

BLAZER PRESENTATION – WESTERN PIONEERS

This weekend the Western Pioneers will present three blazers to players who have achieved 30 Premier game appearances.

Ritchie Ah Chong

Ritchie came to the Pioneers attention during the Seven's circuit in early 2012, when he represented a Counties club team. Swift work by the Pioneers talent scout at the time saw him head to the North West and what an asset and crowd favourite he has become for Pioneers supporters.

In 2012 when the Western Pioneers won the North Harbour competition, Ritchie scored 14 tries, including one in the final against Silverdale, and won the top try scorer award in North Harbour.

He played for Harbour B that year but unfortunately broke his arm and couldn't press for higher honours.

In 2013 he made a late return to rugby due to his arm injury but still managed to score 8 tries.

In 2014 he made the Samoan sevens team and played several series around the world, including the Commonwealth games. This meant he missed quite a few club matches but when he did return, he was immediately back on form, scoring 10 tries.

This year he has been in irresistible form, scoring 7 tries in the first three matches, showcasing his full range of skills and amazing pace. That's 40 tries in just 30 games. Would there be a faster wing in the Union?

Surely this year he will get an opportunity at ITM Cup level, and maybe he'll be the match winner when North Harbour challenge Hawkes Bay for the shield!

Dylan Marsters

Dylan is a local Kumeu boy, having worked his way up through the grades and from their U 21 team and he has progressed to the Western Pioneers prem side.

Dylan plays at loose forward and after initially struggling to make the run on team, he is now a regular starter and an excellent support player.

He has represented North Harbour at age group level.

Pita Volavola

Pita is one of up to six Fijian boys who regularly play for the Pioneers. He too was spotted on the sevens circuit in 2013, along with his friend Isa Vuki who also played for the Pioneers that year.

Pita came to NZ to go to Rotorua Boys High, and played for the Pioneers in his first year out of school.

What an impression he made in 2013, as he set a record for the number of tries scored in the Prem competition, scoring 21. He is a very elusive, fast wing and deceptively strong. At the end of 2013 he had to return to Fiji.

At the start of the 2014 season Pita expressed a desire to come back and play again for the Pioneers, so the Visa consultant was put on the case and Pita arrived mid season.

He scored a few tries last year and to date has scored two this year.

He makes a lethal combination with Ritchie on the other wing.

Pita has represented North Harbour at the national sevens and at Under 21 level.