



**RAPID  
RUGBY**

# GLOBAL RAPID RUGBY

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## CHINA AND NEW ZEALAND JOIN RUGBY REVOLUTION

Global Rapid Rugby has unveiled the **China Lions** as the final team in its inaugural home-and-away competition this year. **China Rugby Football Association** and New Zealand's domestic championship winning **Bay of Plenty** have formed an exciting joint venture.

The Lions are the sixth team to be announced as part of **Global Rapid Rugby Season One** in 2020, joining Australia's Western Force, the Malaysia Valke representing both Malaysia and South Africa, Fijian Latui, Manuma Samoa and the Hong Kong based South China Tigers.

Fast paced and explosive by name and nature, Season One includes a AU\$1 million total prize pool, 30 games over 10 rounds and a one-off Grand Final.

**Global Rapid Rugby CEO, Mark Evans**, described the inclusion of China as 'crucial' to the long-term development of rugby throughout Asia.

"Our expansion into China is an important development for the competition. We believe that rugby has the potential to become an extremely popular and successful sport throughout the country," Evans said.

"Rugby is a game with broad appeal. Add the on-going energy, entertainment and family fun created by Rapid Rugby and I am confident crowds in Shanghai will love supporting their home team, the Lions.

"We thank the China Rugby Football Association for its assistance and belief in what we are trying to achieve. The ongoing support of New Zealand Rugby has always been greatly appreciated. It is tremendously exciting to be involved with a progressive operation like Bay of Plenty Rugby Union," Evans said.

This year is the perfect time to expand the rugby footprint in China. The national women's team will make China's Olympic Rugby debut in Tokyo and the men's team will continue its attempt to qualify for the 2020 Games.

**Mr Chen, President of China Rugby Football Association**, says Rapid Rugby is an appealing concept with an exciting future.

"China Rugby Football Association partnering with Bay of Plenty Rugby to compete in Rapid Rugby supports the strategy for the growth of rugby in China. We are very excited about our Chinese women's team competing this year in the Olympics in Tokyo and see this new partnership as part of our strategy of providing opportunities to develop our Chinese players and coaches and raise the profile of rugby in China."

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**Bay of Plenty Rugby Union CEO, Mike Rogers,** described the partnership with Chinese Rugby and Rapid Rugby as a bold step forward.

“Bay of Plenty Rugby is excited about partnering with the China Rugby Football Association to participate in Rapid Rugby 2020 and over time grow the game of rugby in China. The vision of Rapid Rugby is one that we share, and we are committed to growing the fantastic Rapid Rugby brand in the Asian region.”

The creation of Australian businessman and internationally renowned philanthropist Andrew Forrest AO, Global Rapid Rugby began as a Perth based Exhibition Series in 2018 and developed into a 2019 Showcase Series across seven Asia Pacific territories, featuring 70-minute matches, revolutionary new rules and an emphasis on off-field entertainment for fans.

Global Rapid Rugby Season One will kick off on March 13 with the Grand Final in Perth on June 6. The full match schedule will be released soon.

Global Rapid Rugby will monitor and follow the advice of relevant health authorities around the Coronavirus and immediately communicate any relevant information to stakeholders.

- ENDS

***For more information and interview requests with Global Rapid Rugby CEO Mark Evans or Bay of Plenty Rugby Union CEO, Mike Rogers, contact Head of Media and Communications Mark Doran: [mdoran@rapidrugby.com](mailto:mdoran@rapidrugby.com) +61 412 311 159.***

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