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# NEWS

## Horses help Super Rugby Coaches learn leadership



ALLBLACKS.COM 17 NOV 2011

*New Zealand's top Investec Super Rugby Coaches are taking the reins and going head to head ..*

with horses.

Over the next two days nine coaches including Dave Rennie (Chiefs), Mark Hammett (Hurricanes), and Jamie Joseph (Highlanders) will swap one paddock for another in the innovative leadership course run by Talkinghorses.

The franchise coaches, assistant coaches and Super Rugby referee Chris Pollock are on the two-day course run by premier horse trainer Andrew Froggatt and Janine Sudbury at Te Horo, north of Wellington. They have each been assigned a horse to work with in a series of challenging exercises designed to improve their leadership and communication skills.

NZRU General Manager of Professional Rugby Neil Sorensen said coaching staff need a wide range of skills to deal with the incredibly competitive and challenging environment of Super Rugby.

“They are constantly updating their rugby knowledge, but effectively managing and getting the best out of their team requires much more than that. We wanted to tap into the special nature of this course focussing on body language and people management – through work with horses – to broaden other areas including communication skills,” he said.

Froggatt said horses can teach more about commitment, team work and partnerships than people often can.

“Horses are unusually sensitive animals which makes them behave like an emotional mirror to humans. At the same time, they are herd animals who instinctively look for an authoritative leader.

“It will be up to the coaches to learn how to build a relationship with their horse in order to inspire them. Horses don't lie to flatter an ineffective leader: if you're a hopeless leader, they won't follow and that can sometimes be embarrassing for participants,” he added.

In order to succeed over the two day programme, each coach will have to learn, quickly, how to communicate with the creature and how to control their energy levels so that the horse can begin to trust them.

Talkinghorses has worked with elite sports coaches before including All Black Assistant Coach, Steve Hansen, who described the programme as “one of the best experiences I have been a part of”.

The two-day programme runs today and tomorrow (17 and 18 November) at Sudbury Fields, 101 Te Hapua Road, Te Horo, Otaki. (Approximately 1 hour drive from Wellington).

Media opportunity: Media are invited to view the coaches and their horses in action tomorrow Friday 18 November, at 10am - 11.30am, at Sudbury Fields.

Please notify your intention to attend to Janine Sudbury (below). Please contact Juli Clausen if you wish to speak to the coaches.



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