

# SUPER RUGBY

Your FREE guide to the 2021 Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa season



[www.sky.co.nz/skysuperrugby](http://www.sky.co.nz/skysuperrugby)

# STRENGTH SPEED ENDURANCE IMMUNITY



The elite athlete exists on a knife edge. Hard training may hone the body and mind, but the threat of injury and sickness is always present. Something trivial like a minor sore throat can really impact performance.

ElitePRO with BLIS K12™ is a scientifically developed oral probiotic that protects the mouth and throat by crowding out the bad, illness causing bacteria - helping maintain peak physical condition, to make the elite athlete into an unstoppable athlete.

AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT [BLIS.CO.NZ](http://BLIS.CO.NZ)



-  Tested for wada banned substances
-  Preferred supplier to the HPSNZ supplement programme
-  Official wellness partner of The Highlanders



**Managing Editor:**  
OLIVER LEE

**Editor:**  
PETER WHITE

**Photography:**  
photosport.nz

**Cover:**  
ONTIME ASSOCIATES

**Pagination:**  
HNZL 2014

**Printing:**  
OVATO AUCKLAND

**Publisher:**  
**OLIVER LEE**  
PUBLICATIONS LTD

Box 331-667, Takapuna,  
Auckland 0740,  
New Zealand

**Phone:** 09 486 6966

**Email:** oliver@oliverlee.co.nz

**Website:** oliverlee.co.nz



ISSN 2463-5499 (Print)  
ISSN 2463-5502 (Online)

WELCOME TO YOUR **FREE GUIDE TO 2021 SKY SUPER RUGBY AOTEAROA AND SKY SUPER RUGBY TRANS-TASMAN COMPETITIONS**

# SUPER RUGBY CONTENTS



**04 SUPER RUGBY 2021 SEASON PREVIEW**  
The new Sky Super Rugby Trans-Tasman competition will add an extra dimension to what is set to be a thrilling season.



**07 BLUES BELIEVE THEY CAN WIN**  
Last year the Blues showed what they are capable of – can they go up a step and win a title in 2021?

**11 CHIEFS HAVE NEW HEAD COACH**  
Māori All Blacks head coach Clayton McMillan steps into the hot seat at the Chiefs to lead a talented squad.

**15 CRUSADERS STILL THE TEAM TO BEAT**  
The Crusaders are rightly the TAB favourites after winning the last three Super Rugby competitions and the 2020 Super Rugby Aotearoa title. Can anyone stop them?

**16 SKY SUPER RUGBY AOTEAROA SCHEDULE**  
There will be 10 rounds of local derbies in the New Zealand competition with the final set down for Saturday 8 May.

**17 SKY SUPER RUGBY TRANS-TASMAN MATCH SCHEDULE**  
After the New Zealand and Australian local competitions the 10 teams will combine in a new competition bound to whet the appetite of fans on both sides of the Tasman.

**21 HIGHLANDERS KEEPING THE FAITH**  
The Southerners beat both the Crusaders and Blues last year. Coach Tony Brown is after more consistency this time round.

**25 NEW-LOOK HURRICANES CONFIDENT**  
There will be several new and exciting players representing the Hurricanes in 2021 plus a solid core of quality players back from last year.

**29 A CLOSE LOOK AT THE BRUMBIES AND REDS**  
The Brumbies beat the Reds in last year's Super Rugby AU final. Both teams have strong squads. Are they the likely finalists again?

**30 THE WARATAHS, REBELS AND FORCE ARE READY**  
There are plenty of quality Wallabies stacked in these teams plus some exciting new talent ready to unleash in the Australian and Trans-Tasman competitions.



**NOTE:** The TAB odds quoted throughout the magazine were correct on 9 February 2021. For the latest updated odds visit [tab.co.nz](http://tab.co.nz)

**COPYRIGHT:** Reproduction in whole or in part by any means is prohibited. **DISCLAIMER:** The opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher. Although all material is checked for accuracy, no liability is assumed by the publisher for any loss due to use of material in this magazine.



**INDEPENDENT  
TRAFFIC  
CONTROL**

[ittraffic.co.nz](http://ittraffic.co.nz)

NZ'S TRUSTED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PARTNER

0508 ittraffic | [info@ittraffic.co.nz](mailto:info@ittraffic.co.nz)



**CHAMPIONS:** The Crusaders celebrate with a haka after clinching the 2020 Aotearoa Super Rugby title.



## SUPER RUGBY AOTEAROA 2021: A BRAVE NEW RUGBY WORLD

*By Peter White:* The 2021 Super Rugby season will pack a double dose of excitement for rugby fans with the second instalment of **Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa** followed by the new **Sky Super Rugby Trans-Tasman** competition in May.

There are always multiple reasons to be thankful we live in New Zealand rather than so many other places on the planet.

But the deadly impact of the COVID-19 virus has given us even more reason to thank our lucky stars we call Aotearoa home.

When last year's Super Rugby competition was called off after the seventh round on March 14-15, it seemed rugby fans would miss out on their annual showcase that features the best Southern Hemisphere talent.

But then a master stroke was struck. Super Rugby Aotearoa was launched featuring the five New Zealand franchises.

Every match was played with the intensity of a final. The players could see the opportunity for weekly unofficial All Blacks trials and the chance to get one over their rivals.

The big hits, brilliant tries and non-stop action went down a treat with the rugby-starved Kiwi fans.

The games were mostly high scoring affairs with plenty of upsets to keep everyone honest.

There is no such thing as an easy local derby among the New Zealand teams.

Once again it was the Crusaders who triumphed, lifting the Tū Kōtahi Aotearoa trophy in front of their adoring home fans, before their final match against the Blues at Eden Park was called off due to a new COVID-19 outbreak in Auckland.

The win follows three successive Super Rugby titles from 2017-2019 making the red and blacks the obvious team to beat in 2021.

Two new rule variations will be used in Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa 2021 after the successful introduction of golden point and red card replacement laws last year.

A goal line drop-out and captain's referral are sure to add to the drama unfolding on the pitch.

A goal line drop-out will happen when an attacking player carrying the ball is held up in the in-goal or knocks the ball on in the in-goal area, or when an attacking kick other than a penalty or drop goal attempt is grounded by

the defending team in the in-goal area.

Each captain will get one referral per match to ask the referee to have the TMO check for an infringement in the lead up to a try or to review foul play.

If the captain is correct he retains the referral but if the referee's original decision stands, or the TMO footage is not clear and obvious, the captain loses the referral.

The opportunities increase after 75 minutes if a captain has not lost his referral, as he can at that point in a game check any referee's decision, regardless of whether a try has been scored.

Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa will take place over 10 weeks of intense, physical derby matches and will culminate in a Final on Saturday May 8.

The competition kicks off at Forsyth Barr Stadium in Dunedin on February 26 with the Highlanders hosting the Crusaders and the Hurricanes and Blues completing round one at Sky Stadium in Wellington

the following day. The Chiefs have the opening round bye.

The move to bring back afternoon footy was hugely popular in last year's Super Rugby Aotearoa.

There will be four family-friendly Sunday afternoon kick-offs this time round with two at Eden Park in Auckland and one each at Wellington's Sky Stadium and at Orangetheory Stadium in Christchurch.

The five Kiwi sides will join up with the Reds, Waratahs, Brumbies, Rebels and Force teams playing 25 matches over five weeks before a final on Saturday June 19.

All teams will play two home and two away matches plus take part in the Super Round featuring all matches played at one location over the weekend of May 28-29.

A final between the top two teams on the combined points ladder will be hosted by the top qualifiers.

All 26 matches will be live and exclusive on Sky TV.

# THE GOOAT

ALL NEW

The Greatest **OUTBACK** Of All Time



From its great lakes and great walks, to its great mountains and great beaches, New Zealand truly is a land of greatness. And now none of it is out of reach with the arrival of the Greatest Outback of All Time.

Unlike some goats, the revolutionary 2021 Subaru Outback features EyeSight® clever crash avoidance technology, increased 2,000kg braked towing capacity, and a tablet-like 11.6" touch screen infotainment system, so you can explore all the above, and beyond, with a great drive.

While those other goats might scale steep mountains in search of food, this one does so in search of ski slopes. Or to avoid traffic. Discover what else makes this the Greatest Outback of All Time and head to your locally-owned Subaru Centre to book your test drive today.



**SUBARU**

\*The 2021 Subaru Outback Recommended Retail Price (RRP) is from \$49,990 including GST and excludes on-road costs and accessories. Valid until 30th June 2021.



**LARGE LAWN,  
GAMES ROOM,  
NATIONAL  
STADIUM**

*Gotta love this place*

**BARFOOT  
THOMPSON &**  
LICENSED REAA 2008

# DRUMS ARE BEATING FOR BLUES SUCCESS by Peter White

The Blues captured the imagination of the Kiwi rugby public with a return to winning ways during last year's Super Rugby Aotearoa competition. Can they go all the way in 2021?

## LAST YEAR:

### SUPER RUGBY AOTEAROA: SECOND

It has been a long time between drinks for the Blues faithful supporters but last year the team finally showed what it is capable of in Super Rugby Aotearoa.

Five wins from seven matches meant a second place finish behind the Crusaders with the last round match between the two great rivals cancelled due to COVID-19 issues in Auckland.

Captain Patrick Tuipulotu was superb with a follow-me attitude that swept through the team. Aided by the addition of Beauden Barrett at fullback, the backs had plenty of quick ball to play with which they happily made use of to score some of the best tries of the competition.

It was heartening to see the crowds return to Eden Park again particularly for the Sunday afternoon kick-off times.

**LUCK OF THE DRAW:** A trip to Sky Stadium in Wellington to take on the new-look Hurricanes

**POWERFUL:** Hoskins Sotutu was a standout player for the Blues last year.



awaits the Blues in round one of Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa. An early bye in round two is followed by two Sunday afternoon games at Eden Park against the Highlanders in round three and Crusaders in round four.

The afternoon kick-offs were a huge success last year so expect bumper crowds for those two matches.

Matches against the Chiefs away, Hurricanes at home, Highlanders and Crusaders away before a home clash with the Chiefs lead up to the final.

In the Sky Super Rugby Trans-Tasman competition, the Blues begin in Melbourne on May 15 against the Rebels before another early kick-off at Eden Park against the Waratahs.

Following round three against the Brumbies, the Blues take on the Reds at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane before finishing pool play at Eden Park against the Force.

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** Head coach Leon MacDonald made best use of his own talents during a fine playing career that included 56 tests, most notably displaying courage, attention to detail and the ability to play multiple backline positions.

Now that attitude and the intrinsic confidence to win matches from his career with Canterbury and the Crusaders is rubbing off on his players.

The Blues turned a corner in 2020 with renewed confidence, the ability to win tight games and consistent performances that had eluded them for so long.

The Blues look the best chance to stop the defending champion Crusaders from racking up yet another piece of silverware in 2021. They have depth right across every position and will probably field the best bench in the competition.

The squad includes 10 current and two former All Blacks plus two Manu Samoan reps in Ray Niuia and James Lay. The 2020 All Blacks contingent of Alex Hodgman, Akira Ioane, Caleb Clarke, Hoskins Sotutu, Karl Tu'inukuafu, Ofa Tuungafasi, captain Patrick Tuipulotu, Dalton Papalii, Rieko Ioane, and newly signed Nepo Laulala will give the Blues all the impetus they need.

The front row stocks are the strongest in New Zealand with new signing Laulala joining three other current All Blacks in Tuungafasi, Tu'inukuafu and Hodgman. The loose forward stocks are also impressive with All Blacks Akira Ioane, Papalii, Sotutu and Dillon Hunt along with big-hearted competitors in Tom Robinson and Blake Gibson.

Akira Ioane is one player most eyes will be on. After lacking consistency in his game for 80 minutes and struggling to make the team at the start of last year's campaign, he finally showed what he can do for both the Blues and later on the All Blacks.

## BLUES

**Coach:** Leon MacDonald

**Captain:** Patrick Tuipulotu

### Home grounds:

Eden Park, Auckland;  
QBE Stadium, Albany

**Website:** [www.theblues.rugby](http://www.theblues.rugby)

**Tickets:** [www.ticketmaster.co.nz](http://www.ticketmaster.co.nz)

**Contact:** PO Box 77012,  
Mt Albert, Auckland 1350.  
Phone 09 846 5425

**Email:** [info@blues.rugby](mailto:info@blues.rugby)

**Blues TAB odds:** \$5.50



### CAPTAIN:

Blues leader Patrick Tuipulotu wins clean ball.

Now he needs to make that intensity level of performance his benchmark.

There is no doubt he has the ability and the fire in his belly to do that. If he does step up another notch the Blues will be the beneficiaries.

The new breed of talent at the club is highlighted by the signing of prodigious teenage talent in the form of All Blacks Sevens player Jacob Ratumaitavuki-Kneepkens from Taranaki, Sam Darry from Canterbury, Taine Plumtree from Wellington plus the Auckland quartet of Soane Vika, AJ Lam, Zarn Sullivan and James Lay.

Lam is the nephew of former Blues coach Pat Lam and is the brother of Ben Lam.

Sullivan, 20, looked a fine prospect at fullback for Auckland during last year's Mitre 10 Cup but with a background at first-five during his tenure at King's College he may put pressure on Otere Black, Stephen Perofeta and Harry Plummer to wear the coveted 10 jersey.

Every season the make-up of the halfbacks and first-fives in the Blues squad comes under the microscope.

This is not surprising as players in these vital roles move the team around the park and make instant tactical decisions.

This year the stocks look stronger at halfback. Combative Finlay Christie played for the Chiefs and Hurricanes before moving to the Blues in 2020.

He has the inside running to secure the No 9 jersey and all the skills needed to be a genuine game breaker.

He will be pushed for the starting position by Sam Nock and Jonathan Ruru who have different attributes they bring to the mix. Both players are strong ball runners who can make a major impact off the bench.

The Blues have not won any Super Rugby silverware since the 2003 season.

If this is to be the year they finally get across the line and stop the Crusaders juggernaut rolling along to another title then they must do the basics well – kick a higher percentage of goals, concentrate for the full 80 minutes, stick to the team pattern, maximise try scoring opportunities and defend as if their lives depend on it.

That is the what the Crusaders have built their success on.

If the Blues can manage that then perhaps 2021 will finally be their year to celebrate.

#### WHO'S NEW:

**Forwards:** Soane Vika, Sam Darry, Nepo Laulala, James Lay, Dillon Hunt, Taine Plumtree. **Backs:** Jacob Ratumaitavuki-Kneepkens, AJ Lam, Zarn Sullivan.

#### WHO'S THROUGH:

**Forwards:** Sione Mafileo, Ezekiel Lindenmuth, Aaron Carroll, Tony Lamborn, James Parsons. **Backs:** Beauden Barrett, Joe Marchant, Matt Duffie, Jordan Hyland.

## BLUES SQUAD

### FORWARDS:

Ray Niuia, Kurt Ecklund, Soane Vika, Alex Hodgman, Nepo Laulala, James Lay, Marcel Renata, Karl Tu'inukuafe, Ofa Tuungafasi, Gerard Cowley-Tuioti, Sam Darry, Josh Goodhue, Jacob Pierce, Patrick Tuipulotu, Blake Gibson, Dillon Hunt, Akira Ioane, Dalton Papalii, Taine Plumtree, Tom Robinson, Hoskins Sotutu.

### BACKS:

Finlay Christie, Sam Nock, Jonathan Ruru, Otere Black, Stephen Perofeta, Harry Plummer, TJ Faiane, Rieko Ioane, Tanielu Tele'a, Caleb Clarke, AJ Lam, Jone Macilai-Tori, Emoni Narawa, Jacob Ratumaitavuki-Kneepkens, Zarn Sullivan, Mark Telea.



**LINE BREAKER:** Rieko Ioane makes another break for the Blues.



# NO MOUTHGUARD NO PLAY

nib has teamed up with OPRO to protect our 'Little Legends' little smiles.

**RECEIVE A 25% DISCOUNT ON  
YOUR MOUTHGUARD.\***



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO  
ACCESS YOUR DISCOUNT.**

\*Offer valid until 30 April 2021. Terms and Conditions apply.



**#1**  
LIGHT COMMERCIAL  
HEAVYWEIGHTS

# NZ'S FAVOURITE WORKMATE



**NOT YOUR  
NINE TO FIVER.**



Go Further

[ford.co.nz](http://ford.co.nz)



# BACK TO WINNING WAYS NEEDED

After the disappointment of last season, the Chiefs have a new look squad and a new head coach to spark renewed optimism through the group.

## LAST YEAR:

### SUPER RUGBY AOTEAROA: FIFTH

It started so well in 2020 before the wheels fell off the Chiefs chariot.

Former Wales and British and Irish Lions coach Warren Gatland took over as head coach and there was a settled look to the squad. The Super Rugby championship began well before COVID-19 hit.

But that was the end of the good news.

The Chiefs looked on course for an opening win in the Super Rugby Aotearoa competition over the Highlanders only to blow a lead, which became a recurring theme during the campaign.

The resurgent Blues outplayed the Chiefs in Hamilton before the Crusaders kept their nerve to win an epic clash between the sides in Christchurch.

None from three became four losses on the bounce as the Hurricanes took the points home from FMG Stadium Waikato, before the low point of the season as the Chiefs somehow managed to lose at home to the Highlanders after jumping out to a comprehensive 24-0 lead after 21 minutes.

Another close loss to the Blues and defeat in Christchurch to the Crusaders followed before the Chiefs final match where they were put to the sword by a Hurricanes team brimming with confidence.

**LUCK OF THE DRAW:** The Chiefs start their Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa campaign with a bye before kicking-off at home in round two against the Highlanders. After losing both games last year to the southern men, the Chiefs will not want to make it a forgettable hat trick.

Away to the Crusaders in round three will test the resilience of new head coach Clayton McMillan's team, before the Chiefs take on the Hurricanes at Sky Stadium and the Blues back home at FMG Stadium Waikato.

The Highlanders away, Crusaders home, Hurricanes home and Blues away complete the round robin games.

A trip to Perth to face the Force begins the Sky Super Rugby Trans-Tasman competition for the Chiefs before they host the Brumbies at home and take on the Reds in the Super Round.

The Chiefs finish round robin play with the Rebels at FMG Stadium Waikato and Waratahs away.

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** The Chiefs have put the disastrous 2020 Super Rugby Aotearoa campaign behind them with the focus on bleeding 11 new players and a new coach into the club culture.

Bay of Plenty and Māori All Blacks head coach Clayton McMillan steps into the breach left by Warren Gatland, who is taking a year's leave of absence to coach the British and Irish Lions in South Africa.

McMillan will then move into an assistant coach role once Gatland returns.

"I'm really pleased with the squad we have assembled. It has a good balance of youth and experience, hard workers and X-factor players, and will be ably directed by some outstanding leaders," says McMillan.

"A good percentage of the squad will be entering their second and third campaigns. Their previous experience at this level and the lessons learned will equip them well for the challenges ahead. There will be no lack of motivation to succeed."

Last year's defensive frailties and inability to finish games off after leading will be key points to put right for the Chiefs in 2021.

The squad has been strengthened in some key areas, notably first-five, tighthead prop, hooker, lock and outside backs.

Former Blues prop Sione Mafleo is a welcome addition to the front row stocks, as is former All Blacks hooker

## CHIEFS

**Coach:** Clayton McMillan

**Captain:** Sam Cane

**Home ground:** FMG Stadium Waikato, Hamilton

**Website:** [www.chiefs.co.nz](http://www.chiefs.co.nz)

**Tickets:** [www.chiefs.co.nz/game-tickets](http://www.chiefs.co.nz/game-tickets)

**Contact:** PO Box 4292, Hamilton East 3247. Phone 0800 424 4337

**Email:** [info@chiefs.co.nz](mailto:info@chiefs.co.nz)

**Chiefs TAB odds:** \$8.00

## FOLLOW ME:

Sam Cane will again co-captain the Chiefs in 2021.



## CLASS ACT:

Anton Lienert-Brown is the heart of the Chiefs backline.



**QUALITY:** Halfback Brad Weber sparks another attack.

Nathan Harris, back from a long term injury to add expertise at lineout time and experience.

Wesley College product Tupou Vaa'i was an injury replacement last year but his sensational form saw him elevated to the All Blacks at the end of the year. He will be the senior lock aged just 20 and likely to form a towering partnership with 19-year-old rookie Taranaki lock Josh Lord who stands 2.02m tall.

The mercurial skills of Chase Tiatia will be welcomed with the former Hurricanes utility player joining up with his provincial coach McMillan. He will add depth to fullback and wing alongside some magnificent attacking weapons in Shaun Stevenson, Damian McKenzie, Etene Nanai-Seturo, Sean Wainui and new signing Jonah Lowe.

This could be a watershed season for the little maestro McKenzie who has taken time to retain his old sparkling, broken-play running after coming back from a severe knee injury in the 2019 campaign.

Now back to full fitness he is the man to reignite the Chiefs in 2021.

Another new signing is Taranaki loose forward Kaylum Boshier, who made his mark as captain of the NZ Under-19 cricket side. He is the younger brother of outstanding Chiefs openside flanker Lachlan Boshier.

The impressive Kaleb Trask shared game time with Aaron Cruden last year at first-five but then showed

his versatility and counter-attacking ability at fullback for Bay of Plenty in the Mitre 10 Cup.

Trask will be in a contest with Bryn Gatland for the No 10 jersey. Gatland's signing may be one of the most important in turning around the Chiefs fortunes in 2021.

The former Hamilton Boys' High School player returns home from the Highlanders after an impressive Mitre 10 Cup campaign with North Harbour, finishing as the competition's leading points scorer with 119 points.

All Blacks midfielder Anton Lienert-Brown will be the backline general with an important role to play guiding the relatively inexperienced first-fives in the squad.

Chiefs and All Blacks captain Sam Cane is to be eased in to the season by McMillan but expect his influence on the side to be profound.

**WHO'S NEW:** **Forwards:** Sione Mafleo, Josh Lord, Kaylum Boshier, Simon Parker. **Backs:** Xavier Roe, Bryn Gatland, Rivez Reihana, Rameka Poihipi, Jonah Lowe, Chase Tiatia.

**WHO'S THROUGH:** **Forwards:** Ryan Coxon, Ross Geldenhuys, Nepo Laulala, Donald Maka, Michael Allardice, Tyler Ardron, Dylan Nel, Adam Thompson. **Backs:** Lisati Milo-Harris, Aaron Cruden, Tiaan Falcon, Solomon Alaimalo, Sam McNichol.

## CHIEFS SQUAD

### FORWARDS:

Nathan Harris, Bradley Slater, Samisoni Taukei'aho, Sione Mafleo, Atunaisa Moli, Ollie Norris, Reuben O'Neill, Aidan Ross, Angus Ta'avao, Naitoa Ah Kuoi, Josh Lord, Laghan McWhannell, Tupou Vaa'i, Kaylum Boshier, Lachlan Boshier, Mitchell Brown, Sam Cane, Pita Gus Sowakula, Luke Jacobson, Mitchell Karpik, Simon Parker.

### BACKS:

Xavier Roe, Te Toiroa Tahuriorangi, Brad Weber, Bryn Gatland, Rivez Reihana, Kaleb Trask, Rameka Poihipi, Anton Lienert-Brown, Alex Nankivell, Bailyn Sullivan, Quinn Tupaea, Jonah Lowe, Damian McKenzie, Etene Nanai-Seturo, Shaun Stevenson, Chase Tiatia, Sean Wainui.

# MAKE PICKS. WIN PRIZES!



WINNING TEAM				WINNING TEAM
MARGIN				
	TOTAL TRIES			



WINNING TEAM				WINNING TEAM
MARGIN				
	TOTAL TRIES			



# Sky Super Rugby Tipping is here.

Invite your friends and claim bragging rights  
Spot prizes up for grabs every week + major prizes  
Free to participate and open to everyone



**REGISTER NOW**  
[www.sky.co.nz/skysuperrugby](http://www.sky.co.nz/skysuperrugby)

# UNBEATABLE TEAM UNBREAKABLE BOND



**THE POWERFUL  
NEW 2021  
HILUX**

The powerful new 2021 Hilux. It's time to begin a bond that's as powerful as the ute itself. Beefed up 2.8 litre turbo diesel engine, offering 15% more power than previous models. Plus, a 3500kg max braked tow rating on all diesel models. It's a gutsy specimen alright. Best get amongst.

Accessorised models shown.

**Begin your bond at [toyota.co.nz/hilux](https://toyota.co.nz/hilux)**



# AN ONGOING SUCCESS STORY

The Crusaders have won the last three Super Rugby tournaments and last year added the inaugural Super Rugby Aotearoa title to that impressive record. Can anyone stop them in 2021?

**LAST YEAR:**

**SUPER RUGBY AOTEAROA: FIRST**

The championship title was achieved with one round to play that was cancelled due to COVID-19. Once again the Crusaders were too clinical and utilised the depth in their squad for maximum effect.

But they did not have an easy ride to the title. Most games were close contests and the Hurricanes managed to tip up the Crusaders on their home patch at Orangetheory Stadium, Christchurch.

In the final analysis, just one loss in arguably the most competitive competition anywhere in the rugby world meant the Crusaders deserved to win the inaugural Super Rugby Aotearoa title.

**LUCK OF THE DRAW:** A trip to Dunedin to play the Highlanders will kick-start their 2021 Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa campaign followed by a home fixture against the Hurricanes.

Crusaders head coach Scott Robertson and players will not have forgotten how the Hurricanes won this clash last year.

The Crusaders then have the Chiefs at home, Blues away at Eden Park, the Highlanders at home, Hurricanes and Chiefs both away, before the Blues in Christchurch ahead of the final.

Orangetheory Stadium, Christchurch is the setting for the Crusaders opening match against the Brumbies in the Sky Super Rugby Trans-Tasman competition.

The Reds in Brisbane are up next, before the Waratahs in the Super Round, and the Crusaders finish with the Force at home and Rebels away at AAMI Park in Melbourne.

New competition or not, the Crusaders will be heavily backed to make the final.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

## CRUSADERS

**Coach:** Scott Robertson

**Captain:** Scott Barrett

**Home grounds:**  
Orangetheory Stadium, Christchurch;  
Trafalgar Park, Nelson

**Website:** [www.crusaders.co.nz](http://www.crusaders.co.nz)

**Tickets:** [www.ticketrocket.co.nz](http://www.ticketrocket.co.nz)

**Contact:**  
PO Box 755, Christchurch.  
Phone 03 379 8300

**Email:**  
[socialmedia@crusaders.co.nz](mailto:socialmedia@crusaders.co.nz)

**Crusaders TAB odds:** \$1.83

**CONSISTENT:** Crusaders halfback Bryn Hall clears downfield.



**MOTIVATED:**  
Sam Whitelock continues to lead the Crusaders forward pack.



# SKY SUPER RUGBY AOTEAROA 2021



For up-to-date information on Super Rugby Aotearoa fixtures visit [www.superrugby.co.nz](http://www.superrugby.co.nz)

DATE	NZ TIME	GAME	VENUE
------	---------	------	-------

## ROUND 1

FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders v <input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders	Forsyth Barr Stadium, Dunedin
SATURDAY, 27 FEBRUARY	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes v <input type="checkbox"/> Blues	Sky Stadium, Wellington

Round 1 Bye: Chiefs

## ROUND 2

FRIDAY, 5 MARCH	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs v <input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders	FMG Stadium Waikato, Hamilton
SATURDAY, 6 MARCH	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders v <input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes	Orangetheory Stadium, Christchurch

Round 2 Bye: Blues

## ROUND 3

SATURDAY, 13 MARCH	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders v <input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs	Orangetheory Stadium, Christchurch
SUNDAY, 14 MARCH	3:35 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Blues v <input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders	Eden Park, Auckland

Round 3 Bye: Hurricanes

## ROUND 4

SATURDAY, 20 MARCH	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes v <input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs	Sky Stadium, Wellington
SUNDAY, 21 MARCH	3:35 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Blues v <input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders	Eden Park, Auckland

Round 4 Bye: Highlanders

## ROUND 5

FRIDAY, 26 MARCH	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders v <input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes	Forsyth Barr Stadium, Dunedin
SATURDAY, 27 MARCH	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs v <input type="checkbox"/> Blues	FMG Stadium Waikato, Hamilton

Round 5 Bye: Crusaders

## ROUND 6 (EASTER WEEKEND & DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS IN NEW ZEALAND)

FRIDAY, 2 APRIL	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders v <input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders	Orangetheory Stadium, Christchurch
SATURDAY, 3 APRIL	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Blues v <input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes	Eden Park, Auckland

Round 6 Bye: Chiefs

## ROUND 7

SATURDAY, 10 APRIL	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders v <input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs	Forsyth Barr Stadium, Dunedin
SUNDAY, 11 APRIL	3:35 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes v <input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders	Sky Stadium, Wellington

Round 7 Bye: Blues

## ROUND 8

FRIDAY, 16 APRIL	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders v <input type="checkbox"/> Blues	Forsyth Barr Stadium, Dunedin
SATURDAY, 17 APRIL	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs v <input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders	FMG Stadium Waikato, Hamilton

Round 8 Bye: Hurricanes

## ROUND 9 (ANZAC DAY WEEKEND)

FRIDAY, 23 APRIL	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs v <input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes	FMG Stadium Waikato, Hamilton
SUNDAY, 25 APRIL	3:35 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders v <input type="checkbox"/> Blues	Orangetheory Stadium, Christchurch

Round 9 Bye: Highlanders

## ROUND 10

FRIDAY, 30 APRIL	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes v <input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders	Sky Stadium, Wellington
SATURDAY, 1 MAY	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Blues v <input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs	Eden Park, Auckland

Round 10 Bye: Crusaders

## FINAL

SATURDAY, 8 MAY	7:05 pm	1st Ranked Team: <input type="checkbox"/> v 2nd Ranked Team: <input type="checkbox"/>	Venue: TBC
-----------------	---------	---	------------



# SKY SUPER RUGBY TRANS-TASMAN 2021

Note: All times listed are New Zealand local times and were correct at time of print.

\* Draw subject to change and a two-way Trans-Tasman travel bubble.

\*\* Super Round timings and venues to be confirmed.

DATE	NZ TIME	GAME	VENUE
<b>ROUND 1*</b>			
FRIDAY, 14 MAY	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders v <input type="checkbox"/> Reds	Forsyth Barr Stadium, Dunedin
FRIDAY, 14 MAY	9:45 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Waratahs v <input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes	Venue TBC
SATURDAY, 15 MAY	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders v <input type="checkbox"/> Brumbies	Orangetheory Stadium, Christchurch
SATURDAY, 15 MAY	9:45 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Rebels v <input type="checkbox"/> Blues	AAMI Park, Melbourne
SATURDAY, 15 MAY	11:55 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Force v <input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs	HBF Park, Perth
<b>ROUND 2*</b>			
FRIDAY, 21 MAY	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes v <input type="checkbox"/> Rebels	Sky Stadium, Wellington
FRIDAY, 21 MAY	9:45 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Force v <input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders	HBF Park, Perth
SATURDAY, 22 MAY	4:35 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Blues v <input type="checkbox"/> Waratahs	Eden Park, Auckland
SATURDAY, 22 MAY	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs v <input type="checkbox"/> Brumbies	FMG Stadium Waikato, Hamilton
SATURDAY, 22 MAY	9:45 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Reds v <input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders	Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane
<b>ROUND 3 – SUPER ROUND**</b>			
FRIDAY, 28 MAY	TBC	<input type="checkbox"/> Rebels v <input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders	TBC
FRIDAY, 28 MAY	TBC	<input type="checkbox"/> Force v <input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes	TBC
SATURDAY, MAY 29	TBC	<input type="checkbox"/> Waratahs v <input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders	TBC
SATURDAY, MAY 29	TBC	<input type="checkbox"/> Brumbies v <input type="checkbox"/> Blues	TBC
SATURDAY, MAY 29	TBC	<input type="checkbox"/> Reds v <input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs	TBC
<b>ROUND 4*</b>			
FRIDAY, 4 JUNE	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders v <input type="checkbox"/> Force	Orangetheory Stadium, Christchurch
FRIDAY, 4 JUNE	9:45 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Reds v <input type="checkbox"/> Blues	Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane
SATURDAY, 5 JUNE	4:35 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs v <input type="checkbox"/> Rebels	FMG Stadium Waikato, Hamilton
SATURDAY, 5 JUNE	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders v <input type="checkbox"/> Waratahs	Forsyth Barr Stadium, Dunedin
SATURDAY, 5 JUNE	9:45 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Brumbies v <input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes	GIO Stadium, Canberra
<b>ROUND 5*</b>			
FRIDAY, 11 JUNE	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Hurricanes v <input type="checkbox"/> Reds	Sky Stadium, Wellington
FRIDAY, 11 JUNE	9:45 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Brumbies v <input type="checkbox"/> Highlanders	GIO Stadium, Canberra
SATURDAY, 12 JUNE	4:35 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Rebels v <input type="checkbox"/> Crusaders	AAMI Park, Melbourne
SATURDAY, 12 JUNE	7:05 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Blues v <input type="checkbox"/> Force	Eden Park, Auckland
SATURDAY, 12 JUNE	9:45 pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Waratahs v <input type="checkbox"/> Chiefs	Venue TBC
<b>FINAL*</b>			
SATURDAY, 19 JUNE	TBC	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ v <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Venue: TBC



# Smiths

CITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** It is an ominous sign for their opponents that the Crusaders have retained the bulk of their squad that triumphed in last year's Super Rugby Aotearoa competition.

Head coach Scott Robertson selected just four rookies in the 38-man squad with the newcomers all coming through the development pathway at the Crusaders Academy.

Props Fletcher Newell and Tamaiti Williams, midfielder Isaiah Punivai and utility back Chay Fihaki joined the Academy in 2019. They were all part of the successful Canterbury side that won the Jock Hobbs Memorial National Under-19 Tournament in 2019 and made their debuts for Canterbury in last year's Mitre 10 Cup.

"We have built a strong development programme here at the Crusaders and it's always exciting to see players promoted from within our Academy system," says coach Robertson.

"With the core of our playing group returning it was important we also look to the future and this group of players at just 19 and 20 years old have plenty of potential.

"All four of these young men have already been exposed to our environment through the Academy, they understand how we train as Crusaders and what is expected of them on and off the field.



**VERSATILE:** David Havili can play most backline positions.

# DEWALT

## XR FLEX VOLT

### JUST GOT

# BETTER



UP TO **47%**  
MORE  
POWER\*

DCS578



\*Products tested under controlled conditions to measure power. Power increase compares peak power of DCS578 with DCB547 and DCS575 with DCB546. DCS389 with DCB547 and DCS388 with DCB546. DCG418 with DCB547 and DCG414 with DCB546.

"It's this holistic approach to player development that gives us the confidence they're ready to make the step up to Super Rugby."

Scott Barrett will make a welcome return to captain the side after being sidelined for Super Rugby Aotearoa in 2020 with a foot injury. He is part of a strong group of top quality locks in the squad alongside Sam Whitelock, Luke Romano, Quentin Strange and Mitchell Dunshea.

With internationals sprinkled all over the park and across the bench, there is no shortage of talent to focus on.

Halfbacks Bryn Hall and Mitch Drummond will again enthusiastically compete for the starting No 9 jersey with Hall edging the battle of the lightweights in the past.

Outside them Richie Mo'unga is set for another stellar season at first-five with Brett Cameron a more than capable back-up.

Two players worth extra attention in 2021 are Cullen Grace, 21, and Will Jordan, 22, who both made their debuts for the All Blacks last year.

Grace can play multiple positions in the forward pack but it is blindside flanker where he has made his mark.

He never seems to have a bad game, is a hard-hitting defender and excellent lineout option.

The superlatives have rightly been flowing for the gifted attacking runner Jordan since he came to prominence at Christchurch Boys' High. The fullback/winger finished the Super Rugby Aotearoa season with the most tries, defenders beaten and metres gained.

He has blinding speed which he showed to the world when he scored two late tries after coming on as a replacement for the All Blacks against Argentina in just his second test.

With the expectation he will start every match, expect Jordan to grab the headlines many times over the coming months. His combination with centre Jack Goodhue and the other talented outside backs including Sevu Reece and David Havili will be worth paying money to watch.

Former Highlander Josh McKay and 34-year-old former Blues star Rene Ranger have been called into the squad as injury cover for Braydon Ennor and George Bridge, who will miss Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa while recovering from injuries.

#### WHO'S NEW:

**Forwards:** Nathan Vella, Fletcher Newell, Tamaiti Williams. **Backs:** Rene Ranger, Chay Fihaki, Isaiah Punivai, Fetuli Paea, Josh McKay.

#### WHO'S THROUGH:

**Forwards:** Andrew Makalio, Billy Harmon, Ethan Roots. **Backs:** Inga Finau.

## CRUSADERS SQUAD

### FORWARDS:

Joe Moody, Ollie Jager, Isi Tuungafasi, George Bower, Michael Alaalatoa, Tamaiti Williams, Fletcher Newell, Codie Taylor, Brodie McAlister, Nathan Vella, Scott Barrett, Quentin Strange, Mitchell Dunshea, Sam Whitelock, Luke Romano, Cullen Grace, Tom Sanders, Ethan Blackadder, Sione Havili, Whetu Douglas, Tom Christie.

### BACKS:

Mitch Drummond, Ere Enari, Bryn Hall, Richie Mo'unga, Brett Cameron, Jack Goodhue, Fergus Burke, Braydon Ennor, Dallas McLeod, Chay Fihaki, George Bridge, Manasa Mataele, Sevu Reece, David Havili, Will Jordan, Leicester Fainga'anuku, Isaiah Punivai.



# POWER ON THE GROUND

### We are Terra Cat.

A business built on solid ground. A business built on 90 years of experience and real connection to the people we work with.

Powered by people, powered by Cat. Powered by superior systems and the best machinery.

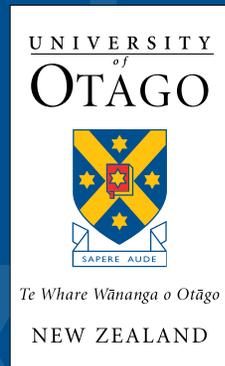
We call it **Power on the Ground.**

Powered by technology to drive tailored business solutions, enabling our customers to be safe, sustainable, productive and profitable.

Whatever the challenge, whatever the size and scale, Terra Cat is ready.

**POWER ON THE GROUND**





# Meet the best mates **you** didn't know you had.

You'll leave Otago with much more than a degree.

---

TO GET THERE, START HERE  
**otago.ac.nz**



# BIG CHALLENGE FOR THE SOUTHERN MEN

The Highlanders have fewer big name players than their higher rated opponents but will be tough to beat under the astute mentoring of head coach Tony Brown.

## LAST YEAR:

### SUPER RUGBY AOTEAROA: FIFTH

The Highlanders avoided the wooden spoon last year and were generally good value to watch. What they lacked in squad depth and X-factor quality, particularly out wide, they made up for with typical Highlanders grit and determination.

The three wins they managed from their eight games were memorable victories. With a little more composure, the 22-32 loss to the champion Crusaders in Christchurch and 24-27 defeat to the Blues at Eden Park could well have been other wins to cherish.

Doing the double over the Chiefs was the undoubted season highlight. The Highlanders won the opening match 28-27 in a thriller under the roof in Dunedin before pulling off an almost impossible challenge to beat them in Hamilton in round six.

Trailing 0-24 after just 21 minutes, the southerners looked set for a hiding but they never gave up, stuck to their patterns and surged home for a comeback win for the ages.

If any game summed up what the famed Highlanders determination and spirit is all about, this was it.

**LUCK OF THE DRAW:** Once again the Highlanders will host the opening round of Super Rugby Aotearoa. This time the defending champions Crusaders are

the opponents and no better time to play them than first up. Expect the unexpected from Tony Brown's men as they look to unsettle the red and blacks early.

Round two is an away trip to Hamilton to look for three straight wins over the Chiefs who will be determined to make sure that does not happen. This could well be the match of the round.

The Blues at Eden Park are followed by Hurricanes at home, Crusaders away, Chiefs and Blues at home and Hurricanes away.

The Sky Super Rugby Trans-Tasman draw has given the Highlanders a home start against the Reds on May 14, followed by the Force in Perth, Rebels in the Super Round, Waratahs in Dunedin and a trip to Canberra to take on the Brumbies to finish the round robin play.

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** The Highlanders go into this unique campaign of two competitions with the same expectations as always. No hype, no frills and no getting ahead of themselves. It is what has always worked well for them.

They are ranked last in the TAB betting for the Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa championship and unlike the other New Zealand teams do not have a wealth of All Blacks across the squad. But most years the Highlanders exceed expectations and in 2021 have assembled a stronger group of players than they had last year.

**INSPIRATIONAL:** The Highlanders again have co-captains in Aaron Smith, left, and Ash Dixon.



## HIGHLANDERS

**Coach:** Tony Brown

**Captains:** Ash Dixon, Aaron Smith

**Home ground:** Forsyth Barr Stadium

**Website:** [www.thehighlanders.co.nz](http://www.thehighlanders.co.nz)

**Tickets:** [www.ticketek.co.nz](http://www.ticketek.co.nz)

**Contact:** PO Box 6070, Dunedin. Phone 03 479 9280

**Email:** [contactus@highlanders.net.nz](mailto:contactus@highlanders.net.nz)

**Highlanders TAB odds:** \$7.00



**TALENTED:** Shannon Frizell will be a key player for the Highlanders in 2021.

The Highlanders are boosted by the return of former All Blacks flanker Liam Squire, who missed last year rehabilitating from injury and playing in Japan. He is a raw-boned, old-fashioned sort of character who loves nothing more than an inside back to run into his defensive channel.

Japan World Cup star Kazuki Himeno can play across all loose forward positions. The talented 26-year-old plays alongside Kieran Read for Toyota Verblitz in Japan's Top League and is highly rated internationally.

Marino Mikaele-Tu'u and All Black Shannon Frizell, former Crusaders openside Billy Harmon and James Lentjes add depth to the loose forward mix. Lentjes returns from injury after missing Super Rugby Aotearoa in 2020.

Leadership will not be lacking on and off the field, Māori All Blacks hooker Ash Dixon and All Blacks halfback Aaron Smith will again co-captain the side. Both players bring immense mana and experience with the world-class Smith capable of winning matches on his own.

The Highlanders front row is strengthened by Wallaby Jermaine Ainsley and Josh Hohnneck, with established locks Josh Dickson, Pari Pari Parkinson, Manaaki Selby-Rickit joined by former All Black Bryn Evans, who has been plying his trade overseas since 2009.

First-five Josh Ioane will be crucial to the fortunes of the Highlanders. Ioane is international class and

in another era may well be the starting 10 for the All Blacks. His all-round game is improving every year and playing outside the world's best halfback is a major bonus for him.

Former Chiefs flyer Solomon Alaimalo has ample speed and try scoring ability. He could be one of the best acquisitions of this new campaign.

Head coach Brown is positive about the season ahead.

"I feel like we are bit more experienced this year with the likes of Bryn Evans, Liam Squire and Josh Hohnneck, who have all played a lot of top-level rugby, and Jimmy Lentjes coming back, and of course with two very experienced captains in Aaron and Ash, we have a better balance to our squad.

"We certainly have a bit more strike power in the backs as well and I'm excited to see how returning players like Sam (Gilbert), CGB (Connor Garden-Bachop) and Thomas (Umaga-Jensen) come back and combine with our new arrivals Fetuli (Paea) and Solomon (Alaimalo)."

**WHO'S NEW:** Forwards: Jermaine Ainsley, Josh Hohnneck, Bryn Evans, Billy Harmon, Kazuki Himeno, Liam Squire. Backs: Fetuli Paea, Vilimoni Koroi, Solomon Alaimalo.

**WHO'S THROUGH:** Forwards: Jack Whetton, Dillon Hunt, Jesse Parete, Zane Kapeli, Josh Iosefa-Scott. Backs: Rob Thompson, Bryn Gatland, Kirisi Kuridrani, Teihorangi Walden, Tevita Nabura, Josh McKay.

## HIGHLANDERS SQUAD

### FORWARDS:

Ayden Johnstone,  
Siate Tokolahi,  
Daniel Lienert-Brown,  
Jeff Thwaites, Ethan de Groot,  
Jermaine Ainsley,  
Josh Hohnneck, Ricky Jackson,  
Ash Dixon, Liam Coltman,  
Pari Pari Parkinson, Josh  
Dickson, Manaaki Selby-Rickit,  
Bryn Evans, Billy Harmon,  
James Lentjes, Shannon Frizell,  
Marino Mikaele Tu'u,  
Sione Misiloi, Teariki  
Ben-Nicholas, Liam Squire,  
Kazuki Himeno.

### BACKS:

Aaron Smith,  
Kayne Hammington,  
Folau Fakatava, Josh Ioane,  
Mitchell Hunt, Fetuli Paea,  
Sio Tomkinson, Thomas  
Umaga-Jensen, Ngane Punivai,  
Nehe Milner Skudder,  
Connor Garden Bachop,  
Scott Gregory, Jona Nareki,  
Solomon Alaimalo,  
Michael Collins, Sam Gilbert,  
Vilimoni Koroi.



**COMMITTED:** Pari Pari Parkinson is part of a strong Highlanders forward pack.

# WAVE INSPIRE 17

THE MOST STABLE AND SMOOTHEST RIDE



@mizunonz

REACH BEYOND

# Proud supporters of your Super Rugby team. And all the others, sorry.

As a 100% New Zealand owned company, we're behind 100% of the Super Rugby Aotearoa teams. Your favourite team, the ones you don't mind, and even that one team you really can't stand. It just felt like the right thing to do.



Proud supporters  
of all five Super  
Rugby teams.



**Smiths**  
CITY



# NEW LOOK HURRICANES SET TO GO

The Hurricanes will need to add some consistency to their performances to go with their proven attacking ability if they are to be contenders in 2021.

## LAST YEAR:

### SUPER RUGBY AOTEAROA: **THIRD**

It was a case of what might have been for the Hurricanes in 2020. They won five of their eight games to finish third, with losses coming in their opening two games against the Blues and Crusaders and their final match against the Highlanders.

In between they played some impressive rugby to win five straight games including thrilling two-point victories over the Blues and Crusaders.

Both victories came back-to-back in weeks six and seven with the 34-32 win over the Crusaders in Christchurch the season highlight.

## CHAMPION: Ardie Savea had a standout campaign in 2020.



New star midfielder Peter Umaga-Jensen scored to open up a 31-20 lead with 18 minutes to go but a typical Crusaders comeback so nearly closed the gap. In the end a missed conversion from out wide by Richie Mo'unga was all that stood between the sides.

It was the first home defeat for the Crusaders since the Hurricanes won in Christchurch in July, 2016.

**LUCK OF THE DRAW:** The Hurricanes kick-off their Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa campaign with a home clash against the Blues at Sky Stadium before a challenging trip to Christchurch to take on the Crusaders.

A bye follows before they take on the Chiefs at home, Highlanders and Blues away, Crusaders at home, Chiefs away, and the final round robin game at Sky Stadium against the Highlanders.

Their exciting Sky Super Rugby Trans-Tasman campaign begins in Sydney against the Waratahs before the Rebels travel to Wellington. The Force are next in the Super Round, the Hurricanes go to Canberra to take on the Brumbies then finish at Sky Stadium against the Reds.

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** A new look Hurricanes side will be in action in 2021. Seven backs are missing from last year's squad with high quality players TJ Perenara, James Marshall, Fletcher Smith, Ben Lam, Jonah Lowe, Kobus van Wyk and Chase Tiatia all moving on.

In their place is the experience of former All Blacks wing turned centre Julian Savea and former All Blacks Sevens and Blues player Lolagi Visinia, but the other talented new backs, Luke Campbell, Simon Hickey, Pepesana Patafilo, Salesi Rayasi and Ruben Love, have little or no Super Rugby experience.

Try-scoring champion Rayasi is a potential match winner. He has been an All Blacks Sevens rep and starred for Auckland in the Mitre 10 Cup last year, while Love made NZ Under-20s in 2020 and is regarded as a fine prospect for the future at either first-five or fullback.

Visinia was a star for Hawke's Bay last year after the Japanese Top League season was cancelled. He is a useful addition to a strong outside-back group including Rayasi, Wes Goosen, Danny Toala and All Blacks Jordie Barrett and Umaga-Jensen.

## HURRICANES

**Coach:** Jason Holland

**Captain:** Ardie Savea

**Home ground:**  
Sky Stadium Wellington

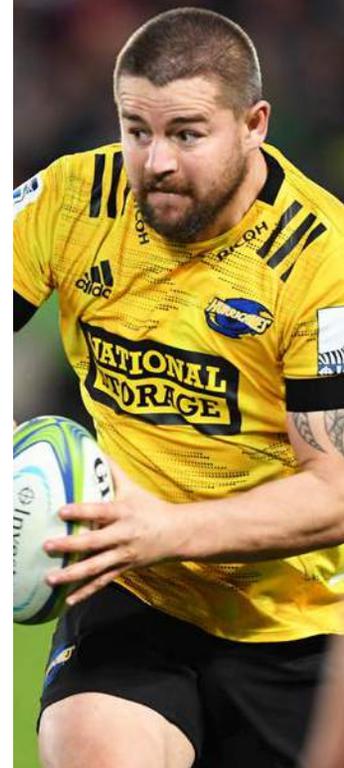
**Website:** [www.hurricanes.co.nz](http://www.hurricanes.co.nz)

**Tickets:**  
[hurricanes.memberlink.net.nz](http://hurricanes.memberlink.net.nz)

**Contact:**  
PO Box 7201, Wellington South.  
Phone 04 389 0020

**Email:** [mail@hurricanes.co.nz](mailto:mail@hurricanes.co.nz)

**Hurricanes TAB odds:** \$6.00



**DURABLE:** Dane Coles makes another strong run.



**2021 OFFICIAL SHORTS PARTNER**  
Global Transport and Logistics

**You need it. We move it. 04 280 2300 WWW.NZ.DSV.COM**



**DYNAMIC:** Peter Umaga-Jensen is set for another strong season with the Hurricanes.

Head coach Jason Holland is excited to have a player of Visinia's quality and experience to add depth to an already talented backline.

"Lolagi has returned from overseas and has been a dominant force in the Magpies backline. He is strong with ball in hand and has a long kicking game.

"We are excited about the calibre of people we have in this squad. A massive work ethic and the ability to have fun along the way are key characteristics we will be driving from the first day on-site."

If the Hurricanes are to push for silverware in 2021 much will depend on how current All Blacks Dane Coles, Tyrel Lomax, Asafo Aumua, Ardie Savea, Ngani Laumape, Umaga-Jensen and Barrett perform.

If they can hit their straps early and play to their potential, then a place in both the Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa and Trans-Tasman finals is possible.

Another vital player is Vaea Fifita who played the last of his 12 tests for the All Blacks in 2019.

The 28-year-old is an explosive athlete with rare speed for a big man and is one of the best ball-runners in the country. The lock/blindside flanker has racked up 14 tries in 67 games for the Hurricanes and has the ability to turn a game for his team.

Fifita is part of a dynamic loose forward mix involving Du Plessis Kirifi, Reed Prinsep, Gareth Evans, Devan Flanders, Brayden Iose and of course the unique skills of Savea.

The loss Perenara, of the second-most capped halfback in Super Rugby history, will be felt on and off the field,

with the inspirational character now plying his trade in Japan.

But the opportunity to wear the No 9 jersey is a massive chance for Jamie Booth, Jonathan Taumateine or Luke Campbell to step out of Perenara's shadow.

They will need to show they can successfully make the adjustment from Mitre 10 Cup to Super Rugby. Certainly they do not lack talent or the right attitude.

Beauden Barrett moved to the Blues last year with Jackson Garden-Bachop taking over at first-five. While the season report card was mixed, he has markedly improved his kicking game, both for territory and goal, and tactical management of the team around the park.

The 25-year-old will undoubtedly be a crucial player in the months ahead.

The Hurricanes have long been a dazzling attacking side capable of brilliant attacking rugby.

Keeping the opposition from scoring has long been the issue so getting that balance right will dictate whether they can make the final of either the Sky Super Rugby Aotearoa or Trans-Tasman competitions.

**WHO'S NEW:** Forwards: Brayden Iose. Backs: Luke Campbell, Simon Hickey, Pepesana Patafilo, Salesi Rayasi, Julian Savea, Lolagi Visinia, Ruben Love.

**WHO'S THROUGH:** Forwards: Ben May, Murphy Taramai. Backs: TJ Perenara, James Marshall, Fletcher Smith, Ben Lam, Jonah Lowe, Kobus van Wyk, Chase Tiatia.

## HURRICANES SQUAD

### FORWARDS:

Pouri Rakete-Stones, Alex Fidow, Xavier Numia, Tyrel Lomax, Fraser Armstrong, Tevita Mafleo, Ricky Riccitelli, Asafo Aumua, Dane Coles, Liam Mitchell, James Blackwell, Scott Scrafton, Kane Leapepe, Isaia Walker Leaware, Du Plessis Kirifi, Reed Prinsep, Gareth Evans, Ardie Savea, Devan Flanders, Vaea Fifita, Brayden Iose.

### BACKS:

Jamie Booth, Jonathan Taumateine, Luke Campbell, Jackson Garden Bachop, Simon Hickey, Ngani Laumape, Billy Proctor, Vince Aso, Julian Savea, Salesi Rayasi, Wes Goosen, Jordie Barrett, Danny Toala, Peter Umaga-Jensen, Lolagi Visinia, Ruben Love, Pepesana Patafilo.



# EXPERIENCES

NEW ZEALAND'S NATIONAL STADIUM



# WANT TO HANG OUT?

Enjoy an enviable vantage point of the famous No.1 field and take in a 360-degree view of Auckland including the city's skyline and volcanic range. This unique experience is topped off with the perfect photo opportunity from the lean-out platform situated 34 metres over the hallowed turf.

[edenpark.co.nz](http://edenpark.co.nz)



# ENTERTAIN YOUR TEAM, CLIENTS AND FRIENDS WHILE EXPERIENCING THE BEST SUPER RUGBY HAS TO OFFER!

## OUR SUPER RUGBY HOSPITALITY PACKAGES INCLUDE



**PREMIUM FOOD  
& BEVERAGE  
SERVICE**



**OFFICIAL  
RESERVED  
MATCH SEATS**



**PERSONAL  
HOSTS**



**DEDICATED  
VENUES**



**GUEST  
SPEAKERS &  
ENTERTAINMENT**

We have a number of exciting hospitality packages available at SUPER RUGBY home matches. Entertain your clients, team members, family or friends and give them an experience they will never forget!



CREATING UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

[info@experiencegroup.co.nz](mailto:info@experiencegroup.co.nz) | CALL +64 9 304 0355

[www.experiencegroup.co.nz/superrugby](http://www.experiencegroup.co.nz/superrugby)

# AUSTRALIAN TEAM PREVIEWS



**By Peter White:** The 2021 Super Rugby AU season features five teams playing 22 games over 12 weekends, kicking off on February 19 and the final on May 8.

Western Force are back after being cut from Super Rugby at the end of 2017. The five Australian teams will then join the five New Zealand teams to contest the inaugural Sky Super Rugby Trans-Tasman competition.

## BRUMBIES



TAB odds: \$2.00

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** The odds favour the Brumbies to go back-to-back in 2021.

The Brumbies beat the Queensland Reds 28-23 in last year's Super Rugby AU final and broke a 16-year title drought. Previous to this, their last title win was against the Crusaders in the 2004 Super Rugby final.

They have 28 players back from last year with a strong forward pack again leading the way. The Brumbies Pathways programme has produced 19 of this year's squad.

James Tucker is an excellent recruit with the former Chiefs and Blues lock highly regarded, as is promising tighthead prop Archie Holz. He adds to the strong front row depth alongside Wallabies Scott Sio, James Slipper, Allan Alaalatoa and Folau Fainga'a.

No 8 Pete Samu, halfback Nic White, former league player Tom Wright and Tom Cusack are other key players.

First-five Noah Lolesio was outstanding in the final victory over the Reds and made his test debut against the All Blacks late last year.

The Auckland-born playmaker has the ability to be a super star for the Brumbies.

Another player with superior attacking skills is fullback Tom Banks who is keen to show his stellar form in 2021 was no fluke. He was recalled by Wallabies coach Dave Rennie for last year's end of year tests.

The attitude in the squad is summed up by loose forward Rob Valetini, who made his Wallaby debut last year.

"Heading into this season, I think there's going to be a target on our back having won last year. But yeah definitely, we want to win the season again and hopefully take that over to the Trans-Tasman competition."

## QUEENSLAND REDS



TAB odds: \$2.80

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** The Reds continue to put faith in young, local talent.

Former All Black Brad Thorn has backed players coming through the Queensland development pathway since taking over as head coach in 2018.

Josh Flook, Zane Nongorr, Mac Grealy, Kalani Thomas and Ilaisa Droasese are five promising young players the Reds have full confidence in to succeed in 2021.

A player sure to get attention is winger Suliasi Vunivalu. He is one of the most talked about code-changers in recent years after he helped Melbourne Storm win last year's NRL title.

Fijian-born Vunivalu was a standout schoolboy rugby player in New Zealand before he was recruited in 2014 to join Melbourne's NRL development system.

In five seasons and 111 NRL games, the excellent finisher nabbed 86 tries and two premierships,

while he also played in a grand final alongside potential Wallabies teammate Marika Koroiibete in 2016.

Expect to see plenty of cross-field bombs to exploit Vunivalu's aerial prowess in the two competitions to come.

There is no shortage of international class in the Reds squad with James O'Connor, Taniela Tupou, Harry Wilson, Jordan Petaia, Filipo Daugunu, Tate McDermott, Liam Wright, Lukhan Salakaia-Loto, Hunter Paisami, Brandon Paenga-Amosa and Fraser McReight all part of Dave Rennie's Test squads last year.

Daugunu was called up to the Wallabies after his excellent performances for the Reds. The former Fiji under-17 football goalkeeper has undoubted ability to cut defences to bits but just needs to add some consistency to his game to make him the complete winger.

**DEDICATED:** Tom Cusack has impressed at flanker for the Brumbies.



**POWERFUL:** Lukhan Salakaia-Loto on attack for the Reds against the Crusaders last year.



## NEW SOUTH WALES WARATAHS



TAB odds: \$8.00

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** Making finals is the minimum goal for the Waratahs in 2021.

Kiwi Rob Penney will again be in charge as head coach. Last year his team won four and lost four in the Australian competition, which is clearly a record he wants to improve on across both the Australian and Trans-Tasman competitions to come.

A starting match up against fierce rivals the Reds will create even more motivation for his players to hit the season running.

New captain Jake Gordon has just one game as captain previously but has 55 games for the Waratahs and five tests for the Wallabies to draw on.

He leads a team lacking experience from past years, particularly inspirational openside flanker Michael Hooper.

Coach Penney says Gordon has the full support of the squad.

"He's a really easy to get along with character that people will embrace.

And he's a fierce competitor. We've lost a couple of people, and Hoops in particular, (who) brings that competitive edge every week.

"Jake has got a lot of that in him and I look forward to him unleashing himself."

Last year's captain Rob Simmons has moved to London Irish and Kurtley Beale to Racing 92 in Paris, while the Waratahs chose not to extend veteran Karmichael Hunt's contract.

Young players expected to make the step up as leaders on the field are prop Angus Bell, hooker Tom Horton, flanker Lachie Swinton, first-five Will Harrison, wingers James Ramm and Mark Nawaqanitawase, and centre Joey Walton.

Harrison has a sharp running game and deadly accurate boot kicking for goal. Last year his success rate for the Waratahs was a remarkably high 92.5 per cent.

Former Brumbies and Highlanders lock Jack Whetton adds power and athleticism to the pack.

## MELBOURNE REBELS



TAB odds: \$11.00

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** The Rebels will be keen to kick on in 2021 after making the play-offs last season for the first time in the club's history.

Wallabies halfback Joe Powell is the major signing. He has joined the Rebels after 73 games for the Brumbies and signed off with victory in last year's final against the Reds.

Rebels coach Dave Wessels is looking forward to working with Powell.

"We've obviously played against Joe many times over the years and know just what a competitor he is," he says. "Aside from the skill and intensity he brings on the field, it's obvious that he's a good team man. He's a great fit for Melbourne."

Powell's combination with classy Wallaby first-five Matt To'omua may well dictate how well the Rebels do in 2021.

To'omua has played 107 Super Rugby matches for the Brumbies (88) and Rebels (19). The 31-year-old, who is equally at home wearing the No 12 jersey,

has recovered from a serious neck injury last year and will be the lynchpin of the Rebels backline.

Powerful centre Young Tonumaiepa is another excellent signing. The 28-year-old joins the Rebels after six seasons playing in the NRL, with five at neighbours the Melbourne Storm and the last season at the Gold Coast Titans.

While the transition from league to union has plenty of challenges, Tonumaiepa is using the inspirational example of his former Melbourne Storm teammate Marika Koroibete, who has become one of the Wallabies best players.

Other new players include hooker Ed Craig, prop Rhys Van Niek and brothers Carter and Mason Gordon, who are both highly promising first-fives.

Perhaps the strongest depth in the squad is across the loose forwards, with vice-captain Michael Wells, Trevor Hosea, Josh Kemeny, Brad Wilkin, Isi Naisarani and Richard Hardwick all contesting starting positions.

## WESTERN FORCE



TAB odds: \$11.00

**CAMPAIGN PREVIEW:** Welcome back the Western Force to Super Rugby, after having missed the last three seasons when the old Australian conference restructured.

Head coach Tim Sampson is confident his team can make a real impact against both their Australian and New Zealand opponents.

Sampson is keen to promote an expansive and free-flowing game plan.

The Force have added several international stars to their roster during the off-season, including Irish fullback Rob Kearney.

"I'd be silly to ignore the calibre of players that have come," says Sampson. "I've already had really good discussions with Rob Kearney, who has thrown some little ideas at us and subtle hints, which is great."

The Force also have two former All Blacks in Richard Kahui and Jeremy Thrush who have 29 All Blacks caps between them and bring invaluable experience to the Force squad.

Skilful midfielder Kahui was a 2011 World Cup champion and two-time Rugby Championship winner, who also played a vital part in the Chiefs Super Rugby-winning side in 2012.

Thrush played 12 tests, including at the 2015 World Cup. He joined the Force in 2019 from English Premiership side Gloucester after more than 100 games for the Hurricanes between 2008-15.

There is a strong South American connection at the Force with four Argentina reps in halfback Tomas Cubelli, flanker Tomas Lezana, prop Santiago Medrano and first-five Domingo Miotti set to make a real impact this year.

The quartet have a combined tally of 130 international caps for Los Pumas with former Brumbies and Jaguares No 9 Cubelli the best known.

The Force have added further depth to their squad with the signing of highly regarded Junior Wallabies and Australian Schoolboys hooker Jack Winchester.

# NEW DAILY E6



# CHANGE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE



## INTRODUCING THE NEW DAILY E6 VAN

With cleaner, more powerful engines including Euro 6-rated options with up to 210Hp/155kW, market-leading payloads and the latest safety technology, the new IVECO Daily E6 is not only a safety leader but more productive than ever. New equipment includes an Advanced Emergency Braking System (AEBS), Crosswind Assist and optional full LED headlights to keep you safer on the road. The enhancements continue inside the cabin as well with a new soft-touch steering wheel, new multi-media system with Apple CarPlay/Android Auto and Satellite Navigation as standard. There's also the availability of a time-saving electric park brake, inductive phone charging and automatic climate control air conditioning. With a model range offering GVMs from 3,500kg – 7,000kg and volumes up to a market-leading 19.6m<sup>3</sup>, there's sure to be a model to suit your needs. So test drive the new IVECO Daily E6 Van today and change your business perspective.

David Didsbury  
027 403 2035  
National Sales Manager

Trevor Wills  
021 347 118  
Sales – Auckland

Keith Tuffery  
027 489 1761  
Sales – Lower North Island

Straun Syme  
027 434 0846  
Sales – Canterbury

Waikato IVECO  
07 850 4909  
Hamilton

Star Trucks International  
03 544 9580  
Nelson

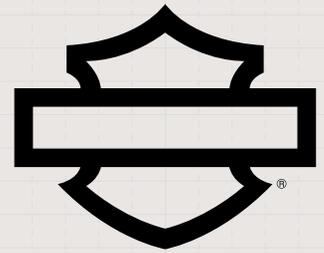
AdvanceQuip  
03 203 9110  
Gore



IVECO ASSIST 0800 367 483

[www.iveco.co.nz](http://www.iveco.co.nz)

**IVECO**  
Your partner for sustainable transport



# HERE'S TO NEW ADVENTURES

GET READY TO RIDE THE H-D 2021 SOFTAIL® LINE-UP INCLUDING THE NEW 2021 **STREET BOB® 114** WITH THE POWERFUL MILWAUKEE-EIGHT® ENGINE AND NEW TANK GRAPHICS.

**SCHEDULE A TEST RIDE AT YOUR LOCAL H-D® DEALER OR VISIT H-D.COM**