

# Gullivers

Proposed Itinerary

## ELITE COACHES TOUR OF JAPAN


 JAPAN

 03 – 13TH DECEMBER, 2026

 ISSUED 23TH JUNE, 2026



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# TOUR CREATOR



One of the great joys of hosting the "**Coaching Culture with Ben Herring**" Podcast (available on all podcast platforms – Spotify, Apple podcasts & youtube etc) has been sitting down with some of the best coaches in the world and learning how they think. Now we're taking that learning off the microphone and into the real world

This December, join us on the Elite Coaches Tour of Japan, hosted by **Sir Gordon Tietjens** and **Matt Cockbain**.

Over 10 days we'll explore schools, universities, professional clubs and the unique rugby culture that makes Japan one of the most fascinating rugby nations in the world.

If you love coaching, leadership and learning, this is a rare chance to travel, connect and grow alongside some of the best minds in the game.

Kind regards,

**Ben Herring**  
Director of Rugby



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# TOUR LEADERS



**Sir Gordon Tietjens**

## We are delighted to have Sir Gordon Tietjens join us as our Tour Hosts for Gullivers.

Gordon is a highly experienced and globally respected rugby coach, widely regarded as the godfather of rugby sevens and one of the most successful coaches in the history of the game. Gordon Tietjens built and led the New Zealand All Blacks Sevens program for over two decades, winning 12 World Series titles, two Rugby World Cup Sevens championships, and four Commonwealth Games gold medals.

Renowned for reshaping the modern sevens format, he set the global standard for high-performance programs and player development. Tietjens played a pivotal role in producing some of the game's greatest players, including Jonah Lomu and Christian Cullen, and has developed over 40 players who progressed to All Blacks honours.

A World Rugby Hall of Fame inductee and Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, he brings unmatched insight from a lifetime in the game. Known for disciplined leadership, clarity of message, and uncompromising standards, he consistently builds environments where players perform at their best and teams thrive under pressure.

### Coaching Experience & Achievements

- Head Coach – New Zealand All Blacks Sevens (1994–2016)
  - 12× World Rugby Sevens World Series Champions
  - Rugby World Cup Sevens Champion (2001, 2013)
  - Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist (1998, 2002, 2006, 2010)
  - Widely regarded as the most successful sevens coach in history
  - Developed 40+ players who progressed to All Blacks honours
- Head Coach – Samoa National Sevens Team (2016–2020)
  - Led the national program through a rebuilding phase
  - Focused on high-performance standards and player development
- Head Coach – Bay of Plenty (1996–2002)
  - NPC Coach of the Year (2000)
  - Strengthened provincial performance and player pathways

### Honours & Recognition

- World Rugby Hall of Fame Inductee
- New Zealand Rugby Coach of the Year (2010)
- Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (KNZM)
- Widely recognised as one of the greatest rugby sevens coaches of all time



# TOUR LEADERS



**Matt Cockbain**

## We are delighted to have Matt Cockbain join us as our Tour Host for Gullivers.

Matt is a highly experienced rugby coach and former international player, Matt Cockbain brings elite-level insight shaped by a distinguished playing career, including 63 Test caps for the Wallabies and a Rugby World Cup victory in 1999. Transitioning into coaching, he has developed a reputation for building tough, disciplined forward packs and contributing to high-performance environments at both professional and international level.

Cockbain's coaching journey is highlighted by his extensive experience in Japan, widely regarded as one of the most challenging environments in world rugby for foreign coaches. Operating within a unique cultural and professional landscape, he successfully adapted his approach to lead, develop, and influence players in a system that demands flexibility, cultural awareness, and strong interpersonal skills.

Having coached within professional setups including the Melbourne Rebels and contributed at international level with Fiji, he combines technical expertise with a deep understanding of the game's demands across different rugby cultures. His experience across Australia, Europe, and Japan has equipped him with a global perspective on player development, team cohesion, and performance.

Known for his work ethic, clarity of coaching, and ability to connect with players, Cockbain brings valuable insight from both a world-class playing career and a broad, international coaching journey.

### Highlights of Achievements

- 63 Test caps for the Wallabies (1997–2003)
- Member of the 1999 Rugby World Cup-winning Australian team
- 90+ appearances for the Queensland Reds in Super Rugby
- Professional playing experience across Australia, Europe, and Japan
- Played and coached in Japan, successfully navigating one of the most challenging environments for foreign coaches
- Assistant Coach – Melbourne Rebels (Super Rugby)
- Forwards Coach with strong reputation for developing physical, disciplined packs
- International coaching experience with Fiji national team (2014 tour)
- Recognised for adaptability across different rugby systems and cultures
- Strong contributor to high-performance environments and player development pathways.



# RUGBY COACHES TOUR TO JAPAN

📍 Osaka & Tokyo, Japan

10-NIGHTS

## Tour Inclusions

 Accommodation

 Meals

 Transfers

 Activities

## Tour Highlights



Where tradition meets adventure. Japan's rugby spirit, rich culture and vibrant cities make every day unforgettable on this tour.

- Tour itinerary featuring in **Tokyo & Osaka**
- **Elite Coaching sessions** led by **Sir Gordon Tietjens** and **Matt Cockbain**.
- Ride Japan's iconic bullet train and discover the excitement of fast-paced travel between Osaka & Tokyo
- Attend local Professional and Youth Academy fixtures.

10-NIGHT PACKAGE

FROM  
**\$3,945.00**

PER PERSON – based on a land only tour.  
\*Indicative Cost – based on 30-40 people



Please contact Avia for any further questions regarding the Coaches Tour to Japan



**Avia Schuster**  
Your Groups Tour Consultant


✉ [avia@gullivers.com.au](mailto:avia@gullivers.com.au)

☎ 02 8379 7089

Best time to contact: 9.30am to 5.00pm



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# ITINERARY

## DAY 1 THURSDAY 03 DECEMBER

### HOME CITY > OSAKA



- Arrive Osaka from your home destination.
- Make your own way to the tour hotel and check into your room where you will stay for the next four (4) nights on a bed and breakfast basis.
- Meet your fellow tour members and coaches.
- Welcome drinks
- Evening at leisure

## DAY 2 FRIDAY 04 DECEMBER

### OSAKA



- Breakfast at your hotel.
- AM: After breakfast there will be a classroom coaching session with Norman and Matt followed by questions.
- PM: A visit to Kobe Steel - meet Wayne Smith / Andy Ellis Coaching staff or similar.
- Dinner with Rugby Quest to understand their mission/state of club rugby.

## DAY 3 SATURDAY 05 DECEMBER

### OSAKA



- Breakfast at your hotel.
- AM: Visit to Kansai University Rugby Club.
- Touch football fixture against a local team.
- Evening with leisure.



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- Breakfast at your hotel.
- AM: Witness a coaching session run by Gordon and Matt.
- PM Attend a local Professional fixture.



- Breakfast at your hotel followed by check out.
- Travel to Tokyo via Shinkansen (bullet train).
- Afternoon coaching session with leading youth team.
- Check into your Tokyo hotel for the next six (6) nights on a bed and breakfast basis.
- Evening at your leisure.



- Breakfast at your hotel.
- Visit to Mitsubishi Dynaboars or similar to view a full training session.
- Rest of the day at your leisure.

**LEAGUE ONE COACHES REST DAY**

- Breakfast at your hotel.
- Full day at leisure to enjoy the many attractions of Tokyo.
- Coaches dinner with current League One coaches at Shin-Hinomoto (Japanese Izakaya Private function) to discuss state of Nation.



- Breakfast at your hotel.
- Visit to Tokai University and/or Tokai Sagami.
- Coaching session provided by Gordon and Matt



- Breakfast at your hotel.
- At leisure in Tokyo.
- Evening cocktail event with Australia New Zealand Japanese Chamber of Commerce.



- Breakfast at your hotel.
- Attend League One round game in Japan.
- This evening there will be a final tour dinner at a local restaurant



- Breakfast at your hotel.
- The tour concludes at check out time where you can either make your way back to your home city.

### Opportunities to review the 2026 equivalents depending on the timing of the tour.

The Japanese Professional Rugby competition, League One, is spread across 3 divisions (Division 1 12 teams, Division 2 8 teams and Division 3 6 teams). The Division 1 teams are spread throughout Japan with high concentration in the Greater Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka/Kobe areas. This tour provides an incredible opportunity to visit and learn from one of the most talked about Professional Rugby competitions in the World.

- **Greater Tokyo**
  - Panasonic Wild Knights
  - Toshiba Brave Lupus
  - Mitsubishi Dynaboars
  - Black Rams
  - Suntory Sungoliath (Eddie Jones, Sam Cane et al)
  - Canon Eagles
  - Kubota Spears
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- **Between Tokyo and Osaka**
  - Toyota Verblitz (Aichi)
  - Shizuoka Blue Revs (Shizuoka)
  - Honda Heat (Suzuka)
- **Greater Osaka / Kobe**
  - Kobe Steel
- **Alternative Interactions:**
  - The National University Rugby Championships started on 22/11/25 and ran until 11/01/26.
  - The Japanese National High School competition in 2025/26 started on 27/12/25 and ran until 07/01/26.
  - There is an incredible opportunity to interact with the tier 1 University and High School teams as well.

# INCLUSIONS

## ACCOMMODATION

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- 4-Night Hotel accommodation in Osaka
  - 6- Night Hotel accommodation in Tokyo
- NB: Accommodation based in twin share, Single room available on request - additional **AUD 946.00pp.***

## MEALS

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- Daily breakfast.
- Dinners (3).

## TRANSFERS

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- Private chartered bus as per the itinerary
- Shinkansen tickets (Osaka - Tokyo)
- Suica IC card (JPY3000 pre loaded)

## ACTIVITIES

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- Admissions to 2 Professional or youth academy games
- Evening event organised by the Japan / Australia Chamber of Commerce to include food and drinks.
- A touch football fixture against a local team.

## RUGBY/TRAINING /COACHING

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- Daily contact with Gordon and Matt
- Daily coaching sessions with the touring group
- Attend coaching sessions with local teams.

## ADDITIONAL

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- English speaking guide to accompany group during the tour
- Luggage service: 1 luggage transfer service (Osaka to Tokyo -IPC )



# NOT INCLUDED

- **INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS:** This is a land only tour, which allows you to make your own flight bookings and will join the land component of the tour only, giving you flexibility and the choice to choose your own airline.
- Any sporting equipment hire or venue facilities beyond the included components
- Meals & drinks other than stated under inclusions
- Any suggested or optional sightseeing as detailed in itinerary
- Items of personal nature (e.g. laundry, phone calls, room service, etc.).
- Passport and visa costs – please check with this office if you require visas for your tour. If you are travelling on a non- Australian passport, please check if you require a re-entry visa.
- Travel Insurance HIGHLY RECOMMENDED by the Australian Government – available at Gullivers. Please refer to [Travel Insurance Gullivers](#) for more information >> Insurance | Gullivers for more information.
- All land costs shown are subject to alteration (up or down) due to currency fluctuations. Increases in land and air costs may arise between now and the date of departure. Costs will also depend on availability of flights, hotels, trains, buses etc quoted on. These costs are subject to the group travelling together throughout the tour. Any variation will incur an amendment fee and may also jeopardise the costs for the rest of the group.
- Land costs are based on AUD

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# CONDITIONS OF BOOKING

Gullivers Sport Travel Pty Ltd ACN001 439 685 trading as Gullivers Sport, Music and Education Travel (which expression shall for the purpose of these conditions include subsidiaries, affiliates or associates and hereinafter shall be called "Gullivers") acts only as an agent for the sale of various travel related products on behalf of, the hotels, airlines, bus or car companies, railroads, steamship lines, or owners or contractors providing accommodation, transportation or other services (third party supplier), and all coupons, exchange orders, receipts, contacts and tickets issued by Gullivers are issued subject to any and all tariffs, terms and conditions under which any accommodation, transportation or any other services whatsoever are provided by such third party supplier.

Gullivers shall not be liable or responsible for death of or injury to any person or loss of or damage to any property or otherwise (including baggage), loss of deposit, or damage (including monetary loss) of any kind resulting from cancellation, or termination whether due to its servants agents or employees negligence or otherwise arising out of or in connection with any booking of accommodation, transportation or other services, or resulting directly or indirectly from acts of God, dangers incident to the sea, hijack, fire, breakdown in machinery or equipment, acts of governments or other authorities, de jure or de facto, wars, whether declared or not, hostilities, civil disturbances, strikes, riots, terrorist activity and its consequences, thefts, pilferage, plague, epidemics, pandemic, infectious disease outbreak or any other public health crisis (including quarantines or other travel or employee restrictions, natural or other disaster (such as volcanic ash or hurricanes or similar events), nuclear incident, fire or bushfires, adverse weather conditions (actual or threatened, including snow and fog), closed or congested airports or ports or other modes of transport, unavoidable technical problems with transport, unforeseen alterations to transport schedules, transportation disruptions or cancellations, domestic and/or international travel restrictions, changes to travel advisories and restrictions, changes to health advisories and quarantines, changes to immigration, labour and free-movement laws resulting from BREXIT, rescheduling of aircraft or boats or other modes of transport, changes to applicable laws and/or other government mandates (including evacuation orders and border closures), and similar events), medical or customs regulations delays or cancellations of or changes in itinerary or schedules or overbookings or defaults, or from any causes beyond Gulliver's control or through the acts of default of the hotels, airlines, bus or car companies, railroads, steamship lines or owners or contractors providing accommodation, transportation or other services or for any loss or damage resulting from improper or insufficient passports, visas or other documents and that neither Gullivers nor its servants agents or employees shall be or become liable or responsible for any additional expenses or liability sustained or incurred by the tour members as a result of any of the foregoing causes.

All prices quoted are subject to change without notice having regards to unforeseen circumstances, foreign exchange fluctuations and variations in airline operating costs including but not limited to say an escalation of fuel prices. Unused services cannot be refunded or exchanged. Gullivers reserves the right to cancel the tour and/or modify the itineraries in any way it thinks desirable and further reserves the right to decline to accept any person or any tour and may substitute hotels where necessary. The issuance and acceptance of receipts, tickets, vouchers, coupons, or travel orders shall be deemed consent to the above.



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## TOUR PRICES

Tour prices are based on costs in effect at the time the latest proposal was issued. Costs will also depend on availability of all services/inclusions quoted on at time of booking. These costs are subject to the group travelling together throughout the tour. Any variation will incur an amendment fee and may also jeopardise the costs for the rest of the group. Prices are based on the tour numbers stipulated on the itinerary. Any change in tour numbers will result in a revised tour price. All costs shown are subject to alteration (up or down) due to exchange rate fluctuations (based on the selling rate) and increases in land and air costs which may arise between now and the date of departure.

## GENERAL PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Initial Deposit - At time of booking: \$750.00 per person (bookings will be made when deposit has been received in our office)

Interim Payment - 6 months prior to departure: \$1,500.00 per person

Final Tour Payment - 2 months prior to departure.

## CANCELLATION

### **(Notice of cancellation must be made in writing)**

Subject to your refund and remedy rights under the Australian Consumer Law, the following change or cancellation fees will apply to your booking:

Time of booking - 6 months prior to departure: \$500.00 per person.

6 - 2 months prior to departure: \$1,500.00 per person

2 months - departure day and after commencement of travel: Nil Refund

Please note there may be specialised inclusions in your tour such as Train Tickets, Theatre/ Show or special event tickets, instant purchase airline tickets etc that are non-refundable in addition to the above cancellation charges. These cancellation fees are in addition to any cancellation fees that may be levied by our tour suppliers.

## AMENDMENT FEE

Any person wishing to deviate from the group tour arrangements will be charged a standard \$100.00 per person amendment fee plus any additional charges involved with the amendment (i.e. increase in airfare, additional transfers, accommodation etc).

The above amendment and cancellation fees and charges reflect the reasonable, direct and indirect costs, time and effort incurred or involved in Gullivers providing booking and advisory services to you, as well as processing and managing the changes to, or cancellation of your booking.

All bookings are made on your behalf subject to the terms and conditions imposed by the third-party supplier. If, for example, a third-party supplier's terms and conditions contain a "no refund policy", Gullivers will only be able to provide you with the remedy provided by the third-party supplier (if any), which may include a travel credit supplied by the third-party supplier.



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## DOCUMENTATION

Australian citizens require a passport with minimum 6 months validity from date of departure from final destination, and a current vaccination record or report in accord with the current government or third-party supplier conditions. For international travel booking, Gullivers will assume that all travellers on the booking have a valid Australian passport which is valid for the relevant destination and transit point. If this is not the case, you must let us know. Other passport holders may require additional documentation. It is important that you ensure that you have valid passports, visas and re-entry permits which meet the requirements of immigration and other government authorities. Any fines, penalties, payments or expenditures incurred as a result of such documents not meeting the requirements of those authorities will be your sole responsibility (except to the extent caused by fault on our part). Gullivers can provide you with general information only on visa and passport requirements that apply to international travel bookings you make with us. Please check your applicable requirements with our Travel Consultant. A copy of each person's passport is required.

Changed or cancelled bookings for any reason (including by reason of matters outside your or our control) may also incur third party supplier fees, which can be up to 100% of the cost of the booking, regardless of whether travel has commenced. Third party supplier fees may also apply where a booking is changed for any reason and when tickets or documents are re-issued. Where Gullivers incur any liability for a third-party supplier change or cancellation fee for any booking which is changed or cancelled for any reason, you agree to indemnify us for the amount of that fee. Where you seek a refund for a changed or cancelled booking for which payment has been made to the third-party supplier, Gullivers will not provide a refund to you until Gullivers receive the funds from that third party supplier (which may take 3-6 months, or longer, dependent upon the supplier processing time). In the event Gullivers are still holding the funds, Gullivers can only provide you with a refund once Gullivers are authorised by the third-party supplier to process your refund, subject to that third party supplier's change or cancellation policy.

## COUNTRY PRE CLEARANCE

You should ask your travel consultant if your country of destination requires you to submit an online pre-entry form prior to your arrival. For example: US and Canadian ESTA.

Travel documents include (without limitation) airline tickets, hotel vouchers, tour vouchers or any other document (whether in electronic form or otherwise) used to confirm an arrangement with a third-party supplier. Travel documents may be subject to certain conditions and/or restrictions including (without limitation) being non-refundable, non-date-changeable, and/or subject to cancellation and/or other change fees. Travel documents cannot be transferred to another person to use. All airline tickets must be issued in the name of the passport/photo identity holder. Your name on your passport, visa and other travel documents must all be identical.

An incorrect name on a booking may result in an inability to use that booking, the booking being cancelled, and the application of additional change and/or cancellation fees. Please review your travel documentation carefully and advise us immediately of any errors in names, dates or timings. As a general rule your travel documents will be available for collection 2 weeks prior to your departure date, however this will depend on your individual arrangements. Please contact Gullivers to confirm when your travel documents will be ready for collection.



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## BAGGAGE

Standard baggage allowance, one piece weighing maximum 20 kg plus 1 cabin bag (piece) of 115cm with a maximum weight of 5kg per person (Please note these restrictions vary between airlines & depends on your destination. Please check with your tour consultant for applicable allowances for your plans). Luggage in excess of these limits will be charged for at the appropriate excess baggage rates. Excess baggage (if your airline allows it) can be expensive and is your responsibility. Gullivers will not be liable for any expenses, fees, penalties, costs, liabilities, damages or losses associated with baggage allowances and excess baggage. Baggage is the responsibility of the passenger at all times (Travel Insurance is strongly recommended).

## INSURANCE PROTECTION

Highly recommended and available from Gullivers Travel. Gullivers strongly recommend you have Comprehensive Travel Insurance to cover all your travel arrangements and encourage travellers to have a policy in place as soon as they make a payment towards their trip plans. This is the sole responsibility of the traveller.

Your insurance protection should at least include cover for cancellation, medical and repatriation expenses, personal injury and accident, death and loss of personal baggage and money and personal liability insurance. Evidence of such insurances should be produced to Gullivers on request. If you choose to be covered for Travel Insurance with an alternative provider such as a credit card company, Gullivers recommend that you thoroughly check the policy wording for levels of coverage.

Insurance cover offered by credit card companies or reciprocal medical cover agreements are often not comprehensive. Travel insurance is strongly recommended by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for all overseas travel. Please ensure you are given a policy number and your policy includes adequate hospital cover, 24hr emergency contact and assistance during your holiday. Make sure you read the PDS before you decide to buy your travel insurance.



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## AIRLINE & AIRPORT TAXES, SURCHARGES & LEVIES

Are not included in the tour cost as they are continually changing. Any of these charges imposed by the airline will be notified to you at the time of final payment 2 months prior to departure.

## FREQUENT FLYER & MILAGE ACCURAL

Some group airfares are not eligible to accrue frequent flyer points (due to discounted group airfares). Please advise your travel consultant if you are a member of the airlines associated frequent flyer program to see if your fare is eligible for frequent flyer point accrual.

## TRAVEL ADVISORIES

Gullivers strongly suggest that you consult the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) website and register (either group or individual) so that you are kept up to date with any travel warnings or advisories that may be in place for your destinations ([www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)). You should also advise DFAT of your travel details such as date of departure and itinerary.

## TRAVEL HEALTH

Please discuss your personal travel plans with a health professional regarding vaccinations for your trip and any booster doses you may need.

Upon re-entry into Australia, Customs & Immigration will request a copy of your vaccination certificate if you have visited areas that have current health risks or hazardous diseases. For further information, visit [Smart Traveller](#) to check the current health alerts and warnings for the destination/s you are visiting.



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