



CHAMPIONS TROPHY
Case Competition

Case Study: New Zealand Rugby
Wednesday 1 February



Case prepared by Taylor Brown under the supervision of Thomas Brash and Sunny Gu. This case has been prepared solely for the Champions Trophy Case Competition. All data in this case has been obtained from publicly available sources and Rugby New Zealand. This case is not intended to serve as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management.

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From: Simon Scrum

Sent: Wednesday 1 February 2017

To: NZR Project Team

Subject: New Zealand Rugby Presentation

Dear all,

When people think of New Zealand, they think of the All Blacks. Rugby is the sport which puts New Zealand on the map and the national team, the All Blacks, are arguably one of the most successful sports teams of all time. With that in mind, must they not have the greatest fan base too?

Our client, New Zealand Rugby (NZR), is an incorporated society. This means that NZR, unlike a private company, must not make a profit and instead reinvests any surpluses it makes back into the growth of rugby in New Zealand through its affiliates and members. However, it is required to be self-sustaining.

During 2015, NZR launched its fan engagement platform known as Team All Blacks. Team All Blacks allows NZR to communicate directly with dedicated and passionate fans on an individual basis regardless of where they are in the world (44% of the current fan base resides outside of New Zealand).

The platform lives 24/7 on the allblacks.com website (and mobile website) and provides members with access to exclusive content and competitions. Becoming a member of Team All Blacks is free and by the end of 2016 the platform had amassed a database exceeding 340,000 members. Currently, Team All Blacks does not generate a revenue stream.

NZR has recently established its 2020 Commercial and Brand Growth Strategy. NZR's current aim is to grow the Team All Blacks database to 1 million members by 2020 with 50% offshore members and to contract an additional \$25 million of revenue by December 2020 outside of NZR's 2016 long-term financial projections. In order to reach these targets, NZR is currently focused on the following two issues:

1. International value – In order to maintain and increase its international user base, Team All Blacks needs to identify additional benefits and create more value for its international audience; and
2. Commercialisation – NZR must commercialise its new online digital fan base in order to be able to sustain it in the future.

NZR would be interested in your team's thoughts on its current strategy and what other initiatives could be added or developed further to create a fuller offering to fans with a view to establishing a range of revenue streams.

You have ten minutes to present, which will be followed by a ten-minute question and answer session. Attached are documents prepared by our research team that will assist you.

From,

Simon Scrum

NZ Rugby background



Team All Blacks

Team All Blacks is a platform established by NZR to create a more engaged relationship with fans. Team All Blacks covers all six of our national teams; All Blacks, All Blacks Sevens, Maori All Blacks, Black Ferns, Black Ferns Sevens and New Zealand Under 20's¹. However, most of the activity is focused on the All Blacks. It provides fans with an enhanced All Blacks experience and exclusive access to content, promotions and ticket deals.

Fans can sign up on the website team.allblacks.com by registering with Facebook or their email. As part of registrations, members can enter their preferences in terms of teams they follow, where they live, their age and their gender. This information is used to target information received via electronic direct mail (EDMS).



Benefits of being a member

When fans enter the website, they enter a database with a range of features:

Offers: Access to domestic pre-sale ticket windows

Pre-sale windows to matches held in New Zealand are the most in-demand feature of the Team All Blacks platform and allow All Blacks fans to get the best tickets first to avoid missing out on matches. Throughout 2017, All Blacks match tickets to test matches played in New Zealand must be purchased through NZR's official ticketing provider and requires a Team All Blacks log on to purchase. These pre-sale ticket windows generally occur six to eight weeks prior to public sale across all ticket categories.

Unfortunately, due to licensing agreements, this feature is unavailable to international fans. This has so far created a barrier to engaging with international fans and new unique benefits are needed to grow this side of the database.

Ticket sales to matches played outside of New Zealand are controlled by the host union requiring the general public to purchase tickets directly through them as Team All Blacks do not receive an allocation to on-sell to its members. The only other way to purchase certified tickets is through NZR's official tour and travel partner as part of a package.

Exclusive content

Team All Blacks fans have access to exclusive content which they can access on the website once they are signed in. This exclusive content includes never-before-seen footage: behind-the-scenes clips, training videos, Q&A and player diaries. However, they are unable to live stream matches. Broadcast rights for matches played in New Zealand are committed to broadcast agreements until 2020. Team All Blacks members do however have access to a highlights package after the game which is made available in the content library on the Team All Blacks website.



¹ New Zealand has many national teams and regional teams, information on teams and competitions is provided in the appendices



All Blacks
Published by Jan Vermeulen (1) · 23 May · Sport

WIN the chance to attend an EXCLUSIVE All Blacks Q&A session with a friend in Auckland, Wellington or Dunedin. To enter, simply tell us what your best All Blacks experience was in the comments below, and which location you're able to attend.

TEN lucky winners will be chosen for each city on Friday, 27 May. The competition is open to #TeamAllBlacks members only, so sign up if you haven't already!

#StanieSeries #NZLVWales



All Blacks
@AllBlacks

Attend #AllBlacks training! To win, RT & reply with the session you can attend: Auckland, Wellington or Dunedin.



Competitions

The Team All Blacks platform gives fans the chance to enter competitions. These competitions include player access, exclusive prizes and other money can't buy experiences such as attending a training session. These competitions are also currently advertised across NZR's other social media channels.

Discounts

Team All Blacks offers a range of discounts to current users to receive discounts on the All Blacks online shop. The online All Blacks store is a separate online store in which All Blacks fans can purchase merchandise and All Blacks branded products such as apparel, merchandise, gifts and accessories.

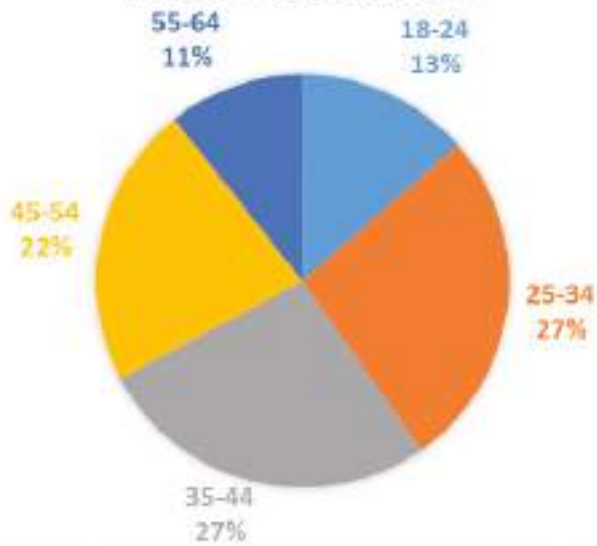
Additional communication

Besides the information provided on the website, Team All Blacks also sends out emails to notify fans of these promotions, pre-sales and upcoming matches. These emails are targeted to fans based on preferences and are sent out approximately two or three times a month. They are well received by fans, with an average email open rate of 28.7% (compared to the industry standard of 26.5%) and an average email click through rate of 6.95% (compared to the industry standard of 3.13%).

Member demographics

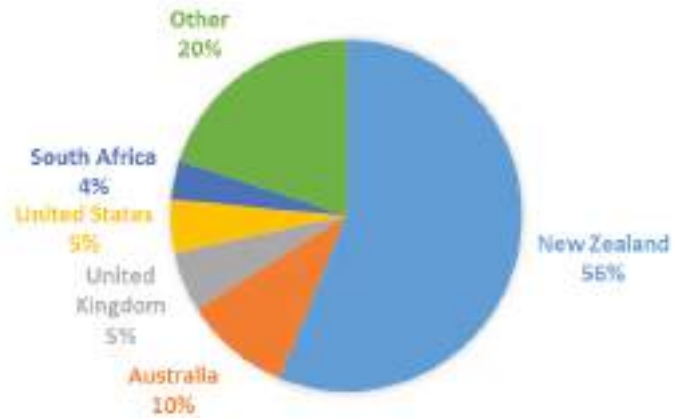
Fans are signed up to Team All Blacks all around the world. Currently the largest segment for Team All Blacks fans are 25-44-year-old men. Overall, 82% of fans are male.

MEMBERS BY AGE



Over the last year, the countries that have driven the biggest growth, in order, are New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom. Our biggest growth within age groups has come from 35-54 year olds. It is likely, however, that this growth in New Zealand has largely been driven by

MEMBERS BY COUNTRY



those entering the 2017 DHL British and Irish Lions Series² test match ticket ballot which required a Team All Blacks sign on in order to enter the ballot.

The below graph outlines the cycle of new members joining Team All Blacks during 2016. Although match footage is unable to be shown on the Team All Blacks platform, exclusive content (eg. behind-the-scenes footage) has attracted a number of fans. This mirrors when the All Blacks are playing test matches in June and between August and November.

In particular, the spike in new members during September to November in 2016 coincides with a period of significant advertising and promotional campaigns relating to the DHL British and Irish Lions Series priority ticket ballot which ran during this period.

2016 TEAM ALL BLACKS GROWTH PER MONTH



Team All Blacks strategy and recent initiatives

Domestic strategy:

In order to convert New Zealand rugby fans to Team All Blacks members, NZR is currently relying on the following unique benefits within the platform:

- Tickets – to purchase tickets for All Blacks matches in New Zealand, you have to sign up to be a Team All Blacks member².
- Competitions/prizes – an increasing number of the competitions and prizes NZR offers which get fans closer to the team require people to be a Team All Blacks member. However, it does still host a number of competitions on other social media platforms.
- Exclusive content – to view the exclusive content that takes you behind the scenes, you need to be signed into your Team All Blacks account.

International strategy:

Team All Blacks' goal mirrors NZR's overall strategy for its international audience:

'Grow the connection and engagement between the All Blacks and our fans, enhancing our reputation as the world's greatest rugby team and a global sports icon'

To do this, NZR launched a game for international fans called The Highest Ball where fans could "catch" high balls by tapping the screen. Once the game was played, you could sign in or sign up to Team All Blacks to enter into the draw for prizes ranging from merchandise to meet-and-greets with the team.



² Tickets can then be sold on secondary markets by individuals as they are no longer under NZR's control. Alternatively, tickets can be purchased as part of a tour or package through NZR's official travel and tour provider.

New Zealand Rugby background

History

After the first rugby match in 1870 in New Zealand the game spread quickly and in September 1875 the first interprovincial match took place in Dunedin, between Auckland Clubs and Dunedin Clubs. In 1879, the first provincial unions were formed in Canterbury and Wellington. There was no national body and unions were affiliated to the Rugby Football Union (RFU) in England.

On Saturday 16 April 1892, at a meeting held in Wellington, the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU) was formed. In 1893, at its first AGM, NZRFU formally adopted the black jersey as the national playing strip and selected the first officially sanctioned national team, for a tour of Australia³.

In 1995, international rugby became professional following World Rugby's repeal of all amateurism regulations. For the first time, NZRFU negotiated with and contracted professional rugby players in New Zealand.

Now known as New Zealand Rugby (NZR), joined with the national unions of Australia and South Africa to form SANZAR (now SANZAAR, following the inclusion of the Union de Argentina Rugby), which sold the television rights for major southern hemisphere rugby competitions and helped to build the commercial foundation on which professional rugby is based. As of 2016, SANZAAR is responsible for delivering Investec Super Rugby and the Investec Rugby Championship⁴, featuring the All Blacks, South Africa, Australia and Argentina.



Current day

NZR is one of New Zealand's largest sports organisations, with a team of employees committed to ensuring that the national game is run smoothly and effectively at all levels, all over New Zealand. NZR has offices in Wellington and Auckland as well as a number of staff based around New Zealand.

As a modern, professional sport, rugby encompasses a wide range of activities and functions. NZR manages national teams, administration of national competitions, and participation in international competitions and matches - including test matches⁵ - as well as assisting community rugby throughout the country. NZR has direct relationships with its members, including all 26 provincial unions⁶, the New Zealand Maori Rugby Board, as well as associate and life members.

NZR's mission is to be a world-leading sports organisation, helping all of rugby to be the best it can be. NZR strives for rugby teams in black that are unrivalled, a high performance system that produces the world's best talent, competitions that fans love, and a community game that is strong and cherished. NZR is committed to New Zealand rugby being financially secure, attracting top partners and contributing actively to the global game.

New Zealand Rugby

Affiliated Unions

There are 26 Provincial unions. NZR works with, for and on behalf of these 26 Provincial Unions, which in turn manage their representative teams and provide rugby administration and services to the clubs and schools in their region. (Northland, Central, Southern)

New Zealand Māori Rugby Board

Promote the game of rugby at all levels amongst Maori and act as guardians of Tikanga Maori⁷ for New Zealand rugby.

Associate Members

Organisations that provide rugby or rugby-related services to particular groups e.g. New Zealand Schools, Rugby Museum Society and the Rugby Foundation.

Life Members

Individuals who have been elected in recognition of exceptional service to New Zealand Rugby and to rugby. E.g. former rugby greats and coaches such as Sir Graham Henry.

³ They were not selected by the national body, the earlier New Zealand team selected to tour New South Wales in 1884 is recognised as a New Zealand team and its players are recognised as All Blacks.

⁴ Investec Super Rugby is an annual rugby union competition played with teams across New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Argentina, and Japan.

⁵ Test Matches are rugby games played between two senior national teams that are recognised by one of the team's national bodies.

⁶ Provincial Unions refer to the geographical division of the population under which New Zealanders register and play rugby in New Zealand.

⁷ Tikanga Maori is an ethical term to describe the daily behavioural and interaction customs under Maori culture.

Going forward

NZR has set goals and focus areas for its commercial and brand development work through to December 2020. The strategy's priority is driving growth and development and has been built around six focus areas all with linkages and interdependencies:

- 1. Digital content delivery and media rights:**
NZR must adapt to remain relevant and keep pace with how consumers interact with content, adopting the technologies that will enable this to be served on every screen in particular the importance of mobile.
- 2. Building engagement and monetising the fan relationship:**
NZR needs to ensure fans stay engaged with all levels of the game, not just the All Blacks. NZR needs to use data and insights to drive a greater engagement with its fans across domestic competitions. Social platforms have restrictions in place that impact on NZR's ability to contact all fans or gain individual fans' information. NZR must create a single view of the fan in order to allow for personalised interactions and content.
- 3. Global brand development:**
NZR aims to create unique emotional triggers that provide cut-through internationally and with non-rugby audiences (including Heritage, the Haka, the Black Jersey, unrivalled winning ratio) in order to grow NZR's global digital and social channels beyond 20 million by the end of 2020.
- 4. Sponsorship:**
The All Blacks portfolio is mature in the domestic market; the growth opportunity lies in off-shore partnerships. More partners are extending rights to include other national teams, primarily the All Blacks Sevens and Maori All Blacks.
- 5. Licencing and merchandise:**
NZR aims to develop an aligned online and physical retail network with global presence. This requires developing the right products for the demands of our fans with specific Team All Blacks offerings.
- 6. Revenue diversification:**
Gain approval for one alternative revenue initiative per year out to 2020.



Commercial and fan relationships

NZR sponsorship portfolio

PRINCIPAL PARTNER AND OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF THE ALL BLACKS



MAJOR GLOBAL SPONSOR



GLOBAL SPONSORS



REGIONAL SPONSORS



OTHER COMPETITION SPONSORS



SUPPORTERS

BVLGARI



BARKERS



Commercial and fan relationships

Branded product

As part of NZR's commercial sponsorship agreement with adidas, it holds all rights to adult sporting apparel and sporting accessories including polo shirts, T-shirts, drink bottles and caps. The agreement with adidas also outlines that only one other sponsor can appear on the national team's jerseys. This front of jersey property has been sold as part of the sponsorship agreement in place with AIG, NZR's major global sponsor. Both AIG and adidas are contracted to beyond 2020.

Velocity Brand Management (VBM) is NZR's Official Licensing agent which currently holds the global rights to grant to third parties to manufacture, promote, sell and distribute NZR official licensed products. VBM has agreements with approximately 60 different third parties that produce in excess of 1,000 different branded stock keeping units ranging from beanies and scarves to golfing accessories and primary products such as manuka honey. These licensed products are sold direct to retailers and on NZR's official online store. VBM's current agreement runs through to the end of 2017.

NZR has an agreement with Super Retail Group (SRG) in Australia to operate the official online store called allblackshop.com. This site sells a wide range of men's, women's, kid's and giftware that can shipped worldwide. The term of the current agreement with SRG expires during 2017.

Broadcast partners and match footage

NZR's current broadcast agreements run for five years from 2016 through to 2020. These agreements provide a global broadcast reach of NZR content into well over 200 million households with match footage rights sold to free and pay TV as well as all online streaming and on-demand formats. NZR does not hold any rights to broadcast full matches on any platform.

NZR has retained the rights to show highlight clips on the allblacks.com website and on social media channels but faces challenges from traditional online news media which often have clips available for the public to view

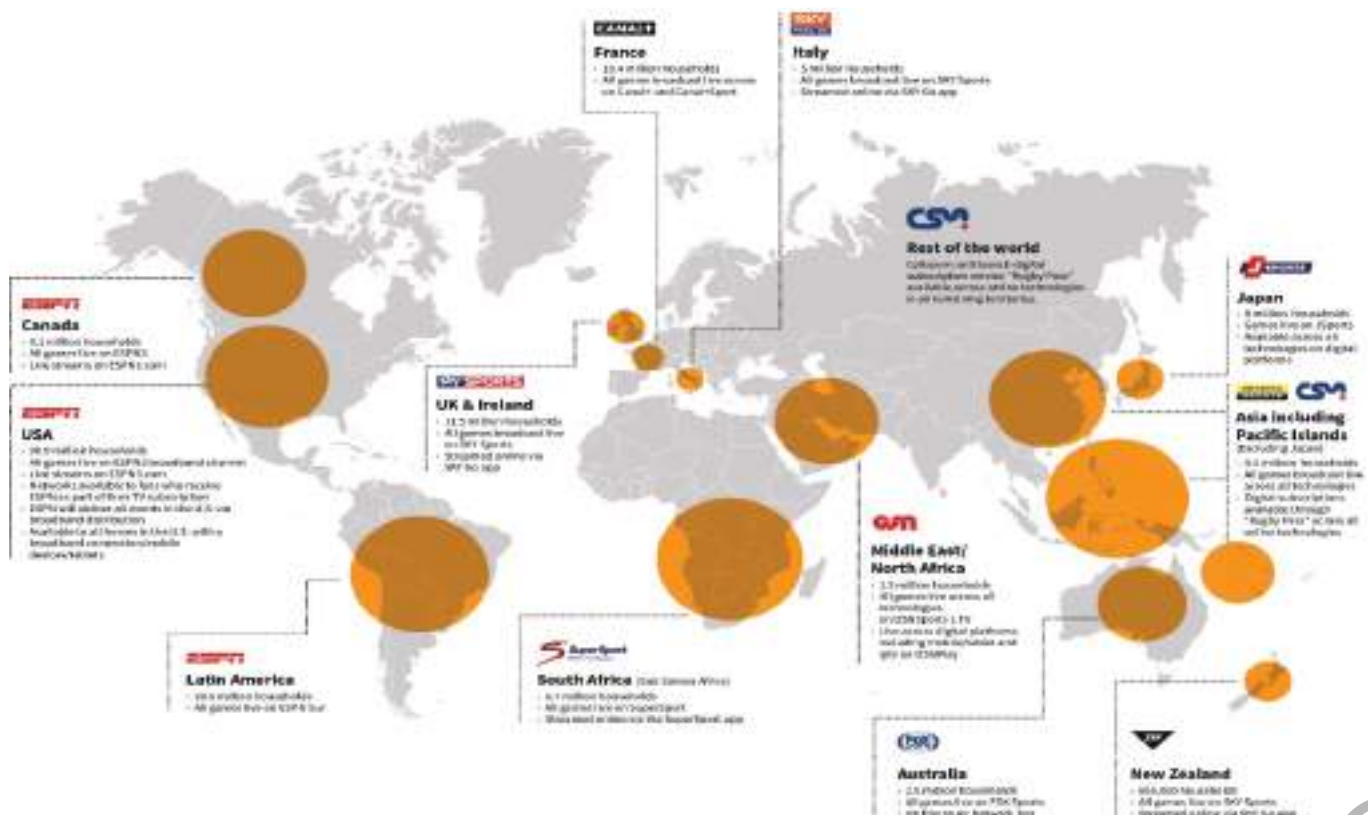
faster than NZR can gain these from its broadcast partners. These traditional news agencies also supplement these clips with additional content such as editorials, pundit pieces and with match stats and in-match written commentary.

NZR digital and social audience

NZR also uses other social media channels to communicate with fans. The All Blacks Facebook page is currently used to post news headlines on the All Blacks and rugby in New Zealand as well as promote tickets and merchandise. The Facebook page is its most widely followed page, with over 4 million likes. Converting the All Blacks Facebook followers to Team All Blacks members is a key strategy enabling NZR to gain individual member details and provide a more tailored engagement experience.

Further to this NZR has an All Blacks application separate to the Team All Blacks platform which provides news, videos and statistics on the All Blacks. This application provides a link to sign up to the Team All Blacks platform.

All Black Facebook	4,293,227
All Blacks Twitter	693,807
All Blacks Instagram	780,214
All Blacks Google+	575,034
All Blacks Weibo	16,433
NZ7s Facebook	60,147
NZ7s Twitter	34,364
NZ7s Instagram	95,305
Facebook (NZ Women's Rugby)	16,636
Black Ferns Twitter	1,133
Black Ferns Instagram	3,351
YouTube subscribers	112,614
Team All Blacks	341,000
All time unique visitors to allblacks.com	4,996,189



International markets

NZR's focus on winning on and off the field is unparalleled and supported by the track record of the All Blacks as the most successful international team in the world. This has enabled NZR and the All Blacks to cement a love affair with the New Zealand public with 82% of the population or 3.2 million New Zealanders being fans of the All Blacks.

Research undertaken during 2016 on the All Blacks in six key international markets outlined that 54 million avid fans exist which represent a major opportunity to connect and engage with. NZR has a mission to promote Team All Blacks and rugby to these fans, in particular in Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

NZR has a long list of 18 countries that are important to the growth of the brand and commercially. Some of these countries such as the United States, United Arab Emirates and China have a low but growing awareness of rugby meaning that continued education about the sport of rugby is needed in conjunction with promoting the All Blacks and NZR's other national teams.

NZR has identified three key primary markets to focus on:

United Kingdom

It is known that the UK has a large population of Kiwis and Australians, already educated and interested in rugby, making it an easy target to begin with. All four nations - England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland - share a strong interest in rugby, especially with the British and Irish Lions (a combination of these four nations) coming to New Zealand in June 2017. Also, after recently hosting the Rugby World Cup, England is particularly well educated and interested in rugby, whether it be the All Blacks or the English team.

USA

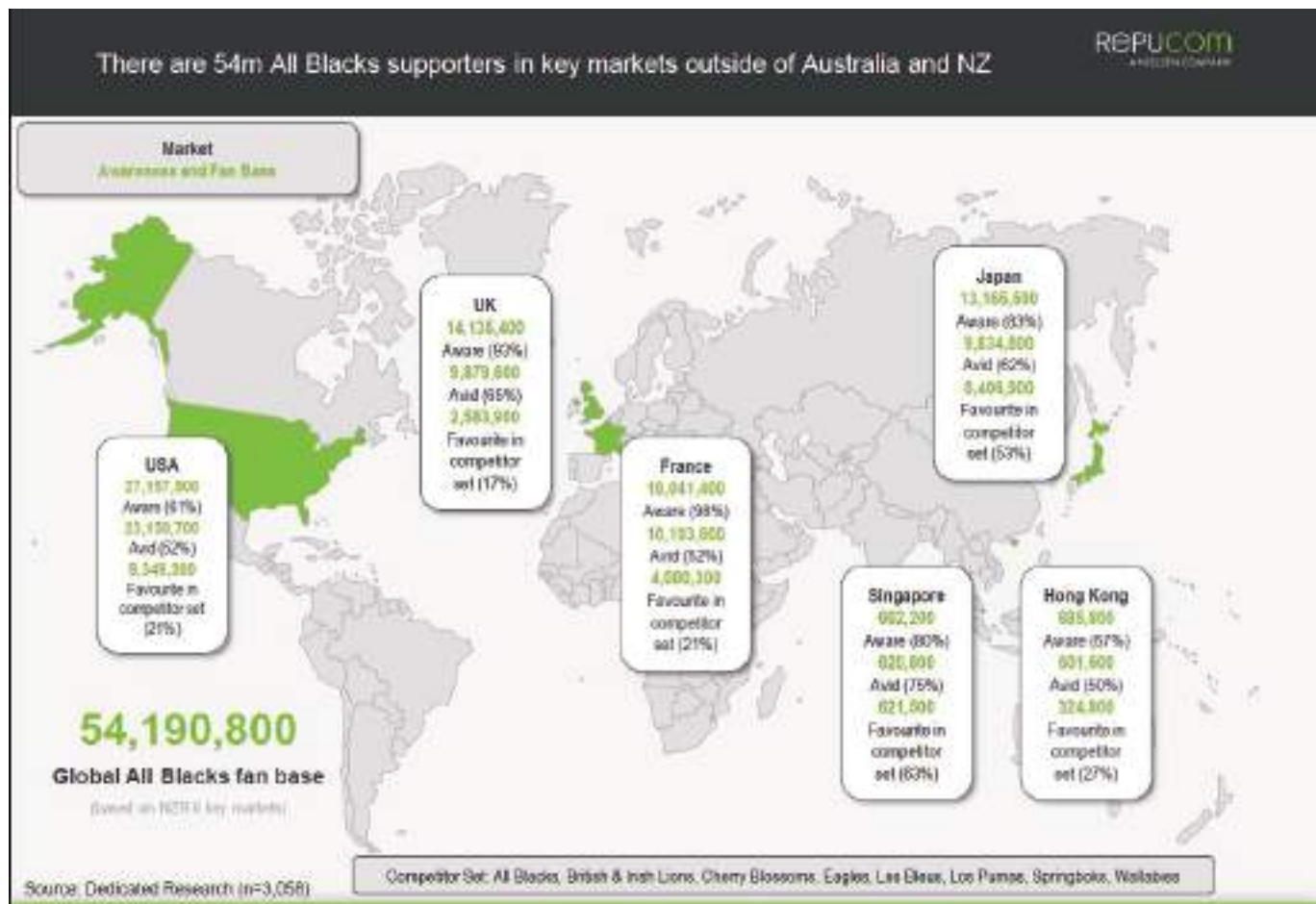
The USA has a growing interest in rugby, in particular in the city of Chicago where the All Blacks recently played a test match against Ireland. USA played the Maori All Blacks, losing 54-7. Of the three test matches in which the USA have played the All Blacks, the All Blacks have a 100% win rate, with an accumulated score of 171-15. USA is the major growth country for Team All Blacks.

Japan

After Japan's recent success in the World Cup as well as hosting the Rugby World Cup in 2019 and the Olympics in 2020, where Rugby Sevens will be played, the sport is getting more visibility and provides an opportunity for Team All Blacks to capture the growing interest in rugby. Japan last played the All Blacks in 2013, losing 54-6. Overall, on accumulated test match scores between the pair, the All Blacks lead 282-30.

Secondary markets

Team All Blacks also has three secondary priority markets that require more education, in which they must focus on the growth of the game and develop a local interest: Hong Kong, Singapore and France. Each country or territory has an established rugby union and a growing interest in rugby. China is also on a watch list as important due to recent World Rugby partnerships being made to grow the awareness and participation of rugby in China.





Case study: USA Weekend of Rugby in November 2016

One of the key ways New Zealand reaches out to fans overseas is through overseas rugby tours. This involves the All Blacks travelling to a foreign country to play a test match and carrying out promotional activities for rugby and the All Blacks. In November 2016, the All Blacks and the Maori All Blacks travelled to the USA for exhibition matches in Chicago.

The Maori All Blacks played USA in front of a sold-out crowd in Toyota Park and the All Blacks played Ireland in a sold-out crowd in Soldier Field stadium.

Both the All Blacks and the Maori All Blacks arrived in Chicago in the week leading up to their matches and undertook a series of media and publicity events:

- Media and press interviews
- Brand building initiatives such as merchandise promotions and giveaways
- Attended partner events during the day and evenings such as gala dinners
- Provided rugby skills demonstrations and undertook coaching clinics
- Team trainings with limited access for VIPs to the last training session prior to the match

Establishing these exhibition matches creates opportunities for sponsor properties such as naming rights to a match as well as broadcasting rights.

Overall, the week was a complete big success, selling just under 80,000 tickets across the weekend in sold-out stadiums and obtaining 238 mentions across print, radio, web and TV media.



Conclusion

The globe is wide open for Team All Blacks to attract and educate new fans on the game of rugby and the All Blacks. But time is running out to support the platform which has the potential to reach millions without a sustainable revenue stream. Monetising the platform too early could significantly decrease the uptake of users, whereas monetising too late will be unaffordable.

New Zealand Rugby has two key goals for Team All Blacks:

- To contract an additional \$25m of revenue by December 2020, which New Zealand Rugby anticipates to generate a 75-80% profit margin; and
- To grow Team All Blacks members to beyond 1,000,000 by December 2020, with at least half being from overseas

Appendices



[Teams and competitions](#)

[Financial information](#)

[New articles](#)





The teams

Team All Blacks focuses on content relating to six of the national teams managed by NZR, and on building support for these teams. These six teams regularly play overseas and take on international opposition.



All Blacks

The All Blacks are the most successful international rugby side of all-time, having won more tests than any other international team. With a winning percentage of 77.2 percent from 552 tests they are noted as one of the most prolific teams across any sport.

The first rugby nation to win 400 test matches, the All Blacks are the current Rugby World Cup champions, winning the title in 1987, 2011 and 2015. They have also won ten of the 16 Tri-Nations trophies (1996-2011), four out of five Investec Rugby Championships (2012-16), and have held the Bledisloe Cup since 2003.

Overseas the side's success is notable, winning four of nine attempted touring Grand Slams⁸ in 1978, 2005, 2008 and 2010.

Since October 2003, when World Rugby (formerly the IRB) introduced a rankings system, the All Blacks have held number one position for over 80 percent of the time and have remained in the top position since November 2009.

Māori All Blacks

The Māori All Blacks is a historic team representing the proud indigenous culture of New Zealand. The team was first assembled in 1910 but has its origins in the 1888 New Zealand Natives side. The first to wear the famous black jersey, the Natives side was originally conceived as an all-Māori selection and ultimately included just five non-Māori players in its ranks.

The Māori All Blacks have beaten many international sides (just the All Blacks and South Africa remain unbeaten from current Tier One opposition), including the British and Irish Lions, England and Ireland, while the last time they lost to a Pacific Island side was in 1973 (Tonga).

All contracted players in New Zealand are able to nominate themselves as eligible for the Māori All Blacks and, in the event a player is considered for selection, the team's kaumatua (cultural advisor) will

trace the player's whakapapa (genealogy) to confirm his heritage and eligibility. The primary objective of this team is to provide an aspirational pathway for young Māori rugby players.

All Blacks Sevens

Sevens is the fast-paced, shortened form of the game played by seven-a-side teams over seven-minute halves. The All Blacks Sevens have been one of the most successful international sevens team in the world, competing regularly on the World Rugby Sevens World Series circuit, which the team has won 12 times.

The All Blacks Sevens have twice lifted the Rugby World Cup Sevens trophy (in 2001 and 2013) and have won four Commonwealth Games gold medals. In 2016 they competed in the Olympics for the first time, where they were knocked out of contention by eventual gold medallists, Fiji.

The All Blacks Sevens team was first selected in 1973 and attended a major international tournament for the first time in 1983 - the famous Hong Kong Sevens.

Black Ferns Sevens

The Black Ferns Sevens have dominated the Women's Sevens Series, claiming three Series crowns since its inception in 2012. The team are the current sevens World Champions after beating Canada in the Rugby World Cup final in Moscow in 2013 and secured silver medals for New Zealand at the Rio Olympics.

Black Ferns

The Black Ferns are New Zealand's senior women's rugby team. The Black Ferns are clearly the dominant team in women's rugby worldwide, with Women's Rugby World Cup titles in 1998, 2002, 2006 and in 2010. They have one of the best winning percentages in international rugby, with victory in close to 90 percent of their tests.

A New Zealand women's selection first took the field in 1989 and competed at the 1991 Women's Rugby World Cup. In 2016 they were unbeaten in five tests against Australia, Canada, England and Ireland.

New Zealand Under 20

New Zealand's rugby strength is supported by a widespread talent identification and development programme, which includes rugby in secondary schools, academies, the Jock Hobbs Memorial Under 19 Tournament and the New Zealand Under 20 side.

The New Zealand Under 20 team is recognised as the senior age-grade side in the country, which formally replaced the Under 19 and Under 21 systems in 2008 when World Rugby (then the IRB) merged the two age-grades to a single tier structure.

The team plays in the annual World Rugby Under 20 Championship and have dominated the competition since its inception in 2008, winning titles in 2008-11 and 2015. They are regularly seen as the team to beat. Most of the players in the 2016 All Blacks squads had played age grade rugby in the black jersey as well.

⁸ A Grand Slam is achieved in rugby when over the year in the Six Nations Championship, a team beats all of their five opponents.

The competitions

These teams compete in international competitions around the world:

Test matches

A test match is generally considered to be a first-class match between the senior 'A' teams of two nations. However, each national union has the discretion to grant a match test status and bestow test caps on the players who take part.

In New Zealand, NZR delivers test matches in partnership with provincial unions which tender each year to host the test. The work involved includes delivering world-leading match, commercial and media operations as well as hosting VIPs and officials. NZ Rugby employees regularly travel to overseas test matches as well in order to assure consistent delivery for our teams and stakeholders and to provide personnel in those areas with training and support.

Investec Rugby Championship

The Investec Rugby Championship is contested annually between Australia, South Africa, Argentina and New Zealand.

Formerly a three-nation series, the competition was expanded to include Argentina from 2012. Like Investec Super Rugby, the Tri Nations tournament was established by the SANZAR partners in 1995 and was first contested in 1996. Each team plays the others at home and away, except in Rugby World Cup years when a different format may be adopted.

The All Blacks won ten Tri Nations titles between 1996 and 2011, won the first three Rugby Championship titles in 2012-14 and regained the trophy in 2016 having finished second to the Wallabies in an abbreviated series in 2015.

Rugby World Cup

Our teams take part in the Rugby World Cup for men's and women's sevens and 15s, contested every four years.

New Zealand hosted the Rugby World Cup in 2011, delivering a fantastic experience for all 21 teams (including the referees) and their supporters. New Zealand Rugby people were actively involved in delivering the tournament as well as a variety of tournament roles from IT and broadcasting through to match programmes and Community Rugby legacy.

In 2013, New Zealand became the first country ever to hold all four cups at one time.

Junior World Championship

The Junior World Championship (JWC) is contested annually amongst 12 international sides and features players under 20 years of age. At the same time, the Junior World Trophy is contested amongst developing rugby nations.

In 2014, New Zealand hosted the JWC for the first time with the tournament taking place in the wider Auckland region.

International Women's Rugby Series

In 2014, New Zealand hosted the International Women's Rugby Series as part of the build-up to the Women's Rugby World Cup in France. The Black Ferns, Australia and Canada played each other, while the Black Ferns also played Samoa.

HSBC Sevens World Series and IRB Women's Sevens World Series

New Zealand's sevens sides both take part in World Series overseen by the IRB. The Wellington RFU hosts the Wellington leg of the men's tournament (Sevens Wellington), with NZR providing operational and media support.

Other competitions

Team All Blacks also provides content on other International and Domestic Rugby Competitions:

Investec Super Rugby

Investec Super Rugby is the most popular, professional, regional rugby competition across the Pacific featuring teams and referees from New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Argentina and Japan. It takes place between February and August, with a break in June to allow for international test series. Investec Super Rugby has an average viewership of 300,000-400,000 people across each participating country.

The competition was devised in 1995 as a result of rugby's shift to professionalism: Super Rugby formed a significant part of the package of broadcasting rights sold by SANZAR to News Corporation and, in New Zealand and Australia, provided a response to the threat of rugby league's lucrative opportunities.

New Zealand has five teams playing in Investec Super Rugby: (from north to south) the Blues, Chiefs, Hurricanes, Crusaders and Highlanders.

Australia has five teams participating: the ACT Brumbies, New South Wales Waratahs, Queensland Reds, Western Force and the Melbourne Rebels.

South Africa have six teams: the Pretoria-based Bulls, Bloemfontein-based Cheetahs, Johannesburg-based Lions, Durban-based Sharks, Port Elizabeth-based Kings, and Cape Town-based Stormers.

A team from Japan, the Sunwolves, and a team from Argentina, the Jaguares, have also joined the competition since 2016.



Management of New Zealand's Investec Super Rugby teams

The five Investec Super Rugby teams are owned by New Zealand Rugby and when originally set up, were run by boards representing the Provincial Unions that make up each Investec Super Rugby catchment. Reviews into the financial sustainability and structure of Super Rugby and franchises identified the need to reinvigorate the franchise model and provide for additional investment to improve its financial sustainability.

Expressions of interest were called for in December 2011 for four of the five licences. The Highlanders were not part of the original process, although they now have a license agreement in place also.

A Super Rugby licensee's responsibilities include:

- Management of the team both on-field and off-field, including the professional development for members of the squad
- Marketing promotion of matches and the team
- The licensee will retain predominantly gate and some sponsorship income and pay administration, additional coaching and management staff, training facilities, match operations and marketing costs

New Zealand Rugby will:

- Retain ownership of the brands associated with each team
- Continue to fund player and coach contracts from centralised broadcasting and sponsorship revenue
- Continue to pay all travel and accommodation costs associated with the regular season (excluding playoffs) through SANZAR

Mitre 10 Cup

From the 1870s onwards, provincial unions had arranged for, scheduled and administered interprovincial matches in an independent, manner, which was later facilitated by the then New Zealand Rugby Football Union (as it then was). Demand increased through the 1970s for an organised provincial competition. This led to the development of the National Provincial Championship (NPC), which was first contested in 1976.

The NPC was restructured several times during its 30-year history. From 2006, the NPC was replaced by two separate competitions: the Mitre 10 Cup (formerly the Air New Zealand Cup (2006-09) and the ITM Cup (2010-15)) and the Mitre 10 Heartland Championship (formerly the AA Rewards Heartland Championship (2007-08) and the the Pink Batts Heartland Championship (2012-15)).

Fourteen provincial unions field teams in the Mitre 10 Cup, which provides first-class representative rugby for professional and semi-professional rugby players. Participating teams are Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Canterbury, Counties Manukau, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu, North Harbour, Northland, Otago, Southland, Taranaki, Tasman, Waikato and Wellington.

The Mitre 10 Cup comprises of a Premiership and Championship with participation determined by the previous year's results. Teams ranked from first to seventh play in the Premiership, while teams 8-14 are in the Championship. At the end of the season, the top-ranked Championship team takes the place of the 7th-placed team in the Premiership, with that team automatically relegated to the Championship. Premiership teams play each other once as well as matches against four Championship sides, while Championship teams play each other once as well as matches against four Premiership sides.

The Mitre 10 Cup is less popular than the Investec Super Rugby competition and therefore draws smaller crowds to games.

Mitre 10 Heartland Championship

The Mitre 10 Heartland Championship kicked off in 2006 as the provincial competition for New Zealand's amateur and semi-professional Provincial Unions, largely based in towns and rural areas of the country. Twelve teams take part in the Heartland Championship: Buller, East Coast, Horowhenua Kapiti, King Country, Mid Canterbury, North Otago, Poverty Bay, South Canterbury, Thames Valley, Wairarapa Bush, Wanganui and West Coast.

The Mitre 10 Heartland Championship is a lower tier of competition to that of the Mitre 10 Cup and therefore draws smaller crowds to games.

GROUP STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

for the year ended 31 December 2015

	Note	2015 \$000	2014 \$000
Income:			
Commercial income		91,255	87,135
Fixtures and tours income		4,346	16,257
Interest income		3,094	3,531
Other income	3	28,789	5,475
Foreign exchange gains		6,123	8,233
Equity accounted profit of associates	14	115	175
Total income	3	133,722	120,806
Expenditure:			
Game development		16,856	15,866
Provincial Union grants		9,572	9,273
Representative teams		43,130	34,974
Competitions		56,503	51,816
Governance and financial		8,171	8,244
Interest expense		49	58
Total expenditure		134,281	120,231
(Loss)/profit before Junior World Championship hosting and income tax		(559)	575
Junior World Championship hosting related profit/(loss):			
Junior World Championship hosting income	3	96	4,225
Junior World Championship hosting expenditure	3	-	(4,427)
Junior World Championship hosting related profit/(loss):		96	(202)
(Loss)/profit before income tax		(463)	373
Income tax	4	-	-
(Loss)/profit after income tax		(463)	373
Other comprehensive income:			
Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:			
Cash flow hedges:			
	21		
Gains taken to equity		8,774	7,385
Transferred to profit or loss for the year		(7,841)	(7,295)
Foreign currency translation reserve:			
Gains/(losses) taken to equity	22	33	(81)
Total other comprehensive income		966	9
Total comprehensive income, net of tax		503	382

GROUP BALANCE SHEET

as at 31 December 2015

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015 \$000	2014 \$000
Current assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	51,868	62,089
Trade and other receivables	48,911	38,773
Prepayments	2,134	2,941
Loans and advances	1,004	2,812
Other financial assets	7,939	8,215
Total current assets	111,856	114,830
Non-current assets:		
Term investments	7,213	523
Loans and advances	208	292
Property, plant and equipment	2,402	2,402
Intangible assets	8,283	8,719
Investment in associates	2,270	1,172
Other financial assets	20,863	17,232
Total non-current assets	41,239	30,340
Total assets	153,095	145,170
Current liabilities:		
Trade and other payables	8,610	7,693
Income in advance	44,708	40,480
Provision for medical costs	494	471
Player payment variation account	76	169
Other financial liabilities	1,549	128
Total current liabilities	55,437	48,941
Non-current liabilities:		
Provision for medical costs	3,078	2,954
Benevolent and welfare fund	1,427	1,938
Income in advance	312	-
Other financial liabilities	1,419	418
Total non-current liabilities	6,236	5,310
Total liabilities	61,673	54,251
Equity:		
Cash flow hedge reserve	25,835	24,902
Foreign currency translation reserve	(90)	(123)
Retained earnings	65,677	66,140
Total equity	91,422	90,919
Total liabilities and equity	153,095	145,170

For and on behalf of the Board


B G IMPEY Chairman
25 February 2016

W W PETERS Director
25 February 2016

News articles

City full of champions

Powerful New Zealand puts streak on line at Soldier Field

By Maya Miller, Chicago Tribune

Nov 5 2016

http://digitaledition.chicagotribune.com/tribune/article_popover.aspx?guid=aceb6f61-5c76-4637-bf3a-ca9465c8734e

With confetti from Friday's Cubs rally having been cleared from Grant Park, thousands of fans will flock to Soldier Field on Saturday to watch another championship team play. The back-to-back World Cup champion New Zealand All Blacks rugby national team is set to face Ireland at 3 p.m. to open a month of international test matches for the two teams.

The sold-out event will cap what has been dubbed "a weekend of rugby" in the Windy City that also featured a match Friday night between the All Blacks and USA Eagles at Toyota Park. While Ireland and New Zealand already have qualified for the 2019 World Cup in Japan, the history between the organizations is attracting fans from all over the world. "If you walk down Michigan Avenue this weekend, you'll hear a lot of Irish and Kiwi accents," USA Rugby CEO Dan Payne said.

Ireland is winless in 28 matches against New Zealand since 1905, managing only a 10-10 tie in 1973. When the teams last met in 2013, however, Ireland was seconds away from ending what had then become a 108-year dry spell. New Zealand trailed 22-17 with less than 30 seconds left in regulation before late-game heroics propelled it to a 24-22 victory.

The Irish face an uphill battle to make history as they prepare to square off against a New Zealand team that has won a record-breaking 18 consecutive test matches. However, as the Cubs demonstrated, the city is a prime backdrop for droughts to be broken.

For Payne, however, there's already a clear winner. "Regardless of who wins on the field Friday or Saturday, rugby in America moves forward and Chicago wins," Payne said.

RUGBY EXHIBITION

New Zealand vs. Ireland, 3 p.m. Saturday at Soldier Field

TV: Tape delay at 7 p.m., NBCSN - See more at:

http://digitaledition.chicagotribune.com/tribune/article_popover.aspx?guid=aceb6f61-5c76-4637-bf3a-ca9465c8734e#sthash.939wFVQy.dpuf

Lions have advantage ahead of first Test - Jones

24 DEC 2016

GETTY IMAGES

Contrary to what many British news media critics have claimed, England coach Eddie Jones believes the build-up itinerary before the first Test of the DHL New Zealand Lions Series 2017 favours the tourists.

Many news outlets have claimed the Lions are on a hiding to nothing on their tour of New Zealand because of the tough programme they face in attempting to become the first Lions side to win a series over the All Blacks since 1971.

But Jones believes the pre-Test fixtures against a Provincial Barbarians in Whangarei (June 3), New Zealand Maori in Rotorua (June 17) and Investec Super Rugby sides, the Blues (June 7), Crusaders (June 10), Highlanders (June 13) and Chiefs (June 20) will give the Lions a significant advantage.

He told Sky Sports the games organised would allow the Lions to adapt to conditions and to the playing styles expected in the Tests.

"What's going to be interesting is the lead-up games; how much form the Lions can get quickly against Super Rugby teams who are going to be firing," Jones said.

"I think there's a potential advantage there for the Lions. Although it's a tough schedule, everyone acknowledges that, but it gives them a chance to adjust to the pace and the tempo that's going to be played in New Zealand."

At the same time Jones acknowledged what the All Blacks had achieved in 2016 after the post-World Cup loss of Richie McCaw, Dan Carter, Ma'a Nonu, Conrad Smith, Tony Woodcock and Keven Mealamu.

"It's quite exceptional what they've done and that they've got the capacity to replace icons of the game so quickly.

"The gap they have been the best player and their next best player is a lot smaller than any other country in the world. It's a great credit to New Zealand's development system and their coaches," he said.





All Blacks tests could become free-to-air under proposed law change

12:48 PM Thursday Dec 8, 2016

Photo / Brett Phibbs

All Blacks tests would have to be broadcast on free-to-air television under a proposed law change to be debated by Parliament.

All Blacks tests would have to be broadcast on free-to-air television under a proposed law change to be debated by Parliament.

The bill in the name of New Zealand First MP Clayton Mitchell would ensure that any game of “national significance” was freely available to all New Zealanders.

That included all international rugby, rugby league, netball, cricket, and football games either played in New Zealand or in a major event such as a world cup.

It would also include the Summer and Winter Olympics and the Commonwealth Games.

The bill also proposed making some domestic events such as the National Rugby League (NRL) grand final or Super 15 rugby final free to air if they featured a New Zealand team.

The bill’s explanatory note said supporting New Zealand teams and other taxpayer-supported events could involve costs of \$1000 a year per household.

“The objective of this bill is to break this barrier down so that taxpayers can support New Zealand teams in key events and enjoy events that have about due to taxpayer support.”

The bill will get its first reading next year.

The full list of proposed free-to-air events:

- All Rugby World Cup matches involving New Zealand (adult men and women)
- All domestic rugby test matches involving New Zealand
- Super XV Competition Rugby Final (if a New Zealand team is involved)
- ITM Competition Cup Final

- All Netball World Cup matches involving New Zealand
- All domestic netball test matches
- ANZ Netball Championship (if a New Zealand team is involved)
- All Cricket World Cup matches involving New Zealand (adult men and women)
- All domestic one-day cricket international matches involving New Zealand (adult men and women) \
- All Rugby League World Cup matches involving New Zealand
- All domestic Rugby League test matches involving New Zealand
- National Rugby League Grand Final (if a New Zealand team is involved)
- All Football World Cup matches involving the New Zealand All Whites
- All domestic football international matches involving the New Zealand All Whites
- All Women’s Tennis Association and Association of Tennis Professionals tennis events held in New Zealand
- Australian National Basketball League Grand Final (if a New Zealand team is involved)
- The Summer Olympic Games
- The Winter Olympic Games
- The Commonwealth Games
- The New Zealand Trotting Cup
- Any other sporting event funded by the Major Events Development Fund

All Blacks, Dan Carter winners at the prestigious Laureus Sport Awards

April 19 2016

GETTY IMAGES

The All Blacks have won the world team of the year award at the Laureus Sports Awards, a second prestigious gong for the World Cup-winning team at the glitzy ceremony after Dan Carter won the comeback athlete of the year award.

It was the sixth time the All Blacks have been nominated for the prestigious world sport award, but was their first win.

Becoming the first team to win back-to-back World Cups, and the first All Blacks side to secure the trophy away from home, proved irresistible to the Laureus academy, made up of some sporting legends.

Carter received his individual award for his key role in the triumph in England last year. Carter, battling injuries and a form dip, was back to his very best by the end of the tournament. He produced some stunning form during the World Cup playoffs, culminating in a man-of-the-match effort in the final win over the Wallabies at Twickenham.

Other finalists for the award presented at a glitzy ceremony in Berlin, Germany, were swimming legend Michael Phelps, surfer Mick Fanning, skier Lindsay Vonn and heptathlete Jessica Ennis Hill.

All Blacks captain Richie McCaw collected the award on behalf of Carter who remained in Paris to rehab a knee injury as his career continues with French club Racing 92.

"It's a privilege to receive such a prestigious award," Carter said via video message.

"It was a very special year for me in 2015, especially after the injury setbacks I've had over the last couple of years. I'd like to say a huge thank you to friends, family, management and team-mates for showing faith in me and allowing me to live my dream."

Carter's World Cup efforts have gained rich reward. He was named World Rugby's player of the year, won the overseas player of the year in Britain's annual BBC Awards, and was named overseas personality of the year by Britain's rugby writers association.

The All Blacks beat some hugely successful teams for their awards, including the Golden State Warriors (NBA champions) and Spanish football giants FC Barcelona.







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