



1 Hinemoa St, Harbour Quays
PO Box 2172, Wellington
Telephone +64 4 499 4995
Facsimile +64 4 499 4224
www.allblacks.com

MEDIA RELEASE
26 January 2012

NZRU begins search for Olympic hopefuls

The New Zealand Rugby Union has launched its search for their next Olympic hopefuls as part of the *Go4Gold* Women's Sevens Programme.

The first of 14 open trial camps began in Wellington this week with female athletes from the region testing out their skills over the two trial days.

Thirty women will then be selected to take part in a special skills programme this Saturday and will play in a mini tournament on Friday 3 February to compete for a spot in a unique exhibition game to be played later that evening during Wellington's Hertz Sevens tournament, at Westpac Stadium.

New Zealand Women's Sevens Coach Sean Horan said they were encouraging all types of athletes to be involved in the programme.

"To be a great sevens player you need to be fit, have speed, good hand-eye coordination and be highly motivated with a great work ethic.

"We have some great 15s players in this country, some of whom will make fantastic sevens players, but we also have untapped talent out there and we are hoping that these trial camps unearth some of that," he said.

"For the players that we identify as potential Sevens Olympians we will monitor their progress through development programmes that will boost their fitness and help them learn the game," he added.

New Zealand Rugby Union General Manager Professional Rugby Neil Sorensen said the inclusion of Sevens in the 2016 Olympics would see the game grow massively.

"We've been working in partnership with High Performance Sport New Zealand and it's exciting that we can now realistically offer young female athletes a chance at winning an Olympic Gold medal, something that all athletes aspire to achieve," he said.



The trial camps will test players in four key areas - speed, skill, endurance and character tests.

The upcoming Hertz Sevens tournament also marks the first female referee appointed to match official duty for the New Zealand leg of the HSBC Sevens World Series. Up and coming 21-year-old women's rugby referee Brigitte Tyler, from Wellington, has been appointed to in-goal duties for the popular tournament. Tyler, a member of the NZRU's Women's Referee Squad, will also referee the exhibition match.

The Women's Sevens exhibition match on Friday 3 January will be broadcast live on TVNZ and SKY Sport 2 and the Rugby Channel at 7.58pm.

The *Go4Gold* programme in 2012 aims to build a base of female sevens players with the aim of competing in international invitational tournaments later in the year.

Media note: Media are invited to attend the skills programme on Saturday 28 between 2.00-3.00pm. New Zealand Women's Sevens Coach Sean Horan will be in attendance and available for interview. Members of the New Zealand Sevens team will also be in attendance.

For further information contact:

Kate Hutchison

NZRU Public Affairs

M: 027 591 4673

E: kate.hutchison@nzrugby.co.nz