

'IKALE TAHI



TONGA

**2019 RUGBY WORLD CUP
MEDIA GUIDE**

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD COACH

To the media,

On behalf of the 'Ikale Tahi squad I'd like to thank you for your coverage of Tonga's Rugby World Cup campaign.

We've brought together an exciting group of players who play in competitions all around the world, all of who are very passionate and proud to wear the Tongan jersey.

We take the responsibility of representing the people of Tonga either at home, or wherever they are in the world with a great sense of pride and humility and we look forward to doing them proud in our campaign this year.

We know that we will have fans cheering in Tonga and with our fans right across the world and that gives us a great sense of pride. I'd like to thank you the media for your coverage of 'Ikale Tahi and look forward to seeing you throughout the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

Malo,

Toutai Kefu

MANAGEMENT AND FIXTURES

TEAM MANAGEMENT

- ❖ Toutai Kefu
Head Coach
- ❖ Grant Doorey
Assistant Coach
- ❖ Pita Alatini
Assistant Coach
- ❖ Richard Watt
Assistant Coach
- ❖ Dan Cron
Assistant Coach
- ❖ Lano Fonua
Team Manager
- ❖ Tony Alatini
Logistics Manager
- ❖ Tevita Koloï and Faka'osi Pifeleti
Team Management
- ❖ Penisimani Poloniati
Doctor
- ❖ LeeVan Santos and Saia Vakasiuola
Physiotherapist
- ❖ Alejandro Pastor and Semisi Fonua
Strength & Conditioning
- ❖ Joh Fifita
Performance Analyst
- ❖ Declan Oorloff
Performance Analyst
- ❖ Patrick Foulkes
Media Manager

FIXTURES

Date	Match	Venue	Kick Off (Local)	Kick Off (Tonga)
❖ 22/09	v ENG	Sapporo Dome, Sapporo	7:15pm	11:15pm
❖ 28/09	v ARG	Hanazona Stadium, Osaka Prefecture	1:45pm	5:45pm
❖ 06/10	v FRA	Kumamoto Stadium, Kumamoto Prefecture	4:45pm	8:45pm
❖ 13/10	v USA	Hanazona Stadium, Osaka Prefecture	2:45pm	6:45pm

COACHING STAFF



Toutai Kefu
Head Coach

Toutai Kefu is a proud Tongan Australian having represented the Queensland Reds and Wallabies throughout his playing career where he earned 60 Test caps. In that time Kefu was a part of the golden era of Australian Rugby from 1997 to 2003, including a 1999 Rugby World Cup campaign where Australia defeated France in the Final. Kefu played for the complete 80 mins in that match.

As a coach this is Kefu's second stint with 'Ikale Tahi having been an assistant coach of the side from 2011-2012. Previously Kefu has also coached domestically in Australia including being involved in Queensland Premier Rugby, Brisbane Schoolboy Rugby and Queensland Country in Australia's National Rugby Championship (NRC).

Kefu took over the head coaching role in 2017 and guided the team through a tough Rugby World Cup qualification process that saw 'Ikale Tahi take up position in Pool C.

Kefu resides in Brisbane, Australia with his wife and family.



Grant Doorey
Assistant Coach

A veteran of three Rugby World Cups, Doorey has coached with Italy (2003 RWC), Japan (2007-2011, RWC) and in 2019 with Tonga.

A former professional Rugby League player, Doorey made the switch to coaching the XV-man code in the late early 2000s after a successful Rugby League coaching debut in France. In 2003, Doorey was an Assistant Coach to Sir John Kirwan at Italian Rugby, where the team guided Italy to ninth in the World Rugby rankings. Moving to coaching at Japan Rugby, Doorey was a part of the team that took Japan from 18th in the World Rugby rankings to 11th which helped spark the rise of Japanese Rugby that we see today.

Joining 'Ikale Tahi's coaching staff in 2017, Doorey has worked alongside Toutai Kefu to ensure qualification for the 2019 Rugby World Cup, as well as working to prepare the team for the rigours of the competition.

Doorey resides in Brisbane, Australia with his wife and two sons.



Dan Cron
Assistant Coach

From one of New Zealand's Rugby royalty families, Dan Cron is the son of All Blacks Scrum Coach, Mike Cron and cousin to former NSW Waratahs Forwards Coach and Junior Wallabies Head Coach Simon Cron. A master of the matrix of scrummaging, Cron has risen from an analyst to be regarded as one of the best scrum minds in New Zealand. Outside of his coaching commitments with Tonga, Cron is an Assistant Coach of the Hurricanes in Super Rugby and lives in Wellington.



Pita Alatini
Assistant Coach

Pita Alatini has represented both Tonga and New Zealand at International level, amassing 18 Test caps across the two nations. Playing one Test for Tonga against Samoa in 1995, Alatini made the switch to the All Blacks where he represented New Zealand from 1999-2001. At club level Alatini travelled across New Zealand and Japan with his trade representing Counties Manukau, Southland, Otago, Wellington, Crusaders, Chiefs, Highlanders, Hurricanes as well as the Suntory Sungoliath and the Kamaishi Seawaves.

Alatini was playing at the Seawaves during the devastating Japanese Tsunami that destroyed most of the town, and along with some of his team mates, stayed behind to help assist in the relief effort after the tragic event.

Alatini has three children and resides with his family in Auckland, New Zealand.



Richard Watt
Assistant Coach

Watt, comes to 'Ikale Tahi with over 15 years of coaching experience in New Zealand Rugby including coaching stints at the Wellington Lions at a domestic level at with the Hurricanes at Super Rugby level. In that time Watt was a part of the successful campaign with the Hurricanes in 2016, where they won the Super Rugby title. In that same year, Watt joined Samoa as an Assistant Coach, starting his International career that would led him to join Tonga's Rugby World Cup campaign.

A born and bred towering Wellington man, Watt is passionate about his craft. He resides in Wellington with his wife and three daughters.

PLAYER PROFILES



Siegfried Fisihoi

Club	Pau
Villages	Falaleu & 'Utui (Vv)
Position	Prop
DOB	8 June, 1987
Place of Birth	Neiafu Vv, Tonga
Height	184cm
Weight	125Kg
Caps	9 (debut v Samoa, 2017)

Biography

Siegfried Fisihoi currently resides in Rotorua and in 2017 played against the British & Irish Lions during their tour of New Zealand. Fisihoi recently made the move to Pau, signing with the French powerhouse.



Vunipola Fifita

Club	Brumbies
Villages	Kala'au and Malapo (Tf)
Position	Prop
DOB	28 February, 1996
Place of Birth	Auckland, New Zealand
Height	180cm
Weight	118kg
Caps	2 (debut v Fiji, 2019)

Biography

Vunipola Fifita is the only Australian Super Rugby player in 'Ikale Tahi squad and has clearly benefitted from the set piece training at the best performing Super Rugby side out of the Australian conference in 2019.



Latu Talakai

Club	Eastwood (Sydney)
Villages	Leimatu'a and Mataika Vava'u (Vv)
Position	Prop
DOB	26 December, 1989
Place of Birth	Leimatu'a (Vv), Tonga
Height	185cm
Weight	132kg
Caps	6 (debut v Wales 2017)

Biography

Hailing from Sydney, Talakai represents Eastwood in Sydney's premier Club competition, the Shute Shield. Talakai made his debut for Tonga against Wales in Auckland in 2017 and has scored one try at Test level.



Paula Ngauamo

Club	Agen
Villages	Vaini, Kolomotu'a, Fasi & Kolofo'ou (Tt)
Position	Hooker
DOB	19 February, 1990
Place of Birth	Christchurch, New Zealand
Height	182cm
Weight	117kg
Caps	19 (debut v Samoa, 2014)

Biography

The leading hooker in the 'Ikale Tahi pack, Ngauamo is not afraid to front up at the set piece. The former New Zealand U20s player has played for Canterbury in New Zealand's domestic competition. A former concreter, Ngauamo made his debut for Tonga in 2015.



Sosefo Sakalia

Club	Asia Pacific Dragons
Villages	Ma'ufanga (Tt) & Nomuka (Hp)
Position	Hooker
DOB	14 December, 1991
Place of Birth	Tofoa Tt, Tonga
Height	177cm
Weight	96kg
Caps	10 (debut v Canada, 2015)

Biography

Sosefo Sakalia is the only player in the current 'Ikale Tahi based out of Tonga but has played in World Series Rugby over the last season.



Siua Maile

Club	Shirley (Christchurch)
Villages	Mata'aho (Eua)
Position	Hooker
DOB	18 February 1997
Place of Birth	Angaha Eua
Height	181cm
Weight	111kg
Caps	1 (debut v New Zealand, 2019)

Biography

Siua Maile was fixing roofs in Christchurch and playing for his local club in July when a call from Tonga Head Coach Toutai Kefu turned his world upside down by bringing him in to Tonga's Rugby World Cup squad.



Siua Halanukonuka

Club	Glasgow
Villages	Prop
Position	Hoi (Tt)
DOB	9 August, 1986
Place of Birth	Tofoa Tt, Tonga
Height	186cm
Weight	120kg
Caps	10 (debut v Georgia, 2014)

Biography

A former Super Rugby Champion in the Highlanders, Halanukonuka played with current 'Ikale Tahi team mate, Nasi Manu in that championship season. Halanukonuka now plays in Scotland with Glasgow.



Ma'afu Fia

Club	Ospreys
Villages	Ha'avakatolo, Holonga (Tt) & Olo'ua (Vv)
Position	Prop
DOB	22 November, 1989
Place of Birth	Tofoa (Tt), Tonga
Height	178cm
Weight	124kg
Caps	6, (debut v Wales 2018)

Biography

Another from the conveyer belt of quality International props that Tonga produces, Fia is a work horse when it comes to the set piece. Fia has played for Highlanders, Manawatu and Ospreys at club level and made his Test debut in 2018 against Wales.



Ben Tameifuna

Club	Racing Metro
Villages	Pea (Tt)
Position	Prop
DOB	30 August, 1991
Place of Birth	Auckland, New Zealand
Height	184cm
Weight	155kg
Caps	11 (debut v Wales, 2017)

Biography

Ben Tameifuna is world famous in Hamilton, being one of the players from the successful generation of Chief's Super Rugby campaigns. Moving from New Zealand to the Top 14 in France, Tameifuna continues to be a force to be reckoned with at provincial and Test level.



Sam Lousi

Club	Hurricanes
Villages	Kanokupolu (Tt) & Leimatu'a (Vv)
Position	Lock
DOB	20 July, 1991
Place of Birth	Auckland, New Zealand
Height	198cm
Weight	121kg
Caps	4 (debut v Samoa, 2019)

Biography

Formerly of the NSW Waratahs, Lousi moved back to New Zealand to continue his Rugby career with the Hurricanes in Wellington. Lousi has a young family with partner Sina and a son Amanaki.



Halaleva Fifita

Club	Grenoble
Villages	Kameli, Leimatu'a & Neiafu Vava'u (Vv)
Position	Lock
DOB	29 July, 1989
Place of Birth	Neiafu, Tonga
Height	195cm
Weight	116kg
Caps	14 (debut v Wales, 2017)

Biography

Rugby is strong in this family with his brother Vaea Fifita playing for the All Blacks, but who missed out on Rugby World Cup selection.



Sitiveni Mafi

Club	Castres
Villages	'Ahou, Kolovai (Tt), Sailoame, Talau (Vv)
Position	Lock
DOB	9 December, 1989
Place of Birth	Sydney, Australia
Height	193cm
Weight	105kg
Caps	32 (debut v Samoa, 2010)

Biography

Sitiveni Mafi is a product of Australia's Rugby system being a former Australian Schoolboy (2007) and having played for the NSW Waratahs in Super Rugby. He is the grandson of former Tonga captain Sione Mafi Pahulu and this is his second Rugby World Cup campaign.



Sione Kalamafoni

Club	Leicester
Villages	Matahau, Te'ekiu (Tt) & Otea (Vv)
Position	Backrow
DOB	18 May, 1988
Place of Birth	Matahau, Tonga
Height	196cm
Weight	121kg
Caps	32 (debut v Korea, 2007)

Biography

Was the man of the match for Tonga at the now famous victory by 'Ikale Tahi over France at the 2011 Rugby World Cup in New Zealand. He now plays at powerhouse English club Leicester.



Maama Vaipulu

Club	Castres
Villages	Folaha (Tt)
Position	Backrow
DOB	21 July, 1989
Place of Birth	Pakarake, New Zealand
Height	190cm
Weight	112kg
Caps	8 (debut v Japan, 2017)

Biography

A product of Counties Manukau and the Chiefs, Vaipulu now plays in France for Castres.



Fotu Lokotui

Club	Counties Manukau
Villages	Longoteme (Tt)
Position	Backrow
DOB	19 March, 1992
Place of Birth	Longoteme, Tonga
Height	180cm
Weight	108kg
Caps	12 (debut v Japan, 2017)

Biography

Lokotui made his debut for Tonga against Rugby World Cup hosts Japan in 2017 and since then has played 11 Tests for his country. Lokotui was a part of the side that defeated Fiji in Lautoka in 2018.



Zane Kapeli

Club	Bay of Plenty
Villages	Utungake (Vv)
Position	Backrow
DOB	28 September, 1992
Place of Birth	Auckland, New Zealand
Height	189cm
Weight	130kg
Caps	6 (debut v Georgia 2018)

Biography

Kapeli grew up in Hamilton, New Zealand and is a promising young talent coming out of the New Zealand system for 'Ikale Tahi, playing his junior Rugby at Hamilton Marist, Rugby Club.

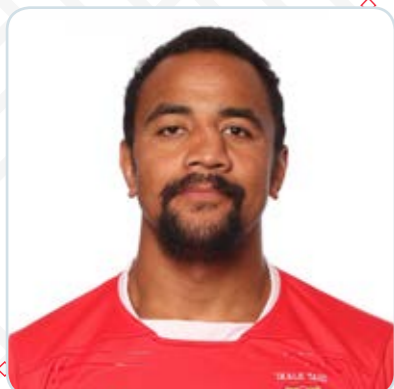


Dan Faleafa

Club	Austin Elite
Villages	Kolomotu'a & Kolovai (Tt)
Position	Backrow
DOB	13 February, 1989
Place of Birth	Auckland, New Zealand
Height	192cm
Weight	115kg
Caps	22 (debut v USA, 2013)

Biography

Dan Faleafa is a product of New Zealand's Rugby system having played for the New Zealand Schools side in 2007. Faleafa has played in the USA and is a part of the new wave of players who have headed to the big lights of America to help Rugby grow inside the sleeping giant of the game.



Nasi Manu

Club	Treviso
Villages	Vaini & Ha'ateiho (Tt)
Position	Backrow
DOB	Canterbury, New Zealand
Place of Birth	15 August, 1988
Height	190cm
Weight	108kg
Caps	3 (debut v Georgia, 2018)

Biography

The towering Canterbury man is one of the gentle giants of the squad and is well respected in World Rugby. Manu recently defeated a cancer scare but has returned to full health within the last 12 months.



Sonatane Takulua

Club	Newcastle Falcons
Villages	Lapaha, Ma'ufanga (Tt) & Niuatoputapu
Position	Halfback
DOB	11 January, 1991
Place of Birth	Tofoa (Tt), Tonga
Height	175cm
Weight	96kg
Caps	34 (debut v Samoa, 2014)

Biography

The vice-captain of the squad, Takulua leads Tonga in its pre match challenge, the Sipi Tau.



Leon Fukofuka

Club	Auckland
Villages	Ha'avakatolo, Fo'ui & Ha'alalo (Tt)
Position	Halfback
DOB	Auckland, New Zealand
Place of Birth	8 September, 1994
Height	185cm
Weight	110kg
Caps	7 (debut v Wales, 2017)

Biography

This promising young halfback is part of the next generation of 'Ikale Tahi players coming through the system. Hailing from Auckland Fukofuka mixes his Rugby brain grown in Auckland with his Tongan physicality to make for a dangerous combination.



Samisoni Fisilau

Club	Auckland Marist
Villages	Longolongo (Tt) and Leimatu'a (Vv)
Position	Halfback
DOB	29 November, 1987
Place of Birth	Tofoa (Tt), Tonga
Height	177cm
Weight	80kg
Caps	19 (debut v Samoa, 2010)

Biography

Born in Tonga but raised in New Zealand Fisilau's Rugby career has seen him go from Counties Manukau, Northland and Bay of Plenty. Fisilau was recently at Jersey Reds in England before returning back to New Zealand.



Kurt Morath

Club	Doncaster
Villages	Leimatu'a (Vv)
Position	Flyhalf
DOB	13 November, 1984
Place of Birth	Takapuna, New Zealand
Height	179cm
Weight	90kg
Caps	37 (debut v Portugal, 2009)

Biography

Kurt Morath is one of the senior players in 'Ikale Tahi and is a veteran of three Rugby World Cups for Tonga. Currently plying his trade in England, Morath has two young daughters Kaia (5) and Millie (1).



James Faiva

Club	Silverstorm, El Salvador (Spain)
Villages	Ngele'ia & Kotu (Hp)
Position	Flyhalf
DOB	13 June, 1994
Place of Birth	Otahuhu, New Zealand
Height	182cm
Weight	98kg
Caps	5 (debut v Samoa, 2019)

Biography

James Faiva is the only player in 'Ikale Tahi to currently play in Spanish Rugby with his club, Silverstorm. The Spanish Rugby competition continues to grow and Faiva is passionate about its growth.



Siale Piutau

Club	Bristol Bears
Villages	Kolofo'ou & Folaha (Tt)
Position	Centre
DOB	13 October, 1985
Place of Birth	Auckland, New Zealand
Height	183cm
Weight	96kg
Caps	39 (debut v Fiji, 2011)

Biography

Piutau is the captain of 'Ikale Tahi and a veteran of three Rugby World Cups. A highly respected player in England with his time at the Bristol Bears, Piutau has said that this will be his last Rugby World Cup.



Malietoa Hingano

Club	Bayonne
Villages	Makaunga, Holonga and Utuali'i (Vv)
Position	Centre
DOB	27 January, 1992
Place of Birth	Sydney, Australia
Height	180cm
Weight	94kg
Caps	4 (debut v Samoa 2019)

Biography

Born on the beautiful northern beaches of Sydney, Hingano's background is half Tongan and Samoan. Outside of his Rugby, Hingano enjoys surfing and his favorite drink is a Tongan drink called, Lo'l'ho'osi and Otai.



Nafi Tu'itavake

Club	Northampton
Villages	Kolofo'ou & Fasi (Tt)
Position	Outside Back
DOB	21 January, 1989
Place of Birth	Auckland, New Zealand
Height	182cm
Weight	89kg
Caps	13 (debut v Fiji, 2016)

Biography

Another family with connections to New Zealand's All Blacks, Nafi is the younger brother of former All Black winger Anthony Tuitavake. Currently playing in England Tu'itavake is a promising centre for 'Ikale Tahi at this year's World Cup.



Atieli Pakalani

Club	Eastwood
Villages	Ha'ateiho (Tt) & Feletoa (Vv)
Position	Outside Back
DOB	2 August, 1989
Place of Birth	Ha'ateiho (Tt), Tonga
Height	183cm
Weight	88kg
Caps	10, (debut v Samoa, 2017)

Biography

Previously an Australian Sevens player, Pakalani qualified to play through Tonga through the Olympic qualification process that now sees him representing Tonga.



David Halaifonua

Club	Coventry
Villages	Fatumu & Tukulalo, Houma (Vv)
Position	Outside Back
DOB	5 July, 1987
Place of Birth	Neiafu (Vv), Tonga
Height	187cm
Weight	108kg
Caps	33 (debut v Fiji, 2009)

Biography

Learning his craft in Sydney where Halaifonua played for the Warringah Rats, before moving to France to play in Federale 1, the third level of domestic competition in France, followed by a brief stint in Sri Lanka. He now plays in England with Coventry.



Viliami Lolohea

Club	Papatoetoe
Villages	Navutoka (Tt) & Niuatoputapu
Position	Outside Back
DOB	4 July, 1993
Place of Birth	Otahuhu, New Zealand
Height	181cm
Weight	93kg
Caps	9 (debut v Georgia, 2018)

Biography

Lolohea grew up playing Rugby League before making the switch to the XV man code in 2015 and hasn't looked back. Lolohea played three seasons for Tasman in New Zealand's domestic competition before making the switch to the Sunwolves in Super Rugby. Lolohea now plies his trade in Auckland.



Cooper Vuna

Club	Newcastle Falcons
Villages	Houma (Tt)
Position	Outside Back
DOB	5 July, 1987
Place of Birth	Auckland, New Zealand
Height	186cm
Weight	108kg
Caps	13 (debut v Italy 2016) *Also 2 caps for AUS

Biography

Cooper Vuna has played in Australia for the Melbourne Rebels, where he was given the nickname "Super Cooper" for his ability to score tries from all over the park. Vuna, has one Wallabies Test cap, but due to his dual nationality was able to change to Tonga through the Olympic qualification.



Telusa Veainu

Club	Leicester
Villages	Matahau (Tt) & Longolongo (Tt)
Position	Outside Back
DOB	26 December, 1990
Place of Birth	Kawakawa, Bay of Islands, New Zealand
Height	180cm
Weight	90kg
Caps	9 (debut v Fiji, 2015)

Biography

Veainu attended St Andrew's College in Christchurch where he Rugby education began in one of New Zealand's proudest Rugby hubs. Veainu is also a former New Zealand U20s player before he progressed to New Zealand's domestic competition. Veainu made his Super Rugby debut in 2011 for the Highlanders.



TONGA RUGBY STATS

England

- Tonga has played England two times at Rugby World Cups (1999 and 2007) going down in both matches, falling in 2007 36-20.
- The match against England in Sapporo will be the third time the two sides have met at Test level.

Argentina

- Tonga has played Argentina only once at Test level at the Rugby World Cup in 2015, where Tonga fell, 45-16.

France

- Tonga has played France six times since 1995, winning two of those matches. Most famously Tonga defeated France at the 2011 Rugby World Cup in Wellington, New Zealand 19-14.
- The other victory occurred in 1999 in Tonga where 'Ikale Tahi won the match 20-16 in Nuku A'lofa.

United States of America

- Tonga has played the USA nine times and won eight of those clashes.
- 'Ikale Tahi has not lost to the USA from the two nation's first clash in 1999 in San Francisco.

