



GLOBAL RAPID RUGBY

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FORREST REVEALS RAPID FUTURE FOR SPORT IN ASIA

A revolutionary sports and entertainment concept is set to sweep the Asia Pacific region with Andrew Forrest's new-look elite-rugby competition receiving a critical tick of approval.

The World Rugby Council conditionally sanctioned a bold new sporting brand, **Global Rapid Rugby**, overnight. The 2019 season would kick-off in late February with teams competing for an AUD\$1 million first prize.

Once official approval is granted by all participating playing unions, a new era in sports and entertainment will begin.

Rapid Rugby details that can now be unveiled include...

- Eight teams across the Asia Pacific
- 14 rounds, 56 games plus four finals
- Up to 20 of the world's best players as competition marqueees
- A fast-paced, 70-minute total game time
- New and revised laws to increase ball in play time towards 55%
- A dynamic, viewer-friendly 90-minute total broadcast product
- Exciting stadium entertainment at every game, everywhere

Global Rapid Rugby founder Andrew Forrest AO described the World Rugby Council decision as an historic moment for the sport, all sports fans and the Asia Pacific.

"It has not been a simple road," he said while commending World Rugby for supporting his vision in a [Social Media video](#) announcing the proposed look and feel of Rapid Rugby in 2019.

"I'd like to thank everyone that has been bold and brave enough to support this brand-new competition. Like all sports, rugby needs to evolve. The modern sports public is spoilt for choice and demands easily digestible, fast-paced action."

The potential for rugby to flourish in Asia and for the sport to benefit local communities is central to Rapid Rugby's mission, according to Forrest.

"There's something about rugby which builds communities, bands people together, gives joy across communities. I want to bring that into the Indo Asia Pacific region."

World Rugby sanction

A statement issued by World Rugby after its bi-annual full council meeting in Dublin reads:

“Conditional sanctioning was granted for the Global Rapid Rugby tournament subject to approval from participating unions. The competition aims to further rugby’s spread across the Asia-Pacific area, providing high performance competition for emerging nations.”

Governing bodies that oversee six teams set to become part of Rapid Rugby in 2019 have already signed letters of support. Official sanction will now be sought from the Japan Rugby Football Union for a leading Japanese club to join, and further discussions will take place with a private consortium to form an eighth team.

Proposed 2019 teams

- The first international rugby team from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- A team from Hong Kong representing the Greater Bay Area
- The Asia Pacific Dragons out of Singapore
- A top-quality team from Japan
- The flying Fijians
- A tough tackling team from Samoa and
- The Western Force from Perth, Western Australia

Rapid Rugby will be governed by Hong Kong Rugby Union, and Chief Executive Robbie McRobbie said he had no doubt the time was right to provide Asia with a new form of sporting entertainment.

“Rugby is on the rise in Asia and across the Pacific. Record numbers of boys and girls are taking up the game and the potential for further expansion in countries like China and India is truly breathtaking,” he said.

Best of the best

Rapid Rugby officials will now begin signing marquee players from around the world to ensure the standard of competition is elite.

“We have committed to recruiting around 20 of the best 100 players in the world today over the next two seasons,” Forrest explained.

“They will be placed in different teams, depending on the team’s needs in the interests of creating a level field across all teams. We have already started, signing former All Black Jeremy Thrush to the Western Force.

“Beyond that, watch this space is all I’m allowed to say right now. But when I mention we’re targeting the very best available I do mean the very best.”

Rapid by name and nature

A series of trial law variations to make the game even more appealing to fans in the stands and watching on their devices were also approved by World Rugby. And new competition rules include reducing game time from 80 minutes to 2 x 35-minute halves.

Increasing the time the ball is in play is a central platform of the competition. This will be achieved through new laws and competition rules designed to:

- Increase the risk of kicking for touch, and reduce line-outs
- Better manage player fatigue through the introduction of rolling substitutions
- Promote attacking, aggressive, high-scoring rugby

Head of Rugby Matt Hodgson said innovation would always be a cornerstone of Rapid Rugby and the competition would continue to push the boundaries and work closely with World Rugby to come up with new ideas while protecting the integrity of 15-a-side rugby union.

“The rules I’m most excited about are the kicking laws. No longer will teams be able to kick out on the full from their own 22, we’ll see more attacking play there and also more counter-attack as teams choose to kick down the middle of the field,” he said.

“It’s about more rugby for the fans, and more rugby for the players.”

Elite sport meets entertainment

The match day and overall engagement element of Rapid Rugby, that proved so popular in a trial series hosted by the Western Force in Perth this year, will continue in 2019 and beyond.

A mantra to provide an ‘every venue, every match for everyone’ spectator experience, together with a focus on family, means Rapid Rugby will provide something for everyone - from fireworks to traditional culture, or a *Power Try* to a *Cash Kick*.

“I think Rapid Rugby is the perfect name for this competition,” Forrest said.

“It speaks to what we will deliver - a dynamic sports and entertainment concept focused on the fastest growing region in the world. It will be rapid alright, and global, because I want to help spread the appeal of the sport to non-traditional markets and sports and entertainment lovers everywhere.”

- Complete Andrew Forrest Social Media video announcement of proposed 2019 Global Rapid Rugby competition, released today via @rapidrugby Twitter and Facebook channels and rapidrugby.com [available here](#).
- Broadcast quality video media release [available here](#). This includes grabs from Andrew Forrest; info-graphics, highlights of the 2018 Rapid Rugby trial series (called World Series Rugby); and overlay marquee signing and Former All Black Jeremy Thrush with Forrest and children from some of the 2019 Rapid Rugby teams.
- Professional images of Andrew Forrest with Western Force Rapid Rugby marquee player Jeremey Thrush (former All Black lock) and children from some of the 2019 Rapid Rugby teams [available here](#).
- Please note Andrew Forrest will not be available for further comment before a Press Conference and National Conference Call in Perth, 11am AWST next **Tuesday, November 20**.

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