



# MATCH DAY PROGRAM | CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

# BRUMBIES



# V



ROUND 1 | 4 JUL 2020: GIO STADIUM 7.15PM KICK-OFF





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# BRUMBIES

## MATCH DAY PROGRAM 2020 SUPER RUGBY AU, ISSUE 1

### 4 COACHES Q&A

Get a an insight into the Boss' preparations ahead of tonight's matchup in our exclusive Q & A with Plus500 Brumbies Coach Dan McKellar

### 12 BRUMBIES JOURNEY: MACK HANSEN

Read all about local product Mack Hansen's journey to a starting Brumbies jersey, from Daramalan College to GIO Stadium.

### 15 MATCH PREVIEW

It's round one, version two; here we give you the big picture on what promises to be an intriguing encounter between two of the form Aussie sides in 2020.

### 16 TEAMS: BRUMBIES V REBELS

Hansen starts for the Plus500 Brumbies with Issak Fines named for a potential debut, while former Brumby Matt To'omua makes his 100th appearance in Super Rugby.

### 26 COMMUNITY RUGBY

The John I Dent Cup is just around the corner, and we have all the information on it's return in our Community Rugby section.

### 33 UPCOMING FIXTURES

Brumbies are on the bye next week, but we have a healthy run of cracking fixtures to look forward to in 2020.

Plus500 BRUMBIES RUGBY  
Established: 1996



# COACHES Q&A

WITH DAN MCKELLAR

## DAN, HOW EXCITED ARE YOU FOR ROUND ONE?

I'm keen mate, really keen! Clearly the world's been turned upside down to a certain extent but rugby wise, we're really excited to get back on the park. To be fair, when we were allowed back in groups of 10, we were excited, and when we got back together as a squad it was the same. It's been pretty seamless. Players and staff have been outstanding in terms of attitude and application, making sure we're ready to go for round one, version two I suppose.

## DOES THIS COMPETITION HAVE THE SAME MEANING TO YOU AND THE GROUP AS SUPER RUGBY?



Definitely, and in some ways mate it's more. The players want to win something, that's first and foremost but it's Aussie derbies every week with Wallabies spots up for grabs.

I've said it before but if you can't get up for these games, you're in the wrong profession.

You know, our game was in a really tough place there for a while. There was a time when we all believed that games might not get played and that would have been very difficult to survive so now that we have games to play, of course it means everything to us.

We get the opportunity to represent our community which has been a big part of our vision for 2020. Whilst we'll only have 1500 there (tonight) we know there's 1000's sitting at home and we want to do them proud.

## WAS IT TOUGH TO COME TO TERMS WITH LOSING THE RED-HOT START WE HAD IN THE FIRST SEVEN ROUNDS?

Not initially to be honest. At that time, my only two thoughts were firstly, the boy's health, mentally and physically and my own family's health of course mate, it was a very uncertain time.

Obviously then you're thinking, how does the game survive? You know I'm really proud of the job (Phil Thomson) and our executive did in looking after our people, not making any rash decisions.

People have asked me, you must be pulling your hair out, the boys were doing so well, and I'll be honest, of course that feeling was there but you have to park that.

Trying to organise a professional program when you can't interact with the players is extremely tough, and again, our staff particularly John Mitchell have been outstanding in that regard.



## MACK HANSEN, LOCAL PRODUCT, GETS A CRACK IN THE RUN-ON SIDE, HOW MUCH HAS HE GROWN OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS?



He's come a long way Mack. I remember the first day he walked in the door, like obviously I'd seen him as a schoolkid, but he trained with us pre-Christmas training and I just remember thinking, this kid is a natural footballer.

He understands space and opportunity so naturally. It's something we try to coach but he has it. He's played five minutes this level obviously, but it was a good five minutes and I've full faith that he's ready to go.

We're very deliberate in our program when we put someone into that arena, and it's not necessarily about age. He's been with us for three years now, he knows exactly what's expected on game day and he's earned his shot in training.

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**WITHOUT THEM OUR GAME TONIGHT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE.**

**EVERYONE HAS PLAYED THEIR PART IN HELPING RUGBY'S RETURN TO THE FIELD, AND WHILE WE'RE EXCITED TO BE BACK, WE ALL NEED TO REMAIN VIGILANT IN STICKING TO THE CURRENT COVID-19 PROTOCOLS SO WE CAN CONTINUE TO ENJOY OUR GREAT GAME, IN 2020 AND BEYOND.**

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## MOST ANNOYING TEAMMATE

MACK HANSEN

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# BRUMBIES JOURNEY: MACK HANSEN



Though he's still just 22-years old, Mack Hansen's first Super Rugby start for his boyhood club is a shade under three-years in the making.

Reared in Canberra, the Daramalan College product signed his first senior contract with the Plus500 Brumbies in 2017, a teenage phenom drawing comparisons to Stephen Larkham who was tipped to break through with little to no hiccups.

With the pressure of expectation, especially as the great homegrown hope, Hansen's journey was always going to be far more difficult than first perceived.

In 2018, his maiden professional season, Hansen didn't see a single second of Super Rugby action, with Tom Banks and Andy Muirhead occupying the fullback jersey and a host of world-class wingers holding up the wing spots.

However, Hansen was flourishing behind the scenes, continuing his development locally with the Gungahlin Eagles and internationally as a member of the Junior Wallabies.

Heading into 2019, opportunity for play was still likely to be sparse for Hansen, but a Super Rugby debut wasn't far over the horizon.





It took until round five of that season but finally Hansen stepped into the Super Rugby arena, and of course it had to be against the Brumbies fiercest rivals, the Waratahs.

Incredibly, his childhood friend and fellow Dara' oldboy Tom Ross also made his debut for the club that night, both helping the side finish off a 19-13 victory over the old enemy.

Even in that brief stint, Hansen's potential was plain to see.

Whilst not physically imposing, Hansen has an uncanny ability to break tackles and find his way through a gap, and more skill in one finger than most have in their whole body.

Hansen has had to be content with that small taste of top-level rugby since, but much like 2018, the rest of his second season with the club was not wasted.

Brought in as cover for the Brumbies tour to South Africa and Argentina, as well as the semi-final trip back to Buenos Aires, Hansen had the chance to fully immerse himself in the professional game, learning what it means to be part of game day.

That experience was invaluable for Hansen, and now with his run-on debut looming, the moment is likely to be far less daunting for the dazzling fullback.

It's the stuff of dreams. The kid who was a fan, running out at GIO Stadium with a Brumby on his chest. Yes, you always remember your debut, whether it's for your local club or the Wallabies but your first start is equally special.

For Hansen, it comes at the expense of Tom Banks for round one, and with COVID restrictions limiting more of the Eagles army, there may not be what it may have been, but when the whistle is blown, he will have fulfilled at least part of that of his promising talent which caught the eyes of Brumbies brass back in 2017.

Don't be surprised if he looks more comfortable than his number of caps would suggest. Hansen was made for the big moment and will relish the chance to prove himself with 15 on his back.



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## MATCH PREVIEW: REBELS

Throw out the form guide, forget about the first seven rounds of Super Rugby, tonight the Plus500 Brumbies start at square one against a star-studded Melbourne Rebels. Super Rugby in its AU form promises to be an attacking thrill ride, full of excitement and promise for the future, but the Brumbies will be hoping the past repeats itself for this tantalising opening encounter.

Back in round two, which admittedly feels like an eternity ago, the Brumbies outlasted the Rebels at GIO Stadium, courtesy of a number of well taken tries and a masterful performance from rookie flyhalf, Noah Lolesio. The Brumbies went on to win five of their six fixtures, including a stunning win away to the Chiefs and a 47-14 battering of the old enemy, the Waratahs.

But that was then, and this is now.

The Brumbies welcome a Rebels side who were starting to turn a corner before shutdown, and on paper, they'll pose a real threat to Dan McKellar's side.

Particularly in the backs, where the Rebels boast a number of high-calibre Wallabies, including former Brumby Matt To'omua, who played 89 of his 100 caps in Super

Rugby in our nation's capital. Up front, the likes of Matt Phillip and Richard Hardwick will be well up for the physical fight, the Rebels bench providing significant punch with Rob Leota, Trevor Hosea and Wallaby Jermaine Ainsley all waiting in the wings.

For the good guys, Mack Hansen's inclusion highlights what is a strong Brumbies selection, his Gungahlin Eagles teammate Issak Fines in line to make his top-flight debut as a reserve. Folau Fainga'a's return bolsters the Brumbies up front with Darcy Swain and Tom Cusack also returning to the run-on side.

In the tight, again at least on paper, you would favour the Brumbies, but the Rebels will hope they can achieve parity in that area and look to launch from their considerable set of outside backs. The Rebels will win by picking off tries from counterattack and Brumbies mistakes. The Brumbies will win by dominating the collision area and set-piece, allowing Lolesio et al to play on the front foot.

It's an intriguing battle, one which hasn't really got a likely victor. You back the Brumbies pack to dominate, and get the job done but this Rebels outfit are serious operators, and they can beat anyone on their day.

# STARTING XV



- 1 James Slipper
- 2 Folau Fainga'a
- 3 Allan Alaalatoa (C)
- 4 Darcy Swain
- 5 Murray Douglas
- 6 Rob Valetini
- 7 Tom Cusack
- 8 Pete Samu
- 9 Joe Powell
- 10 Noah Lolesio
- 11 Tom Wright
- 12 Irae Simone
- 13 Tevita Kuridrani
- 14 Andy Muirhead
- 15 Mack Hansen



## Match Officials

**REFEREE:**  
Angus Gardener

**ASSISTANT REFEREE:**  
Amy Perret

## Replacements

- 16 Connal McInerney
- 17 Scott Sio
- 18 Tom Ross
- 19 Lachlan McCaffrey
- 20 Will Miller
- 21 Issak Fines
- 22 Bayley Kuenzle
- 23 Len Ikitau

## STARTING XV



## Officials:

**AR2:**

Reuben Keane

**TMO:**

James Leckie

- 1 Matt Gibbon
- 2 Jordan Uelese
- 3 Pone Fa'amausili
- 4 Matt Philip
- 5 Michael Stolberg
- 6 Josh Kemeny
- 7 Richard Hardwick
- 8 Michael Wells
- 9 Ryan Louwrens
- 10 Matt To'omua
- 11 Marika Koroibete
- 12 Billy Meakes
- 13 Reece Hodge
- 14 Andrew Kellaway
- 15 Dane Haylett-Petty (C)

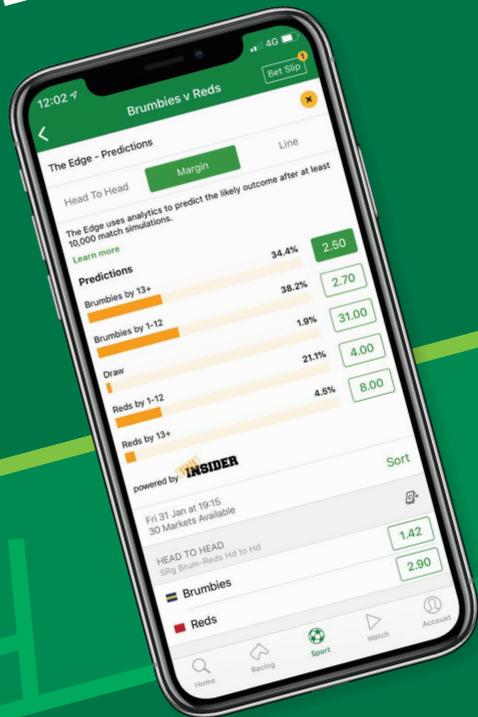
## Replacements

- 16 Efitusi Maafu
- 17 Cameron Orr
- 18 Jermaine Ainsley
- 19 Trevor Hosea
- 20 Esei Haangana
- 21 Rob Leota
- 22 Frank Lomani
- 23 Andrew Deegan



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# MATCH STATISTICS



V



## BRUMBIES V REBELS @ HOME

BIGGEST VICTORY

**37-6** (2012)

**W6 | L3**



**MATCHUP**

NOAH LOLESIO V MATT TO'OMUA

**FIRST TIME**

10.06.2011 | BRU 31 REB 17

**34** MOST POINTS  
CONCEDED

MOST POINTS  
SCORED **39**

TOUGHEST LOSS

**27-34**  
(2019)

**LAST TIME**

7.02.20 | BRU 39 REB 26



BRUMBIES



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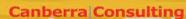
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## RESERVES





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**// We like to think of ourselves as a pretty dynamic backline so it'll be a good way to see where we're at after a break against a red hot backline that the Rebels have. //**  
**- Andy Muirhead**



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# JOHN I DENT CUP SET FOR JULY KICK-OFF



Club rugby is BACK in the capital from 18 July, following further easing of COVID-19 restrictions from the ACT Government.

All our local sides are back in full-contact training since 19 June giving teams plenty of time to prepare for games to commence.

All teams have been adhering to the guidelines around training and hygiene standards set out in the, 'Return to Play Framework', a critical measure in Rugby's return moving forward.

Plus500 Brumbies Deputy CEO & General Manager of Community Rugby Craig Leseberg said:

"We're excited about returning here in the ACT and our surrounding regions.

"Our clubs have been fantastic in sticking to the set protocols, which has allowed us to take the next step in getting our competitions up and running.



"For Rugby to continue and for us to see games being played every weekend in 2020, we all have to do our bit and continue to follow the guidelines to make sure everyone involved is safe; players, coaches and all of our wonderful volunteers.

"We're continuing to work with Government officials both locally and nationally, as well as Rugby Australia, and we look forward to confirming each competitions' draw in the near future."

Head to the John I Dent Cup's Facebook page for the full draw.



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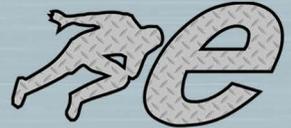


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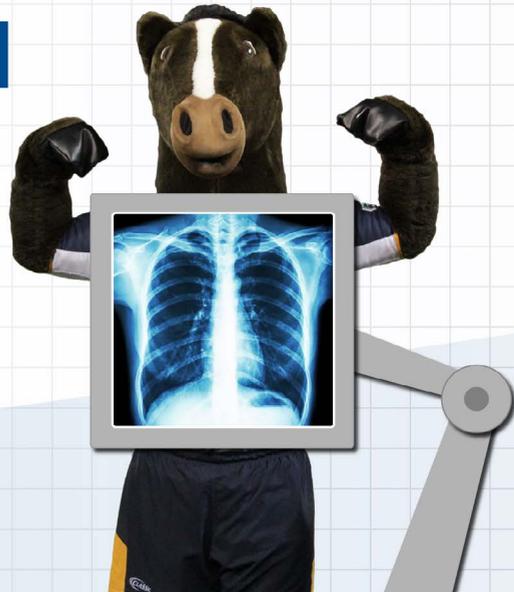
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## GETTING OUR TEAM BACK ON TRACK!



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# #TEAMREHAB

The Plus500 Brumbies boast a relatively clean bill of health heading into round one of Super Rugby AU.

Skipper Allan Alaalatoa has made a full recovery from the broken arm he sustained in the Brumbies last outing, against the Waratahs in March.

Front-row partner Folau Fainga'a is also fit to take to the field having missed the Brumbies final three games of the season pre-COVID.

Light in the lock departments, the second row is perhaps the biggest area of concern for Dan McKellar, with Cadeyrn Neville and Nick Frost unavailable for selection.

Solomone Kata is not too far from being back on the field, as well as star fullback Tom Banks who returned to non-contact training during the week.





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# UPCOMING FIXTURES

**RD 2** BYE

**RD 3**  
AWAY



v



**SAT 18 JUL**  
7.15PM

**RD 4**  
AWAY



v



**SAT 25 JUL**  
7.15PM

**RD 5**  
HOME



v



**SAT 1 AUG**  
7.15PM

**RD 6**  
AWAY



v



**FRI 7 AUG**  
7.05PM

**RD 7** BYE

**RD 8**  
HOME



v



**SAT 22 AUG**  
7.15PM

**RD 9**  
HOME



v



**FRI 28 AUG**  
7.05PM

**RD 10**  
AWAY



v



**SAT 5 SEPT**  
7.15PM

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