



MEDIA RELEASE



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OTAGO RUGBY TEAM UP WITH HIGHLANDS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE SIDELINE BEHAVIOUR

Otago Rugby Football Union has teamed up with the world class tourism and events facility Highlands to promote positive behaviour on the sidelines of the provinces rugby fields.

The "Sideline Standards – Driven by Highlands" initiative is aimed at rewarding fair play and sportsmanship in school rugby which includes the First XV, U-18, Colts, Intermediate, Junior, Girls Metro and Girls Central grades.

The referees of each match will score each team on four criteria: captain behaviour and interaction, player's behaviour, coaches' behaviour and side-line behaviour. The winning team in each grade across Otago will win an end of season trip to Highlands in Cromwell, Central Otago.

Otago Rugby Community Rugby Manager Richard Perkins said "This is a fantastic new local initiative that will complement the good work that has been implemented over several seasons towards improving sideline behaviour. The NZR National 'Applaud' programme has been in place for several seasons, Sport Otago's video message last year along with positive sideline signage erected at club grounds by local rugby clubs and Otago Rugby. While we would have liked instant results around sideline behaviour, we have to keep reinforcing the messaging. The thing I really like about this initiative is that it puts real value on both positive behaviour and sportsmanship. I certainly hope it will provide a more positive environment for the match officials to go about their work. Thank you to Highlands for this wonderful support.

Highlands Chief Operating Officer Josie Spillane said "We are really proud to be playing a role in ensuring that our youth are in a positive encouraging environment in these formative years. Sport plays such an important role in kid's development, giving them all sorts of life skills and experiences. There should be a zero tolerance for sideline bullying and we are excited about being part of the movement to ensure this is the case. We are looking forward to welcoming the recipients to Highlands later in the year for adventures on the go-karts and the circuit!"

The initiative kicks off on Wednesday 5 June, when the Secondary Schoolgirls grade starts.

For any further comments, please contact Richard Perkins, Otago Rugby Football Union Community Rugby Manager, 021 445 736.

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