



ROUND 1

# MATCH DAY PROGRAM

SAT. 19 FEB | 6:45PM QLD TIME KICK OFF | SUNCORP STADIUM

# WE'RE SEEING RED IN QUEENSLAND

Everyone at Westpac will be cheering on the Queensland Reds and Reds Super W teams this season. We're proud to be partners of Queensland Rugby Union for the next two years, helping Queensland communities thrive and supporting the development of the sport across the Sunshine State.

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**Ross Miller**

Chief Customer Engagement Officer,  
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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** *Roger Gould*

A historic night awaits rugby fans with not only the inaugural Super Rugby Pacific tournament on show, but a Vintage Reds and Tongan Invitational XV curtain raiser set to ignite Suncorp Stadium tonight.

Queensland Rugby legends have come together to raise funds for the Tongan recovery effort with a charity match featuring some of the game's greatest names.

Queensland Reds head coach Brad Thorn will make his rugby return playing for the Vintage Reds, while David Croft will captain the side from the backrow, with the likes of Chris Latham, Rod Davies and Berrick Barnes lining up in the backs

The Reds forward pack features no less than four former Wallaby captains, with Stephen Moore, Nathan Sharpe, James Horwill and Ben Mowen all set to pull on the boots at Suncorp Stadium.

For the Tongan side, Radike Samo, Trevor Leota George Smith bring over 160 caps of international experience to the forward pack, while All Black star Hosea Gear and 2011 Super Rugby title winner Digby Ioane start on the wings.

Olympic flag bearer Pita Taufatofua will carry the Tongan flag onto the field, while the side will also perform a traditional war cry before kick-off.

The brother of current Reds prop Taniela Tupou, Criff Tupou, will come off the bench, as will cross-code star Lote Tuqiri.

Toutai Kefu will coach the side, although he may see late minutes off the bench.

The QRU has partnered with UNICEF Australia's Tongan Recovery Appeal with all public donations generated by this special invitational game directed towards UNICEF Australia's fundraising efforts, in response to the explosion of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai underwater volcano and subsequent tsunami last month.

Following this game, the Queensland Reds will battle the Melbourne Rebels as the reigning domestic champions look to continue their impressive recent record against Australian teams

in Brisbane.

I would like to welcome the Rebels, their coaching staff and team management to this great stadium here tonight in what shapes as a great season opener for both teams.

Brad Thorn has named a strong side for his first Super Rugby match of 2022 with a great mix of experience and exciting young talent on show.

Up to two players could make their Queensland debuts with Bond University scrumhalf Spencer Jeans and Brothers utility back Lawson Creighton both named on the bench.

After an extended injury layoff, hooker Alex Mafi will make his Super Rugby return alongside Dane Zander and the destructive Taniela Tupou in the frontrow.

Angus Blyth and Lukhan Salakaia-Loto pack down at lock, with co-captain Liam Wright, Harry Wilson and Angus Scott-Young making up a strong backrow combination.

James O'Connor and Wright's fellow co-captain Tate McDermott start in the halves, with Hamish Stewart and Josh Flook outside them in the midfield.

Wests duo Filippo Daugunu and Jordan Petaia make up an electric wing pairing, while Jock Campbell brings playmaking nous at fullback.

Off the bench, Josh Nasser also returns after an extended injury break, with Fraser McReight and Hunter Paisami offering strike power as finishers.

I would also like to congratulate James O'Connor who will play his 100th Super Rugby match tonight after making his debut as a 17-year-old for the Western Force back in 2008.

It shapes as another exciting season ahead for Queensland fans and I thank you all for attending tonight's match.

Go Reds!

**Roger Gould – QRU President**

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HOOKER



**3** **TANIELA TUPOU**  
TIGHTHEAD PROP



**4** **ANGUS BLYTH**  
LOCK



**5** **LUKHAN SALAKAIA-LOTO**  
LOCK



**6** **ANGUS SCOTT-YOUNG**  
BLINDSIDE FLANKER



**8** **HARRY WILSON**  
NUMBER EIGHT



**7** **LIAM WRIGHT (c)**  
OPENSIDE FLANKER



**9** **TATE MCDERMOTT (c)**  
SCRUMHALF



**10** **JAMES O'CONNOR\*\***  
FLYHALF



**12** **HAMISH STEWART**  
INSIDE CENTRE



**15** **JOCK CAMPBELL**  
FULLBACK



**13** **JOSH FLOOK**  
OUTSIDE CENTRE



**14** **JORDAN PETAIA**  
WING



**11** **FILIPO DAUGUNU**  
WING

- 16. JOSH NASSER**  
**17. HARRY HOOPERT**  
**18. ZANE NONGGORR**  
**19. RYAN SMITH**

- 20. FRASER MCREIGHT**  
**21. SPENCER JEANS\***  
**22. HUNTER PAISAMI**  
**23. LAWSON CREIGHTON\***

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# BACKS

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CAMERON  
ORR



**2**  
JORDAN  
UELESE



**3**  
CABOUS  
ELOFF



**4**  
MATT  
PHILLIP



**5**  
ROSS  
HAYLETT-PETTY



**6**  
SAM  
WALLIS



**7**  
BRAD  
WILKIN



**8**  
MICHAEL  
WELLS (C)



**9**  
JOE  
POWELL



**10**  
CARTER  
GORDON



**11**  
GLEN  
VAIHU



**12**  
MATT  
TO'OMUA



**13**  
STACEY  
ILI



**14**  
LACHLAN  
ANDERSON



**15**  
REECE  
HODGE

<b>16</b>	MATT	<b>GIBBON</b>
<b>17</b>	JAMES	<b>HANSON</b>
<b>18</b>	SEF	<b>FA'AGASE</b>
<b>19</b>	THOMAS	<b>NOWLAN</b>

<b>20</b>	TAMATI	<b>IOANE</b>
<b>21</b>	JAMES	<b>TUTTLE</b>
<b>22</b>	RAYMOND	<b>NU'U</b>
<b>23</b>	YOUNG	<b>TONUMAIPEA</b>



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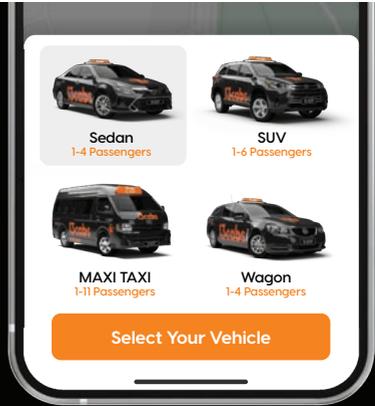
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***TANIELA TUPOU:  
WINNING VIBES FOR TONGA'S  
RECOVERY AND THE REDS***

**BY JIM TUCKER**

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***If Taniela Tupou had his way he'd probably play 120 minutes tonight for the Queensland Reds and the Tongan recovery cause that is so dear to him.***

Before he rips into the Melbourne Rebels, the prop will definitely have an eye on the 5pm curtainraiser that will raise much-needed funds to help his homeland recover from the recent volcanic eruption.

The giant prop playfully said he'd love to play beside George Smith, Radike Samo, Digby Ioane, former All Black Hosea Gear, former Samoan hooker Trevor Leota and Co in the Polynesian line-up assembling as the Tongan Invitational XV.

They will get tonight's action at Suncorp Stadium off to a lively start in a 40-minute match against the Vintage Reds to drive fundraising for UNICEF Australia's Tongan Recovery Appeal.

For Tupou, the cause is deeply personal. He had to wait days after the dramatic eruption in mid-January to hear from his mother Loisi.

"It was tough wondering if my mum was OK," Tupou said of the violent volcanic eruption and the tsunami to follow.

"It was hard being here in Australia with my family back in Tonga. Everything happened and you couldn't talk to them for four or five days.

"My (late) father's small island of Nomuka...gone, no more houses.

"People heard a big noise like a machine gun, then the tide went out and came back in again.

"My mum's village outside Nuku'alofa is OK. The ash from the volcano is thick on the roof, everywhere. You needed to wear a mask but it could have been worse.

"I couldn't call my mum. I had to wait four days until she could call me.

"The call came through at 2am. When I heard everyone was OK I went to sleep in peace."

The recovery cause holds significance for all those of Tongan heritage in the Reds squad including hooker Alex Mafi, prop Feao Fotuaika, new squad prop George Blake and lock Lukhan Salakaia-Loto, who has Tongan and Samoan background.

The creation of Super Rugby Pacific is exciting for everyone at the Reds because it does create new goals and standards to be reached.

The Reds' 40-34 victory over the Chiefs in Townsville last season was a glimpse at what is possible but Tupou is well aware that a successful 2022 campaign requires more than a single win over a Kiwi team.

At 25, Tupou is not just a pillar of dominance at scrum time and a whirl of powerful limbs when let loose as a ball-runner. He's one of the best experienced in the Reds line-up with 38 Tests to his name and more than 70 Super Rugby appearances since 2016.

"It's hard to believe that I'm one of the older guys in the team now. I've been here since 2014. Most of boys, they were still in school then," Tupou reflected.

"The Reds have done a lot for me. I love this team. When I came here in 2014, we were the low of the lowest. There have been a few hard years of footy and look where we were last year as Super Rugby AU champions.

"There is definitely room for improvement but, from where we were to now, we are heading in the right direction. I'm really looking forward to where we can take this team to."

On every level that is competing more consistently with Kiwi opponents and sustaining the rage against Australian opponents like the Rebels.

"Every season, 'Thorny' (coach Brad Thorn) tries to make us better," Tupou said.

"Last year, we did really well against Australian teams (8-1) but when we played the Kiwi teams they gave us a big lesson.

"In pre-season, we've looked at that because if we want to win the comp we have to beat the Kiwi teams. Whatever it takes.

"Off turnovers, the Kiwis are really quick so we have to set our defence early so we cover the whole field. React.

"We can't be nervous when we play them just because they are the Crusaders, for example. Two years ago, we nearly beat them in Christchurch."

Tupou is not looking too far ahead when the first match against the Kiwis is slated for April 23 when the Reds meet the Hurricanes in Melbourne during the "Super Round."

Those higher standards must infuse every performance and that starts tonight against Carter Gordon and the dangerous Rebels.

You can donate to UNICEF Australia's Tonga Recovery Appeal via: [tonga.unicef.org.au/t/gru](https://tonga.unicef.org.au/t/gru)



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