



**The court
of Sir Key:**
Kevin Sinfield
rallies the
Leeds troops

the fracture the first week of pre-season in January on a training camp in Cyprus. I always strap my wrist anyway if I am training and playing, but I just strapped it a little bit tighter. When I saw the specialist he gave me a choice...either pot it for six weeks and it will heal more quickly or you can just carry on, you can't do any more damage. By March it didn't give me any more problems up until the England games, so for the majority of the year I was fine. At the back end of the year it flared up again and I needed an operation. It's all good now."

He can talk it down as much as he likes, but it all adds to the image of the modest genius, who reveals more about his character through his actions than his words. His facial expression on and off the pitch is often inscrutable, except for rare moments

when the pressure's on and the team gets a captain's kick-up. Emotionally restrained, he gives the impression of being in control, a cool head in a crisis. And for all these qualities he has been given an honorary knighthood by Leeds fans. They even had a Sir Kevin Sinfield Day to mark his ten years as captain.

"It's really embarrassing, but in the same breath it's really very nice," he says. "It's hard to hear it, but I think the Leeds fans have always been fantastic with me. I have been at the club for a long time and they have always been very loyal towards me. I would like to think I have repaid that with my service and the years I have spent at the club.

"I have given them everything I have got and for them to say nice things about me

has been incredible. I must add it's not just myself who gets that sort of recognition but the likes of Jamie Peacock and Jamie Jones [Buchanan] and Rob Burrow and Danny McGuire are really held very highly by the fans and I think it is really nice that we have been through some special times. "

All of those leadership qualities will be called upon later this year when the 2013 World Cup gets underway. After a year of sport that lived up to every superlative in the dictionary, the pressure is on to deliver a competition that makes rugby league seep into the national consciousness. Forget the old 'one game at a time' cliché - Sinfield knows that the World Cup will be on every professional player's mind from now until it kicks off.

"Players want to focus on the next ▶