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Wallaby makes a splash with Aqua Rugby

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WHILE the Wallabies have been accused of going to water in some recent narrow Test losses, one of their stars is behind a new version of rugby which actually rewards players for taking a dive.

Aqua Rugby, invented by Wallabies fly half Bernard Foley and ex-Cricket Australia administrator and music event promoter Jimmy Galvin over a

pub meal, launches in Sydney Harbour at Manly today.

Lifeguards, rather than touch judges, will be stationed on each corner during the three-day tournament which Mr Galvin describes as “Hong Kong Sevens meets the Monaco Grand Prix”.

Five players on each team play on a 30m x 30m pontoon moored on the harbour, with players scoring tries by diving into the water and also getting

crash-tackled over the side.

A mix of amateur and professional teams will play in front of crowds on the foreshore as well as corporate hospitality on superyachts anchored near the pontoon.

Mr Galvin said Aqua Rugby should not be regarded as “a novelty” and told spectators to expect action on the pitch.

“There will be plenty of competitiveness. We encourage the players to come up

with tactics and tap moves. It is a professional set-up ... They will be full-blown games.”

Mr Galvin says he and Foley, who is in Europe with the Wallabies, dreamt up Aqua Rugby “to showcase rugby in a brand new, modern format and bring colour, fun and entertainment back to the game.”

Backer Shane Anderton is keen to take the game to Singapore and the US and even a South-East Asian tour.



Shane Anderton and Jimmy Galvin. Picture: Nikki Short