

Visa Rugby Legend

John Eales



John Eales is not only one of an elite group of players who have won the Rugby World Cup twice, but also one of the rarer group of players who have captained their country to Rugby World Cup glory; he captained Australia to Rugby World Cup victory at the Rugby World Cup 1999 in Wales. John is recognised as one of the greatest Australian (Wallaby) players ever, and in 2002, the Australian Rugby Union (ARU) inaugurated the John Eales Medal, which recognises the best Australian international rugby player each season. John was also inducted into the Rugby International Hall of Fame in 2005.

John was awarded the Wallaby captaincy in 1996 and he would go on to captain Australia 55 times. After a slow start, 1998 proved to be the turning point in Australia's fortunes. John kicked Australia to a narrow away win over England, and later that year led the Wallabies to a 3-0 whitewash over New Zealand's All Blacks to win the Bledisloe Cup. This would be the first of three under John's captaincy, the other two coming in 2000 and 2001. 2001 was a momentous year: not only did John lead the Wallabies to Australia's first series win over the British and Irish Lions, but later that year he also captained Australia to its successful defence of the Tri-Nations Championship, which Australia had won for the first time the previous year under his leadership. The final game of the 2001 Tri-Nations tournament was John's 86th and final cap for the Wallabies, and with Australia needing a win against the All Blacks to retain the title, Australia won at the death in dramatic style. During his ten-year career, John captained Australia a record number of times and was Australia's most capped captain on his retirement.

John made his debut at lock in 1991, when Australia thrashed Wales 63-6. The same year, John was part of a victorious Wallaby team that beat England in the Rugby World Cup final; winning the first of his two Rugby World Cup medals. It was in the final that John would take part in one of the defining moments of Australian and world rugby. With the match nearing full time, Australia was leading England 12-6, when England fly-half Rob Andrew made a break for the Australian line. John's tackle saved the likely try and the match to ensure victory for the Wallabies.

At six foot seven inches this was no mean feat, but it characterised this outstanding player and inspirational leader. In addition to his height John possessed superb strength and agility that enabled him to be a commanding player in the lineout and scrum. As a forward, John also enjoyed the unique accolade of being Australia's goal kicker, giving him the opportunity to score 173 points for his country. He is the highest scoring forward in test rugby history and seventh highest scoring player in Wallaby history.

John began his rugby career with the Brothers Rugby Club and in 1990 made his debut for his state, Queensland. He would go on to represent Queensland 112 times. In 1999 he became captain of the Queensland Reds and led them to three semi-finals of the Super 12 competition. He still holds the record for the most number of points scored by a forward in Super 12 (now Super 14) with 402 points.

Following retirement, John set up John Eales 5, a corporate hospitality company. He is a founding member of the Mettle Group, and he works with the BT Funds Groups. John also acts as an Ambassador for the ARU.

