



Bad Boys of League

Revelations about Trent Barrett's recent indiscretions at a Wollongong hotel have prompted *Te Waha Nui* to take a look at some of the game's less celebrated moments and assemble a team of Rugby League's most infamous party monsters.

Rugby League has a long history of pushing the envelope in the social sphere, each year throwing up a new list of offenders.

With this in mind we've scoured the archives to come up with a 13-man team to represent League's dark side.

Julian O'Neill, the 32-year-old former Brisbane, South Sydney and North Queensland utility, has a long history of misdemeanours, and is the logical choice as captain. The first came in 1992 when he was disciplined following a DUI charge during the Broncos visit to Britain for the World Club Challenge.

In 1995 O'Neill struck again, when he and a teammate were ejected from Jupiter's Casino on the Gold Coast after being caught on tape urinating under a blackjack table.

He clearly didn't learn his lesson, as another indiscretion took place at the Treasury Casino in Brisbane – which O'Neill had been banned from after the incident at Jupiter's – when O'Neill was seen to urinate under a blackjack table, abuse a croupier and cheat.

In 1999, after years of personal and professional turmoil and another DUI charge, O'Neill trashed a motel room in Dubbo, smearing the walls with excrement, placing it in a team-mate's shoe and throwing it on to the hotel roof.

These incidents confirmed O'Neill as favourite for the Hall of Shame captaincy.

We move on to the centre-wing combination of Anthony Minichiello and Mark Gasnier.

It was May 2004 when Mark Gasnier used Anthony Minichiello's phone to leave an obscene message on a stranger's voicemail.

Gasnier left the message for a 27-year-old female "marketing consultant" during the New South Wales team's preparations for the 2004 State of Origin series.

The fallout saw Gasnier sacked from the team and

Minichiello disciplined.

Kiwis Clinton Toopi and Nigel Vagana make up the other centre-wing combination.

Toopi's 2002 end-of-season British tour was curtailed by a broken hand, reportedly sustained in the second test against Great Britain. Later reports revealed the injury came about in a late-night punch-up with team-mate Nigel Vagana.

Vagana was reported to have inspired the fight by saying the only reason the Warriors made the grand final was because the Bulldogs weren't there.

The Bulldogs were leading the competition in 2002 before being stripped of competition points for breaching the NRL's salary cap.

At stand-off is Trent Barrett who gets the nod over Brad Fittler, due to "Freddie's" ability to play lock forward.

The St George skipper was fined over an incident at a hotel in Wollongong just last week.

Barrett was fined \$2000 by his club for stripping down to his underwear and performing press-ups on the hotel bar.

At half is the less well known Newtown Jets five-eight Paul Hayward. In 1978 he was arrested in Bangkok and charged with smuggling 8.4 kg of heroin into the country.

Hayward was convicted and sentenced to 33 years in jail. He was pardoned by the King of Thailand in 1989, but died in 1992 from AIDS contracted in the infamous Bang Kwang "Bangkok Hilton" prison.

Brad Fittler locks down the scrum for sheer guts. The man known as "Freddie" was described by a police source as "the drunkest human being ever", after a big night out in 1999.

The former Penrith, Easts, NSW and Australian legend was discovered heavily intoxicated and asleep outside the Glebe police station in Sydney. After spending the night on a

boat with a number of women on a hen's night, "Blind" Freddie found himself – or someone found him – lying on the nature strip outside the police station.

Police said he was unable to communicate and they allowed him to remain on the premises for three hours until he was sober enough to supply his home address and be taken home by taxi. Just 24 hours later, Fittler was named Australian captain for a European tour.

Many Australians feel Johnny Raper was the best loose-forward who ever pulled on a green and gold jersey. The St George and Newtown legend was remembered for his bone-crushing defence. However, we've included him for another reason.

The 33-test veteran – a record for an Australian forward – was reported to have wandered into a hotel lobby naked, save for a bowler hat, on the 1967-68 Kangaroo tour to Britain which is not completely shocking, but the most notable event of the pre-modern era.

Honourable mention has to go to John Hopoate, who I think is best suited in the second row for the Hall of Shame.

In 2001 "date fingers" Hopoate was suspended for 12 weeks after being found guilty of putting his fingers up the backsides of three North Queensland players during an NRL game.

The Wests Tigers and Manly hit-man followed up this year with an elbow king hit on Cronulla player Keith Galloway, which left Galloway unconscious and Hopoate sacked.

Manly second-rower Les Boyd's frequent clashes with authority – and long suspensions which resulted – did aid his selection to the Hall of Shame 13.

Out of 160 first grade games, Boyd was suspended for 55. His moment of glory came in the aftermath of the

1983 State of Origin when a glorious elbow tackle broke the jaw of Queensland prop Darryl Brohman.

At hooker is Penrith Panthers captain Craig Gower who, in the same year as O'Neill's Dubbo incident, continued the fine tradition of drunken, indecent behaviour, when he exposed himself to a female Irish tourist at the Coogee Bay Hotel. Gower was reported to have waved his penis round in a circular motion, imitating a propeller.

The last spot goes to former Bronco and now Roosters utility Chris Walker who got into trouble after breaking curfew at a Queensland State of Origin camp in April 2004.

Capsicum spray was needed by police to rein in an intoxicated Walker during the early hours in downtown Brisbane. He was charged with assaulting police, obstructing police and being a public nuisance.

Walker put his hand up, apologised and vowed to stay off the drink for the rest of the season and the charges were dropped, as was Walker from the Queensland team.

There's no doubting the team would also be competitive in the league arena, with some of the game's greats in Fittler and Raper. But you'd want to steer well clear of the after-match function.

— Todd Hewitt

BAD BOY XIII

- 1 Julian O'Neill (c)
- 2 Anthony Minichiello
- 3 Mark Gasnier
- 4 Nigel Vagana
- 5 Clinton Toopi
- 6 Trent Barrett
- 7 Paul Hayward
- 8 Chris Walker
- 9 Craig Gower
- 10 Johnny Raper
- 11 John Hopoate
- 12 Les Boyd
- 13 Brad Fittler