

#RWC2021



RUGBY
WORLD CUP
NEW ZEALAND 2021

COMMENTARY TEAM



Rikki Swannell



Rikki has been a sports broadcaster for 20 years, working across radio and TV as a reporter, editor and commentator. She is a regular commentator on the men's and women's HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series, having become the first female lead on the men's Series in 2022. She has also commentated on international 15s matches, Super Rugby and provincial competitions in New Zealand

Sean Maloney



Sean has been commentating on rugby for more than a decade, taking in RWC Sevens and the World Rugby U20 Championship in 2018, Rugby World Cup 2019 and now Rugby World Cup 2023. Sean has been a regular on the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series for many years and is now a lead commentator for Stan Sport in Australia.

Willie Lose



A former Tongan international, co-captaining Tonga at RWC 1995 in South Africa, Willie also played New Zealand age-grade rugby, including Colts, and for Auckland and North Harbour in New Zealand's NPC. From 1996-2001, Willie was a professional player for Yamaha in Japan. He has a Diploma of Broadcasting 2002 and is a regular rugby commentator on SKY New Zealand. Willie has commentated at Rugby World Cups in 2002, 2007, 2011 and 2019 and RWC Sevens in 1997, 2005, 2009 and 2018, and is a regular on the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series.

Rupert Cox



Born in the UK and brought up in Australia and New Zealand, Rupert has presented, commentated and produced sports television around the world. He's worked for various global broadcasters, including Sky Sports in the UK, NBC in the US, Channel Nine in Australia and Discovery/Eurosport. Rupert is particularly proud to have worked on women's sport as it has been given its rightful place in the limelight, including the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series, the historic first England v Barbarians Women game at Twickenham, the Women's Six Nations and November internationals, the Netball World Cup and women's Rugby League.

Melodie Robinson



A former Black Fern and two-time Rugby World Cup winner, TV presenter and commentator for Sky New Zealand. Melodie is now the General Manager of Television New Zealand's Sports and Events, working in sports acquisitions and leading sports content strategy. She also runs the Wonderful Group which is a support network she founded for women working in the media industry and is currently on several boards, including Rugby World Cup Limited as the IRP representative, and the Rugby Foundation looking after seriously injured players.

Karl Te Nana



KT played 15s for New Zealand Secondary Schools and Māori All Blacks as enjoyed great success with the All Blacks Sevens as a former captain, winning RWC Sevens 2001, Commonwealth Games gold and four HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series winner. Since retiring, KT has become a regular commentator and pitch-side reporter on the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series, the World Rugby U20 Championship, RWC 2019 – where he called the final – and for SKY New Zealand broadcasts of All Blacks tests and Super Rugby.

Honey Hireme-Smiler



Honey was born and raised in a small south Waikato town in New Zealand, surrounded by a big whanau (family). Honey played all sports available to her, before advancing through representative grades in both rugby and Rugby League to enjoy a long international career with the Black Ferns, Kiwi Ferns and Black Ferns Sevens. Since retiring from representative sport in 2020, Honey has worked for SKY NZ most weekends, commentating on both rugby and Rugby League, and works full-time for the Halberg Foundation supporting young athletes with physical and visual disabilities. Honey lives in Hamilton with her wife and three teenage sons.

Rachael Burford



Rachael has been playing at an elite level for more than a decade, representing England at four Rugby World Cups in 15s and two RWC Sevens, earning 84 caps for the Red Roses. A multiple Women's Six Nations Grand Slam winner, Rachael helped England win RWC 2014 in France, the year she was named England's player of the year. She has gained broadcast experience across both men's and women's domestic and international rugby as co-commentator and pitch-side pundit, working with broadcasters such as BT Sport, Channel 4, BBC and TalkSport.

Kirstie Stanway



Kirstie has a wealth of experience in the broadcasting industry. A very familiar face to viewers of SKY Sport New Zealand, Kirstie fronts rugby coverage, hosts *The Breakdown* panel show and features in various other capacities. Having worked in New Zealand and abroad, the dynamic host and journalist has quickly built an impressive portfolio of experience, including the 2017 America's Cup and Rugby League World Cup, the 2018 Commonwealth Games, Rugby World Cup 2019 and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Natalie Yoannidis



Natalie is an experienced broadcaster who has covered some of the biggest sporting events in Australia and around the world. The first female commentator to appear on Fox Sports' Super Rugby coverage, she has also worked as a host and sideline reporter on Super W, rugby sevens and women's international rugby broadcasts.