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New Zealanders set to watch more than 50 sports free with exciting new Sky Sport Next initiative

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New Zealand sport is set to get a massive boost thanks to a ground-breaking grassroots sport initiative launched today by Sky and Olympian and former America's Cup sailor Rob Waddell.

More than 50 National Sports Organisations and rights-holders have come together to form the New Zealand Sport Collective, led by Rob Waddell. Together, they will be part of Sky Sport Next, a platform designed to be a launching pad for some of New Zealand's most popular grassroots sports and rising young talent.

Through Sky Sport Next, New Zealanders will get free access to watch more than 50 different sports and thousands of events, many of which wouldn't have otherwise been live streamed or made their way to a leading platform.

The events will be streamed, and highlights packages available, on the Sky Sport Next YouTube channel and some content will be broadcast on Sky Sport, Sky's sport streaming service Sky Sport Now, and Sky's free-to-air channel Prime.

In particular, Sky Sport Next will shine a spotlight on Olympic pathway sports such as swimming, climbing, athletics and gymnastics, showcasing international home games and events not currently on Sky Sport, and National Championships across many grades.

In line with Sky's commitment to support women in sport, Sky aims to have an equal mix of male and female representation on Sky Sport Next.

Sky Chief Executive Martin Stewart says: "As the Home of Sport in New Zealand, we're about the whole game, which means all levels of sport – from grassroots to the elite. We're keen to support all the sports that New Zealanders love to play and watch.

"We understand the importance of a sustainable future for New Zealand sport and are proud to be investing more than \$10 million over the next three years to give over 50 Kiwi sports a chance to be seen and to grow. Sky Sport Next is a tangible way we can give back to our communities and support sports and talent that don't currently get a lot of exposure.

"When Rob approached me with the NZ Sport Collective, after hearing about our efforts in the grassroots sports space, we jumped at the chance to be part of such a ground-breaking initiative. We look forward to working together and making a game-changing impact on the New Zealand sporting community."

Rob Waddell says: “On behalf of the New Zealand Sport Collective, we are thrilled to be working with Sky on Sky Sport Next. The scale of our collaboration is unprecedented, and many sports that previously had little in the way of funding and exposure will now be seen on New Zealand’s most prominent sports broadcaster. Together we want to inspire more Kiwis to play sport, and work with sports codes to reduce the barriers for young people to participate. It’s an exciting era for New Zealand sport.”

Basketball New Zealand CEO Iain Potter says: “Being part of the New Zealand Sport Collective and Sky Sport Next is great for our sport. Basketball has been experiencing phenomenal growth for some time and this initiative will help continue that growth. This collaboration also recognises and validates the difference made by the supporters, players and parents, the helpers and the officials, who selflessly give so much to our communities.”

Graeme Maw, CEO of Canoe Slalom, says: “We are very excited to be part of this new venture, and the exposure and support it will bring to our sport from our growing schools programmes to our increasing international success. We look forward to fostering this partnership as we head towards hosting the Junior and U23 World Championships in our own backyard in 2021.”

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For further information, visit www.sky.co.nz/sky-sport-next

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