



NELSON COLLEGE

TE KURA TAMATĀNE O WHAKATŪ

INTERNATIONAL
RUGBY PROGRAMME

RUGBY

WHUTUPŌRO

HISTORY

Nelson College has a rich and historic connection with rugby in New Zealand. The school was part of the country's first-ever rugby game held in May 1870. This is a significant milestone that helped introduce and popularize the sport nationwide.

QUADRANGULAR TOURNAMENT

Nelson College's commitment to rugby is further exemplified by its involvement in the Quadrangular Tournament, the oldest schoolboy rugby competition in New Zealand, which continues to foster fierce competition and camaraderie among schools. In 2026 this tournament will celebrate its centenary.

MODERN PEDIGREE

In 2024, Nelson College's rugby legacy was further solidified by finishing 2nd in the prestigious New Zealand Schools Competition, showcasing the strength and skill of its rugby program today.

We currently have 5 current or recent All Blacks including; Ethan Blackadder, David Havili, Leicester Fainga'anuku, Wyatt Crockett and Mitchell Drummond as well as ex-students that have qualified for other national teams such as James Lowe (Ireland) and Willi Havili (Tonga).

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

We have a Junior (year 10) and a Senior (year 12 & 13) Rugby Academy that run all year through our school timetable. These development programmes give athletes access to specialist coaching, strength and conditioning, nutrition and introduce players to our team culture which is linked to the school values.

School teams play in local age group competitions as part of the regular season participation programme and then come together for performance age group representative tournament games against other schools.



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Nelson College offers two specialised rugby pathways, strengthened by our in-curriculum Rugby Development Programme (Adacemy):

1. Participation Programme

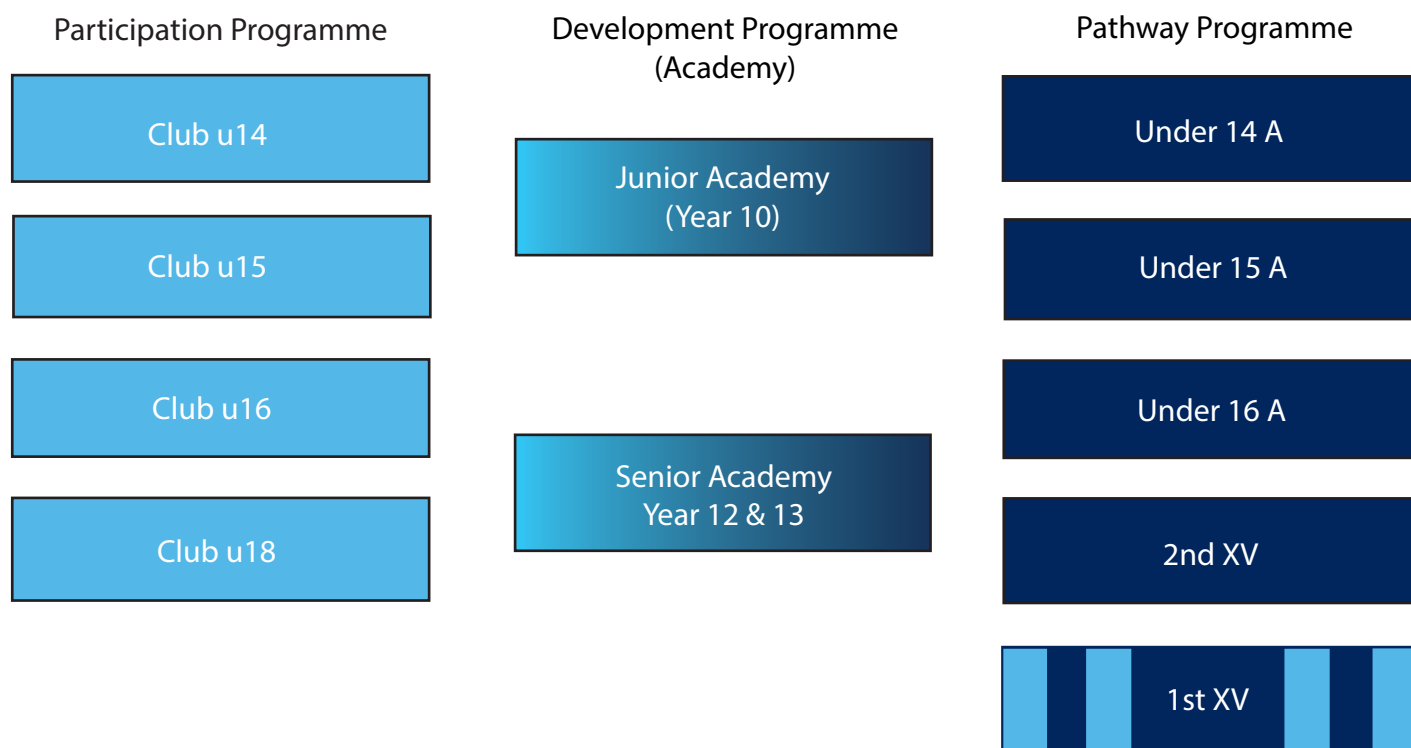
This programme is open to all students who wish to play rugby for the school. Nelson College fields teams in the local Saturday Tasman Rugby Union age-grade club competitions, providing opportunities for players of all skill levels to get involved.

2. Pathway Programme

This pathway is designed for players who progress from the participation programme into competitive age-grade representative sides. These teams compete in scheduled midweek school exchanges and challenge fixtures against other schools, offering a higher level of play and development.

3. Rugby Development (Academy) Programme

To support both pathways, Nelson College runs Junior and Senior Rugby Academy classes. These optional subjects are available to Year 10 students (Junior Academy) and to Years 12 & 13 students (two Senior Academies). Held four times per week within the school timetable, the classes are open to all aspiring players aiming to enhance their physical conditioning, mental resilience, and game management skills.



1st XV Rugby at Nelson College

The 1st XV is the premier rugby team at Nelson College and represents the pinnacle of our rugby programme. The team compete in the prestigious Crusaders Region 1st XV Rugby Competition and the South Island Boys' Competitions. The season runs from early May through to mid-August.

The ultimate goal each season is to qualify for the finals series, win the regional competition, and earn the right to compete for the South Island Championship. Success at that level provides the opportunity to play in the highly regarded Top 4 National Schools Competition.



ACADEMY

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Practical and Theory Component

- 4 lessons per week
- Practical includes: strength & conditioning, catch & pass, ball carry, tackle technique, breakdown skills, decision making and position specific coaching
- Theory includes: tactical awareness, video analysis, nutrition, injury prevention, goal setting

PROGRAMME ENTRY

To be selected for this programme a student must be:

- An enthusiastic rugby player
- A hard working and well behaved academic student
- Aged between 14 and 18 years old.
- Able to cover the costs of joining the school as an International Fee Paying student.

ACADEMY OPTIONS

We have 3 rugby development programmes available:

- Junior (Year 10) for 14-15 year olds.
- Senior Level 2 (Year 12) for 16-17 year olds.
- Senior Level 3 (Year 13) for 17-18 year olds.





PROMINENT RECENT NELSON COLLEGE OLD BOYS

All Blacks

Ethan Blackadder (Crusaders)

David Havili (Crusaders)

Mitchell Drummond (Crusaders)

Wyatt Crockett (Crusaders)

Leicester Faininga'anuku (Crusaders)

Other Internationals

James Lowe (Ireland & GB Lions)

Willi Havili (Tonga)

Jared Payne (Ireland & GB Lions)

Ratu Veremalua Vugakoto (Fiji)

Vaea Tutu'ila (Tonga)

Super Rugby

Anton Segner (Blues)

Mitchell Hunt (Highlanders)

Cooper Grant (Crusaders)

Nic Saurira (Crusaders)

Taine Robinson (Highlanders)





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ENQUIRIES

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