

# Stephen Larkham

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## *Australian Rugby Legend and Speaker*

Stephen Larkham's exceptional skills, strategic thinking, and game-changing performances both as a player and coach have earned him a place among the legends of Australian rugby. Widely regarded as one of the most talented and influential rugby union players of his generation.



From his early days on the field to his remarkable international career, Larkham's journey is one of dedication, resilience, and triumph.

Growing up in Canberra, Larkham developed a passion for rugby at a young age. He attended St Edmund's College, where his talent and potential quickly became evident. Larkham's natural ability as a fly-half and his exceptional kicking and passing skills set him apart from his peers. He represented the Australian Schoolboys team and the Australian Under-19 team, showcasing his promise as a future star.

Larkham's professional career took flight when he joined the ACT Brumbies in 1996, a team that he would become synonymous with for over a decade. His partnership with scrum-half George Gregan would prove to be one of the most successful and enduring half-back combinations in Australian rugby history.

During his time with the Brumbies, Larkham showcased his exceptional vision, attacking prowess, and tactical brilliance. He played a key role in guiding the team to two Super Rugby titles in 2001 and 2004, leaving an indelible mark on the franchise. Larkham's ability to control the game, execute precise passes, and orchestrate devastating attacking moves made him a nightmare for opposing teams.

Larkham's international career was equally impressive. He made his debut for the Wallabies in 1996 and went on to earn 102 caps, becoming one of the most capped fly-halves in Australian rugby history. His intelligent and composed style of play earned him the nickname "Bernie" and made him a fan favourite.

One of Larkham's career highlights came during the 1999 Rugby World Cup, where he played a pivotal role in guiding the Wallabies to victory. His exceptional performances throughout the tournament, including a memorable drop-goal in the final against France, helped secure Australia's second World Cup title.

In addition to his World Cup success, Larkham was a crucial part of numerous Tri-Nations and

Bledisloe Cup victories. His ability to read the game, create opportunities, and maintain calm under pressure made him a key figure in Australia's success on the international stage. After retiring from professional rugby in 2007, Larkham turned his attention to coaching. He served as an assistant coach for the Brumbies and later joined the Australian national team as the attack coach before an international stint as Senior Coach in Ireland for Munster. In 2023, Larkham returned to the Brumbies as head coach for the Super Rugby Pacific competition. In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the sport, Larkham was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 2012 and World Rugby Hall of Fame in 2018. His legacy as a player, mentor, and innovator continues to inspire the next generation of rugby players across Australia.

### ***What Stephen talks about***

- Teamwork
- Motivation
- Strategy
- Resilience
- Goal Setting

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