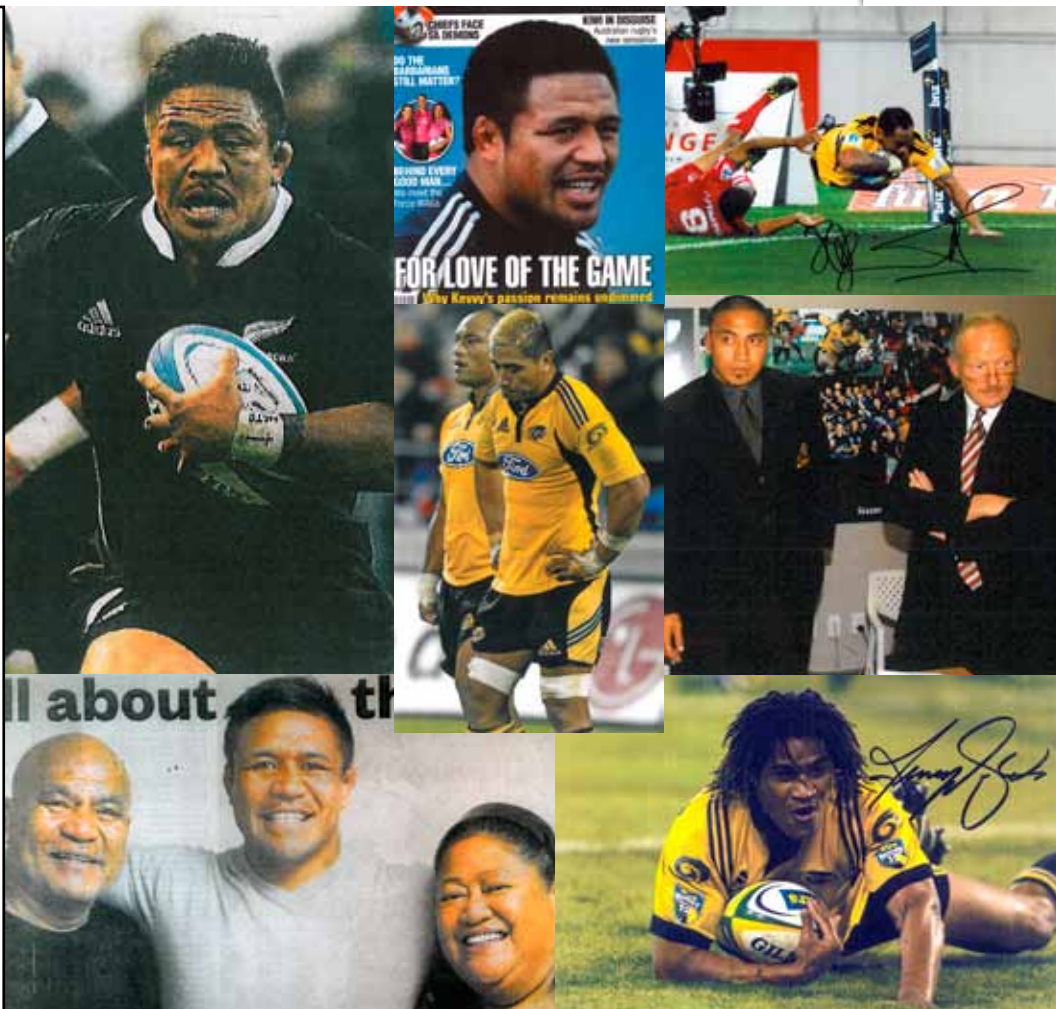


KEVEN MEALAMU:

“Young players need sound and objective advice from somebody who understands the environment in which the game is being played at the semi-professional and professional levels at this time. Someone who is experienced with young people particularly athletes and can understand and connect with them, but at the same time be able to see the bigger picture and give good objective advice based on a more broad experience in sport and in life. Advice these days includes help over injury issues, mental wellbeing, finding ways to step away from the game and relax, dealing with nutrition, including supplements and performance enhancing drug education.”

AS FOR HIS MANAGER, KEVEN MEALAMU SAYS:

“TC has the complete trust and confidence of me and my family. His role is as a manager and confidante. He is completely professional in everything he does. He understands the way I think: our thinking is aligned. I can be open and relaxed with him. For me, the most important thing is that I am really comfortable with him, in his company as well as with his advice. It is a strong personal and professional relationship built up over the years.



TIM CASTLE / TC SPORTS MANAGEMENT LIMITED

My work in athlete management began almost by accident when I was called in by a small group of senior All Blacks to assist them to make an abrupt and necessarily urgent player-manager/player-agent change. This was in 2007. Previously I had been retained on a regular basis to act as legal counsel for a number of athletes and players before sporting discipline bodies, particularly the rugby judiciary.

I had in any event been engaged in sports law as a young lawyer in Wellington and have, for almost 30 years, been heavily involved in sports organisations offering a range of professional and advisory services. This includes – being the first member from Australasia and Oceania to the International Court of Arbitration for Sport based in Lausanne; serving as First Vice President of the board of the New Zealand Olympic Committee and in 1995 I accepted an appointment by the Hillary Commission as Chairman of the Athletics New Zealand Task Force to look at ways in which that sport with its 23 disciplines might be better arranged structurally in order to provide the best support for its athletes. I was also New Zealand's inaugural appointee to the International Cricket Council's Code of Conduct/Corruption Commission and Judicial Appeals Commission.

I give advice to elite athletes including for some for whom I am not a manager or an agent. This has been at the request of their manager/agent. I also continue to act as manager (including as an accredited agent) for players including legendary All Black Keven Mealamu and former All Blacks Rodney So'oialo, Jerry Collins and Neemia Tialata. It was for them that I took on the responsibilities as manager in 2007 – although my association with them stretches back much further. Neemia and Jerry are both now playing in France. Rodney has successfully transitioned to coaching rugby after playing in Japan.

There are other athletes under my management but their identity is currently confidential.

I established TC Sports Management Limited as a separate business entity for the purposes of my work in sport and particularly as an elite athlete management undertaking. I have more recently been joined in this work by one of my three sons, Tom, who is a lawyer in Tauranga and living in Mount Maunganui. He, like me, has committed effort and energy to sports law. Tom played for the First XV at Wellington College, Premier Club Rugby at Otago University, was an Otago provincial representative and trialled for the New Zealand Under 19 side when, unfortunately, a serious knee

injury ruled him out of further play. Rugby is a huge passion in our family.

There are many challenges facing young players today. In addition to the passion and dreams they have to be provincial players at the semi-professional level, as Super 15 players and ultimately become All Blacks – as if that is not enough of a challenge – there is an added pressure simply because of the prospect of being able to make a living from rugby.

As Keven Mealamu comments, the semi professional/professional rugby environment looks “... like a big golden egg” for young players coming out of the First XV in their schools, but hopes and dreams can be dashed so quickly and for many it will not be a golden egg at all. Good advice when players are making the transition is essential.

There is always the risk of disappointment and there are traps out there. So the role for me and Tom in our athlete management endeavours is to provide full, committed, as well as objective and realistic support and advice for the athlete. We can provide something of a safety net but we also positively look for opportunities, for pathways for progress and for minimising risk. A professional relationship with an empathy for an individual player's character, goals, experience and social circumstances is crucial.

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