



Otago Rugby Referees Association Newsletter



Issue #1

Date: 23rd March 2026

Welcome to Season 2026!

A massive welcome back to Season 2026! Firstly, a massive thank you to everyone. Without you, we couldn't service the game of rugby throughout Otago. Another huge thank you goes to our sponsors for 2026, New World, Andrew Haulage, The Ale House Dunedin, QPower, and Fred's Fencing, as well as our kit supplier, Paladin. Without the tremendous support from our sponsors, we couldn't do anything that we do.

New Executive

As of the 2026 Annual General Meeting, we have new faces joining our executive team. Caleb Neilson takes over as the Coaching & Development Coordinator, Erin Doherty takes over as the Secretary, Phil Carroll takes over as the Socials Lead, and Georgia Mason takes over as the South Representative. We also have Rodger Hewitt remaining as the Chairperson, Keith Wallis remaining as the Treasurer, and Hamish McKnight remaining as the Central Representative!

New Executive Contacts

Over the summer, there was a great deal of work put into creating a centralised system for the executive on Google. With this comes new email addresses that each Executive member can be contacted on; they are as follows:

Executive Member	Email
Chairperson	chair@orra.co.nz
Secretary	secretary@orra.co.nz
Treasurer	treasurer@orra.co.nz
Coaching & Development	coaching@orra.co.nz
Socials	socials@orra.co.nz
South Representative	south@orra.co.nz
Central Representative	central@orra.co.nz

New ORRA Website

We have a new website www.orra.co.nz! Over the summer, we've had a new website developed and made live! This will contain everything that the old hub did and more. This includes greater transparency, while also providing us with a more public presence.

Our Referee's Experience

Meet Logan: The Referee Who Fell in Love with the Whistle

At just 23, Logan Whitty has been refereeing for 9 years - and it all started with something a bit unusual. "I enjoyed watching the referees as a kid," Logan admits with a laugh. "Weird, I know!"

But that childhood fascination turned into a passion that's taken him all the way to the 2022 Premier Club Final - a moment he describes as his favourite in nearly a decade of refereeing.

It hasn't all been easy, though. From battling roaring southerlies in Port Chalmers to stepping up to full scrums for the first time, Logan has faced his share of challenges. But through it all, he's discovered something powerful about himself: "I've learnt how calm I can be when under pressure, and how to get level-headed when the pressure does come on."

When he's not on the field, you'll find Logan deer farming - but refereeing remains a huge part of his life.

His advice to anyone considering picking up a whistle? "Embrace the challenge and give it a go! Refereeing isn't as it seems to most people. We're all so well looked after by the Otago rugby community, and it's a very enjoyable group to be part of."

Want to join Logan and our referee team? Get in touch - we'd love to have you!



Logan

Referee Panels

We are making a huge effort to make our association cohesive, all together as one ORRA. In that we are assigning all of our referees to a panel, based on their abilities, not where they referee. You can find these panels on the new website. If you have any questions or issues, please contact the Coaching and Development Officer or your regional representative.

ORRA Selectors

We would also like to welcome on board our head selectors in each region - Mark Milburn (Metro), Colin Calteaux (South) and Chris Buckley (Central). Our selectors will select Premier (Div 1) and top 1st XV appointments throughout the season.

Exciting Debut News

A massive congratulations to Ollie Shore (pictured in one of our pre-season shots below) who has been selected to make his Metro Premier Debut in Round 1, this weekend, when Alhambra Union take on Taieri at the North Ground.

Ollie made his South Premier debut in 2024 and has continued his hard work and dedication to be selected for his Metro debut - well done Ollie!

Registrations and Subs

A reminder to ensure you have registered through RX for the upcoming season (if you need help with this reach out to Brandon Hale - Brandon.Hale@orfu.co.nz). Subs have again been set for the 2026 season as below:

Full Member: \$70

Student Member: \$50

First Year: \$35

Referee Coach: \$35

Associate Member: \$0

The account for payment is 06-0901-0881984-00

Reminder - if you have any issues with paying subs, reach out to one of the executive.

Key Upcoming Dates

Metro Div 1 + 2 Round 1	28th March 2026
South and Central Div 1 Round 1	2nd April 2026

All other club grades Round 1	18th April 2026
School Grades Round 1	2nd May 2026

Pre-Season Action

Check out these shots of our referees in action throughout March.





Photo credit:

- Alhambra Union RFC
- Taieri Rugby Football Club
- University Rugby Football Club

- Stevemcarthur.nz
- Naomi Grambin

Submit Something to the Newsletter

If you would like to submit anything to be added to the next newsletter, especially any great action shots of our referees from around the grounds, please email it to the Secretary at secretary@orra.co.nz by the first Thursday of the month that the newsletter is to be published on.