Olympian to fly University of Tasmania flag as state forges female sporting history

The University of Tasmania will welcome Rio gold medalist Ellia Green to its Sandy Bay campus TODAY (Saturday, 27 May), to champion the institution’s flag in a new national women’s Rugby competition.

In a significant advancement for local and national sport, the University of Tasmania has been selected as one of eight higher education institutions to compete in the inaugural Women’s Aon Uni 7s Series, allowing female Rugby players across Australia to tread the turf alongside some of the world’s best.

Ms Green who is considered the fastest female in rugby, helped Australia’s women’s rugby sevens team secure gold at the Rio Olympics, and will oversee the formation of the University of Tasmania squad comprising of elite female athletes, university students and local emerging players.

In a further coup for the state, the home side will be coached by former Wallaby Luke Burgess, with University of Tasmania Stadium set to make history when it hosts the first tournament of the series between 25 – 26 August.

Mr Burgess said it was exciting to welcome Olympian Ellia Green to the state for the final Talent Identification day and Autumn Sevens tournament, which would help determine and recruit players for the University’s squad.

“Ellia’s experience as an elite athlete and gold medallist makes her an invaluable asset to our side. She will play an intricate part in the team’s development by imparting a wealth of knowledge, and providing mentorship to the players to help evolve the squad into a formidable powerhouse,” Mr Burgess said.

“The competition is a major advancement for women’s sport not only in Tasmania but across Australia, so to be fielding a local side in this new national movement is a huge development that is increasing opportunities for females.

“It also builds on how widespread rugby already is across the institution and excitingly James Erwin, a University of Tasmania student and leading Rugby player for the Australian Maritime College will take on the role as Assistant Coach. We have
also had girls approaching us from everywhere who now want to study with the University and be part of this new program.”

The University of Tasmania side will also be bolstered by national players Georgie Friedrichs and Shanice Parker.

The inaugural series was inspired by Australia’s women’s sevens success at the Rio Olympics, which generated increased interest in the sport, influencing the Australian Rugby Union (ARU) to forge new pathways for elite female athletes towards selection for the national squad.

Professor Mike Calford, Provost of the University, said the institution was proud to be supporting its students to pursue their sporting aspirations alongside education.

“Importantly, the series will increase the number of pathways for our elite female athletes towards a professional playing career with the national Sevens, while they simultaneously progress through their higher education,” Professor Calford said.

“To be one of only eight universities in Australia that is able to offer this prestigious opportunity highlights that our institution is a leading university committed to expanding academic sporting programs for all women.

“We are also proud that the historic University of Tasmania Stadium, a cultural and iconic centre of sport in our State, will play a pivotal role in the competition, hosting the first tournament of the series in August that will put our students, state players and communities at the forefront of the nation.”

The University of Tasmania was selected for the competition after submitting a competitive and unique application.

In the first two-day Women’s Aon Uni 7s Series tournament, all eight teams will face-off at University of Tasmania Stadium in line with the Women’s Sevens World Series fixture format.

The complete University of Tasmania Women’s Sevens squad will be announced in July.

2017 Women’s Aon Uni 7s Series Player Allocations:

University of New England, NSW - Alicia Quirk and Hannah Southwell;
Macquarie University, NSW - Dominique Du Toit and Chloe Dalton;
University of Tasmania, TAS - Ellia Green, Georgie Friedrichs and Shanice Parker;
University of Adelaide, SA - Emma Tonegato, Evania Pelite and Mahalia Murphy;
University of Canberra, ACT - Sharni Williams and Brooke Anderson;
Griffith University, QLD - Shannon Parry and Demi Hayes;
Bond University, QLD - Charlotte Caslick and Brooke Walker;
University of Queensland, QLD - Emilee Cherry and Emma Sykes.
2017 Women’s Aon Uni 7s Series Fixtures

Round 1 - University of Tasmania Stadium, Launceston, 25-26 August;
Round 2 - Macquarie University fields, Sydney, 9-10 September;
Round 3 - University of Queensland fields, Brisbane, 16-17 September;
Round 4 - Bond University fields, Gold Coast, 29-30 September.

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