

Women in Rugby Clubs Toolkit

June 2020





The more women and girls we
can get involved in rugby
having positive experiences;
the stronger our clubs,
communities and game will be.

What's the toolkit for?

We're super-charging women's rugby!

Women's rugby has grown by 40% over the past four years. From 22,000 players in 2016 to over 31,000 players in 2019. The success of the Black Ferns winning the World Cup in 2017, the Farah Palmer Cup providing a national platform for our top female players and the introduction of girls only grades in many regions have all helped fuel this growth.

But we know we need to do more. Facilities at many clubs and sports grounds are relics of the past, not providing clean safe areas for whanau and friends. Getting good quality coaching for girls and women's teams is difficult and female referee numbers haven't kept pace with the growth of the game. Around our Board and Committee tables the woman and girls are not often given the consideration when decisions are made on resourcing and funds.

This toolkit is for Committees of rugby clubs who want to be part of the growth of girls and women's rugby in New Zealand. It will provide information on key areas to focus on to improve your clubs offering for female players. There's links to templates and resources to help with planning, and you'll find inspiration and motivation from what others are doing.

In 2021 New Zealand is hosting the Rugby World Cup with the Black Ferns out to defend the title in front of their home crowd. With this tournament there is an opportunity to super charge the women's game here in Aotearoa. This will only happen if our rugby community are ready and have the tools for them to be able to do this, that's what this toolkit is aiming to achieve, to inspire and unify the grassroots behind our woman's game.

'He waka eke noa' – a waka we're all in together.

What key areas to focus on?

There are 3 key areas that clubs should focus on to be successful in growing participation by girls and women:



1. Include women in the Governance of the club.

- Professional and well managed.
- Fair and equal opportunities.
- Being friendly and welcoming.
- Providing information when needed.
- A safe and enjoyable environment.



2. Provide good quality Coaching.

- Improve the number and quality of women as coaches and coaches of female players.
- Provide opportunities for women to fulfil potential as coaches.
- Provide support for women to get into refereeing.



3. Equitable access to good Facilities and Support.

- Cleaned and well-maintained facilities.
- Having fit for purpose, inclusive changing rooms.
- Fair access to good ground's and facilities.

1. Include women in the Governance of the club.

Your committee has the responsibility for the delivery of the game in your club, from the off-field services, to the on-field experience. To do this well, you need to draw on diverse perspectives and views of the membership and local community. Here are some steps to achieve this:

1. Get women's involvement in your club on the Committee agenda - Start a conversation about your current representation and discuss the why more female participation at all levels of the club is good for its future sustainability and success.
2. Review the constitution - Do you have appointed or co-opted positions that can make it easier for women to fill positions?
3. Review competency requirements - Think about the breadth of skill and knowledge that you need on your Committee and are there women already in the club who would bring these skills to the table?
4. Seek and invite women to apply - Think about the language you use when advertising and be clear that being on the Committee is not all about financials and speeches. Sometimes people just need to be asked.
5. Run the selection process - Make sure your process is free of bias and fair to everyone.
6. Welcome the new members - Create a positive first experience with a good induction process so they well informed.
7. Maintain a positive environment - Involve all members of the Committee in discussions and decision making.
8. Prepare for the future - Discuss where the next Committee members will come from and how to get them involved.

2. Provide good quality Coaching.

Studies show that the person who has the greatest influence on a positive experience with a sport is the coach.

In many ways the game of rugby is much the same for females and males, however there are a few important differences in the way coaches should engage with females in order to give them the best experience possible. Here are some things to consider when providing coaching for girls and women in your club:

Communication

Female players often want lots of information and detail. They'll ask questions and want to understand exactly what they need to do. Coaches need to be willing to listen and have patience to respond to all questions to get the most from their players.

Strength and education

Girls and boys are on average equal in strength up until about 13. Beyond this females are obviously physically different and tend not to be as aggressive as boys. Tactics, skills and drills need to be modified to adapt to this change. As the level of coaching increases there is also a need to educate coaches in gender education to ensure physical and mental wellbeing.

Trust

Female players need to trust their coach more than males, especially if they new to the game. They may not back themselves and need encouragement to show their talent.

Language

Coaches should be conscious of emphasising the image of rugby being a 'mans' game. For example using terms like 'eight-man scrum' can reinforce this perception.

World Rugby – Women Coaching Rugby Toolkit

World Rugby have developed a toolkit to increase the number of women coaches worldwide. While aimed at national organisations, it has some valuable insights into what motivates women in sports and how to plan, grow and retain coaches.

World Rugby - Women Coaching Rugby [Toolkit](#).

3. Equitable access to good Facilities and Support.

It's essential that rugby clubs are inclusive and gender equal to encourage our female players. Appropriate facilities and fair access to equipment and grounds play an important part in this.

Changing Room Facilities

Questions to ask to check of your changing rooms facilities:

- ✓ Is there sufficient toilet cubicles for a team (4) rather than just men's toilets with urinals?
- ✓ Do you have individual shower cubicles?
- ✓ Do you have sanitary bins in bathrooms?
- ✓ Are there private spaces for medical requirements?
- ✓ Are there family friendly spaces, including baby changing amenities?
- ✓ Are they clean and safe, including having adequate lighting in and around the facility?

For information and design of good practise changing rooms, have a look at section 9 of the Wider Auckland Facilities Plan.

Wider Auckland Facilities [Plan](#).

Facilities and Support

Things to consider when allocating resources and planning developments in your club that will support women's rugby:

- ✓ Training times need to be considered and flexible for women to accommodate family and work commitments.
- ✓ Create a schedule for changing rooms if they are shared between males and females to avoid any cross over.
- ✓ Provide new jerseys and outfitting that are made for females. Work with the teams to find what is appropriate.
- ✓ Recognise significant milestones reached by female players, coaches and volunteers, and make awards appropriate.
- ✓ Make the club rooms more welcome by including better food and beverage options, and a more inclusive environment including having safe areas for kids to play.
- ✓ Provide equal medical and development support for the female players as what's provided for males.

Women's Rugby Plan

Create a plan so that everyone knows where you want to get to and how you'll get there.

The *World Rugby – Women in Coaching Toolkit* has a chapter on planning. Although its specifically for coaching, it can be adapted for all parts of women and girl's participation. The planning process is broken into 3 easy steps that are shown below in a simple 1-page template. The toolkit also highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluating your plan to ensure you're on track and if adjustments are needed.

Where are we now?

Where do we want to be?

How are we going to get there? Focus on a few areas. Break it down to seasons. Apply funding and resources needed.



Case Study: Martinborough Rugby Club

I started my journey off as Junior President as the club was rebuilding and we made an off-field plan. We started with our local café stepping in to help run the kitchen which improved the vibe across the club, and it began to become a family environment. Being part of the younger generation in the club we thought “why should the guys get all the fun?” and we started having women’s trips and meetings which really brought everyone closer together. I then began to be involved with helping manage the Senior men’s team. With the coach we thought about how this year could be different, and instead of sitting in the changing rooms drinking after training we made it partners night and put on a meal. With women taking lead and making these changes the dynamics of the club changed. Our supporters gear was everywhere, and our family environment just grew with hundreds attending each game, topped off by winning the 2019 Wairarapa-Bush Senior men’s title. Having a women run committee and club rooms has been a huge part of the club’s success. Now to get our girls teams out there!

- Kaitlin Russel



Case Study: Zingari-Richmond Rugby Club

Former Otago Spirit loose forward, Karina Nafatali, has bucked the trend and is believed to become the first female to coach a Premier men's team in Dunedin when she took over in 2019. Having coached both Pirates and University women's team to banners, and being assistant coach for Otago Spirit it was a challenge that she was up for. With many of the players former students at Kaikorai Valley college where she worked and also coached the 1st XV, she knew exactly what she was walking into. Zingari was a club she knew well, one that her family have been involved with for a long time. Zingari-Richmond chairman Stephen Baughan said the club had approached Ms Nafatali after the players had wanted her to coach the side.

Sacha Nicolson is another example of Zingari-Richmond's inclusive environment. She has been club captain for the past three years and showing how females can take leading roles within the rugby club environment.



Case Study: Green Island Rugby Club

Green Island is a club based in Dunedin that strives to be a community club for all. In 2018 the club established a women's team and have been very accommodating and supportive of women's rugby. I was invited to join the Committee to ensure that we were represented in any club decisions. The team receive the same prizes as other teams, and were purchased women specific playing kit, wind breaker jackets and dress shirts. To top this off in 2020 the committee allocated funding to develop a separate women's changing rooms with its own shower block. Some of the players rolled their sleeves up and painted it to ensure it had the look and feel they wanted. I'm really proud of our club that is doing its best to ensure that club facilities are equally accessible to women and the environment is welcoming for all.

- Nikita Coubrough, Green Island Manager & Committee member



Be part of the Tour!

Rugby World Cup 2021 – Trophy Tour

As part of the build up to New Zealand hosting the Rugby World Cup in September 2021, the Rugby World Cup Trophy (affectionately known as 'Nancy' to the Black Ferns) will be touring the country.

The Trophy will be going the length of Aotearoa stopping at clubs and schools so fans can get up close and personal, and possibly have some World Cup winning Black Ferns or Olympic Silver medallist Black Fern 7's visit as well.

Look out for 'Expressions of Interest' applications coming out in July 2020 on www.nzrugby.co.nz. We want to hear the great things your doing at your club or school to super charge Women's rugby and why you'd love 'Nancy' to stop by.