

Dear World Rugby and Rugby NGBs,

Integrity. Passion. Solidarity. Discipline. Respect.

These are the defining characteristics of our sport. And they're exactly the values we can use to take on the climate crisis we're all facing.

Strength. Courage. Selflessness.

These qualities bind us together as athletes and lovers of the game. And we'll need every one of them if we're going to meet the threat that climate change poses.

There will be a lot to discuss at World Rugby's Council Meeting this November, but as players we ask that one issue sits above all: that we act to safeguard a better world for our communities, our sport and future generations.

Over just the last couple of years we've seen our sport and its players impacted by flooded pitches, forest fires, air pollution and droughts; World Cup matches postponed by typhoons; Rugby 7s players facing the hottest Olympics on record.¹ Most critically, climate change is posing an existential threat to countries who embody significant cultural and competitive identities of our sport. Island nations like Samoa, Tonga and Fiji are facing catastrophic sea level rises, with more powerful storms and rising temperatures also killing the ecosystems around their coasts and damaging their way of life.²

Signing the UN's Sports for Climate Action Framework was World Rugby's first step in creating a more sustainable and fairer society. But we know there is much more work to be done to limit global warming to 1.5°C and protect the environment we all depend on.

The scale of this challenge makes it easy to wonder what we can possibly do. But ours is a sport where individuals come together as a team, striving towards extraordinary achievements. Ours is a sport of comebacks, sometimes against all the odds. It's a game of strategy and tactics, paired with courage and ambition. And it creates an unparalleled camaraderie within teams; a solidarity that transcends geographical boundaries.

Climate change is the opponent we have to tackle. These are the decisive minutes of the game. We urge you, our governing bodies, to show leadership in this - knowing you have our full support in doing so.

Yours,

James Farndale, Alena Olsen and David Pocock

Supported by over two-hundred current and retired professional players and the IRP

¹ Joe Ritchie, "Rugby World Cup in Japan Is Disrupted by Storm", The New York Times, 10th Oct. 2019 [<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/10/sports/rugby-world-cup-japan-typhoon.html>]; Y. Oikawa, V. Downie, Prof. M. Tipton et. al., *Rings of Fire*, BASIS, May 2021 [https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/6cdc8479-c2c3-4986-80f1-2807ea88051a/Rings_of_Fire.pdf].

² UN Environment Programme, "Climate change is wiping out the secret to Fiji's international rugby success", 25th Sept. 2018 [<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/climate-change-wiping-out-secret-fijis-international-rugby-success>].

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