

NOVEMBER 2025

BARBAA NEWS

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

www.barbarianrugby.co.nz • FB: @NZBarbarianRugby • Insta: @nzbarbarianrugby



The NZ Barbarians Under 18s boys, who scored 16 tries in their two matches in September.

PRESIDENT'S TEAM TALK



It almost feels like the club has paused for breath after another very busy three months on and off the field from August through to October.

Our teams have been in action showing off our traditional open rugby in the famous scarlet jersey. The NZ Barbarians Under 18 girls and boys teams were doing their thing in September and October, as were the NZ Barbarians Area Schools, who won their big game up in Ahipara. This is our 13th season of sponsoring this important national schools team. There was also a match against the NZ Marist Colts, coached by our very own Craig 'Dundee' Glendinning, back in August.

I was on hand, along with our patron Sir Bryan 'Beegee' Williams, U85kg rugby ambassador Sir Graham Henry and NZR chairman David Kirk, to help make the presentation after the National U85kg Club Cup final at Eden Park before the September Bledisloe Cup Test. I felt humble standing next to that trio!

'Ted' reminded us that HSOB was his club as he nodded to the winning HSOB Light Bears team. It was the culmination of another fantastic competition, the sixth, for our 'middleweight' players, off the back of the groundbreaking tour to Sri Lanka in May. We are still very much involved in that space.

The clubrooms were pumping for both the big Tests in September. How epic was that Test against the Boks, with the All Blacks taking the win in a hugely physical encounter?

We also take a moment to remember those members who have left

us recently, all great rugby men. Fuller obits will be further into this newsletter, but RIP to Keith Nelson, Ian Gemmell, Peter Russell, Alec Magee and Mick Bremner.

Our AGM is coming up on Wednesday, November 26 at 6pm. It's back in the clubrooms after the plumbing issues from 2024, so there will be food and beverages this time! We'd love to see a good gathering of Barbarians to hear what the club has done in 2025 and look ahead to a busy 2026. We'll also be talking there on the club's draft strategic plan for the next few years until the end of 2029. We've agreed on four key pillars, and it's now about nailing down timelines. Catch you then!

Rick Johnston
President
NZ Barbarian Rugby Club



WHAT'S ON IN 2025-26

Wednesday November 26
Club AGM
6pm



December 19-21
Global Youth Sevens,
Dilworth School, from 9am

GLOBAL YOUTH
SEVENS



Saturday February 14
Blues v Chiefs
7.05pm



Saturday March 7
Blues v Crusaders
7.05pm



Sunday March 15
Blues v Moana Pasifika
3.35pm



Saturday March 28
Blues v Fijian Drua
7.05pm



Friday April 17
Blues v Highlanders
7.05pm



Saturday May 16
Blues v Hurricanes
7.05pm



*All events are at Eden Park unless otherwise specified.

*Keep an eye on the website and your email for confirmation of further 2025-26 functions/events.



Our Under 18 boys getting the good oil on the Barbarians club

Deaths Of Members

Tony Edgar (1937-2025)

Tony Edgar was 87 and had been a member since 1969.

As a halfback, he played 32 games for Auckland, for six tries, from 1957-62 out of the Auckland University club, and was in the starting Auckland XV that famously won the Ranfurly Shield off Southland in 1959. He played 12 games for Counties, out of the Papakura club, in 1961, and also appeared for the NZ Juniors, captaining them against the 1959 Lions, and the 1960 NZ Universities. His First XV rugby was for King's College in 1954-55. A stock agent, he was great mates with the late Barbarians Bob Graham and Norm Brown.

Keith Nelson (1938-2025)

Keith Nelson was 86 and had been a Barbarian since 1979.

A loose forward/lock, Keith was All Blacks number 631, playing 18 times, including two Tests, from 1962-64 out of Otago University.

He played 87 games for Auckland from 1964-70, the last few years as captain, and was later President, patron and life member of the union. He also appeared for NZ Juniors, NZ Universities and for both North Island and South Island in 154 first-class games.

Though he was an All Black out of Otago University, Keith was a great Ponsonby club man, also serving as patron of Ponies and being a life member. It was his one rugby regret that he never won a Gallaher Shield as a player. But he did take real pride in being given his 200-game blazer at Ponsonby's Double Centurions luncheon in May 2025, despite recent ill health.

Keith was a dentist by profession, having founded Keith Nelson and Associates, a west Auckland family practice still going strong. Many rugby players went to see him for their dental work, some only days after things got very physical against Keith's Ponsonby side on the field.

Ian Gemmell (1944-2025)

Ian Gemmell was 81, had been a member since 1999, and was one of three Barbarians brothers, along with Bruce and Doug, which was unprecedented in the club.

Out of Auckland Grammar School, Ian played his senior club rugby as a hooker/loose forward for Manukau, with whom he later coached and served in administration for many years, including a stint as President. He was made a life member of the Manukau club in 1990.

In later years, he was a supporter of the Grammar, Grammar-Carlton and Grammar TEC club and helped facilitate the feeding of players after training. Ian helped run the iconic family business of Gemmell's shoe repairs until recent times, a four generation affair which reached 100 years in 2025. Only a fortnight before his death, the Gemmells gathered at the Barbarians clubrooms for a family reunion, which proved to be Ian's last hurrah.

Alec Magee (1930-2025)

Alec Magee was 94 and had been a Barbarian since 1977.

He made 10 appearances for Auckland out of the Grafton club in 1954-55, scoring a try on debut against Taranaki, and challenging Canterbury for the Ranfurly Shield. Alec

also made one first-class appearance for Auckland in 1952 and turned out for the Barbarians club on occasion in non first-class matches. After his playing days, he coached at Grafton.

Alec was also a stalwart of the Cornwall Cricket Club, and bowled left-arm spinners for the premiers, earning the nickname 'Paleface.'

In later years, he was often to be found enjoying 'choir practice' on Thursday nights at the Auckland University RFC, often alongside his great mate and fellow Barbarian, the late Don Cameron, and other Barbarians such as Bob Burnes and Bruce Gemmell.

Peter Russell (1963-2025)

Peter Russell was 62 and had been a Barbarian since 2009.

He was a highly regarded coach, especially so in Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa-Bush, Manawatu and Wellington at club, NPC and Heartland Championship levels as well as a stint in 2009-10 as Highlanders assistant coach, in the UK with Newcastle and in Japan with NEC Green Rockets.

In 2007, he was named New Zealand Rugby coach of the year for his work in taking the Magpies, in tandem with fellow Barbarian Tom Coventry, to the semifinals of the old Air New Zealand Cup. In 2011, the duo coached the Magpies to the ITM Cup Championship title. Peter also won Jubilee and Swindale Cups with MSP in Wellington from 1999-2002. From 2003-06, he coached Wairarapa-Bush, winning the last NPC third division crown (2005) before winning the inaugural Meads Cup (2006). In more recent times, he coached the Manawatu Turbos from 2019-22.

Mick Bremner (1930-2025)

Selwyn 'Mick' Bremner was 95, the second oldest surviving All Black at the time of his passing, and had been a Barbarian since 1966.

He was also patron of the Wellington-based Centurions club. All Black number 545, Mick became known as the 'Olympic All Black', as he played as a five-eighths for the team in the Olympic years of 1952, '56 and 1960, the latter as vice-captain on the tour of South Africa. In all, he played 18 games, including two Tests.

His first-class career spanned 11 years, from 1949-60 and he scored 11 tries in 89 games, appearing for Auckland, Manawatu, Wellington, Canterbury and NZ Universities.

In a 2020 interview with Rugby News mag, Mick reckoned a hat-trick he scored for the NZ Barbarians against Auckland sealed his All Blacks call-up in 1952.

He won an Auckland 1A First XV title with Mt Albert Grammar in 1947, the 1951 and '53 Gallaher Shield with Grammar under Fred Allen's coaching, the 1954 Jubilee Cup with University in Wellington, and four straight Canterbury club titles with the Maroons (University) from 1956-59. He also played in several teams that won big scalps, notably the 1956 NZ Universities side that shocked the Springboks and the Canterbury side that beat the 1956 Boks and 1959 Lions respectively.

Mick later turned to coaching, guiding Victoria University to the 1964 Jubilee Cup. He was President of the VU (now Old Boys-University) club in 1980-82, and later OBU life member, President of the Wellington union in 1995, and a life member of the Halberg Trust.

RUGBY REVIEW



No less than three Barbarians national teams were in action since our last newsletter in August.

First up were the NZ Barbarians Area Schools, with Barbarians Stephen Beck and Ron Williams running the cutter, the former again as team manager. They had their first ever camp in Ahipara, with the help of former Black Fern Rawinia Everitt, training at the Te Rarawa Rugby Club and staying at the Korou Kore marae. It all led up to a "disciplined, confident performance" in defeating the Northland Natives Academy 29-5 in Kaitia.

This team, under long-time coaches Justin Marsh and Hone Manuel, continues to provide important opportunities for talented young men from the smaller towns and they always seem to connect swiftly despite only a few days together.

The NZ Barbarians Under 18s boys, 13 years after we first fielded this team, played some very good rugby in their two matches in Hamilton, beaten 48-37 by NZ Schools, though scoring seven tries (including a double to Johan Schaumkell of King's College) and then defeating NZ Maori Under 18s 51-35, with nine tries, including braces by PJ Palamo out of the Linwood club and Hunter Kennedy of Palmerston North BHS.

Under the coaching of Darren Larsen, Tasesa Lavea and Greg Feek, and new manager James Kumate of the Blues, the theme was 'Be Barbarian.' Sir Bryan Williams and AJ Whetton imparted some of the ethos of the club on the team at the clubrooms before their campaign.

Special mention to Josh Findlay (captain, out of the HSOB club), Alex Palazzo (co-vice captain, Palmerston North BHS First XV) and Boston Krone (co-vice captain, Pakuranga club) for their



Our U18 boys worked off a 'Be Barbarian' theme.

leadership and committed efforts. Watch for some of these boys to filter into NPC and Super Rugby ranks in the coming years.

For the third straight year, the club fielded an NZ Barbarians Under 18s girls team, filling a key void in the pathways for talented young schoolgirls. Under a star coaching/management team, led by head coach, former Black Ferns halfback and Barbarian Emma Jensen, the side was very competitive in both fixtures, though falling 48-29 to a Pasifika XV, which included several FPC players, and then 24-22 to the NZ Maori Under 18 girls in Pukekohe. It must be said that the Baabaas did not have access to any FPC players, which was a shame, and most of the squad came from the wider Auckland region plus one from Hawke's Bay.

Just around the corner will be the NZ Barbarians Under 18 girls sevens team, who will strut their stuff at the Global Youth Sevens at Auckland's Dilworth School next month under the coaching of Barbarian Sherwin Stowers. Go well, girls!



The NZ Barbarians U18 girls team.



Our U18 girls team management, with club captain Craig Carter, in Pukekohe.

BAABAAS BRIEFS



**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 November 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 months ago. Please pay your subs, if applicable, at your earliest convenience, as this is a requirement of membership.*



OFFSET & DIGITAL PRINTERS

Cnr Boston Rd & Nugent St, Grafton
Auckland 1023, New Zealand

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:

Club office number: 09-846-7241

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BARFOOT
& THOMPSON

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