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Hororata Highland Games announces 2018 Chieftain

Patrick Hellier, New Zealand's highest achieving Highland Games Heavy athlete, has been named Chieftain for the 2018 Hororata Highland Games.

Patrick has been involved in Highland Games since 1988 as an athlete in the Heavy Events, tossing cabers and other feats of strength and skills that the Scots devised for their men. During this time, he has won the New Zealand Championship, held at Waipu, 18 times which lead to him representing New Zealand in overseas championships. He has competed in games and gatherings in Finland, USA, Australia, Malaysia, Canada and of course Scotland. Basically, anywhere that the Scots emigrated to there are games.

"It is an absolute honour to have been invited to be Chieftain of the Hororata Highland Games. I first competed at Hororata in 2011, and I still have the 'rock' trophy I was presented as champion that year," said 2018 Chieftain Patrick Hellier. "The games at Hororata have held true to the traditional spirit of Highland Games as a gathering of the clans. People from all walks of life come to experience the Scottish culture of dancing, listening to the bagpipes, athletics, eating traditional foods and of course the water of life whisky."

Along with Highland Games accomplishments, Patrick has also competed and coached at the top level for athletics. He is 13 times New Zealand Track and Field Champion Over Shot Put, Discus and Hammer events; has been Throws Coach for the New Zealand Commonwealth Youth Team, and Throws Coach for the Cook Islands Olympic Team. Patrick is the head judge of the Hororata Highland Games Gough CAT Heavy Events, and has been instrumental in growing this sport in New Zealand. His day job for the last 14 years has been to serve as a Police Officer with the New Zealand Police.

"From an athlete's point of view the Hororata Community Trust has always been open minded and very supportive of the traditional heavy events. Hororata is a bucket list event for many athletes from around the world. But just as importantly it is inspiring people to have a go and take part in the sport, right from primary school age to adults. The amateur field has grown and seen a number of athletes step up to the open division, compete overseas and win Championships."

"I am looking forward to being part of the Hororata Highland Games in the Chieftain role. It will be the first time I will be able to spend time out of the heavy's arena, although I will still be involved with judging and the athletes. We have a good crew of volunteers in the arena, including my wife Kirsten Hellier, so I am sure it will run smoothly as ever," concluded Patrick.

Patrick joins a prestigious list of Hororata Highland Games Chieftains. Following Amy Adams who was the first female Chieftain in 2017; past Chieftains include Simon Dallow (2011), Gerry Brownlee (2012), Governor General Sir Jerry Mateparae (2013) and Sir Bob Parker (2014). 2015 saw the events first international Chieftain, Alex Bruce, Director of Adelphi Distillery, Scotland and in 2016 bagpipe rock star Kyle Warren travelled from Australia. All past Chieftains have reminded in touch with the Games and a number return each year. Amy Adams, Gerry Brownlee and Kyle Warren all plan to attend the event this year.

The Hororata Highland Games is a community event staged by the Hororata Community Trust which has wide reaching benefit the community. Competition entries are up until the 23rd of October and discounted early bird tickets are on sale now, for details visit www.hororatahighlandgames.org.nz

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