



# Otago Rugby Referees Association Newsletter



Issue #2

Date: 16th April 2026

## Chairman's Update

It's great to see everyone back for the season and more footy starting up this week means there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved. Some changes are afoot regarding the way T&D will be delivered this season, which will hopefully lead to a higher attendance than what we have seen so far. As covered below, unfortunately we are stepping away from our traditional interchange schedule for this season, but there will be opportunities for some to travel within the region, and closer to home. We would like to welcome Jackson Henshaw from South Canterbury back this week, refereeing Dunedin v Southern Div 1.

I hope everyone is enjoying the season so far, and remember to reach out to the exec with any questions or feedback (or use our online feedback form).

- Rodger Hewitt

## Coaching Update

With all senior grades starting this weekend, more game opportunities are popping up, including mid week - reach out if you are interested in mid week games. We are happy with the standard of refereeing this far, but let's all keep pushing ourselves to be better each game and remember to keep referring to your IDP and game reviews.

The next metro Bronco opportunity is May 4th - and a reminder for those that have not completed a law exam to have a go.

Coaching allocations and more information regarding T&D meetings will be communicated shortly.

- Caleb Neilson

## Interchange News

The executive have made the difficult decision to suspend our traditional interchanges with Canterbury and Auckland for this year due to the uncertainty around air travel / fuel prices etc.

We are looking into the possibility of more "regional interchanges" within the ORRA catchment and possibly also with Southland and North Otago.

Any questions around this, reach out any of the exec members (contacts below).

## New ORRA Website

We have a new website [www.orra.co.nz](http://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

### **Angus Macgregor: One Year In, Already Making His Mark**

At just 16, Angus Macgregor is one of ORRA's newest referees - but he's already experiencing the highs that come with being in the middle.

After one too many head knocks as a player, Angus made the call to step off the field and pick up the whistle. "I love the game of rugby and wanted to stay amongst it," he explains - and what better way than from the safest seat in the house?

In just his first year, Angus has already racked up some memorable moments: assistant refereeing high-stakes high school matchups, and refereeing his first final under the roof at Forsyth Barr Stadium. But beyond the big occasions, it's the people that have made the difference. "Getting to meet the very friendly referees at ORRA who have all assisted my understanding of the game to another level" stands out as a highlight.

Of course, not every moment has been easy. Vocal sideline supporters sharing their opinions on "the vast majority of calls" tested him early on. His biggest challenge? Mastering positioning - learning where to be and when, and what pictures to look for at set pieces. But through it all, Angus has discovered something powerful about himself: "I didn't know I could just block the crowd out" during big

games with substantial crowds - a skill that will serve him well as he continues to develop.

Outside of refereeing, Angus is a Year 12 student at King's High School, playing in the 1st touch team and representing Otago in the U18 touch side.

His advice to anyone thinking about it? "Just give it a go. The team at ORRA are very supportive as they will guide you and assist you with kickstarting your referee career."

From player to referee in one year - and already thriving. Watch this space!

*Want to follow in Angus's footsteps? We'd love to help you get started!*



Angus

## REFerral Initiative

A reminder about the REFerral initiative run by ORFU currently. Anyone who refers someone new to refereeing will receive a \$50 Prezzy card - as will the new referee (once the referee completes 6 games and registers!)

Prefer to ORFU social media or Brandon Hale for more information.

## Exciting Debut News

Following on from last issue's debut news, we have another debut to celebrate this week - Congratulations to Amelia O'Connell who has been selected to make her Women's Premier Debut this weekend, when Zingari take on Alhambra Union at Montecillo!

Amelia began refereeing last year and this selection is just reward for the dedication shown to improve every week!



Amelia

(Photo Credit: Nathan Hill)

## 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](mailto: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

All club grades (below Div 1) Round 1	18th April 2026
School Grades Round 1	2nd May 2026

## Executive Contacts

A reminder of the 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

## Our Referees in Action

Check out these shots of our referees in action throughout the early rounds of the season (including Ollie in action in his Metro Div 1 debut, as covered last issue)





Photo credit:

- Rach's Sports Photos
- Green Island Rugby Football Club
- The Taiari Rugby Football Club
- [Stevemcarthur.nz](http://Stevemcarthur.nz)
- Kayla Ann Photography
- Susan Church
- Kings HS 1st XV
- Richard Jones

## 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](mailto:secretary@orra.co.nz) by the first Thursday of the month that the newsletter is to be published on.