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Rugby Updates: Genia Retires, Booth Joins Hong Kong

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Australian rugby has seen major developments this week, with Wallabies legend Will Genia announcing his retirement and former Ospreys coach Toby Booth taking on a new role with Hong Kong China Rugby. The news comes as international teams begin preparations for the 2027 Rugby World Cup in Australia.

Toby Booth, who left Welsh side Ospreys in December, has been appointed **High-Performance and Technical Consultant** for Hong Kong China Rugby. Sharing the announcement on LinkedIn, Booth wrote:

“Following the successful progression of Hong Kong China Rugby in recent years, I am happy to share that I’m starting a new position as High-Performance Strategic and Technical Consultant. It’s good to contribute further to this journey and support and challenge the group as they work towards the 2027 Rugby World Cup in Australia.”

While Hong Kong China Rugby has not yet qualified for the tournament, Booth’s appointment is aimed at strengthening the side’s high-performance systems as it builds towards its qualification campaign. Booth had a successful spell at Ospreys, though a difficult start to

the 2023–24 season led to his early departure, with Mark Jones replacing him as head coach.

In Australia, one of the nation's most decorated players has decided to hang up his boots. **Will Genia**, 37, confirmed his retirement this week, ending a career that spanned over a decade at the top of world rugby. Genia earned 110 caps for the Wallabies, featuring in three Rugby World Cups between 2011 and 2019.

On Instagram, Genia expressed his gratitude:

“Thank you to the teams, my teammates, coaches, teachers, friends, and all the wonderful people in the game who helped me, guided me, shaped me, included me, put up with me, and made me better. Thank you to the fans for making the game what it is. Finally—thank you, rugby, for all the joy. It was always the game and then everything else.”

After finishing his international career at the 2019 World Cup, Genia played club rugby in Japan with the Kintetsu Liners, having previously represented Stade Français in France and the Melbourne Rebels in Super Rugby. Rugby Australia CEO Phil Waugh paid tribute, describing him as “a world-class number nine who starred on international rugby's grandest stages for more than a decade.”

Elsewhere in world rugby, **Scotland's Emma Wassell** has made a successful return to the international stage following major surgery to remove a benign chest tumour in 2023. Now 29, the lock is preparing to feature in Scotland's Rugby World Cup opener against Wales in Salford. Reflecting on her comeback, she said:

“There were many moments where I feared I would never play again, yet there was a big part of me that knew I wouldn't stop until I did. Playing against Italy and Ireland this summer was a really good test to prove to myself that physically and mentally I can perform on the international stage.”

Meanwhile, former England captain **Sarah Hunter** is also shaping the future of the women's game. Having retired in 2023 with 141 caps, she is now part of England's coaching setup as defence coach ahead of the home Women's Rugby World Cup. Hunter said:

“Seeing how the game has grown, with a home World Cup returning to England, it's exciting to watch the next generation take the field.”

The combination of retirements, comebacks, and fresh coaching appointments highlights rugby's global reach as the countdown begins to the 2027 Rugby World Cup in Australia.

