



With Sevens in full swing this edition of the NZRPA Players' Own Magazine has been put together with input from the New Zealand Men's Sevens team.

# PLAYERS IN BUSINESS DALLAS SEYMOUR

**Dallas Seymour Biography** Dallas Seymour was born in Tokoroa and educated in the now closed, iconic St Stephens School in South Auckland. He played more than 100 Provincial games for Canterbury, Hawke's Bay, Wellington and Bay of Plenty. He also played Super Rugby for the Hurricanes and Crusaders but is best known as the former New Zealand Sevens captain and one of the longest serving sevens player in New Zealand. Dallas is a former All Black, New Zealand Maori player, Sevens 1998 Commonwealth Gold Medallist. He also played in a variety of representative sides including New Zealand Colts, New Zealand Universities, the Divisional XV, North Island XV and New Zealand XV. Dallas attended his first Hong Kong Sevens international tournament in 1998 and was a regular until 2002, playing in 35 international tournaments and two World Cup tournaments. The 48 year-old is married to former Silver Ferns captain Julie Seymour and they have four children.



DALLAS SEYMOUR



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**D**ALLAS SEYMOUR IS WORKING IN WHAT HE CALLS HIS DREAM JOB, A ROLE HE HAS BEEN IN FOR JUST OVER A YEAR, WHERE HE IS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING A PIPELINE OF IWI TALENT FOR THE COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES OF TE RŪNANGA O NGĀI TAHU. THE COMMERCIAL ENTITIES INCLUDE NGĀI TAHU PROPERTY, NGĀI TAHU SEAFOOD, NGĀI TAHU TOURISM, NGĀI TAHU FARMING AND NGĀI TAHU CAPITAL. JUST LIKE A RUGBY TEAM, TE RŪNANGA O

NGĀI TAHU KNOW THE VALUE IN GROWING AND DEVELOPING THEIR OWN TALENT. We ask the former rugby player how did he land his dream job? "Rugby was amateur when I started and I knew I had to have something to fall back on, so that's why I completed two Bachelor degrees, both from the University of Canterbury, in Science and Forestry. I worked for four years in the Forestry industry in harvest management before rugby went professional which held me in

good stead. **All the skills you learn in the sporting world are highly transferrable to the working environment.** They include goal setting, hard work, mental skills, people management, building relationships and learning how to do business. And while you have a profile it is good to build relationships that can be useful once your playing career is over. Playing on the field is obviously quite different to sitting in an office. So it is important to prepare for life after rugby. I



NEW ZEALAND MEN'S SEVENS TEAM

retired from rugby at 35 years of age, so there was still plenty of life to live." Off the field Dallas knew the value of a good support network and drew great strength from his whānau, partner and Ngāti Hikairo and Māori culture. He married former Silver Ferns captain Julie Seymour in 1998 after the Kuala Lumpur games with a no 1 haircut, which he has his team mates to thank for. The Gold Medal winning team of Eric Rush, Jonah Lomu, Joeli Vidiri, Rico Gear, Roger Randle, Christian Cullen, Caleb Ralph, Amasio Valence and Bruce Reihana all agreed, which Seymour says he does not remember, to shave their heads if they won. "It was Jonah's idea... I had two choices, do it willingly or Jonah was going to hold me down. Julie was not that impressed with my new look, but thankfully it grew back a tiny bit just before the wedding. Leading into 2002, I felt my career was in its twilight. We had played in the Welsh sevens tournament and my knee was troubling me leading into the final so that was my last time in the Black Jersey. The jersey and the team has always been paramount for me, so I told Josh Blackie he had better start and he backed that decision with a great performance, with a fantastic try saving tackle – just one of his fine efforts that day. Even though Manchester was on the horizon, I was toying with the idea about retiring from the game or to keep going. After missing the cut for the 2002 Games, I spoke to Rushie [Eric Rush] and Titch [Sir Gordon Tietjens] about it being the right time to go. I had done fifteens and sevens

back-to-back since the late 90's, was carrying a couple of injuries and the younger guys coming through were in good form, so I did what was best for the jersey, and my broken body to be fair! I was keen just to move on quietly then, but Titch suggested we release an official statement just so people didn't get any wrong ideas about whether he and I had fallen out or the like. I knew that the game was in a good space and it was time to let the young guys take it to higher places. I enjoyed the ride but come the end of 2002 I got a role at SPARC, which became Sport NZ, as a Senior Maori Advisor, which was a good transition out of the game. It took about two years to adjust to working normal hours and I was doing a bit of travel, commuting between Christchurch and Wellington. **It took about two to three years to get over the wanting to play feeling.** I got dragged back to play for my old University club, but I wasn't enjoying the game as much as I used to because I had achieved what I wanted and I didn't really want to take some younger person's position when I wasn't 100% committed. I had over a decade with Sport NZ doing a range of roles including management, policy advice and relationship management, before changing tack. **I got made redundant, which was a bit of a surprise. It was like picking a team – if you get selected, you're playing, but if you are not, you just go into a different process. You just get on and find something new.** My wife passed me the paper the

following week. It was the first time I had looked at a paper for a job in 20 years! But it was also the first time I had got really excited when I saw this role with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu advertised. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is a highly successful organisation who were keen to open up the opportunity for the Ngai Tahu iwi members to develop and prepare for leading the iwi businesses, and that really appealed to me. My role involves developing programs and opportunities for iwi members to grow and it is about identifying talent and investing in people. Like sports, you cast your net wide, so you give as many people opportunities as you can. In this case it is about commercially, entrepreneurially and as Ngai Tahu iwi members. I am always talking to my ancestors and they give me strength as I have that sense of identity and purpose. I believe those values and knowledge of your own culture give you strength on how to deal with adversity and business and success. It is taking the approach of commercial and cultural astuteness and combining them to benefit the iwi. We have just started a new strategy and plan which is building on the great work that has been started by people who were here before me. The foundations have been laid and I am just doing my bit to help Ngāi Tahu thrive into the future. **It is a bit like wearing a jersey – you take it forward and then expect the next person to take it to another level.** [www.ngaitahu.iwi.nz](http://www.ngaitahu.iwi.nz)