



**RAPID  
RUGBY**

# GLOBAL RAPID RUGBY

MEDIA STATEMENT  
Friday, 1 March 2019

## RAPID RUGBY 2019 SCHEDULE ON SHOW

**Embargoed until 10.00am AWST, Friday 1 March 2019**

Global Rapid Rugby will launch a unique combination of elite sport and super-charged entertainment with a **14 match Showcase Series in six venues** throughout Asia, the Pacific and Australasia this year.

The series kicks off in three weeks, on Friday March 22, when **Perth's Western Force** goes head-to-head with the star-studded **World XV** combination, led by former Australian Test and New Zealand Crusaders coach Robbie Deans.

Teams from **Hong Kong, Fiji, Singapore** and **Samoa** will play and host games, with venues in New Zealand and east-coast Australia part of the Showcase Series as well. On top of that, Rapid Rugby will be played on the eve of a historic Bledisloe Cup clash between the Wallabies and All Blacks in Perth.

The appearance of rugby's World XV for the first match, along with a full-scale pre-match entertainment package including fireworks, live music and circus stunts, will ensure a spectacular Showcase opener.

Deans experienced a version of the Rapid Rugby rules when his Japanese club team, the Panasonic Wild Knights, played in Perth last year and believes the brand will be a big hit with players and fans alike.

"The 'All Stars' concept of the World XV lends itself to the excitement and entertainment at the forefront of Rapid Rugby and is the perfect vehicle to promote the brand within a Showcase Series," Deans said.

"Our squad is comprised of a core of experienced Test players, 10 in all, who will lead a group that also includes a number of promising youngsters with big futures ahead of them."

After the World XV game, teams from Fiji, Samoa, Hong Kong, Singapore and Western Force will play in separate six game tri-series contests.

The **Asia Showcase Series**, between the **South China Tigers** out of Hong Kong, **Asia Pacific Dragons** in Singapore and the **Western Force**, begins on March 29. The **Pacific Showcase Series** will be played between the Force, **Fijian Latui** and **Kagifa Samoa** from May 18.

Teams will play at least two matches in their home market; however, construction work on Samoa's main stadium means its 'home' games will be played in **Queensland** and **Auckland**.

Winners of the Asia and the Pacific series will access an AUD50,000 prize purse to assist local community rugby programs.

Rapid Rugby has partnered with global broadcast company **Input Media** to produce a live turnkey production, while negotiations are continuing with leading Asia Pacific TV networks and online broadcasters to televise games and highlights.

**Head of Rugby, Matt Hodgson**, said teams are now eager to bring the excitement of Rapid Rugby to local supporters, as well as test themselves under new laws that reward attacking, free-scoring play.

“The Western Force against an international line-up coached by Robbie Deans is a perfect stage to launch the Rapid Rugby Showcase. I have been asked ‘when does it start’ and ‘who will be playing’ wherever I go, so I know there is plenty of interest,” Hodgson said.

“I also appreciate that a lot of people have been waiting for the 2019 draw to be released, so thank you for your patience. If it’s half as good as we expect, it will be worth the wait.

“It’s so exciting to know that this new brand of sport and entertainment will soon be on show in Fiji, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand and both sides of Australia. I hope it’s the beginning of something very special for the entire Asia Pacific region, its local communities and for rugby itself,” Hodgson said.

2019 Global Rapid Rugby Showcase						
	Day / Date	Local Time	Home	Away	Stadium	Location
<b>Showcase Opener</b>	Fri, 22 Mar 19	7:40 PM	Western Force	World XV	HBF Park	Perth, WA
<b>Asia Showcase Series</b>	Fri, 29 Mar 19	7:40 PM	Western Force	South China Tigers	HBF Park	Perth, WA
	Fri, 12 Apr 19	7:45 PM	Western Force	Asia Pacific Dragons	HBF Park	Perth, WA
	Sun, 21 Apr 19	3:10 PM	South China Tigers	Asia Pacific Dragons	Aberdeen Sports Ground	Hong Kong
	Sun, 28 Apr 19	3:10 PM	Asia Pacific Dragons	South China Tigers	Queenstown Stadium	Singapore
	Sun, 5 May 19	3:10 PM	Asia Pacific Dragons	Western Force	Queenstown Stadium	Singapore
	Sun, 12 May 19	4:00 PM	South China Tigers	Western Force	Aberdeen Sports Ground	Hong Kong
<b>Pacific Showcase Series</b>	Sat, 18 May 19	3:10 PM	Fijian Latui	Kagifa Samoa	ANZ National Stadium or Churchill Park	Fiji
	Sat, 25 May 19	3:10 PM	Fijian Latui	Western Force	Churchill Park	Fiji
	Fri, 31 May 19	7:45 PM	Western Force	Kagifa Samoa	HBF Park	Perth, WA
	Fri, 7 Jun 19	5:40 PM	Kagifa Samoa	Fijian Latui	Navigation Homes Stadium	Auckland, NZ
	Sat, 15 Jun 19	3:40 PM	Kagifa Samoa	Western Force	Ballymore	Brisbane, Qld
	Fri, 21 Jun 19	7:40 PM	Western Force	Fijian Latui	HBF Park	Perth, WA
<b>Bledisloe Showcase</b>	Fri, 9 Aug 19	7:40 PM	Western Force	TBC	HBF Park	Perth, WA

**ENDS**

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