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## Excitement builds ahead of the Tongan rugby invasion!

Northumbria University is excitedly preparing for the arrival of the [Tongan national rugby team](#) who will be using the University's sports facilities before their [Rugby World Cup](#) match in Newcastle.

The Tongans will be training at Northumbria between Tuesday 6 and Friday 9 October in advance of their big game against favourites New Zealand at St James' Park.

The University was selected as the official team base for the Tongan team by

Rugby World Cup organisers who judged Northumbria's state-of-the-art facilities as being suitable for this prestigious international tournament.

The 31-man Tongan squad – who will be accompanied by a 15-strong management and support team – will use the University's outdoor grass pitches at Bullocksteads and the gym and strength and conditioning labs at the £30 million [Sport Central](#).

The University has also received some specialist equipment including a ruck machine and dumbbells weighing a huge 70kg to help the team with their training.

Northumbria's Director of Sport, Colin Stromsoy, said: "Northumbria University is now firmly established as one of the UK's leading universities for sport and accordingly we are delighted to be hosting the Tongan team as part of the Rugby World Cup.

"The whole team have been working tirelessly over many months to ensure that the facilities and services we provide to Tonga will be the best they have ever experienced. I know that the entire Northumbria student and staff community will give the team a huge welcome and that we'll all be behind them when they face world champions New Zealand on Friday."

While preparing for the arrival of the Tongan team, the University welcomed the iconic [Webb Ellis Cup](#) to its Great Hall during the trophy's 100-day tour around the UK and Ireland.

The University is also playing a front-line role in the Rugby World Cup. [Leadership and Management](#) student Rob Webber – hooker for Premiership side Bath – has been selected for the England squad. Rob is one of 70 rugby players studying at Northumbria on a course specially designed for the [Rugby Players' Association](#) to match a professional rugby player's needs and provide an opportunity for members to study around their sporting careers.

Northumbria's sports facilities are ranked top 10 in the UK and are open to members of the public, as well as staff and students. For more information visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk/sport](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sport)

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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