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Briefly Australia top, Fiji fifth LEAGUE: Australia have consolidated their position at the top of the international rankings after their World Cup victory at Old Trafford on Sunday. New Zealand, runners-up to the Kangaroos, remain second, while England and France are still third and fourth respectively. Fiji are the most notable movers, climbing above Wales and Papua New Guinea to fifth after reaching the semifinals for a second successive time. Co-hosts Wales, who failed to win a match, have slipped to sixth.

NZRL not blamed LEAGUE: Sydney Roosters say they have no issue with New Zealand Rugby League despite Roger Tuivasa-Sheck being cleared of a fractured leg which was then broken in the World Cup final. Tuivasa-Sheck was a late inclusion for the Kiwis side that was trounced 34-2 by the Kangaroos in the final in Manchester. He was cleared to play by NZRL but suffered a broken leg in his first hit-up of the game. The superstar winger is facing an extended stint on the sideline and the injury has raised concerns over the value of care he received under the NZRL medical staff.

Blind sailor inspiring SAILING: A blind skipper in this year's Sydney to Hobart doesn't consider his condition a problem, with plenty of eyes to help him. **Kirk Watson**, 40, who suffers from the degenerative disease Retinitis Pigmentosa, will be the leader aboard **Sailors with Disabilities** in this month's race. "Kirk's leadership is inspirational, this will be an empowering journey for him and the whole crew," said Malcolm Turnbull, Australia's Federal Communications Minister and patron of the group.

Unleash beast, says rival MOTORSPORT: Craig Lowndes will need to unleash his inner mongrel if he wants to beat Holden teammate Jamie Whincup to this year's V8 Supercars title, Ford rival Mark Winterbottom says. Grid favourite Lowndes is just 20 points shy of series leader Whincup as he hunts down his first championship since 1999 at this weekend's season finale at Sydney's Olympic Park. Despite the looming battle, the Red Bull duo insist their friendship is tighter than ever. **Winger joins wounded RUGBY:** Wasps wing Christian Wade has added to England's injury woes after the Premiership club announced the speedster would be out of action for up to six months with a foot injury. England coach Stuart Lancaster had wanted to field rising star Wade, capped once when he made his test debut on tour against Argentina in June, during last month's internationals at Twickenham. But the 22-year-old was ruled out with a variety of injury problems and he will now miss the Six Nations Championship, which starts in February. Wade will undergo surgery to repair "significant ligament damage," Wasps said.

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