

= Mark Hammett =

Mark Garry ' Hammer ' Hammett ( born 13 July 1972 ) is a New Zealand rugby union coach and former player . Haven represented Canterbury provincially 76 times , and the Crusaders 81 times and the All Blacks 30 times ? including 29 Test matches , Hammett later went on to coach both Canterbury and Crusaders as a forwards / assistant coach . He is currently the head coach of Japanese Super Rugby franchise the Sunwolves and will return to New Zealand in mid @-@ 2016 to join the coaching staff at Tasman Makos .

= = Playing career = =

= = = Early career : 1989 ? 97 = = =

Hammett first represented New Zealand , while he was a pupil at St Thomas of Canterbury College , when selected for the New Zealand Under 17 team in 1989 . He then captained the Under 19 team in 1991 , before making his first appearance for Canterbury in 1992 . Although his one game for Canterbury in 1992 was as a replacement , he played seven games the following season . As hooker , he played mainly as backup to Matt Sexton in 1993 ; however , by 1994 they were sharing the role . By 1995 , Hammett played more games than Sexton .

Rugby turned professional in late 1995 , and in 1996 the Canterbury Crusaders ( now called the Crusaders ) franchise was established . Hammett became a founding member of the side , which struggled in the inaugural Super 12 , finishing in last place . The 1997 season went better for Hammett ; the Crusaders finished sixth , and the Canterbury provincial team won the National Provincial Championship ( NPC ) after beating Counties in the final . Although Hammett was receiving more and more game time , he still only participated in the NPC final as a replacement .

= = = Super 12 success : 1998 ? 2001 = = =

Hammett started regularly for both Canterbury , and the Crusaders in 1998 , with the latter he won his first Super 12 title . The 1998 Super 12 final was played against the Blues at Eden Park ; Hammett said of the match " If we 'd been polled in that week , and had to give an honest answer , most of the boys , deep down , would probably have thought that the Blues would beat us . " Despite this , the Crusaders defeated the reigning champions 20 ? 13 . Hammett was rewarded with a New Zealand trial , where he captained his team . He was subsequently selected for New Zealand A and played against Tonga .

The Crusaders achieved more success in 1999 as they finished the round @-@ robin in fourth place , then won their semi @-@ final , and final ( both away from home ) to take another championship . Hammett 's achievements with the Crusaders were rewarded by being called into the All Blacks in 1999 , at the age of 26 . His first game was against New Zealand ' A ' , on 11 June in Christchurch , quickly followed by his first Test against France on 26 June . Hammett eventually played in the 1999 Tri Nations Series , and was selected for the 1999 Rugby World Cup .

After winning a third title with the Crusaders in 2000 , he was again selected for the All Blacks ; getting a start against Tonga , and in that years Tri @-@ Nations . After returning from All Blacks duty , he played for Canterbury and contributed to a Ranfurly Shield win over Waitako . Canterbury then reached the NPC final , giving Hammett the opportunity to be part of a Super 12 , Ranfurly Shield , and NPC winning team , all in the same year . Wellington won the NPC final however , and the opportunity was lost . Hammett was then selected for the end @-@ of @-@ year All Blacks tour , and played against France and Italy ( both as a substitute ) .

Hammett 's 2001 Super 12 season was marred by a shoulder injury , and the Crusaders eventually finished tenth . Due to injury , Hammett only played one game for the All Blacks , as a substitute against Argentina in June . He missed the entire NPC campaign due to injury : an ankle problem which required surgery and causes him to also miss the 2001 end @-@ of @-@ year All Black tour .

== Final seasons : 2002 ? 03 ==

After the 2001 NPC , Crusaders ' captain Todd Blackadder left New Zealand to play rugby in Scotland . During the 2002 Super 12 pre @-@ season , half @-@ back Justin Marshall questioned which of the senior players were going to step into Blackadder 's leadership role for the tough matches . Hammett took the comment " as a slap in the face " , as " one player doesn 't make a team . " Hammett later said " I took it that way , and I think a lot of the others must have as well , because we all ended up stepping up ! " Subsequently , the Crusaders went through the season unbeaten , including a 96 ? 19 victory over the New South Wales Waratahs . He again played for the All Blacks in 2002 , starting against Australia and South Africa in the Tri @-@ Nations . The 2002 NPC season was Hammett 's last , and although Canterbury were knocked out in their semi @-@ final , they managed to retain the Ranfurly Shield . Hammett 's last match was his 76th for Canterbury .

The 2003 Super 12 season was Hammett 's last . The team ended the round @-@ robin second on the table , and eventually travelled to Eden Park to face the Blues in the final . Although the Crusaders lost the final , Hammett scored two tries , becoming one of only three players to score two tries in a Super 12 final . Despite the two tries , Hammett calls the match the biggest disappointment of his career . Hammett was again chosen for the All Blacks , and eventually played in the 2003 Rugby World Cup . The All Blacks call @-@ up made Hammett reconsider his retirement plans . He planned to continue playing after 2003 , however a neck injury during the 2004 pre @-@ season ended his playing career .

== Honours ==

== Coaching career ==

== In New Zealand : 2006 ? 2014 ==

Two years after his playing career ended with the Crusaders , Hammett was back with the Crusaders , working as a forwards coaching adviser for the 2006 Super 14 season . He went on to fulfill the same role for Canterbury in the 2006 Air New Zealand Cup . He was later appointed as the new Crusaders assistant coach in November 2006 as a replacement for Vern Cotter who departed to France . Hammett remained as assistant coach from 2007 to 2010 , and was not appointed as Crusaders ' head coach when Robbie Deans left to coach Australia in 2008 ; Todd Blackadder was given the head coach role instead . During his time at the Crusaders , he helped guide the team to the semi @-@ finals of every single season he was at the franchise , before securing their sixth and seventh title in 2006 and 2008 . In later 2010 , he was appointed coach of the Wellington @-@ based Hurricanes ahead of the 2011 Super Rugby season . After the 2011 Super Rugby season ? his first season in charge ? Hammett decided controversially not to renew the contracts of All Blacks Ma 'a Nonu and then Hurricanes ' captain Andrew Hore . In the three years at the helm in Wellington , the Hurricanes failed to progress to the knock @-@ out phase of the competition , only getting as high as seventh on the table ; in 2014 Super Rugby season . In April 2014 Hammett indicated he would not be seeking to renew his contract when it expired at the end of the 2014 season .

== Outside New Zealand : 2014 ? 2016 ==

On 18 May 2014 , Hammett was named Director of Rugby for Wales @-@ based team Cardiff Blues , working alongside Dale McIntosh and Paul John . The Mark Hammett era was a slow start , losing both the pre @-@ season friendlies . However , the first round saw Cardiff defeat Zebre 41 ?

26 . Despite only winning one game in his first competitive 6 games , Hammett lead Cardiff to a surprise victory over French side Grenoble and an easy victory over Rovigo Delta in the 2014 ? 15 European Rugby Challenge Cup . These games were backed @-@ up by a narrow loss to Irish giants Munster . On 24 January 2015 , Hammett led the Blues to an away victory over Grenoble , to see the side through to the quarter @-@ finals of the 2014 ? 15 European Rugby Challenge Cup . On 20 February 2015 , Cardiff were beaten by Benetton Treviso 40 ? 24 in Treviso , which later turned out to be Hammett 's last game in charge of the Welsh side . On 25 February 2015 , after six months of a three year contract , Cardiff Blues agreed to release Hammett at his request for personal reasons , to allow him to return home to New Zealand .

On 21 December 2015 , the Japan Rugby Football Union announced Hammett as the head coach of the newly formed Japanese Super Rugby franchise , the Sunwolves . In their debut season , the side finished bottom of the newly expanded table , with 1 win . Ironically , their win came against the other newly formed team , the Jaguares , a team made up predominantly of the successful Argentine side from the 2015 Rugby World Cup . On 27 June , it was announced that Hammett would be leaving the Japanese side to return to New Zealand . It had previously been announced that Hammett would be joining the Tasman Makos in 2016 as their new assistant coach for the 2016 Mitre 10 Cup . While in June 2016 , it was announced that Mark Hammett will remain in Super Rugby , but as as an assistant coach at the Highlanders .

In March 2016 , Hammett was named as the caretaker coach for the Japanese national team , while Jamie Joseph closes out his contract with the Highlanders . Hammett led the Brave Blossoms to a 26 ? 22 win over Canada , before losing 2 ? 0 to Scotland during their two @-@ test series .

= = = Honours = = =

Crusaders ( as assistant coach )

Super 14 / Super Rugby

Winners : 2006 , 2008

Runners @-@ up : 2011