

CHINA LIONS RUGBY MEDIA RELEASE



MEDIA RELEASE | China Lions support decision to cancel the season

Bay of Plenty Rugby Union chief executive Mike Rogers supports the decision to cancel the 2020 Rapid Rugby Season.

The long-term travel restrictions that were put in place as part of the worldwide fight against COVID-19 provided the Asia Pacific competition with no choice but to cancel the inaugural season.

Rogers says while he is disappointed the season has ended, it was the smart thing to do.

“There was a lot of excitement generated around the competition, but we had to put the safety of the players, managers, staff and the public first. Yes, it is disappointing this has happened but we can take a lot out of what games were played.”

Rapid Rugby chief executive Mark Evans says making the call to cancel the season was a tough decision but it was a necessary one.

“All of our decisions around Global Rapid Rugby in 2020 have been based on expert health advice; there are global realities and challenges that cannot and should not be ignored or worked around,” Evans says.

“We have never been scared of hard work or seemingly impossible challenges, but in the current circumstances, we feel that our hand has been forced to upgrade our previous Season One suspension to a complete cancellation.”

Evan says Rapid Rugby will continue to work closely with all teams and stakeholders around potential future plans.

“The work that went into the formation of the 2020 home-and-away season was first-class. We showed in the one round that we were able to play, what an exciting game we have created.”

China Rugby Football Association’s, Director of the Multi-Ball Games Administrative Centre of the General Administration of Sport Yingbiao Chen says, the China Lions team had exceeded his expectation and he was looking forward to continuing the elevation of rugby in China.

“I am proud of how our team performed in their first game. The courage they showed in that game was inspiring. They showed the real heart of a lion. It’s disappointing the season finished this way, but Rapid Rugby has shown it is an exciting game and it has the potential to go a long way.”

China Lions head coach Mike Rogers,(no relation to the Lions chief executive) says the team took a lot of positives from the shortened season.

“There was a real spirit of camaraderie within the team. The boys are gutted it’s come to a premature end. But we showed we can play a really exciting brand of rugby and we’ve set a great foundation moving forward.”

Evans says the immediate future may be full of uncertainty, but the bigger picture is full of exciting opportunities for rugby in the Asia Pacific region.

“I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank everyone involved in what was to be the first full season of Global Rapid Rugby. China Rugby Football Association, the Bay of Plenty Rugby Union, Hong Kong Rugby Union, Rugby Australia, Fiji Rugby, Samoa Rugby Union, Malaysia Rugby Union, Valke Rugby Union and of course Rapid Rugby’s founders Andrew and Nicola Forrest.”

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