

## **COLUMN FROM MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT**

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Magnificent! Brilliant! Fantastic! Glorious! Stunning! Heroic!

There are simply not enough words in the English language to describe the historic victory by the Southland Stags. In Southland, Gore, Invercargill, all over New Zealand and even in Mongolia, groups of Southlanders are sharing in the euphoria of this great victory. Not since the glory days of netball have so many Southlanders gathered to cheer for and celebrate our sporting heroes.

Of course our thanks must go to those who contributed to the success of the Stags and I would like to congratulate their main sponsor, the Southern Institute of Technology. Their 'Zero Fees' trademark has been emblazoned on the Stags' maroon jersey for the last six years and they will be the main sponsors for the 2010 season as well. No other educational institution in New Zealand has been the major sponsor of any other provincial rugby team, and during the more difficult seasons they were mocked for their investment. Now it has become the marketing coup of the century. Three cheers for the Stags and Zero Fees!

I would also like to thank the Cantabrians for their generous spirit in defeat. They're often accused of being 'one eyed' but on this occasion they showed real character and sportsmanship.

In fact people throughout New Zealand seem to be sharing in our joy. The fantastic turnouts at local games and the exciting rugby our players engaged in has somehow given us the moral high ground. Our fellow Kiwis feel we deserved to win.

Regardless of the semis and the final, the Shield will be home for summer giving us all a sense of pride and achievement. And it's not over yet! Go the Stags!