**The date changes every day: By Joe Fraser**

**It wasn’t easy planning for the Kingz match in Wellington, as fan Joe Fraser explains…**

It was whilst I was at the Canberra - Kingz game in January that I was first alerted to the possibility that the Kingz might host a game in Wellington.
Being a resident of Wellington I was pleased when the news came through that it was to become a reality.
Now we all know that the Kingz have not been short of their critics since their inception... some of it justified and some of it not!
I don't intend to re-invent the wheel here except to seize on the common complaint (that regularly comes up on the NZ Goalnet mailing list) that at times the Kingz let themselves down with their marketing of games, this being a key factor in contributing to the low attendance's at NHS.
Wellington was now being presented with an ideal opportunity to show those stay-at-home Aucklanders how to give NZ's first professional football team the attendance it really deserved.
Unfortunately as I write this (Wednesday before the game) confusion still appears to reign over the day on which the Kingz are meant to play here.
It's left a sour taste in my mouth. You try and encourage your workmates (in a rugby-dominated city) to come to the game, but the date changes every day. Your sport becomes a joke outside.
But I'm running ahead of myself. On Tuesday Feb 1, in the Evening Post, came confirmation in its "Briefly" sports column that the Kingz would be playing in Wellington on Sunday February 20, kick-off 3pm.
Later in the week an ad in the Dominion confirmed this date. On the Soccer Observer web site on Feb 6, I found a posting slating: *"Sunday 20 February WestpacTrust Stadium, Wellington Kick Off 3.00 pm. A Great Weekend of Soccer! See Wynton Rufer and the Kingz take on the Aussies in his hometown, as they face the best of the Australian National Soccer League. KIDS! Two hour Coaching Workshop with Wynton Rufer on Saturday 19th 3.30; 5.30 pm at the Stadium".*
Imagine my surprise when I saw the Evening Post on 10 Feb, in the same column, same page, a notice stating that the game had been transferred from Sunday to Saturday, Feb19 at 3.00pm, so that Wynton Rufer could play in front of his home town crowd.
A mate confirmed this change to Saturday through the ETM (the ticketing agents) website (www.etm.co.nz).
Why the change at this late notice I asked myself? Why had it suddenly come up NOW that Rufer couldn't play on the Sunday (another victory for forward planning?)
What about those fans who'd already bought a Sunday ticket and now won't be able to go on the Saturday? A lot of questions... no answers... But wait, there's more!
In the Evening Post on Friday February 11: *"Soccer's Football Kingz play the Newcastle Breakers at Wellington's WestpacTrust Stadium on SUNDAY week, starting at 3pm. A report in yesterday's first edition quoted organisers as saying the game had been brought forward to the Saturday, but they have since reverted to the original schedule."*"What the hell was going on," I asked myself? Original schedule? The Kingz fixture list 1999-2000 states it was down for Friday 18 Feb. Sunday, Saturday, Sunday....what next, tomorrow... Friday?
This was really starting to piss me off. I found myself questioning the low crowds at NHS. Was it any wonder, the crowds don't turn up if they're treated this way? Maybe it's not just the fault of the apathetic Auckland supporters after all.
Where are the statements from the Kingz clarifying the correct date and reasons? Seems like they (playing staff excluded!) don't give a toss about their fans! I wondered what Saturday's paper would bring?
Surprise, surprise, the Dominion confirms it as Saturday; the Evening Post has no retraction, so readers of the Post are still led to believe that the game is on Sunday.
Today at work (14/2) a couple of my workmates raise the issue of the game. Karen *(who's Karen? - Ed's wife)* asked me what day it was on.
When I said it was now Saturday, she replied it was too late. She'd made other plans for Saturday... however, if she'd known earlier. Allan asked why have it at 3pm on the Saturday when there's conflict with other sports (club cricket)?
Why not make it 5pm or 7pm, when the cricket, races and other sports are all over for the day? Simple questions, but common sense doesn't seem to prevail here.
I've posted an article on the NZ Goalnet mailing list expressing my hopes that I end up at the stadium on the right day, the Kingz win and that there's a great crowd to watch it all. At this stage I'm not confident.

**Footnote: Joe made it to the game, it was a good crowd. Rufer put it at 8500 and Chris Turner on radio said it was 8000, the Dominion said both 6000 and 7000 (papers do that) and the Kingz lost. Two out of three ain't bad in Wellington.**