



Thunder Tour New Zealand

August 2023



The Thunderbird is a powerful supernatural bird from the Pacific Northwest. The Thunderbird could catch orcas in its talons, and place bighouse beams in their place. Lightning came from its eyes while the flapping of its wings produced Thunder. The Thunderbird from all oral histories is from “the west”, grounding us to our place in the world, strengthening who we are and where we come from.



Thunder Rugby designs by Curtis Wilson & Rande Cook, Kwakwaka'wakw

Goals

- To promote the game of rugby to Indigenous athletes & communities throughout Canada,
- To promote core values of rugby of teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship,
- To have Indigenous culture play a greater role in the development of rugby in Canada,
- To identify potential high performance Indigenous athletes that could one day represent BC & Canada.

Rugby's core values of teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship resonate with those of Indigenous communities. Thunder are focused on Indigenous youth, but we are open to all! In short, we would like to see more Indigenous youth take up this great game.

Thunder Rugby was formed in 2013 under the direction of Directors Phil Mack, Leah Mack, Bobby Ross, John Lyall, Mark Bryant & Vanessa Hooper.

The Thunder Indigenous Rugby program is getting ready to soar and has its sights set on NZ for an August 2023 tour. They will be taking 28 players, representing a U18 boys team and an U18 girls team. The teams will get to experience rugby where it is an integral part of the culture, our youth will also get to learn more about the Maori culture. The trip is set for August 13th to August 28th and we encourage supporters to follow us on social media to get updates and support our fundraising initiatives, Facebook at /ThunderIndigenousRugby, Instagram at /thunder_rugby and Twitter at /ThunderRugbyCA

John Lyall, Kwakwaka'wakw, Director of Thunder Rugby

"Going to New Zealand with our Thunder rugby team is a dream come true. Confidence in who we are and where we come from is a key component of Thunder Rugby, and Aotearoa embodies cultural pride and rugby ethos. Our youth accepted the challenge of our 2022 California tour and came back the better for it, on and off the field, and made some lifelong friends doing so! We will continue to use the philosophy of Numwayut, or "we are all one" to guide us!"

Bobby Ross, Songhees Nation, Thunder Rugby Board member, and former Canada national team player

"A rugby tour embodies everything that is good about sport. You bond with team mates and make friends for life. You get to test yourself against great players and absorb their culture. It is a soul and life enriching experience."



Thunder, California Tour 2022

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Thunder Rugby International Tour 2023

To Thunder Rugby and John Lyall:

On behalf of BC Rugby, we wish Thunder Rugby the very best ahead of its upcoming Tour to New Zealand on August 13-28, 2023.

This will be a very special experience for all 32 youth athletes attending the tour, and one that should be savored and celebrated by all. Representing your Club and Community overseas is one of the most prestigious honours in our great sport, and will create great memories that last a lifetime.

From all of us at the BCRU, embrace every second of this fantastic experience and we look forward to continuing working with and supporting Thunder Rugby for many, many years to come!

Sincerely,

David Newson

CEO – BC Rugby



[Dear Thunder Rugby tour participants:](#)

I am writing on behalf of Rugby Canada to wish you all the best on your upcoming tour to Aotearoa.

It sounds like an amazing trip that I'm sure will create life-long memories for each and every one of you, as you make new friendships and solidify the ones you already have.

A tour to New Zealand is so special for every young rugby player - playing the sport you love in a beautiful country that celebrates, lives and breathes it every day. I'm sure you'll be great ambassadors for your country and culture, and will also learn a lot about the rich Maori culture. I understand you'll even have the opportunity to see the Haka at Eden Park. Wow!

I wish you safe travels. Play fairly and safely and – above all – enjoy every moment and have fun.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Dennis'.

Sally Dennis

Chair,

Rugby Canada



Thunder Rugby New Zealand Itinerary, August 2023

Thursday August 10: Meet Shawnigan Lake School, train, canoe, swim: stay Shawnigan Lake School

Friday August 11: Malahat Skywalk AM visit – train - Thunder Cultural night, stay Shawnigan Lake School

Saturday August 12: Train – scrimmage, stay Shawnigan Lake School

Sunday August 13: Leave for Vancouver via Duke Point 8:55 pm flight Vancouver Auckland.

Tuesday August 15th: Arrive Auckland 5:55 am! Check in, Pick up three 12 seater vans, and a 17 seater. World Cup Semifinal, 8:00 pm Eden Park. Sweden Spain, Stay Auckland Park Rose Hotel

Wednesday August 16th: Train Sightsee Auckland, Panga House BBQ, stay Auckland Park Rose Hotel

Thursday August 17th: Grammar Tec Scrimmages, Hosting Orakei Clubhouse, stay Auckland Orakei Marae

Friday August 18th: Tiki Tour with host Alec Hawke, stay Auckland Orakei Marae, One NZ Warriors—Manly Sea Eagles Rugby League

Saturday August 19th: Leave for Mount Maunganui, Stay Whareroa Marae

Sunday August 20th: Mount Maunganui, training Inside Rugby Academy, Stay Whareroa Marae

Monday August 21: Mount Maunganui, scrimmage Inside Rugby Academy, Stay Whareroa Marae

Tuesday August 22: Leave for day trip Rotorua - New Plymouth, Taranaki- Stay Broughan Heights Motel

Wednesday August 23: Scrimmage Francis Douglas Memorial College, Sacred Heart College, New Plymouth, Taranaki- Stay Broughan Heights Motel

Thursday August 24: Leave for Feilding, train – Stay Feilding, Billet Feilding High School, coaches Asprey Inn

Friday August 25: Scrimmage Feilding High School, Billet Feilding High School, coaches Asprey Inn

25 Aug	19:05	Manawatū vs. Northland	Central Energy Trust Arena
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Saturday August 26: Leave for Auckland, NPC game, stay Auckland Park Rose Hotel

26 Aug	14:05	Auckland vs. Hawke's Bay	Eden Park
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Sunday August 27: Auckland, Cultural celebration, open day, stay Auckland Park Rose Hotel

Monday August 28: Free Day, leave Auckland 8:00 pm – Arrive Vancouver Monday August 28, 2:05pm, mainland parents pick up airport, Island parents pick up Duke Point.

Grammar TEC - Auckland

Grammar TEC is one of Auckland's premier Rugby Clubs boasting more registered players at all levels than any other club in Auckland. They have three facilities including the one at Orakei Domain where the Thunder will be hosted. Some of the schools that will be represented by the Auckland hosts include Glendowie College, Selwyn College, Tamaki College, Sacred Heart College, and Baradene College. Grammar TEC history dates back to 1873 and they were a founding member of the Auckland Rugby Football Union formed in 1883. The clubs involved in Grammar TEC history include Grammar Old Boys, Grafton, Cornwall, Teachers and Eastern.

Inside Running Academy

The Academy describes itself as, "New Zealand's leading full time rugby academy and operating since 2010, Inside Running Academy offers a range of Camps and Services that are entirely focused on player's present and future development. We will teach you how to become the best player that you can be through comprehensive training schedules, expert coaching and support staff, state of the art methodology and world-class training facilities. Additionally, you'll experience a taste of quintessential New Zealand rugby culture — while based at one of New Zealand's top beach resort locations."

The Academy is led by Mike Rogers who has coached in the MLR with the New England Free Jacks, he was recently named as the head coach of the Manawatu Turbos in the NZ NPC competition.

Francis Douglas Memorial College - New Plymouth

FDMC describes itself as "the only state-integrated Catholic day and boarding school for young men in Taranaki". The college was founded in 1959 under the leadership of the De La Salle Brothers, a religious order of brothers based on the teachings of St Jean Baptiste de La Salle. The name of the school is dedicated to the memory of Father Francis Vernon Douglas, a missionary priest who was killed while doing missionary work in the Philippines during the Second World War. The school educates approximately 760 boys from Years 7 – 13, 130 of whom are boarders.

The school usually puts out 11 Rugby Teams (1st XV, 2nd XV, 3rd XV, U15 A, U15 open weight Barretts, U15 open weight Smiths, U65kg Coltmans, U13 open weight, U13 U55kg Red, U13 U55kg Blue, Year 7 and 8 1st XV). The 1st XV play in the Central North Island Rugby competition (Chiefs Cup), the 2nd XV play in the Taranaki Secondary Schools Premier Competition. All other teams play in the local secondary school's rugby competition. The following All Blacks are alumni of the school: Beauden Barrett, Scott Barrett, Jordie Barrett, Conrad Smith, John Mitchell, Liam Coltman.

School doing Haka: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=491301121076243>

Feilding High School - Feilding

Feilding High School (FAHS) is a co-educational high school founded in 1921 - formerly Feilding Agricultural High School. It currently educates over 1400 students, 185 of whom board in their hostel, L.J. Wild House. They take pride in a strong academic focus and their sporting achievements, especially in boys' and girls' rugby. FAHS have eight boys' and one girls' team participating at local, regional and national levels.

The following All Blacks are alumni of the school: Samuel Whitelock, Aaron Smith, Luke Whitelock, Codie Taylor, George Whitelock, Nelson Ball, Jack Finlay, Richard (Tiny) White, William Stuart Freebairn, Perry Harris. The following have also represented the NZ Maori: Aaron Smith, Nick Crosswell, Mitchell Crosswell, Codie Taylor.

Thunder Tour Party

Jimena Alvarez	Westshore	Mexico			
Naomi Armstrong	Westshore	Coast Salish			
Mady Doucet	Westshore	Mi'kmaq			
Charlise Foster	Westshore	First Nations			
Madison Hamilton	Comox Valley Rapids	Indigenist			
Brooke Horsfall	Comox Valley Rapids	Gitga'at			
Paige Horsfall	Comox Valley Rapids	Gitga'at			
Paradise Johnson	Abbotsford	Gitsxan			
Presley Kallio	Haida Gwaii	Haida			
Aislin Mackay	Westshore	Indigenist			
Grace McKay	Manitoba	Ojibwe			
Lauren Quinn	Comox Valley Rapids	Metis	John Lyall	HBIC	Kwakwaka'wakw
Renya Seguin	Manitoba	Cree	Shery Spence	Coach	Indigenist
Cynthia Shingoose	Delta	Saulteaux—Cree	Clay Panga	Coach	Maori
Shayla Stigant	Comox Valley Rapids	Indigenist	Hunter Grant	Coach	Stl'am'Imx
Monique Vinnedge	Comox Valley Rapids	Indigenist	Kaci Ellerby	Trainer	Indigenist
Savion Atchison	Capilano	Squamish FN	Mark Bryant	Media	Indigenist
Grady Berg	Cowichan	Metis	Vanessa Hooper	Secretary	Indigenist
Manuel Boada	Abbotsford	Inca	Ian Rose	Parent	Driver
Mike Chandler	Squamish	Squamish FN			Land of Long White Cloud
Linden Chandler	Squamish	Squamish FN	Christy Fenton	Parent Driver	Inuvialuk
Quentin Farquhar	Fort St. John	Dane Zaa Doig River	Mellissa Jack	Nuu Chah Nuulth	
Brighton Feldman	Westshore	Indigenist	Kelsey Lyall	Kwakwaka'wakw	
Waylon Fenton	MacDowell	Inuvialuk	Alyssa Foster	First Nations	
Kowin Garant	Kamloops	Dene Chilcotin			
Kaleb Hunt	Westshore	Kwakwaka'wakw			
Waylon Morris	Ladysmith	Stz'iminus—Tsartlip			
Will Morris	Saanich	Tsartlip FN			
Quinten Ormiston	Kamloops	Metis			
Clayton Ritchie	Abbotsford	Sto Lo First Nation			
Dane Robinson	Kamloops	Metis			
Isaiah Sousedik	Abbotsford	Sto Lo First Nation			
Fraser Smith	Abbotsford	Sumas First Nation			
Chris Rose Treagear	Westshore	Land of Long White Cloud			
Josh Rose Treagear	Westshore	Land of Long White Cloud			



Jimena Alvarez (*Jojo*)

Westshore

Mexico

Hooker

Rugby Goals: play for the Canada rugby team and keep improving my skills

My # (hashtag) description: #countonme

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: This is my first year playing for Thunder rugby. I am thankful for the amount of amazing people I have met and I am glad to be able to call them my teammates and coaches. I truly appreciate singing the team's songs, hearing their stories, and many other things. Becoming a part of the team meant I became a part of a beautiful family, and I plan to cherish that forever.

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby?

I'm excited to improve as a player. Any opportunity I get to play means I will be better. I can't wait to explore a new country with my friends.



Naomi Armstrong (*They call me the Breeze*) Westshore Coast Salish

Rugby Goals: be the best prop on the field

My # (hashtag) description: #sendit

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: it gives me the opportunity to connect with our community as well as play rugby. We get to sing and come together, and make some fire tackles. Best of all worlds

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I'm super excited to experience rugby in a place where rugby is like Canada's hockey. Plus it's my first time out of North America!



Mady Doucet (*Madu*)

Westshore

Mi'kmaq

Back Row

Rugby Goals: be the best player I can be

Favorite Rugby memory (on and off field): My first Thunder tour!

My # (hashtag) description: #lockedandloaded

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: Thunder rugby allows me to learn and explore more of my culture, all through rugby

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I'm excited to learn and grow as a player in by being in New Zealand, and learn a new style of rugby and experience the rugby culture.



Charlise Foster (*Angel*)

Westshore

First Nations

Lock

Rugby Goals: have fun, play good rugby and travel

Favorite Rugby memory (on and off field): Oregon Sand dunes!

When I'm not playing: Im playing the electric bass!

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: it it's a great way to build the community and create connections through rugby through the trust and teamwork that goes into playing the sport together

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I'm excited to travel and see what rugby is like in New Zealand while having new experiences with the team!



Madison Hamilton (*Hammer*) Comox Valley Rapids Back Three

Rugby Goals: play for rugby at university & Team Canada

How long at Thunder, my favorite Thunder experience? I have been part of Thunder for 5 years and my favorite experience was the LA tour

Favorite Rugby memory (on and off field): LA with Thunder, Orlando with MacDowell and provincials with school

Hashtag: #rugbylife

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I get to learn more and experience culture while playing rugby

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby? I am excited to meet new people, learn a new culture and improve my game while playing rugby with Thunder!



Brooke Horsfall (*Flue*) Rapids Gitga'at Scrum half, Centre

Rugby Goals: play for team Canada

How long at Thunder, my favorite Thunder experience? I have been part of Thunder for 5 years and my favorite experience was the LA tour

Favorite Rugby memory (on and off field): LA, and Easter trip.

My # (hashtag) description: #gobig

School / Life goals: travel the world and experience different cultures

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I get to learn more about the Indigenous culture and play rugby

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby? I am excited to meet new people, play rugby, experience new places, and learn about the culture



Paige Horsfall (*Waaka*) Rapids Gitga'at Wing, Centre, Fullback

Rugby Goals: play for team Canada

How long at Thunder, my favorite Thunder experience? I have been part of Thunder for 5 years and my favorite experience was the LA tour

Favorite Rugby memory (on and off field): LA, and Easter trip.

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: it allows me to experience and learn my culture while doing what I love (rugby)

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby? I am excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder because I had the best time last year going on a road trip to LA, and now looking forward to learning new techniques from a new country



Paradise Johnson (*Lights Out*) Abbotsford Gitsxan Prop

Rugby Goals: Team Canada

How long at Thunder, my favorite Thunder experience? California Love

Favorite Rugby memory (on and off field): #girlsareplayerstoo

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I get to play rugby with some really cool people and learn about their culture

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby? Ever since I started playing rugby, I've wanted to go to New Zealand, my favourite teams are there. Not only that, but I'm also excited to hang with my friends and learn of Maori culture



Presley Kallio (*Elvis*) Haida Gwaii Haida Wing

How long at Thunder, my favorite Thunder experience? I have been part of Thunder for 5 years and my favorite experience was the LA tour

Favorite Rugby memory (on and off field): scoring my first try, travelling to LA with Thunder

My # (hashtag) description: #ruggers

Rugby goals: bring rugby to Haida Gwaii

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: open opportunities for rez kids like me

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby? I have never been

Aislin Mackay (*Gingy*) Westshore Fly half—Utility

Rugby Goals: continue to play and have fun for as long as I can and see where it takes me

School / Life goals: finish my dual credit course next year and eventually become a paralegal in criminal law

My # (hashtag) description: #ruggers

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I love to learn new things about people, already from the few trips I've been on with Thunder I've learned a lot about Indigenous culture and I can't wait to learn more. Thunder has amazing coaches and everyone that is there truly wants to be there.

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? it has always been a dream of mine to go to New Zealand so when the opportunity came up I jumped to it. Now I am so excited to continue to get closer to the people in the program and play high level rugby while learning about the Māori culture along the way.



Grace McKay (*Amazen*) Manitoba Ojibwe Backrow Centre

Rugby Goals: Play for Canada and be an indigenous role model for youth

Favorite Rugby memory: Discovering the stiff arm

Hashtag: #mamba

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: It lets me be a part of my community as well as play the sport I love

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I'm excited because I get to play some of the best players in the world with all my friends



Lauren Quinn (*Mighty*) Comox Valley Rapids Metis Scrum Half flank

Rugby Goals: Play at university

Favorite Rugby memory: Touring California with Thunder

Hashtag: #rugbylife

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I get to learn more about my culture while playing rugby

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder?

I am excited to experience a new country, and after having such a great trip with Thunder last year, I think this will be awesome. Hoping to meet some new people and look forward to explore the beautiful land



Renay Seguin (*NayNay*) Manitoba Cree Center

School / Life goals: To play rugby in university and get my bachelor of science at Queens.

Hashtag: #letsgetit

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: It allows me to play with other experienced girls my age.

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I am excited to go to New Zealand to experience and be immersed in another indigenous culture as well as getting to learn more about mine at the same time. Excited to go play in one of the best rugby countries.



Cynthia Shingoose (*Goose*) Delta Saulteaux—Cree Scrum Half wing

School / Life goals: to play high level rugby and hopefully represent my country and my people. One day, I want to be a great example for youth and show them that they too can follow their dreams and become whoever they want to be.

Hashtag: #thecrusher

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I get to make friends who also enjoy playing rugby and who take it seriously. My culture is who I am and I take full pride in my ancestry and by being a powwow dancer playing rugby and making healthy choices with my life

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I've always wanted to visit New Zealand and since my favourite team is there and they inspired me to play rugby. This will be my first time flying out of the country, and I want to make new friends.



Shayla Stigant (*Shaymendous*) Comox Valley Rapids Lock— Centre

School / Life goals: go to UBC to study and play rugby then hopefully play for Canada

Hashtag: #lock¢relife

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: This will be my first year playing with Thunder rugby and I am beyond excited to make some new friends and play with a whole new team.

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I'm excited to go to New Zealand because of the culture and getting to play with new people and against teams from one of the most known rugby countries is really cool.



Monique Vinnedge (*Mo*) Comox Valley Rapids Flyhalf

Rugby Goals: I want to be able to play on the Junior Canadian team and play for the UVic Vikes.

My # (hashtag) description: #10 #AllForOne #Rugby

School / Life goals: I want to go to UVic and play for their varsity rugby team.

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: Indigenous culture is not only important to me but is important to me because I am Canadian, and it surrounds me wherever I go. I want to learn more about the beautiful land I am so grateful to have grown up on.

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I am excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder because this is a once in a lifetime experience that I am so grateful to be apart of. I will get to play some intense rugby and I look forward to it.



Savion Atchison (*Jeri*) Capilano Squamish FN Wing Fullback

My # (hashtag) description: #squamishnation

School / Life goals: to continue to develop myself as an athlete and global citizen

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: Thunder Rugby is an opportunity to connect with other indigenous athletes from various areas of BC. Because I live off reserve it's important for me to stay connected to my culture and indigenous community and doing so through sport is a super opportunity.

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby? I am excited to travel to NZ as I have never been there before. Being able to play high level rugby and learn about another culture will be a great opportunity



Grady Berg (*Cowboy*) Cowichan Metis Prop

School / Life goals: to graduate next year and continue with my carpentry apprenticeship

Favorite Rugby Memory: joining the Nooky Wood with my dad, and playing in Seattle

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: gives me a sense of pride and identity and connection to our culture

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby? To experience and learn more of the Maori culture. Very excited to be going overseas and playing rugby with Thunder and taking in the whole experience of the trip



Manuel Boada (*Manu*) Abbotsford Inca Flyhalf Centre

Rugby Goals: I want to make momma proud and play in the Olympics.

How long at Thunder: Second year, California blessed me with fond memories

My hashtag description: #spreadpeaceandlove #blondmoment #ilovehiking

Life goal: When I grow up, I wanna be kind. Might be rich too, haven't decided yet.

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: people like Phil Mack and John Lyall Inspire me to use my voice and speak up about Indigenous reconciliation. The community here at Thunder is so special and is FULL of people who all believe that every child deserves the same opportunity to pursue their dreams in a safe way. I'm grateful to have the privilege of being involved with this movement.

Why am I excited to go to New Zealand: In all seriousness, I'm stoked to learn from others to get better at the game! I'm also looking forward to tanning on the beach!



Linden Chandler (*CoolHand*) Squamish Skw'wxwu7mesh FN Wing

Rugby Goals: develop as a player as much as I can

Favorite Rugby Memory: BC Bears summer 2022

My hashtag description: #longhairddontcare

Life goal: Be successful

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I can connect through my culture through rugby and meet lots of people

Why am I excited to go to New Zealand: To experience a new culture and new place



Mike Chandler (*Big Mike*) Squamish Skwxw7mesh FN Lock 8 Man

Rugby Goals: develop as a player the best as I can, and go pro!

Favorite Rugby Memory: Thunder LA Summer 2022

My hashtag description: #bigguy

Rugby—Life goal: travel the world and

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I can connect through my culture through rugby and meet lots of people

Why am I excited to go to New Zealand: Excited to go to New Zealand to learn the Maori culture and travel to a place I haven't been before



Quentin Farquhar (*Fokker*) Fort St. John Dane Zaa Doig River Hooker

Goals: to become a great player by the time I'm 20

Favorite Rugby Memory: Scoring my first try!

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: this is very important to me because I hope to learn more about my culture and being in a Indigenous team, makes me feel more confident

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby? I am very excited to travel to New Zealand with Thunder. I will be able to connect more with the team. Travelling outside of Canada is something I've never done!



Brighton Feldman (*B-Mo*) Westshore Prop

Position: prop

Surprising but true: Once went 36 hours with a shirt on

Indigenous Ancestry: Mayan

Rugby Goals: win a World Cup with Canada

My # (hashtag) description: #uptheshore #tarpsoff

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I love learning about indigenous culture so that I can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of it

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? Get some Ws and become the best rugby player I can



Waylon Fenton (*Lil Way*) MacDowell Inuvialuk Backrow

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I am Inuvialuk and we traditionally have been a very physical people. The Inuvialuit have competed since time immemorial in tests of strength. I was also raised with ceremony and there is a different way of doing things in Indigenous community. It is nice to play for a club that involves ceremony and doing things in a good way. It feels like family even though we all come from different nations.

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby? I am a very physical player and I want to learn more about the New Zealand-style game which involves a lot of crash and advance to move up the field. I could really improve the way I naturally play by learning more from this style. I also am interested in learning more about Maori culture and travelling



Kowin Garant (CC) Kamloops Dene Chilcotin #7, #12—#15

Rugby Goals: Play for Seattle Seawolves in the MLR and play for Team Canada

School—Life Goals: Attend TRU for Bachelor of Science and play pro rugby!

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: It brings other Indigenous people around me so I can connect with others and create bonds

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? To explore the land of New Zealand and play the best of the best rugby players



Kaleb Hunt (Pie) Westshore Kwakwaka'wakw Wing

Rugby Goals: Play for the national team

When I am not playing: I am learning the Kenyan language

Hashtag: #train

Thunder rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: Thunder rugby is a wonderful team/program meeting all these great people from different cultures and learning about some is really great getting to play/train rugby and be able to hang with new people each trip I go on.

Why am I excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder Rugby: It will be a great trip going somewhere new experiencing a new culture and being able to learn more from others and seeing a new area.



Waylon Morris (Big Way) Ladysmith Stz'iminus—Tsartlip Prop

Rugby Goals: be able to travel and meet new people from different nations

When I'm not playing rugby, I am Working or fishing

Favorite Rugby memory: going to California and playing in the L.A. 7's

My # (hashtag) description: #beast#thewall

School / Life goals: be a good role model for youth in my community. Looking into a trades program.

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: I like playing with Thunder, because the team leaders are welcoming and good support.

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I look forward to travelling with our Thunder team to meet new friends/ nations, building new friendships and being able to travel with team mates.



Will Morris (Lil Will) Stellys Cowichan—Wsanec Hooker

Rugby Goals: play Team Canada, play Pro, and play against the Maori All Blacks Haka

When I'm not playing rugby, I am War canoeing, Outrigger, Boxing, Soccer

Favorite Rugby memory: flying tackle first game, PRC's

My # (hashtag) description: #beachkid

School / Life goals: earn a scholarship to play rugby, travel the world

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: learn other cultures while playing rugby

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? Play rugby, meet new people and the Haka!



Quinten Ormiston (*ChuckNorris*) Kamloops Metis Back row

Rugby Goals: play on the national team, and play abroad

School / Life goals: complete a degree on athletic therapy and take rugby as far as possible

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: further educates me on Indigenous culture while being able to learn from high level coaching developing me as a player and person

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I am excited to go to New Zealand so I can see where I stand with the world's best. This is my first opportunity to play abroad. Also a great opportunity to spend time with great people and explore a beautiful country



Clayton Ritchie (*Candle*) Abbotsford Sto Lo First Nation Hooker

When not playing rugby: I am war canoeing

Hashtag: #longhairdontcare

Goals: Degree in Criminal & Indigenous Law

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous Culture is important: I'm Indigenous and proud of it!

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder: I'm excited to go to New Zealand because I've heard many great things about the country. I'm excited to learn about the Maori culture and see how similar it is our West Coast Indigenous culture. I also want to buy a few souvenirs.



Dane Robinson (*JusDane*) Kamloops Metis Centre / wing

My # (hashtag) description: #Rugby #rollsaunts

School / Life goals: Get my Bachelor of Science at TRU

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: Thunder Rugby important to me because it allows me to play more rugby and allows for me to learn all sorts of things about Indigenous culture

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I am excited to go to New Zealand because of the amazing rugby culture they have there and I want to visit as many countries as I am able to.



Isaiah Sousedik (*ImSquatch*) Abbotsford Sto Lo First Nation Centre / Backrow

Rugby Goals: International 7s

Favorite Rugby memory (on and off field): my favorite memory on the field is when I scored a full field try in the HSBC stadium in LA, my favorite off field memory would be singing on the Thunder bus.

My # (hashtag) description: #sasquatch because I have big feet and run hard

How I roll: run Broncos in Beauden Barrett time

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: Thunder rugby is important to me because they have become my rugby family over the years and wouldn't feel the same without them. and the culture is important as well because there is alot I still have to learn about my culture

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I am excited to go to New Zealand with thunder because keep learning more about it. It has been a huge dream of mine to play rugby in New Zealand and learn more of their culture and how its similar to our Indigenous culture.



Fraser Smith (*Squatch*) Abbotsford Sumas First Nation Prop

Rugby Goals: smash the opposition!

My # (hashtag) description: #Squatch

School / Life goals: Teach Indigenous Culture

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: With Thunder, I play rugby with people from different communities and make friends. Culture is what my family & community are known for, and I would like to continue that

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I get to experience going to a different country and continent with people I hope to continue having good friendships with!



Chris Rose Treagear (*Piri*) Westshore Land of Long White Cloud

Scrum Half Fly half

My # (hashtag) description: #iloverugby, #chiefs

School / Life goals: Play rugby for a university team and complete a degree in kinesiology / physiotherapy at the same time

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: it provides an education of multiple cultures, similarities and differences and builds a strong community

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? To play rugby in a strong rugby nation, be part of the culture, play on the same team with my brother, and see family



Josh Rose Treagear (*Beaver*) Westshore Land of Long White Cloud

First Five—Fullback

Favourite Memory: captaining my school team and playing with my brother

My # (hashtag) description: #rugbylife #upthe blues

School / Life goals: Bachelor of Commerce and Canada u20

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: it provides an opportunity for Indigenous players to travel the world. Allows me to further my rugby experience and play with my brothers

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? To play the sport in a country that is very good at it, and to be able to play with my brother



John Lyall *HBIC* Kwakwaka'wakw

John is a lifelong rugby player & director of Thunder Rugby. Proud father of three girls, and husband to Mellissa. When not onto rugby events, John is a school administrator! I am super pumped my daughter Kelsey joining us from Australia!

Kwankala'a!

Rugby Experience: Since time immemorial.

Fun Fact: Played for Albion RFC in Christchurch, RFC bunking with Mike Cron, when tries were worth 4 points

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: it is our dream come true to visit Aotearoa. Rugby & Indigenous culture are two of my favourite things, so Thunder Indigenous Rugby goes together like PB & J!



Shery Spence *CoachSherry* Cowichan Piggie

Rugby Experience: 20 years playing, prop life capped! 10 years coaching

When not playing: enjoying the outdoors, hiking, kayaking or paddle boarding

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: Thunder Rugby is giving kids amazing opportunities

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? To reconnect with the kids and become immersed in the rugby culture



Clay Panga *Coach* Maori

Clay is from Papakura Auckland who came to Canada in 2005, playing some amazing rugby for Velox and the Wolfpack! Clay was a 2011 RWC Triallist and netted 6 caps for the Canadian National team. He has coached Canada u20, Shawnigan Lake School, Dog River Howlers & Thunder!. He is proud husband to Canadian rugby legend Barbara Mervin, and two young children. He returns to Aotearoa as Aragorn in the Return of the King, I hope that doesn't make John Gimli! Kia Ora!

Kaci Ellerby *Sunshine* Trainer

Favorite Rugby memory (on and off field): Going on the field at LA 7s with Thunder last summer.

My # (hashtag) description: #ATliving

Career goals: Becoming a successful Athletic Therapist on the field and in a clinic helping all types of individuals recover from their injuries.

Thunder Rugby & Indigenous culture is important to me because: Thunder Rugby is important to me as it has opened many doors and opportunities for me within the rugby world but has also exposed me to new cultures and wonderful people.

Why are you excited to go to New Zealand with Thunder? I am excited to travel to NZ as I will get to experience a new culture, amazing adventures/opportunities, and to get to know the Thunder athletes more!





Vanessa Hooper, aka Vanny, also been with Thunder since *Time Immemorial*, and is our club secretary. She's put up with McRugby for 20+ years, her IG account The Rugby Widow says it all. A Cub & Scout leader for 10 years, we are in good hands if lost in the woods. Vanessa has three boys, Cree descent and has three grandchildren. She is excited about touring New Zealand, the heart of rugby and watching the Thunder youth show their warrior spirit & experience NZ and Maori culture.



Mark Bryant, aka McRugby has been with Thunder since *Time Immemorial*, does the photography, videos and writing, also editor at BC Rugby News. Helps the boss, aka Johnny on admin when needed. Oldest on tour, will answer to "Gramps" or "where's the camera guy". 2nd tour to New Zealand, first one with the over 40 Ebb Tide in 2009.

Excited about New Zealand, hoping to make new rugby contacts, watch some top level NPC rugby matches and watch the Thunder youth grow from the experience.



Hunter Grant

Hunter Grant was born and raised in Victoria, British Columbia, where he currently resides. An Interior Salish Status Indian, Hunter is a member of the St'at'imc first Nation. His native language is English, but he also speaks & writes fluent French and Spanish.

Hunter is a recent graduate of the University of Victoria, where he excelled in his academic career, majoring in Spanish and minoring in French and Film Studies. His language studies focused on the literature, culture, and politics of various regions of the world. During his undergrad he began working at Tyhee Financial, a financial services company specializing in wealth management and capital project development for Indigenous bands in the interior.

Hunter spent much of his adolescence balancing his talents for academics, athletics, and the arts. He was a multi-sport athlete who competed in wrestling and rugby at the national and international levels, traveling across Canada and around the world as he did. These experiences broadened his perspectives and instilled in him a desire to give

back to his communities, both local and global. Most recently, he has done so by coaching youth rugby with the Thunder Program.

Hunter has been a participant of the Thunder Rugby program since it was first founded in 2014, where he was a player in the program's inaugural team. Hunter continued to play for the Thunder throughout his time in high school, and has recently begun to contribute to the Thunder program as an assistant coach.

In August 2022, Hunter went on an Indigenous Thunder Rugby Sevens tour as a coach and chaperone of four high school Sevens teams from across BC. Over the course of two weeks, they traveled the West Coast by bus to Los Angeles to compete in the L.A. Sevens Tournament. In August 2023 he is set to once again coach for a Thunder Rugby tour, traveling with a youth rugby team to New Zealand.

Hunter is looking forward to the chance to help young athletes participate in and learn more about the sport of rugby, to help young athletes foster community and lifelong friendships through the program, and to broaden his skills and experiences as a coach to be able to continue participating in the program in years to come.

ALSO ON TOUR: Ian Rose Land of Long White Cloud , Christy Fenton, Inuvialuk, Kelsey Lyall, Kwakwaka'wakw Alyssa Foster, First Nations



Hych'ka Siem for all your support!

We took 40 kids, 11 coaches and managers, one brother Rick, two buses, 6 cars parent caravan, 4 teams, 36 + games, to two invitational rugby tourneys, one international tourney, 5000 km, three states and one province in 14 days in an adventurous trip of a lifetime!



Thunder 2023 in Review!





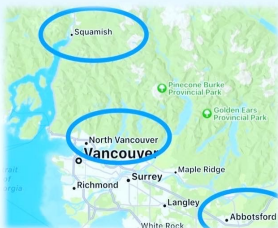
Thunder Rugby Easter Tour

North Vancouver—Squamish—Abbotsford
Friday April 7— Sunday April 9 (Easter
Weekend)

U16 & U18 Girls & Boys

Check your emails or contact John
at jlyall@thunderrugby.ca for
more information

To register, go to
www.thunderrugby.ca



RC Flare Inspired Thunderbirds Design by Loni Skelton



May 2023

Brooke, Paige and Isaiah won the Phil Mack Indigenous Youth Player of the Year!

Noah Bain the Phil Mack Indigenous Player of the Year



May 2023

Brighton & Mady with the JL Award for Best and Fairest!



Cherokee Honour song

Witchita do yah do yah do yah

Witchita do yah do yah day

Witchita do yah do yah do yah

Witchita do yah do yah day

Washa Tanaya way yah hay yah

Washa Tanaya way yah hay

Washa Tanaya way yah hay yah

Washa Tanaya way yah hay

Women Warrior Song (Lil wat elder Martina Pierre)

Way Hey Hey Hey

Yahee yo ho ho

Yahee yo ho ho

Aw way hey yahee yo

Yahee yo ho ho aw way hey yahee ho

Hychka Siem

Hychka Siem Hychka Siem (Thank you)

Hychka Hychka Hychka Siem

Hychka Siem Hychka Siem (loudly or individually)

Hychka Hychka Hychka Siem

Kwan qwa la la Kwan qwa la la (Thunderbird)

Kwan qwa Kwan qua Kwan qwa la la

Kwan qwa la la Kwan qwa la la (Loudly or individually)

Kwan qwa Kwan qua Kwan qwa la la

Chorus

Yaa-A, hee yaa Yaa-A, hee yaa

Wo-ho heey, Yaa-A, hee yaa (2X)

- 1) Kwanxwala-a, Yaa-A dzi-i
Thunder How great

'wist'ans-hee yaa, Kwanxwala-a (2X)
Our Thunder

- 2) Dli dla dlo laa, Yaa-A dzi-i
Family How great

'wist'ans-hee ya, Dli dla dlo laa (2X)
Our Family

- 3) **Yaa-A dzi-i, 'wist'ans hee yaa (vocals only)**
How Great, our

Kwanxwala, Ka-so – wa-ha,
Thunder, Real/True it is

Finish Song with Chorus

Shannon Alfred, Kwakwaka'wakw

'Kaniya' – Tribal Journeys Song

Composed by late Uncle Frank Nelson

Belongs to Chief Robert Joseph Sr (uncle Bobby Jo), who gave permission for all canoe nations to use and share this song, so its become known as the 'Tribal Journeys' song over the years. It is fitting for us today as we acknowledge the journey, the travels together, and the incredible "Canoe of all Nations" we represent.

Oyi (Chorus)

Wo ha-ya hey-ey-ey hey
Hey wo hai-ya ho wa-a-a-ah hey ya-
Wo ha-ya hey-ey-ey hey
Hey wo hai-ya ho wa-a-a-ah
Hey-ya a-hey a-ha hey wo.

Verse

Wo Kaniya-a-a-a-ha
Himas ka-sa-wa-ah-ah hey ya
Wo Kaniya-a-a-ha
Himas ka-sa-wa-ah-ah
Hey-ya a-hey a-ha hey wo

2nd

Tlanikwala galis ka-sa-wa-ah-ah hey ya

3rd

Kwanzistala galis ka-sa-wa-ah-ah hey ya
Thunder rolling all over the world

For each verse you change out the lyrics (in bold)

Kaniya – 'take flight'
Himas - Chiefs

Kasawa – true, great, real
Tlanikwala galis –
'Lightning all over the

world'
Kwanzistala galis –

Thunder rolling all over the world

Kwagul Amlala (Calvin Hunt)

Oyi

Wo ho hu wey—ya

Hey he yey hey he ye he ya times 2

Wo ho hu wey ya

Wo –o ho –o hu wey he ya

A kwanzista xala galis

Hoy nugwa kasawa

Wo ho hu wey ya

Wo –o ho –o hu wey he ya

Oyi

Laxdan Tlakish

Nawala Yatlawatl

Wo ho hu wey ya

Wo –o ho –o hu wey he ya

Thunder Rugby

Almost Heaven, Shawnigan

Orakei, Mount Maunganui

Taranaki, Palmerston North

Back to Auckland, Kwankwala –a

Thunder Rugby, take me home

To the place where I belong

Aotearoa, Kwankwala –a

Take me home, Thunder Rugby

Thunder Program

Thunder Mask: Kaniya

Thunder Celebration

Cherokee Fun Song

Women Warrior Song

Fly Thunder Fly

Hych'ka Siem

Kwagul Amlala



Thunder Rugby New Zealand 2023

We are looking forward to Thunder Rugby's first overseas tour. We will be travelling with a party of 44. Thunder Rugby is not only our name, but represents who we are and where we come from. The Thunderbird from all oral histories is from "the west", grounding us to our place in the world, strengthening who we are and where we come from.

Let us use the four R's of Indigenous Ways of Knowing to guide us!

Respect: respect yourself, respect your teammates, respect your coaches, respect our opposition!

Responsibility: Accept the responsibility of the jersey that you are wearing for your teammates before you and ones to follow.

Relationship: use the philosophy of *Numway'ut or we are all one* to guide us.

Resiliency: touring and rugby can and will be hard. Dig deep and find that resiliency, that spirit to give us strength.

Hychka Siem: Please take a moment and give a Hychka for our supporters and sponsors!

Drugs & Alcohol: this will be a drug & alcohol free trip!

FIND US

www.thunderrugby.ca

Thunder Indigenous Rugby on Facebook

Thunder _ rugby on Instagram

@ThunderRugbyCA on Twitter (X)

jlyall@thunderrugby.ca

