

WAYNE BARNES



Wayne Barnes OBE is one of the world's leading international sports officials, named World Rugby Referee of the Year in 2019 and took charge of the Rugby World Cup Final in 2023.

He is a criminal barrister, public speaker and is highly sought after in the sports media.



INTERNATIONAL REFEREE

Wayne became an international centurion, refereeing his 100th test match in 2022 and a week later broke the World Record for the most internationals ever refereed. He has overseen 273 English Premiership games, officiated 17 Six Nations tournaments and taken charge of 10 Premiership Finals.

Wayne has presided over 27 Rugby World Cup matches, more than anyone else in history at an unrivalled 5 RWC Tournaments. He announced his professional refereeing retirement in November 2023 and fittingly his last match in charge was the Rugby World Cup Final 2023.

Wayne was recognised in the 2024 Kings Birthday Honours List being awarded an OBE for his services to rugby union.

BARRISTER

A practising criminal barrister since 2003, Wayne balances his legal career with his professional rugby commitments, and is a Partner at globally renowned law firm Squire Patton Boggs in London.

Wayne is part of the Government Investigation and White Collar Crime team, but is also regularly instructed by National & International Governing Bodies, professional sports organisations, commercial sponsors and rights holders on all aspects of sports law, governance, ethics and safeguarding.

In addition, Wayne specialises in bribery and corruption and other financial crime investigations and has acted for many multinational companies who have been prosecuted by the world's largest international law enforcement agencies.

An experienced criminal barrister and trial advocate, Wayne is an accomplished public speaker on the corporate and legal circuit and regularly delivers training to companies and individuals in order to avoid regulator intervention.

MEDIA PUNDIT

Wayne regularly contributes in all aspects of rugby media including mainstream tv and the broadsheets as an expert pundit and commentator.

Offering in-depth, expert analysis, Wayne is uniquely placed to explain the technicalities of law and the nuances of the global game.

He draws on his experience of performing under pressure at the highest level to bring an educational and informed perspective to match day coverage and written comment.



CORPORATE SPEAKING & WORKSHOPS

Wayne is a highly competent and engaging corporate speaker. He is able to draw upon both his lengthy career in top flight sport and his legal background to deliver interactive corporate talks and workshops, commanding a natural respect from any audience.

Subjects include:

Leadership

- Workshop format exploring how strong leadership means being a true part of your team.

The True Meaning of Team

- The fine art of navigating (and working with) your competition, what it means to truly build cross-discipline togetherness, and how diversity of thought is so valuable to your team's development.

Thriving through adversity

- Preparing for the nuclear scenario, how to deal with pressure with a clear head, and techniques for surviving the fall-out of failure and coming back stronger.

Learning Culture

- Review, review, review: how a learning culture is relevant every day, not just in retrospect. Hear how laying it all out publicly and developing an honest - and sometimes brutal - review culture from the top to the bottom of an organisation sounds scary, but it's the only way to truly improve.

Motivational

- Techniques for building up confidence, having self-belief and silencing both inner and vocal external critics in your personal development.

Conflict

- Advice on dealing with difficult personalities, separating fact from emotion, navigating the blame game and communicating clearly and calmly, even under extreme pressure.

Governance & regulation

- Fairness, ethics, integrity and doing things the right way; an overview on what business can learn from sport and vice versa.

ENTERTAINMENT SPEAKING

Cheating, fighting, death threats, controversy, failure, success, the sublime to the ridiculous - Wayne has been there, and with a first book and podcast on the way, has many stories to tell.

Wayne is a popular keynote and entertainment speaker, with hundreds of corporate and fundraising events under his belt. Former Rugby Speaker of the Year, he has all manner of stories to tell - through extraordinary highs to challenging lows - and his hard-earned experience of five Rugby World Cups and beyond.

From frozen pitches and abandoned test matches, to judgement calls that changed his life, the funniest players (and the most difficult), attempts at bribery and having to leaving the stadium in disguise in the back of an ambulance - Wayne has seen it all.

With relationships in football, cricket, tennis and many more, his insight into the challenges faced by global sport is detailed, and he shares funny, informative and sometimes unbelievable insight from behind the scenes at some of sport's biggest competitions.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Wayne's autobiography *Throwing the Book*, written with Ben Dirs, was published by Little Brown in November 2023.

PERSONAL LIFE

Wayne and his wife Polly, whom he met at school, have two children and live in Twickenham. Wayne is a patron of the Atrial Fibrillation Foundation, a regular supporter and fundraiser for the rugby charity Wooden Spoon and, along with Polly, organises a host of charity rugby events in support of Breast Cancer Now.

EMAIL: HELLO@NURTURELONDON.COM

  [@WAYNEBARNESREF](https://twitter.com/WAYNEBARNESREF)

WEB: WWW.WAYNE-BARNES.COM

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