

MARCH 2025

BARBAA NEWS

The Newsletter of the New Zealand Barbarian Rugby Club Inc.
Level 6, ASB Stand, Eden Park, Auckland, New Zealand.

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The NZ Barbarians U18 sevens girls before their December games at Dilworth School; at bottom right is coach and Barbarians member Sherwin Stowers.

PRESIDENT'S TEAM TALK



Hello to all our Barbarians members and welcome to the 2025 rugby season.

I feel very proud and privileged to be the 38th President of this great club, having become a member in 2014. For those who don't know me well, you can read a bit more about my rugby background further into this newsletter.

Those who were at the AGM in November will recall that I mentioned the influence of 1982-83 President, the late Bob Graham. Bob taught me everything about accounting, firstly, but also how to be a good human, because he was just an outstanding man. I try to emulate the good that he did.

There are two accountants on the current club committee (hello, Grant 'Scurrah' McCurrach), which is always a good thing!

I'll be quite mindful of the financials of the club. We are here providing a service and want to fill a gap between the professional and amateur sides of the sport. If we have to dig into our reserves, then we will if required, but also we want to ensure a long-term future, so we'll be judicious in our use of funds.

The committee goes from strength to strength. Everyone puts their hands up, not out. No one is there giving lip service. They are putting in the yards. My predecessor Craig 'Dundee' Glendinning gave two years of sterling service as President, though I have no intention of following in his footsteps and donning the boots again for the club! I cannot recall any other President who did that, but Dundee did the mahi on and off the field. Regina Sheck, too, who so deservedly won

our Albert Storey Trophy, is unafraid, even after a knee operation, to get the boots on in club colours.

So this committee will be continuing to push the ethos of the club with a focus in 2025 on helping expand the women's game, which needs some TLC. We were big in the Under 85kg space, and we've nurtured that for New Zealand Rugby to take over.

The other push for the club is to reengage with the members and get them to turn up to the club and club events in larger numbers and participate in our activities. We're not seeing as many new old faces as we'd like and, as you know, the clubrooms are fantastic, so come on down for Blues games. Those are the occasions we love, as is the Fun Day. Mark it down, Sunday May 18 at Bruce Pulman Park. This is the biggest gathering of Barbarians at one time. There'll be upwards of 50 of us there and we have a beer afterwards. Also mark on your calendar the March 16 Pat Walsh Memorial Bowls Day and the April 5 new members' induction event.

Catch you at the club.

Rick Johnston
President
NZ Barbarian Rugby Club



WHAT'S ON IN 2025

Saturday March 15
Super Rugby U20 tourney, Taupo:
NZ Barbarians v Chiefs, 1.05pm



Sunday March 16
Pat Walsh Memorial Bowls Day,
Bridge Park BC, 9.30am



Tuesday March 18
Super Rugby U20 tourney, Taupo:
NZ Barbarians v TBC



Saturday March 22
Blues v Crusaders
7.05pm



Saturday March 22
Super Rugby U20 tourney, Taupo:
NZ Barbarians v TBC



Saturday April 5
Blues v Hurricanes
7.05pm



Saturday April 5
Aupiki: Blues v
Hurricanes Poua, 4.35pm
New members' induction,
1pm



Saturday April 12
Blues v Moana Pasifika
4.35pm



Friday May 2
Blues v Western Force
7.05pm



Sunday May 18
Annual Fun Day,
Bruce Pulman Park, 8.30am



Saturday May 31
Blues v Waratahs
7.05pm



Saturday September 6
All Blacks
v South Africa (RC),
7.05pm



Saturday September 27
All Blacks
v Australia (RC/BC),
5.05pm



**All events are at Eden Park unless otherwise specified.*

**Keep an eye on the website and your email for confirmation of further 2025 functions/events.*

Deaths Of Members

Jon McLachlan (1949-2024)

Jon McLachlan was All Blacks number 732, playing eight games, including his sole Test, on the 1974 tour of Australia.

On debut against South Australia, he ran in a record four tries, but there was much competition in his position from the likes of Grant Batty and Sir Bryan Williams.

The 2005 edition of the Encyclopedia of New Zealand Rugby described him as "a wing possessing explosive pace, a deceptive swerve and a sound tackle."

Jon played 55 games for Auckland, scoring 19 tries, between 1970-78, out of the Eastern and College Rifles clubs. He was a life member of the Grammar TEC club, the modern-day incarnation of Eastern, and he was Rifles' fifth All Black, but the first to play a Test.

Jon also played six first-class games for the NZ Barbarians. In later years, he was a cheerful presence around the grounds and at the clubhouse.



Some club members at last month's Peter Johnstone Memorial Bowls tourney at The Mount; from left: Wayne Brill, Paul Eaton (Mt Maunganui BC), Mark Moore, Bryan Williams, Peter Tubberty and Rick Johnston.

GLOBAL YOUTH SEVENS REVIEW



The Barbarians club fielded an Under 18 girls team in this burgeoning event, which was held at Dilworth School in December.

Coached by Sherwin Stowers, but with little prep time, the girls placed 18th out of 24, with standouts being captain Aleiyah Tuala, Grace Tipi and Monica Tuala. Many had featured at the Condor Sevens a fortnight earlier. By all accounts, the girls, mainly drawn from the Year 11 and 12 ranks, enjoyed themselves at the camp at MAGS. This age group girls rugby is a target area for the Barbarians, especially in establishing pathways and helping ID young talent.

We wish Sherwin well in his new role as Sacred Heart College's First XV coach and DoR.

MEMBER PROFILE TIM BURCHER



Tim Burcher is still sprightly at 70, as he was in his rep playing days.

Tim Burcher loves the Barbarians and what the club stands for as he reflects on over 30 years as a member.

Now 70, the sole practitioner solicitor played halfback for NZ Universities, Otago, Auckland and Counties, renowned as a sharp runner and swift passer.

He played one first-class match for the club, a 20-all draw at Eden Park against a strong NZ Maori Invitational XV combination in 1981.

"I always loved the ethos of the Barbarians. Back in the day, you often had top provincial reps and All Blacks playing for or against the Baabaas or against school teams. It was always a thrill," he says.

Burcher served on the club committee during the crucial mid-2000s period.

"I feel very privileged to have been on the Barbarians committee when we were full-on negotiating with the Eden Park Trust Board to get into our present clubrooms. They absolutely had to take our building (The House that Jack Built) and we had to have a decent return for that. What we've ended up with is really special," Burcher says.

"I don't get there often enough these days, but I did get to see Coldplay and Ed Sheeran, which was a bonus!

"I always feel totally at home when I'm there. There's always someone whom I know that I can swap a few lies with about how good we thought we were!"

Of the 1981 Baabaas team, skippered by Graham Mourie and including the likes of AJ Whetton, Stu Wilson, Brad Johnstone, Andy Haden and Andy Dalton, Burcher recalls "a free-flowing, entertaining game with a fair result. I enjoyed playing in the mighty red jersey."

Burcher had a fascinating career, playing 46 games for Otago from 1975-78 while doing his LLB in Dunedin, 11 games for Counties in 1980 when he was surplus to Auckland coach Bryan Craies' requirements, and 44 games for Auckland from 1981-85. He effectively retired after the epic 1985 NZU tour of Europe, just as David Kirk arrived in the City of Sails.

But easily the high water mark of Burcher's career was the 1984 season, in which he was the No 9, inside Grant Fox, for the peerless Auckland side which won the NPC and dispatched

the Ranfurly Shield-holding Canterbury 32-3 on Eden Park. He was also alongside Fox as Varsity won the Gallaher Shield in decisive fashion.

"Varsity was on top of its game, so as an old halfback it was a dream ride," he says, of a team which includes 8-9 Barbarians today.

He played behind some great No 8s in his time, too, namely Merv Jaffray, Alan Dawson, 'Buck' Shelford, Glenn Rich, Glen Young and John McDermott and, other than Fox, he fed the ball to some top 10s, notably including the late, great Nicky Allen.

Burcher liked to employ the dive pass on occasion. Alas, we rarely see it any more.

"The dive pass still has its place but, as my career went on, I realised you're no use to anyone on the ground. Sometimes, though, a dive pass was the only way to get it cleared."

He was not an especially robust defender, but then he didn't have to make as many tackles as halfbacks of today: "Our loosies would say 'Step aside, so we can smash them.' So men like Grant Dickson and John Hunt were marvellous tacklers on my behalf."

These days, other than work and seeing the grandkids, Burcher enjoys his golf (off a 20-handicap) and keeping tabs on Varsity, Auckland, the Blues and the All Blacks.

He's a fan of Cam Roigard, though they are very different halfbacks.

"He's going to be outstanding. He has speed, which I had, but also strength, which I didn't have."

AGM REVIEW



New President Rick Johnston, left, and Nick Sheppard on AGM duty in November.

The 88th Annual General Meeting of the club saw a smallish gathering of members hear about another busy, full and productive year for the Barbarians.

The event was held in the Auckland Rugby box in Eden Park's South Stand as a plumbing issue had ruled out our clubrooms for the night.

NZR CEO Mark Robinson, a Barbarian, spoke on 2024 activities and 2025 plans by HQ and was happy to answer some curly questions from members around the game's future.

Financially, the club came close to breaking even, which is not a terrible result given the times. But the hope is to be back in the black this year.

One of the highlights was the life membership accorded to **Peter Thompson**, a long-time Barbarian and huge supporter of rugby in the region from grassroots to the Blues. In particular, Thomo's support of the Fun Day since 2002 has been substantial

and unstinting. He's also a life member of the College Rifles club and the Auckland union, and becomes the 13th living life member of the Barbarians.

The Albert Storey Trophy was awarded to committee member and two-time Rugby World Cup-winning Black Ferns prop **Regina Sheck**, of whom it was remarked that "she gets stuff done." She certainly does, willing to strap on the boots, despite a recent knee op, if needed, in any Baabaas games or to help out with commentary on live streaming, as she did with the Barbarians U18 girls and the Global Youth Sevens, not to mention all her other organisational work on the rugby committee. She'll be even busier in 2025 as she is coaching Papakura premier men with Frank Bunce and Taupiri women, again, with Vanessa Cootes.

In committee movement, **Rick Johnston** has succeeded Craig Glendinning, one tough Samoan loose forward replacing another, as President.

Rick was made a Barbarian in 2014, having played five games as an openside for Auckland in 1982 out of the Auckland Marist club, with whom he won a Gallaher Shield in 1989. He would have played more but for injury and a plethora of top loosies in the union through that decade. Rick played for a strong NZ Barbarians team in 1984 on a two-game internal tour, a side that was managed by his mentor, Bob Graham.

Nick Sheppard steps into the senior Vice-President role with **Pete White** as the junior Vice-President. **Craig Carter** replaces Pete as the club captain. **James Parsons** steps down from the committee. Incoming is another Marist loose forward, **Ivan Tasi**, and **Gary Howarth**, a stalwart of the East Coast Bays club and former President and Chairman of the North Harbour union.

BAABAAS BRIEFS



**Congratulations to a trio of Barbarians who were recognised in the New Year honours as Companions of the NZ Order of Merit.*

Former All Blacks coach Ian Foster, now in Japan, was recognised for services to rugby, former Maori All Black Fred Graham for services to Maori art, and former All Blacks coach John Hart for services to sports governance. Congrats, too, to Bernie McCahill, who is the new President of Auckland Rugby.

**The Barbarians club has been on social media for some time, via Facebook www.facebook.com/NZBarbarianRugby and Instagram www.instagram.com/nzbarbarianrugby so you can more swiftly keep up with all the club news. The website is looking good too.*

**The newsletter editor is also the editor of iconic monthly magazine Rugby News.*

There's plenty of provincial, sevens, grassroots and women's coverage in there to sink your teeth into, as well as All Blacks and Super Rugby content. The February/March issue is out now. Rugby News is available at all good magazine retailers and supermarkets or you can subscribe by calling 0800-77-77-10 or visit www.rugbynews.co.nz

**The 2025 subs notices were sent out several weeks ago. Please pay your subs, if applicable, at your earliest convenience, as this is a requirement of membership.*



At the February 15 Blues v Chiefs match: from left, Vesi Talamaivao, Mike Casey and George Duncan.

EMAIL ADDRESSES



The club uses email and the website for most of its communication and dissemination of information these days.

Some of you may not have an email address, but can you please let us know a possible email address for a family member or friend that could expedite our communications to you. This would also help reduce the cost of postage. Please contact secretary Monalisa Codling if you wish to take this route. You will then be able to keep up with the club activities on a far more regular basis. If you are moving or changing your email or contact number, please email secretary@barbarianrugby.co.nz

VISITORS TO THE CLUB



Eden Park security will only allow members and/or visitors into the ASB Stand and our clubrooms by showing your membership/visitor cards. If you need more than one visitor card to bring friends or family to the club, especially on 'game days', please contact Monalisa Codling to obtain additional 'visitor' cards. Please ensure any additional 'visitor' cards are returned before leaving the club at the end of the function/event.

CLUB CONTACT



Your first port of call is our club secretary Monalisa Codling, who is at times based at Eden Park in the clubrooms' office.

Monalisa's details are:

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