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## **Tony Brown appointed Head Coach of Highlanders for 2017**

### **Scott McLeod and Mark Hammett appointed Assistant Coaches**

One of Otago's favourite sons, Tony Brown has been appointed Head Coach of the Pulse Energy Highlanders for 2017, along with an exciting new coaching team, the southern club and New Zealand Rugby announced today.

Brown, who has been Assistant Coach to Jamie Joseph since 2014, will be joined next year by fellow former All Blacks Scott McLeod who will continue as Assistant Coach and experienced Investec Super Rugby coach Mark Hammett set to return to the South Island as a new Highlanders Assistant Coach.

A former coach of Otago and Japanese club the Panasonic Knights, Brown will return to Japan in 2018 to take up a role with the Japanese national team.

Pulse Energy Highlanders CEO Roger Clark said: "We are delighted with this appointment, we said at the outset that we were looking to replace Jamie Joseph with a proven coach with a successful track record and we certainly believe Tony fits that description. Ideally we would have liked his appointment to be longer, however we are excited by the coaching group we have appointed for 2017 and are confident we will find a quality replacement for Tony in the time frame we have available."

McLeod and Hammett, who is currently coaching new Super Rugby club the Sunwolves, have both signed through to 2019.

Brown said he was excited and humbled at the opportunity to take the top job for the 2017 season.

"I wasn't sure the timing was right for me, but having spoken to people inside and outside the organisation, I know now that this is too good an opportunity to pass up. Knowing that I will have Stormy (McLeod) and Hammer (Hammett) with me was an important part of the decision and I'm excited at the prospect of working with them next year."

Scott McLeod has been Assistant Coach since 2013 and while his current contract ends this season, he was happy to recommit to 2019. "Obviously whenever you finish a contract you have to weigh up all your options and it certainly wasn't an easy decision, but I get a lot of satisfaction from working with the current group of players and coaches. The family has also settled well into Dunedin and with some fresh challenges for the club on the horizon, the best option was to recommit to the Highlanders."





Mark Hammett brings a wealth of experience to the assistant coach role. In 2013 and 2014 he was the Head Coach of the Hurricanes before taking up a similar role with Cardiff Blues the following season. He became the first head coach of the Japanese expansion club the Sunwolves this year. “Clearly what Jamie and the team have accomplished is outstanding. All I really want to do is make a contribution to the group from what I have learned over the last few years as a head coach, assist Brownie and Stormy as much as I can, and build on the good work that has already being done. The opportunity to work with the Highlanders is very motivating for me and I am looking forward to it.”

New Zealand Rugby General Manager Rugby, Neil Sorensen welcomed the appointments as a fantastic outcome for Highlanders team, club, and fans.

“It’s outstanding that Brownie is stepping up to the Head Coach role, as he incredibly well regarded by players and management alike. While we would have loved to have had him commit for longer, we’re also excited for him knowing he’s got Japan to look forward to as they prepare to host the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

“As with a lot of our coaching talent overseas, we look forward to seeing Brownie come back with some great international experience,” Sorensen said.

