

INTERVIEW

Kevin Farrell

aged 26, Manager of Farrells Nurseries, which has been in business in Franklin for 27 years. Born & bred in Pukekohe, educated at Pukekohe High School, then attended St Peter's College, where Kevin found a different atmosphere and a strong accent on sport. He has played 45 games for Counties and is a member of the 2008 Steelers Training Squad. Club team: Pukekohe Rugby Club.



What do you like about being in Pukekohe?

I love my job, it's a good lifestyle. My family is here, and I've got a big family – I'm number six of nine and an uncle to over 20, with more on the way.

What drives you, makes you want to get up and train?

I've always enjoyed rugby, I love being part of the team. It's like being in a family, we watch each other train and feel satisfied when we play well. If you train all the time you're eventually going to play well, that's the idea of it. I really enjoy sport and have always played rugby and cricket.

Would you say you have a very competitive part in your nature?

Yes, I suppose you could say I'm competitive but there's something really good about playing well and having a good game – it's a feeling you don't get all the time and something worth striving for.

What teams have you played for and what position do you play?

I've gone through from junior boys to the 21s team, First XV for St Peters for a couple of years, to Counties Colts, from there to Steelers and I played for Chiefs Colts. In 45 games for Counties, I've always played halfback. The good thing about rugby is that any size can play.

What are your aspirations as a player?

To be selected for Counties, I'd love to get there, but there's a bit of competition in the halfbacks at the moment so there's some pressure on. Playing 50 games for Counties is a goal. I've got an Irish passport, so that's an option. I've been to Ireland once and played a few games for the New Zealand Youth side, it was awesome. We played Munster, they've got a small park there – it was brilliant. Growers Stadium is the heart of Counties, it's well set up. It's a good place to play and I hope we get the crowds to support the local teams. A lot of good players have played there for Counties, they've had some good years there and I hope they will continue.

Who are the people who have played an important role in your rugby career and why?

My mum and dad have always been there, encouraging me. If I had a bad game, dad would probably say I had a good one. I've been in one club for my whole career, so I suppose my senior coaches. I've had a lot of success with those guys, so they've had a big influence. Bruce Robertson has also had a big influence, he picked me from nowhere. He must have thought I had a bit of something that he liked and gave me the chance to play for Counties. I was only 20 at the time and he didn't rush me in there. He was an All Black legend, so I learnt from a pretty good player.

What goes through your mind when you're playing in a game?

Our club team goes out with a game plan – if it's working, we'll probably stick with it. If it's not working that's when you've got to make a few changes, and for me, being a halfback, I'm pretty tactical and like to think about what's happening. The halfback bosses the forwards around and keeps them going.

What are some of your best moments?

My first starting game for Counties, the semi-final against Manawatu at Growers Stadium. I've probably never been so nervous in my life. Also, winning three club titles for Pukekohe.

Worst moments in rugby?

I was pretty disappointed when I didn't get picked for Counties a couple of years ago. I'd been there for four or five years previous and done a lot of hard work. I thought they might give me a chance but I never got that opportunity. But it's good, I came through and got back in there.

Advice for younger players coming through

Stick at it. I've seen heaps of really talented guys. Because they didn't make a certain team, they've flagged it, when really, it's only one man's opinion. You never know what's going to happen. It's about the passion too. I've had a real passion for the sport since I started at 8 years old.

Do you use the skills learnt on the field in everyday life?

You learn a lot about yourself when you're under pressure. You've got to work harder, so I've definitely learnt a bit.

Are you a good loser and a good winner?

I didn't start out being a good loser. If you lose and you know you could have won, that's pretty disappointing, but if you lose when you get outplayed, you've got to give the other team credit. I think I'm a good winner. You never know, in your next performance you might lose, so you've got to be pretty realistic about it.

Do you train hard?

Yes, this year for Counties we are all training real hard. The boys are pretty fit.

What are you looking forward to most this season?

I really want to make the Counties squad, so I'm looking forward to that. If I make it, it will be pretty exciting. I think it will be a good year for Counties. Also, I'm looking forward to a successful club season. I really enjoy club rugby.