

Big
League
CHEERGIRL
of the **YEAR**

SHE'S



After 25 rounds of intense competition, we reveal who you crowned as *Big League's* 2009 Cheergirl of the Year – Warrior Danielle!

By **MONIQUE KAIROUZ**

THE 2009 NRL season has been full of surprises and record-breaking moments, and this year's *Big League* Cheergirl of the Year competition has proven no different.

Warriors' beauty Danielle has taken the glamorous title to New Zealand for the first time in the competition's history.

The Kiwi side has had a disappointing season, failing to qualify for the finals, but thanks to Danielle they have managed to go one-up on their cross-Tasman rivals. The Auckland local has taken the cheerleading crown not only out of Australia but has become the only girl to win outside of NSW and the ACT in 10 years of *Big League* pompom battles!

Danielle received hundreds of votes and enormous support from Warriors fans to win the 2009 title, and was shocked to receive our phone call.

"I didn't realise it had closed! I wasn't sure, especially being so far away, but the Warriors really backed me," she says.

"The Warriors really promoted it at their last home game and the Vodafone One Tribe ran a forum as well. It was really neat!"

Courtesy of *Big League* and GoDo.com.au, Danielle has scored herself a \$2,000 leisure adventure voucher. The thrill-seeking Danielle hopes to use the voucher to do "crazy things like jumping out of a plane", she says.

"I've got a list of things I can do before I die and I can actually do a lot of those things with this voucher, so that's really neat."

Photogenic Danielle first gave Warriors fans something to cheer about when she defeated Manly cheergirl Laura in the club v club round.

"I thought I was a goner in the last round – the girl from the Manly Sea Eagles was gorgeous," she admits.

Last week Danielle triumphed over seven other girls to take out

the title, declaring national and family pride as her inspiration.

"It's awesome to be a New Zealander and do it... I've got family over in Noosa in Australia," she says.

"They're always calling me up when New Zealand lose in things so it will be good to ring them and go, 'yeah, shame!'"

Danielle concedes to being surprised with her newly acclaimed celebrity status, but reckons she could get used to it.

"The radio station the other morning was going on about the surprise famous New Zealand guest and I was going, 'maybe not yet!'" Danielle says.

When asked about working for the Warriors, the grateful 22-year-old says she owes her victory to the club.

"I love it, and the fans here are amazing, they really love us as well and I really enjoy it," she says.

"It's my third year with the Warriors and it's fantastic. It's really social, the girls are amazing. I can't get words together!"

"I think the other Warriors cheerleaders will be stoked and also the Vodafone One Tribe guys because they've always been going 'you're going to win it, you're going to win it!'"

Interestingly, Danielle first began cheerleading when she auditioned for the New Zealand television show *The Cheerleaders* in 2006. The Warriors issued a talent search upon deciding to bring back their cheerleaders and Danielle describes the show as the beginning of the journey.

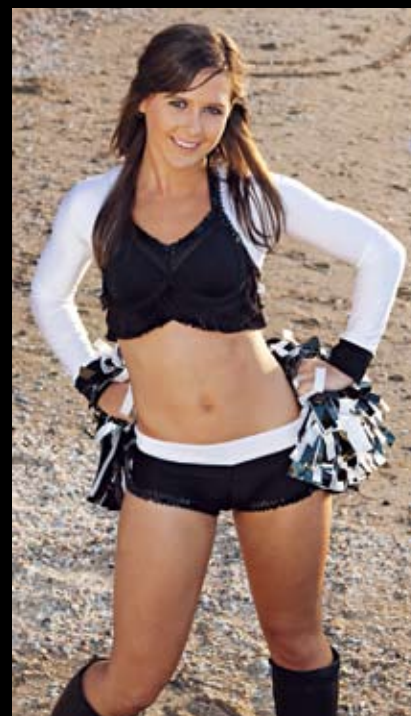
"It was an interesting experience... they sent us over to one of the islands to do a boot camp and followed us from auditions right through to our first game," she says.

"It was really cool and everyone got to know us really well."

Danielle has a bright future ahead of her away from the Mt Smart sidelines, completing a Bachelor of Dance and nearing the end of her Graduate Diploma in Primary Teaching studies.

"I finish in November and hopefully I'll be teaching next year," she says.

"I want to perform as long as I can but you can't perform your whole life I guess so it's good to have something to fall back on. I love teaching as well so I'd be happy doing either." **BL**



PHOTOS (opposite page): Holley Mangament NZ. PHOTOS (this page): Photo Sports/Simon Watts.

THE ONE!