



Media Release

PNGRFL Unites for "Wan Haus" Pawa Meri Round

August 5th 2026, PORT MORESBY: The Papua New Guinea Rugby Football League (PNGRFL) is proud to announce the return of the Pawa Meri Round (Women in League Round), scheduled for August 8–9, 2026.

Under the theme "Strong Women, Strong Families, Strong Communities," the 2026 Pawa Meri Round embodies the "Wan Haus" (One House) spirit, bringing together the PNG Chiefs, SP PNG Hunters and the PNG National Rugby League Competitions (PNG NRLC) to celebrate the contributions of women in the sport and key issues affecting women.

"Pawa Meri, meaning 'Powerful Woman,' is about more than just acknowledging our female players, coaching staff and administrators; it's about protecting the backbone of our community. By coming together as 'Wan Haus,' we promote gender equality and encourage the participation of women in our sport as one team, 'Wan Haus'," said PNGRFL Chief Executive Officer, Stanley Hondina.

PNG Chiefs Chief Executive Officer, Lorna McPherson, added, "We acknowledge the countless women nationwide who guide and champion our sport, from the locker room to the boardroom. As a female-led administration where the positions of Chairperson and CEO are currently occupied by women, the PNG Chiefs serve as a prime model of the impact of empowering and providing opportunities for women both on and off the field."

This commitment to advancing women in rugby league is reflected across the game's national organisations. Collectively, 32 women are helping shape the future of rugby league across the PNG Chiefs, SP PNG Hunters, PNGRFL and NRL in PNG. This includes 7 women at the PNG Chiefs, 5 at the SP PNG Hunters, 11 at PNGRFL and 10 at NRL in PNG, demonstrating the growing leadership, expertise, and influence of women across all levels of the game.

For the first time, this year, the Pawa Meri Round will feature an alignment across all elite national competitions during the round in a unified **"Wan Haus"** commitment. In a powerful display of solidarity, all participating players from the SP Hunters, Digicel ExxonMobil Cup and Santos Cup will wear purple socks during their respective matches.

"It is important that we use this platform to not only celebrate women in our sport and communities, but to also use our platform to drive awareness as well. The PNG Hunters this year, through naming rights sponsor SP Brewery, will be using this round to advocate against domestic violence, which remains a significant issue





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affecting many women across the country,” said PNG Hunters Chief Executive Officer, Scott Barker.

The Pawa Meri Round is an annual initiative within PNG Rugby League designed to celebrate the contributions of women as players, coaches, administrators and supporters. "Pawa Meri" embodies the resilience and community strength of PNG women, while providing a platform that goes beyond celebration to take a unified stand on key issues affecting women through advocacy and awareness campaigns.

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For Media Queries, please contact:

Media Contact: PNGRFL Media Unit

Phone: +675 7296 3749

Email: media@pngrfl.org.pg

