



NELSON COLLEGE

TE KURA TAMATĀNE O WHAKATŪ

INTERNATIONAL
RUGBY PROGRAMME



NEW ZEALAND
EDUCATION
Manapou ki te Ao



WELCOME

NAU MAI, HAERE MAI

NELSON COLLEGE

Founded in 1856, Nelson College stands as New Zealand's oldest state secondary school, educating around 1,000 boys. Its campus spans 14 acres and sits within easy walking distance of the city centre.

NELSON

Nelson is a vibrant coastal city of around 50,000 residents, set at the northern tip of New Zealand's South Island. Celebrated for its striking landscapes and gentle, temperate weather, it brings together the best of relaxed rural living and lively urban culture in one beautifully balanced place

Approx domestic flight times to Nelson:

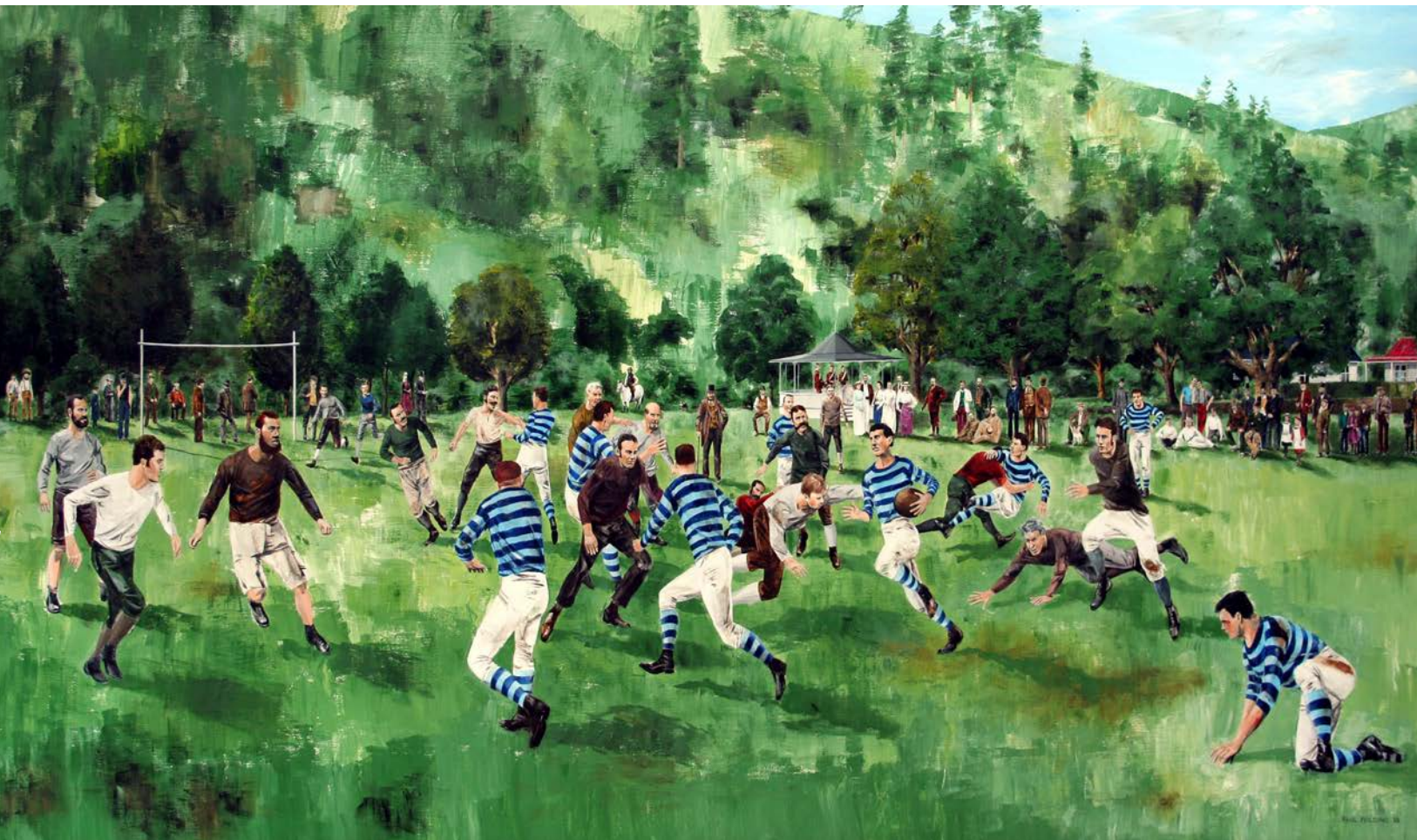
Auckland International Airport = 90mins

Christchurch International Airport = 45mins



RUGBY

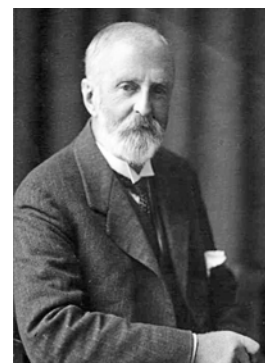
WHUTUPŌRO



HISTORY

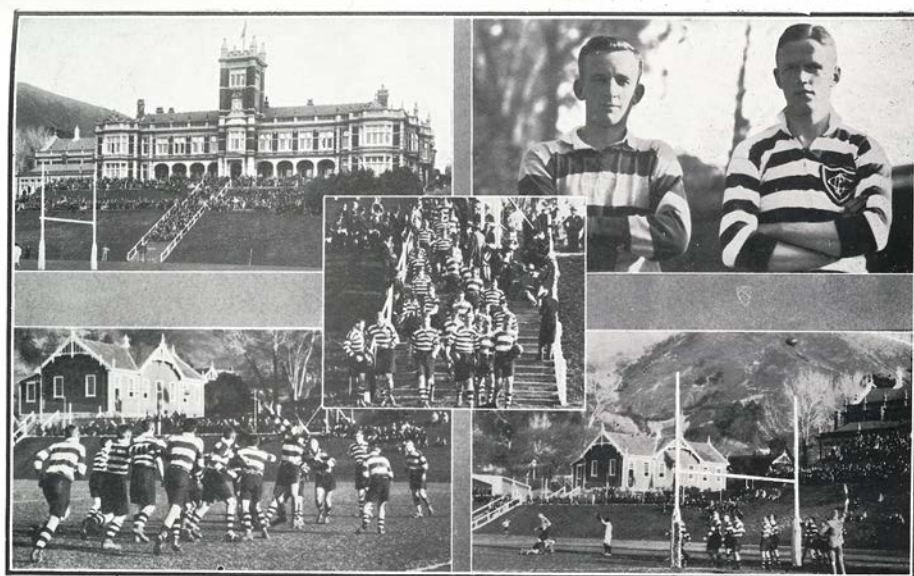
Nelson College has a rich and historic connection with rugby in New Zealand. The school was part of the country's first-ever rugby game held on 14 May 1870. The game was played at the Botanics Reserve between Nelson Football Club ("The Town") and Nelson College ("The Gown"). This is a significant milestone that helped introduce and popularize the sport nationwide.

Charles John Monroe (1851-1933) is the Nelson-born pioneer who introduced rugby union to New Zealand. He was educated at Nelson College between 1863-1865 and then at Christ's College, Finchley in the UK where he learned rugby under Rugby School rules. After returning to Nelson in January 1870 Monroe persuaded Nelson Football Club to adopt rugby's handling code. He then worked with Nelson College's Headmaster, Rev. Frank Simmons to bring the game into the school.



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 it's centenary.



INTER-COLLEGIATE TOURNAMENT, 1928.
The final with Christ's College.

Broma



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 6 current or recent All Blacks including; Anton Segner, 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).

RUGBY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (ACADEMY)

Our Rugby Academy operates year-round within the school timetable, offering two pathways: a Junior Academy for Year 10 students and a Senior Academy for Years 12 and 13. These programmes provide athletes with specialist coaching, strength and conditioning support, nutritional guidance, and a strong introduction to our team culture, which is grounded in the core values of the school.

Throughout the regular season, school teams compete in local age-group competitions as part of our participation pathway. Players then come together for performance-focused representative fixtures, taking part in tournament games against other schools to further extend their development and experience.





DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

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

1. Participation Programme

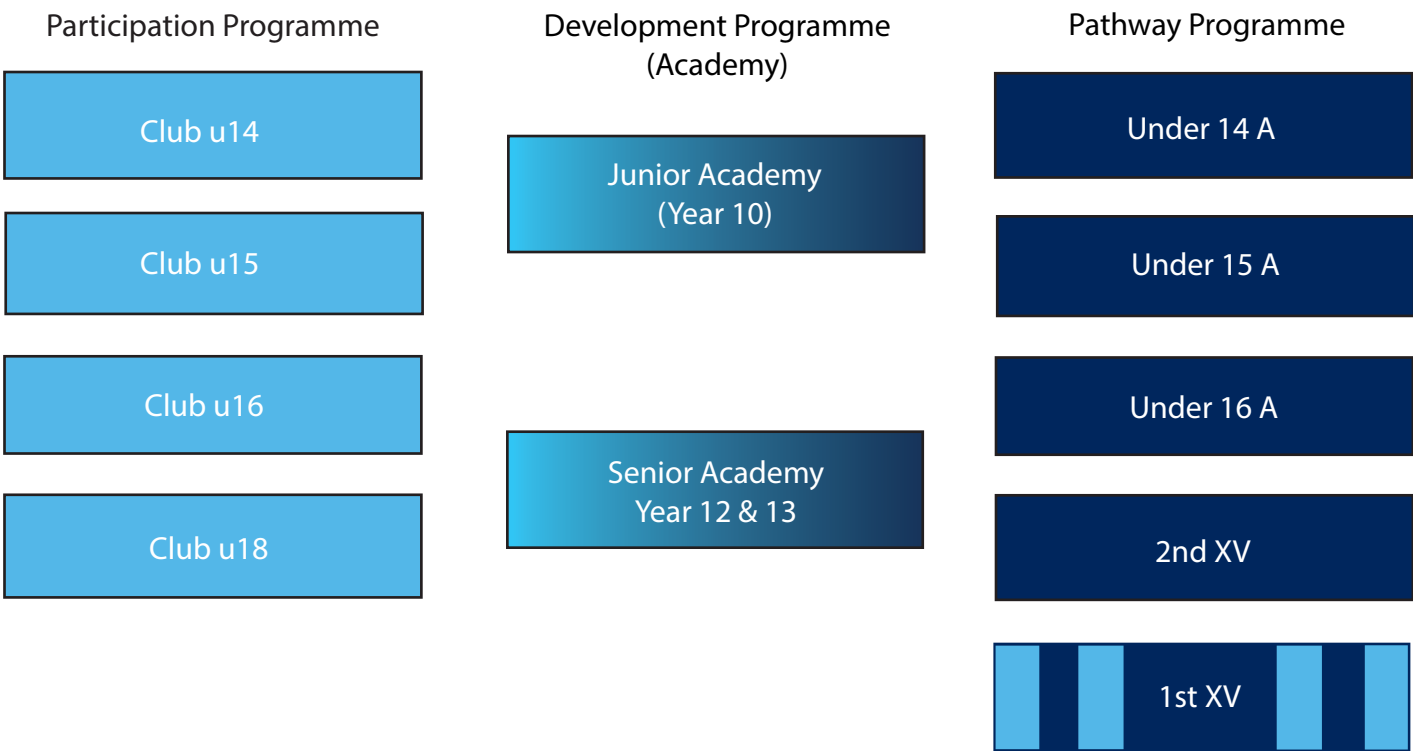
This programme is open to all students who wish to play rugby for the school. Nelson College fields teams in the local Saturday Tasman Rugby Union age-grade club competitions, providing opportunities for players of all skill levels to get involved.

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.



RUGBY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (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.
- Demonstrate strong work ethic and positive behaviour in academic settings.
- Be aged between 14 and 18 years old.
- Be able to meet the costs associated with enrolling as 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)
Anton Segner (Blues)

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

Mitchell Hunt (Highlanders)
Cooper Grant (Crusaders)
Nic Sauira (Crusaders)
Taine Robinson (Highlanders)
Tom Marshall (Crusaders & Chiefs)

Tasman Mako NPC

16 ex-Nelson College students were named in the 2026 Tasman Mako Squad.







NELSON COLLEGE

TE KURA TAMATĀNE O WHAKATŪ

ENQUIRIES

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