer, it's hard to be a Kiwi and not get a little wound up when the rugby season starts and our local heroes take to the pitch. It's active, physical and in many ways a game of skill. A time when most Kiwis become know-it-all spectators solving all of the game's problems and knowing exactly who should have done what and who shouldn't have done the other. All assisted with a few Steingrenades (Steinlagers).

Even so, the effort to actually become and remain one of those immortal Haka exponents is no doubt as challenging as being selected for Olympic fame. So when it came to inviting and getting a couple of the most unforgettable icons of the game to come on a course with me to learn to dive, my allegiance to soccer took a nose-dive. It was even more surprising to also see that my increased interest in the sport of rugby was becoming no match to the even greater interest being shown by these 'greats' in our sport of diving. Fanbloodytastic!

pictured above left to right, top to bottom: Instructor Keith Cardwell checks Sean Fitzpatrick's dive gear. All Blacks John Kerwin and Shaun Fitzpatrick at poolside; The pair kitted up and about to enter the Sportways Training Pool in Orakei, Auckland. John Kerwin and Sean Fitzpatrick resting at the surface. Their open water dive..

At the start I admit to a few nerves in facing up to the solid block of a bloke that was Sean Fitzpatrick and the lean, mean running machine of John Kirwan but it was a needless concern. There is a saying about football players that goes something like 'Soccer is a gentleman's game played by thugs and rugby is a thug's game played by gentlemen' so I half expected grumpy, grizzly, rough, tough and terrible-to-get-on-with egotists that expected the world to suck up to them. Ah! How presumptuous we can be! After the experience of training with Sean and John, I'll certainly agree that it would have to be a sport played by at least two perfect gentlemen.

It was a very great pleasure to train with them and not only did they prove to be outstanding players on the football field but equally as adept at all of the underwater challenges that they were presented with. I've since been told that in true Kiwi tradition, the lads score on the crayfish stakes in equally as grand a fashion as they do against the Wallabies. And the Springboks, And...

below: Television presenter Phillip Leishman where the footage aired. (go to www.DiveNewZealand.com to view)

