



For immediate release  
Issued on behalf of Lakapi Samoa

Date: 30 March 2023  
Press Release: 004/2023

## SAMOA TO HOST WORLD RUGBY PACIFIC CHALLENGE 2023

TUANAIMATO (30 March 2023)

### Starts

The World Rugby Pacific Challenge will take place in Samoa as it returns for the first time since 2020. The tournament, contested by the national 'A' teams of Fiji, Japan, Tonga and Samoa, will be hosted in Apia from 3-13 May, 2023.

After six consecutive editions organised in Fiji (2015-20) since its rebranding as the Pacific Challenge, the World Rugby-funded tournament is returning to Samoa in 2023 for an exciting competition contested by hosts Manuma Samoa, Fiji Warriors, Tonga A, and Junior Japan.

Organised in Apia between 3-13 May, the tournament will be played across three match days in a round-robin format with each team playing three matches. The Pacific Challenge 2023 champions will be the team who records the maximum number of competition points across the tournament and the full match schedule has been confirmed by the international federation.

The four teams involved from the Asia-Pacific region will be formed from the best locally-based players, with most promised of a bright future with their senior national team. Competition should be fierce at Apia Park between defending champions Junior Japan, Fiji Warriors and their record nine titles in the competition, Tonga A and Manuma Samoa looking for a third crown on home soil.

Each team's squad of 28 players must consist of 23 players that are 23 years of age and under as of 3 May, 2023, while the remaining five players can be any age over 18. The tournament will allow future stars of the game in the region to develop their skills in a competitive environment against cross-border opposition.

### FIRST INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT ORGANISED IN SAMOA IN 13 YEARS

Samoa are looking forward to hosting the competing teams and their first international World Rugby tournament in 13 years, the last having been the World Rugby Pacific Nations Cup in Apia in 2010. This year also marks 50 years of diplomatic relations between Samoa and Japan and their two senior teams will meet on 28 September at Rugby World Cup 2023 in France later this year.

Lakapi Samoa CEO Faleomavaega Vincent said: "We are excited to be hosting this event in Samoa after the last 3 years of the pandemic but also a start on what is an exciting year for rugby in our region heading towards Rugby World Cup in Europe." We are grateful to World Rugby for bringing the games to Samoa and we look forward to hosting our friends from Japan, Tonga and Fiji".

World Rugby continues to invest in various age-grade competitions throughout the world to support the pathway from junior teams to international test rugby. The World Rugby U20 Championship and Trophy are also returning in 2023 and will take place in South Africa and Kenya respectively in June and July.

[World Rugby U20 tournaments return to Africa in 2023 >>](#)

### WORLD RUGBY PACIFIC CHALLENGE 2023

Apia Park | Kick-off times are TBC

#### MATCH-DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, 3 MAY

- Junior Japan v Fiji Warriors
- Manuma Samoa v Tonga A

#### MATCH-DAY 2: MONDAY, 8 MAY

- Tonga A v Junior Japan
- Manuma Samoa v Fiji Warriors

#### MATCH-DAY 3: SATURDAY, 13 MAY

- Fiji Warriors v Tonga A
- Manuma Samoa v Junior Japan

### Ends

