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**Attn All Media**  
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### **Gallagher Chiefs 2016 squad announced**

The Gallagher Chiefs have named their squad for the upcoming 2016 Investec Super Rugby season.

Head coach Dave Rennie believes they have assembled a squad with a good blend of enthusiastic debutants and experience, with 12 current and former All Blacks in the team.

“We’ve selected an outstanding group of men, high on character and competitive edge. The 14 new faces, our highest turnover since 2012 when we had 16, gives us an exciting blend of youth and experience and excellent depth throughout.

“The new competition structure will be challenging with more travel, but being the first team to play in Buenos Aires will be an amazing occasion,” said Rennie.

There are 26 players returning to the Gallagher Chiefs who include Japanese RWC captain and Chiefs New Player of the Year in 2015, Michael Leitch and former All Black and Rugby World Cup hero Stephen Donald. Donald has played 85 matches for the Chiefs, last appearing for the side in 2011.

There are a total of 25 players from the Chiefs region Provincial Unions with seven from Counties Manukau and Waikato, six from Taranaki and five from Bay of Plenty.

Sonny Bill Williams and Augustine Pulu from Counties Manukau will be involved in the All Blacks Sevens squad in 2016 at a Tier 1 and Tier 2 level respectively.

Fourteen new players will join the Gallagher Chiefs with 11 players expected to make their Investec Super Rugby debut\*.

Those players include Sam Vaka from the All Blacks Sevens side and Counties Manukau and Mitch Karpik from the New Zealand U20’s 2015 IRB Junior World Cup winning team who has been a stand out for Auckland in the ITM Cup and has now joined Bay of Plenty. James Tucker and Tom Sanders, both from the 2014 New Zealand U20’s team, former Warrior Glen



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Fisiiahi, Teleni Seu from Auckland, Latu Vaeno from Taranaki and Chase Tiatia all become new Chiefs.

20 year-old Tiatia caught the Chiefs eye during the ITM Cup season with Bay of Plenty after making the move from Wellington. Last year he played ITM Cup and in the inaugural winning team of the Jock Hobbs Memorial National U19 Tournament for Wellington.

Tiatia said “I have worked with some of the Gallagher Chiefs staff and they have really looked after me and encouraged my development this year, so I was keen to continue with this pathway.”

The captain of the 2015 world champion New Zealand U20’s team Atu Moli and his Waikato team mate Shaun Stevenson will be in line to make their Super Rugby debut having come from this year’s Chiefs Development team. The Gallagher Chiefs features 12 players in the squad from the Chiefs Development programme.

Three Super Rugby players will make their Gallagher Chiefs debut\*\*. Dominic Bird and Nepo Laulala from the Crusaders and Sam McNicol from the Hurricanes have all made the move north.

Nineteen year-old McNicol made his Investec Super Rugby debut against the Chiefs earlier this year in Taranaki.

McNicol who grew up in Hawke’s Bay said “I jumped at the opportunity that the Gallagher Chiefs have given me and am looking forward to getting some game time in this highly competitive sport. I have heard great things about the Chiefs environment and am looking forward to my move.”

A fractured eye socket in a pre-season game for Wellington limited McNicol’s opportunities in this years’ ITM Cup

Kieran Keane from the Tasman Makos and Neil Barnes from the RWC Canadian team join Dave Rennie and Andrew Strawbridge to complete the Gallagher Chiefs coaching team.

A special member of the Chiefs whanau, Austin Manning from Mount Manganui has been named as the 41st man in the Gallagher Chiefs Squad. The seven year old is suffering from cerebral palsy. Austin is confined to a wheelchair and requires help for all of life’s tasks. The Gallagher Chiefs will be fundraising to assist Austin to get to St Louis in America for an operation that will radically change his and his family’s life. Austin’s Mum is also going



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through her own battle with cancer. Visit <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/austinsdreamtowalk> to help Austin.

Gallagher Chiefs memberships will be on sale soon. Current members will be invited to renew their membership first and new membership enquiries can be made through [www.chiefs.co.nz](http://www.chiefs.co.nz).

### **Gallagher Chiefs Investec Super Rugby Squad**

Michael Allardice – Lock (Hawke’s Bay)  
Johan Bardoul – Loose forward (Bay of Plenty)  
Dominic Bird – Lock (Canterbury)\*\*  
Sam Cane – Loose forward (Bay of Plenty)  
Stephen Donald – First five-eighth (Waikato)  
Aaron Cruden – First five-eighth (Manawatu)  
Hika Elliot - Hooker (Taranaki)  
Glen Fisiiahi - Utility Back (Counties Manukau)\*  
Siegfried Fisiiohoi – Prop (Bay of Plenty)\*  
Mitchell Graham - Prop (Taranaki)  
Nathan Harris - Hooker (Bay of Plenty)  
Andrew Horrell - Midfield back (Hawke’s Bay)  
Mitchell Karpik – Loose forward (Auckland-Bay of Plenty)\*  
Tawera Kerr-Barlow – Halfback (Waikato)  
Tevita Koloamatangi – Loose forward (Tasman)  
Nepo Laulala – Prop (Canterbury)\*\*  
Michael Leitch – Loose forward (Japan)  
Anton Lienert-Brown – Midfield back (Waikato)  
James Lowe – Winger (Tasman)  
Pauliasi Manu – Prop (Counties Manukau)  
Rhys Marshall – Hooker (Taranaki)  
Damian McKenzie – First five-eighth/Fullback (Waikato)  
Sam McNicol – Outside back (Wellington)\*\*  
Atu Moli – Prop (Waikato)\*  
Charlie Ngatai – Midfield back (Taranaki)  
Augustine Pulu – Halfback (Counties Manukau)  
Toni Pulu – Winger (Counties Manukau)  
Brodie Retallick – Lock (Bay of Plenty-Hawke’s Bay)  
Tom Sanders – Loose forward (Canterbury) \*  
Teleni Seu – Loose forward (Auckland)\*



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Shaun Stevenson – Outside back (Waikato)\*  
Seta Tamanivalu – Midfield back (Taranaki)  
Chase Tiatia – Outside back (Bay of Plenty)\*  
Siate Tokolahi – Prop (Canterbury)  
James Tucker – Lock (Waikato)\*  
Maama Vaipulu – Loose forward (Counties Manukau)  
Latu Vaeno – Winger (Taranaki)\*  
Sam Vaka – Midfield back (Counties Manukau)\*  
Brad Weber – Halfback (Waikato-Hawke’s Bay)  
Sonny Bill Williams – Midfield (Counties Manukau)  
Austin Manning – Supersub (Bay of Plenty) \*\*\*

\*Super Rugby debut

\*\* Gallagher Chiefs debut

\*\*\*Special team member



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