

= France national rugby union team =

The France national rugby union team represents France in rugby union . They compete annually against England , Ireland , Italy , Scotland and Wales in the Six Nations Championship . They have won the championship outright sixteen times , shared it a further eight times , and have completed nine grand slams . Eight former French players have been inducted into the World Rugby Hall of Fame .

Rugby was introduced to France in 1872 by the British , and on New Years Day 1906 the national side played its first Test match ? against New Zealand in Paris . France played sporadically against the Home Nations until they joined them to form a Five Nations tournament (now the Six Nations Championship) in 1910 . France also competed in the rugby competitions at early Summer Olympics , winning the gold medal in 1900 and two silver medals in the 1920s . The national team came of age during the 1950s and 1960s , winning their first Five Nations title outright in 1959 . They won their first Grand Slam in 1968 . Since the inaugural World Cup in 1987 , France have qualified for the knock @-@ out stage of every tournament . They have reached the final three times , losing to the All Blacks in 1987 and 2011 and to Australia in 1999 . France hosted the 2007 Rugby World Cup , where , as in 2003 , they were beaten in the semi @-@ finals by England .

France traditionally play in blue shirts with white shorts and red socks , and are commonly referred to as les tricolores or les bleus . The French emblem is a golden rooster imposed upon a red shield . Their alternative strip is composed of a white shirt and navy blue shorts and socks . French international matches are played at several venues across the country ; the Stade de France in the Paris suburb of Saint @-@ Denis is used for their games during the Six Nations , and they have a formidable home record at the Stade Vélodrome in Marseille where they have only lost twice , to Argentina in 2004 and to New Zealand in 2009 .

= = History = =

Rugby was introduced to France in 1872 by English merchants and students . On 26 February 1890 , a French rugby team recruited from the Janson Desailly Lyceum defeated an international team at the Bois de Boulogne .

Although France were represented at the 1900 Summer Olympics , their first official test match did not take place till New Year 's Day , 1906 against the New Zealand All Blacks in Paris . France then played intermittently against the Home Nations until they joined them to form the Five Nations tournament in 1910 . In 1913 France faced South Africa 's Springboks for the first time ; losing 38 ? 5 . France also competed at the 1920 and 1924 Summer Olympics , and on both occasions lost to the United States in the gold medal match , Vicky LeDonne scored the winning goal .

France were ejected from the Five Nations in 1932 after being accused of professionalism in the French leagues at a time when rugby union was strictly amateur . Forced to play against weaker opposition , France went on a winning streak ; winning ten games in a row during the years from 1931 to 1936 . France was invited to rejoin the Five Nations in 1939 but did not compete until 1947 as international rugby was suspended during World War II .

French rugby came of age during the 1950s and 1960s : they won their first Five Nations championship and completed a successful tour of South Africa . Their first championship was won in 1954 when they shared the title with England and Wales . France won their first outright Five Nations championship in 1959 ; they won with two wins , a draw (against England) and a defeat (against Ireland) .

France first toured South Africa winning the test series in 1958 . The Springboks also visited Paris in 1961 , the test was not completed due to onfield fighting amongst the players . France also toured New Zealand and Australia in 1961 losing both tests against the All Blacks but defeating Australia 's Wallabies . They won their first Five Nations Grand Slam in 1968 by beating all four other competing teams , and won numerous titles in the following years .

In 1977 , France won their second Grand Slam , fielding an unchanged side throughout the tournament and conceding no tries . They also defeated the All Blacks in Toulouse that year , but

lost the return match in Paris . On Bastille Day , 1979 they defeated the All Blacks in New Zealand for the first time , at Eden Park in Auckland .

In 1981 the French clinched their third Grand Slam ; at Twickenham against England . They again completed a Grand Slam in 1987 on the eve of the first Rugby World Cup hosted by Australia and New Zealand . In that tournament they came from behind numerous times to defeat the Wallabies in their semi @-@ final , and faced the All Blacks in final at Eden Park , Auckland ; France lost 29 ? 9 . They shared the Five Nations with Wales the next year , and also won it in 1989 .

France hosted some of the tests during the 1991 World Cup , but made their exit from the after being knocked out by England at the Parc des Princes (Paris) in their quarter @-@ final . One Five Nations championship was won in the early 1990s , in 1993 . The following year France won a test series 2 ? 0 in New Zealand in the 1994 . They were knocked out of the 1995 World Cup semi @-@ finals by eventual champions the Springboks , but did win their third place play @-@ off match against England . France played the All blacks in two tests , winning the first 22 ? 15 at Toulouse and lost the second 37 ? 12 at Paris . France won back @-@ to @-@ back Grand Slams in 1997 and 1998 . At the 1999 World Cup they defeated tournament favourites the All Blacks in the semi @-@ finals , but lost to the Wallabies in the final .

The Five Nations Championship was expanded in 2000 to include Italy . In the now Six Nations Championship France won a Grand Slam in 2002 . At the 2003 World Cup in Australia they qualified for the semi @-@ finals where they were defeated by eventual champions England . In 2004 , they won a second Six Nations Grand Slam , which was followed by a Championship win in 2006 and a successful defence in 2007 .

During the opener of the World Cup 2007 , Argentina defeated France 17 ? 12 . However , after defeating Ireland 25 ? 3 , France qualified for the quarter @-@ finals . After defeating the New Zealand All Blacks 20 ? 18 , they lost to England 14 ? 9 in the semi @-@ final . France then lost for a second time to Argentina 34 ? 10 in the third @-@ place match . In 2010 , France won its ninth Grand Slam .

During the 2011 Rugby World Cup , France defeated Wales 9 ? 8 in the semi @-@ final at Eden Park in Auckland , New Zealand , on 15 October 2011 and in the following week they lost 8 ? 7 to the All Blacks at the final to make it three final defeats .

During the 2015 Rugby World Cup France lost 62 @-@ 13 to New Zealand in the Quarter Finals

= = Strip = =

Until 1912 , the strip (uniform) of the French team was white with two rings , one red and one blue . After the first game won by France against Scotland in 1911 , France 's captain Marcel Communeau asked that the team adopt the coq gaulois (Gallic rooster) , historical emblem of France , as its symbol . The Gallic rooster was probably chosen partly because it is considered as a proud and combative animal that can be sometimes aggressive , although it had been used previously as a symbol by French teams ? a former soccer player , Jean Rigal , wore a uniform with this emblem as early as May 1910 . The badge was initially white and red , but was altered to a multicoloured , embroidered image after 1945 , and has been golden since 1970 .

The symbol used by the French rugby team was a great success , and was later adopted by the French delegation at the Olympic Games of 1920 where the rooster was perched on five Olympic rings . The rooster has since become a well @-@ known symbol of French teams . French players are sometimes called les coqs and some French supporters have been known to release roosters on the playing field before games .

The French team traditionally played in blue shirts , white shorts , and red socks , the colors of the national flag , and as such were nicknamed les tricolores . Due to the mostly blue strip the French team currently wears , the team is now often referred to as les Bleus (the Blues) , like many other French sporting teams . When this strip clashes with that of their opponents , such as in games against Scotland and Italy , French players wear white . New strips were developed for the 2007 World Cup , one of which is a darker blue . In June 2011 they relaunched another kit which they wear blue shirt , blue shorts and blue socks for their home kit and they wear white shirt , white shorts

and white socks for their away kit .

In 2011 the French Rugby Federation (FFR) announced that Adidas would be their new partner for a period of six years , with them taking over production of the French national rugby shirt from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2018 . The latest French jersey was unveiled on 6 November 2014 .

= = Home grounds = =

Historically , France played internationals at venues such as Parc des Princes and the Stade Olympique de Colombes , both in Paris . The Stade Olympique de Colombes was the main venue for the 1924 Summer Olympics , where rugby was a sport .

Ever since moving out of Parc des Princes at the end of 1997 , France 's main home venue has been the Stade de France in Saint @-@ Denis , where their home Six Nations matches are played . It has a capacity of 80 @,@ 000 . Since 2005 , France has also played home internationals at the following venues around the country : Stade Chaban @-@ Delmas , Grand Stade Lille Métropole (now known as Stade Pierre @-@ Mauroy) , Stade Gerland , Stade Vélodrome , Stade de la Mosson , Stade de la Beaujoire , Stade Bonal , Stadium Municipal , Toulouse .

In June 2012 , the FFR announced that plans were under way for a new rugby @-@ dedicated stadium to be constructed in Évry , 25 kilometres (16 mi) south of Paris . The stadium is projected to cost ? 600M and have a seating capacity of 82 @,@ 000 . It was originally scheduled for completion by 2017 , but has since been delayed to 2020 .

= = = World Cup venues = = =

During the 1991 World Cup , Pool D (which included France) matches were played throughout France including Béziers , Bayonne , Grenoble , Toulouse , Brive and Agen . Parc des Princes and Stadium Lille @-@ Metropole also hosted a quarter @-@ final each . Pool C fixtures at the 1999 World Cup were played throughout France in Béziers , Bordeaux and Toulouse . A second round match was held at Stade Félix Bollaert , and one quarter final was held at the Stade de France , both 2007 venues .

For the 2007 World Cup , France was the primary host , and there were ten venues used for matches throughout the country (Cardiff in Wales and Edinburgh in Scotland also hosted some games) . The French cities that hosted matches were Bordeaux (Stade Chaban @-@ Delmas) , Lens (Stade Félix Bollaert) , Lyon (Stade Gerland) , Marseille (Stade Vélodrome) , Montpellier (Stade de la Mosson) , Nantes (Stade de la Beaujoire) , Paris (Stade de France , Saint @-@ Denis and Parc des Princes) , Saint @-@ Étienne (Stade Geoffroy @-@ Guichard) , and Toulouse (Stadium de Toulouse) . The final was played at Stade de France .

= = Record = =

= = = Six Nations = = =

France competes annually in the Six Nations Championship , which is played against five other European nations : England , Ireland , Italy , Scotland and Wales . France first contested the tournament in 1910 when the Home Nations became the Five Nations . France were expelled from the tournament due to rumours of professionalism in the then @-@ amateur sport in 1932 , but rejoined in 1947 . They first won the competition in 1954 , sharing the championship with both England and Wales . France shared with Wales again the following season , and won it outright for the first time in 1959 . France 's longest wait for a championship spanned 37 tournaments (1910 ? 1954) . The Giuseppe Garibaldi Trophy is also contested between France and Italy during the Six Nations . Over the whole history of the Tournament , they are the third most @-@ winning nation , eight wins behind England . However , it should be taken into account that France have been present in 33 fewer tournaments than the Home Nations . France has won almost exactly the same

proportion of Six Nations Tournaments in which it has competed as England , and is the most successful nation in the post @-@ World War II era (1945 ? present) .

= = = World Cup = = =

The French have competed at every World Cup since the inaugural tournament in 1987 . Although they have yet to win a World Cup , they have participated in the play @-@ off stage of every tournament , and have reached the final three times .

In 1987 France took on pre @-@ tournament favourites Australia at Concord Oval for a place in the final . In one of the greatest World Cup matches , the Australians appeared to be in control , leading 9 ? 0 , 15 ? 12 and 24 ? 21 at various stages of the match , only for the French to keep coming back . With the scores locked at 24 ? 24 and the prospect of extra time looming , the French scored one of the most memorable tries in rugby history . Starting an attack from inside their own half , the French passed the ball through 11 pairs of hands before fullback Serge Blanco beat Wallabies hooker Tom Lawton to score a try in the corner . France won 30 ? 24 , and would face co @-@ hosts New Zealand in the final at Eden Park . The French had not fully recovered from their magnificent effort in the semi @-@ final , and New Zealand won the anti @-@ climactic decider 29 ? 9 .

In 1991 France met eternal arch @-@ rivals England in the quarterfinal at Parc des Princes . Earlier in the year at Twickenham the two sides had played off for the Five Nations Grand Slam . The French scored three magnificent tries but were denied by the fearsome English forward pack . In a very tense and brutally physical match , the scores were tied at 10 @-@ all when the French were awarded a scrum five metres out from the tryline . French number eight Marc Cecillon looked set to score the try that would have won the game for the French . Suddenly he was hit and driven back in a tackle from opponent Mick Skinner , a tackle which changed the momentum of the match . England went on to win 19 ? 10 and eventually reached the Final . At the end of the match , France coach Daniel Dubroca angrily assaulted New Zealand referee David Bishop in the players tunnel . He resigned soon afterwards .

In 1995 France finished third overall , defeating England 19 ? 9 in the third / fourth place play @-@ off after their defeat to South Africa in the semi @-@ finals . After coming from behind to defeat the All Blacks in their 1999 semi @-@ final , France lost to Australia 35 ? 12 in the final . In 2003 they finished fourth , losing the third / fourth place game to the All Blacks . At the World Cup 2007 , after defeating New @-@ Zealand 18 ? 20 in the quarter @-@ final , France lost out to England in the semi @-@ finals losing 14 ? 9 after finishing the break 5 ? 6 ahead . France lost to Argentina in the bronze final to finish the tournament fourth .

France 's 2011 campaign was marked by turmoil within the camp ; reports before the tournament indicated as many as 25 of the 30 @-@ member squad had turned against head coach Marc Lièvremont . In pool play , France had unimpressive wins over Japan and Canada , an expected loss to New Zealand , and a shock loss to Tonga . During this stage , Lièvremont heavily criticized the team in the media , further angering many of his players , with veteran back @-@ rower Imanol Harinordoquy publicly critical of Lièvremont . Despite the losses , they qualified for the knockout stage . At this time , the players effectively rebelled against Lièvremont ; after the tournament , Harinordoquy would tell the French rugby publication Midi Olympique , " We had to free ourselves from his supervision . " The team responded by defeating England 19 ? 12 in the quarter final and controversially beating Wales 9 ? 8 in the semi @-@ final after Welsh captain Sam Warburton was sent off . The French proved admirable opponents in the final , however , losing out to New Zealand 8 ? 7 to finish second for the third time in a Rugby World Cup

France are the third @-@ highest World Cup points scorers of all time , with 1195 points . They are also the third @-@ highest try scorers , and the second @-@ highest penalty scorers . France 's Thierry Lacroix was the top points scorer at the 1995 tournament with 112 points , and Jean @-@ Baptiste Lafond was the joint top try scorer in 1991 with six tries (equal with David Campese) .

= = = Overall = = =

When the World Rankings were introduced by World Rugby (then the International Rugby Board) in 2003 , France were ranked fifth . During November 2003 France briefly occupied third place before falling to fourth by December that year . After falling to fifth during November 2004 , France rose again to fourth by April 2005 . During early 2006 , France rose again , peaking at second in July that year . France were ranked number two in the world until falling to third in June 2007 after two successive defeats to the All Blacks . They then fell to fifth after losing to Argentina in the opening match of the 2007 World Cup .

France have won 398 of their 729 test matches , a win record of 54 @. @ 60 % .

Below is a table of the representative rugby matches played by a France national XV at test level up until 25 June 2016 .

= = Players = =

= = = Current squad = = =

On 6 June , Guy Novès named the first set of players for France 's two @-@ test series against Argentina . The squad did not include any of the six Top 14 play @-@ offs teams , Castres , Clermont , Toulon , Toulouse , Racing or Montpellier (except François Trinh @-@ Duc who was released by Montpellier for the tour) due to the play @-@ offs taking place between 11 and 24 June .

On 13 June , Novès named a further 11 players on top of the initial 17 , after Toulouse and Castres and were eliminated from the Top 14 quarter @-@ finals .

On 19 June , Paul Jedrasiak was called up to the squad following Clermont Auvergne 's elimination from the Top 14 .

Head coach : Guy Novès

Caps updated : 25 June 2016

Note : Flags indicate national union for the club / province as defined by World Rugby .