



Nigel's biography

Nigel Owens

International rugby referee & leading [sports](#) speaker

Nigel is a Welsh international rugby union referee. He is an international and Heineken Cup referee and was the only Welsh referee at the 2007 Rugby World Cup in France.

Nigel Owens' background

Nigel Owens was born and raised in a small village called Mynyddcerrig in the Gwendraeth Valley in South Wales and he is a fluent Welsh language speaker. He was a school technician at Ysgol Gyfun Maes Yr Yrfa Cefneithin and youth worker with Menter Cwm Gwendraeth.

He was appointed as an international referee in 2005, and that year officiated his first international between Ireland and Japan in Osaka. Along with Wayne Barnes of England and Marius Jonker of South Africa, Owens made his World Cup debut in Lyon, France on 11 September 2007 for the Argentina vs. Georgia match. He is only one of two referees ever to be appointed to referee two consecutive Heineken Cup finals: Munster v Toulouse at the Millennium Stadium in 2008 and Leicester Tigers v Leinster at Murrayfield in 2009.

He is also known as one of the presenters on Jonathan, a rugby-themed Welsh language chat show hosted by former Welsh international Jonathan Davies, broadcast on S4C on the eve of big international matches. He also co-presents the [sports](#)-themed Welsh language chat show Bwrw'r Bar.

In November 2008 he released his autobiography in Welsh called "Hanner Amser" which means Half Time. The English language version was launched at the end of October 2009. In 2011 he was made a member of the Gorsedd of Bards.

In January 2012 Nigel made the headlines by addressing Treviso scrum-half Tobias Botes for continually yelling in protest by ending with the words "This is not soccer!", which then instantly became extremely popular among rugby fans, to the point that T-shirts with this phrase printed were commercialized.

In 2015 Nigel was honoured to be appointed the referee in the RWC Final at Twickenham and was also subsequently presented with the World Rugby Referee Award.

He is a patron of the LGBT Centre of Excellence Wales, The Wooden Spoon [Society](#) rugby charity plus Bullies Out charity in Wales.

Nigel is much in demand as both an entertaining after dinner and motivational speaker with a host of humorous stories.

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