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And a very good rugby player.

That pretty much sums up the sentiment about veteran hooker Liam Coltman as he approaches his 100th game for Otago.

Coltman will bring up the milestone against North Harbour in a Ranfurly Shield defence in Dunedin tomorrow.

Former Otago prop and Otago B coach Scott Manson packed down alongside the happy hooker from 2010 to 2015.

They were supposed to be groomsmen at each other's weddings, but rugby got in the way.

Now their children play together and they have remained fast friends.

That bond was forged on the field.

"I think the first word that pops up is loyalty," Manson said.

"He's a loyal mate. He'll do anything for you, do anything for your team.

"He's got a team-first mentality. I remember when he was captain for a while, he didn't speak a whole lot of words, but just led through a lot of actions. And when he did speak, everyone listened.

"And he's always smiling, even when he is grumpy, probably."

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RUGBY

Coltman 'just an outstanding person'

ADRIAN SECONI

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Otago Rugby Football Union chief executive Richard Kinley has had a long association with the eight-game All Black and has always been struck by Coltman's loyalty and his strength of character.

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Otago rugby

The 100 club

Richard Knight	170
David Lall	161
Ken Blackham	155
Steve Hutton	146
Lindsay Clark	137
Gordon Macpherson	137
John Leslie	123
Greg Cooper	121
John Hoggart	119
Gary Sear	116
Sha Foster	115
Laurel Munn	114
Wayne Graham	111
Arian Pene	111
Drew Kenny	110
Paul Cooke	107
Rolo Ray	106
Duncan Robertson	104
Merv Jaffray	102
John Tims	101
Topsy Duck	101
Ezra Kirton	100
Liam Coltman	99*

*Statistics from Blue and Gold. Coltman plays his 100th game tomorrow.

really special award," Kinley said.

"When your peers select you as their most outstanding player of the year, that really says something.

"He's just an outstanding person. He is the ultimate professional. He leads by example on and off the paddock.

"He's just well grounded, down to earth and an outstanding rugby player."

Coltman will become the 22nd player to register 100 games for Otago, but the first to reach 100 for both the Highlanders and Otago.

It is a testament to his skill, fitness and passion that he has been able to keep going during a professional career that has

spanned 15 years.

Former lock Richard Knight is Otago's most-capped player. He made a staggering 170 appearances in the blue and gold strip, but even he is in awe of what Coltman has been able to achieve.

"You've got to remember Liam's contribution to the Highlanders on top of the Otago games as well," Knight said.

"He's the sort of guy you build a team around and can completely and utterly rely on, on the field and off it."

Coltman is the first player in more than 20 years to give the 100-game milestone a nudge and may well end up being the final player to get there.

Former Otago rake David Latta, who clocked 161 games for the province, said he was fortunate to have coached Coltman "early on".

"He was fantastic. He was driven. He knew what he wanted to do," Latta said.

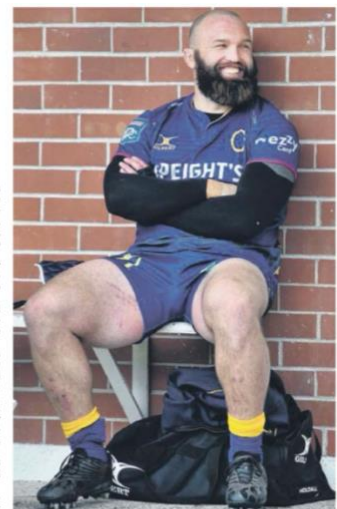
"He worked hard. He's got a great work ethic, and he's carried that right through. He's pretty humble and patient and always smiles."

Latta got a thrill out of watching Otago host the Ranfurly Shield from Canterbury in Christchurch at the weekend.

Coltman came on in the second half and made a huge impact. He drove over from a lineout drive to score a crucial try, which tied the game up.

Cameron Millar nailed the conversion and Otago held on for a memorable 38-36 win.

If they defend it against North Harbour tomorrow, they will get to tack the Shield away for the remainder of the season and



Otago hooker Liam Coltman takes a break at the end of a training session at Logan Park. PHOTO: PETER MONTOSH

focus on the NPC playoffs.

Coltman's lineout feeds are money, he is a tremendous scrumman and he loves getting over the ball and snaffling turnovers. And he is part of a strong bench which has helped Otago finish strongly and clinch games which were otherwise in the balance.

"You know, there's a reason why he's not starting games," Manson said.

"Otago have got experience and toughness and a winning

mindset to come on and win games.

"That's what he's there for. It's helped shape the way that Otago is playing a lot, I believe.

The young boys are doing a job to start the game, and then these guys are coming on and just, you know, knocking down and finishing it. It's pretty cool to watch."

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TOMORROW: COLTMAN'S STORY

Coltman's loyalty and his strength of character .

“ What sums up the man is that he came back from [two years] overseas [in 2024] and the players picked him as the player's player of the year, which is a really special award,” Kinley said.

“ When your peers select you as their most outstanding player of the year, that really says something.

“ He's just an outstanding person . He is the ultimate professional . He leads by example on and off the paddock.

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“ He was fantastic. He was driven. He knew what he wanted to do,” Latta said.

“ He worked hard. He's got a great work ethic, and he's carried that right through. He's pretty humble and patient and always smiles.”

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“ Otago have got experience and toughness and a winning mindset to come on and win games.

“ That's what he's there for. It's helped shape the way that Otago is playing a lot, I believe.

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IF all goes well this afternoon, Liam Coltman will clock his 100th game for Otago, help lock away the Ranfurly Shield and be home in time to tuck his daughters Tilly and Ruby into bed.

He might have to squeeze in a beer with his team-mates as well.

Whatever happens, you can guarantee the veteran hooker will have a broad smile on his face.

SPORT & RACING

Otago Daily Times • Saturday, September 27, 2025



The merry, and mostly hairy, faces of Otago and Highlanders centurion and former All Black Liam Coltman.

PHOTO: ALBA HENDERSON & GETTY IMAGES

RUGBY

Big smile ahead of 100th for province

ADAM BEGON

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Whatever happens, you can guarantee the veteran hooker will have a broad smile on his face.

He has been bashing into blokes for Otago for 13 years and will become the first player to reach 100 for both teams and Super Rugby NPC.

Coltman, 35, is a former Highlanders/Hawke's Bay, Jimmy Cowan (Highlanders/Southland), Mitchell Drummond (Crusaders/Canterbury) and Liam Messam (Chiefs/Waikato) player.

It is a big day for the 35-year-old with the glorious beard.

Coltman moved to Dunedin from Taranaki to study physical education, but rugby quickly became the priority.

He made his debut against Counties-Manukau in July 2010.

Counties won comfortably, but the following week Coltman played in a game every Otago fan remembers.

The team headed south to challenge a talented Southland side for the Ranfurly Shield.

The match was controversial. Steps prep and captain James Macdonald "bored" "over" to score a try and put the home team ahead with 12 minutes remaining.

And by over, well, we use that term very loosely, as the photographic evidence suggests the ball was well short of the try line when he grounded it. Regardless, the Reds were 16-10.

Former Otago Daily Times sports writer Stephen Stephens wrote "even Stephen King could not pen something this ghastly, this painful and this

much happier Ranfurly Shield moment availed Coltman and Stephens, for that matter."

The shock 26-18 win against Southland in 2011 ended a 15-year drought and Coltman was in the side that won it again in 2020.

Last Saturday's 26-18 Ranfurly Shield win against Canterbury was something special on well, perhaps even his favourite game in Otago rugby.

It's definitely right up there with the way the beard did it. We had a man in the line, a few points down, 20 minutes to go, that was massive.

"That's the third time I've ever beaten Canterbury, so it's definitely right up there."

But also that Shield challenge in 2013. To win it for the first time in such a long time, to

vine was absolutely massive, so probably those two are right up there."

Coltman played a key role in the win against Canterbury. He scored from a loose drive and Cameron Milner's conversion put them ahead with 13 minutes remaining.

Otago had trailed 16-21, so it was a remarkable fight back.

Coltman has an immediate plan to give the game away tonight - a day of the "boys" usually grinding out to him. They were toddlers when he started playing for Otago.

"That's pretty funny, but yeah, it's a shame being able to be in this environment for so long. It's more an absolute pleasure."

"I'll most likely head back to the States for next season and then we'll see what happens

appearances for the Highlanders and will become the first player to reach 100 for both teams and just the fifth man to do the Super Rugby NPC double behind Ash Dixon (Highlanders /Hawke's Bay), Jimmy Cowan (Highlanders/Southland), Mitchell Drummond (Crusaders/Canterbury) and Liam Messam (Chiefs/Waikato)

It is a big day for the 35-year-old with the glorious beard.

"Yeah. It's an exciting week, especially having the Ranfurly Shield," he said.

"There's a lot of buzz around that as well, so it's going to be a good weekend. "I'm looking forward to the match." His mother and father will be at the game and his wife, Aleisha, and daughters Tilly, 7 and Ruby, 6 will be there too. "They'll be here cheering me on and I'll be very proud. "I still can't believe it, to be honest. The first one was such a buzz and so it's still a buzz now."

Let's wind the clock back.

Coltman moved to Dunedin from Taranaki to study physical education, but rugby quickly became the priority.

He made his debut against Counties-Manukau in July 2010.

Counties won comfortably, but the following week Coltman played in a

He has been bashing into blokes for Otago for 15 years and will become the 23rd player to bring up 100 games for the province when he emerges from the bench for the Ranfurly Shield defence against North Harbour today.

He also made 138

game every Otago fan remembers.

The team headed south to challenge a talented Southland side for the Ranfurly Shield.

The match was controversial.

Stags prop and captain Jamie Mackintosh barged “ over’ ’ to score a try and put the home team ahead with 12 minutes remaining.

And by over, well, we use that term very loosely, as the photographic evidence suggests the ball was well short of the chalk when he grounded it. Regardless , the Stags won 16-12 .

Former Otago Daily Times rugby writer Stephen Hepburn wrote “ even Stephen King could not pen something this ghastly, this painful and this darn sad” .

Much happier Ranfurly Shield memories awaited Colt-man , and Hepburn, for that matter.

The shock 26-19 win against Waikato in 2013 ended a 57-year drought and Coltman was in the side that won it again in 2020.

Last Saturday’s 38-36 Ranfurly Shield win against Canterbury was something special as well, perhaps even his favourite game in Otago colours.

“ It’s definitely right up there with the way the boys did it. We had a man in the bin, a few points down, 20 minutes to go, that was massive.

“ That’s only the third time I’ve ever beaten Canterbury, so it’s definitely right up there.

“ But also that Shield challenge in 2013. To win it for the first time in such a long time, to see what it meant to the province was absolutely massive, so probably those two are right up there.”

Coltman played a key role in the win against Canterbury.

He scored from a lineout drive and Cameron Millar’s conversion put them ahead with 13 minutes remaining.

Otago had trailed 36-21 , so it was a remarkable fight back.

Coltman has no immediate plans to give the game away despite “ a few of the boys’ ’ kindly pointing out to him they were toddlers when he started playing for Otago.

“ That’s pretty funny, but yeah, it’s awesome being able to be in this environment for so long. It’s been an absolute pleasure.

“ I’ll most likely head back to the States for next season and then we’ll see what happens from there.”

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