



2017 EMERGING LEADERS BOARD HONOREE

JOE SCHMIDT

Joe Schmidt is a New Zealand-born Irish rugby union coach, who is currently the head coach of Ireland.

A former school teacher and coach, Joe Schmidt worked in several coaching roles in New Zealand including New Zealand Schools, Bay of Plenty and at Auckland as assistant coach.

He was backs coach at Clermont Auvergne from 2007 to 2010 when the club captured the coveted Bouclier de Brennus Top 14 title.

Joe took over as Leinster head coach for the 2010/11 season and guided the province to their second Heineken Cup title in his first season.

Leinster won back to back European titles in 2012 and Joe signed off his tenure with Leinster by guiding them to a treble in 2013 capturing the Amlin Challenge Cup, Rabo Direct Pro12 and British & Irish Cup titles.

Since joining Ireland as head coach that summer, Schmidt has won two 6 Nations Championships in four years and recorded the historic victory over New Zealand last Autumn in Chicago.

Twenty-six years ago though the English teacher from Woodville in New Zealand was coaching the first XV at Wilson's Hospital school near Mullingar. He was doing what is termed Down Under an "OE" – spending a year getting Overseas Experience.

Schmidt and his wife Kellie made lifelong friends during his stint in the midlands, he played for the local team Mullingar RFC, and coached them too. And he turned around the sporting fortunes of Westmeath's oldest school.

Up until that point the small college had been perennial minnows in the Leinster Schools Senior Cup for sheer want of numbers. But the young, enthusiastic, sandy-haired New Zealander with a touch of charisma and inventive flair had his first taste of glory there.

Together with local legend Joe Weafer, Schmidt inspired the boys to win the section 'A' final of the Schools Cup for the first time in their history against St Conleth's in Donnybrook Stadium.

As if turning the school around was not enough, 25-year-old Schmidt also worked wonders at Mullingar Rugby Football Club where he spent time as player/coach.

Schmidt the English teacher still likes to give each of his players regularly updated detailed pieces of homework known as "work-ons", and the players in Mullingar did not escape his laser-like scrutiny. According to local lore, one of the players was instructed: "Do not smoke in the shower."

It was this welcome in Mullingar that helped to draw Schmidt back to Ireland in 2010, when the offer of a job in Leinster came up.

Those who have watched Schmidt's rise say his years in the classroom shaped his coaching philosophy. He knows that if you talk in the same style every time you address a group of young people they stop paying attention. So, he varies the pace.

It was a brave gamble of Leinster to hire Schmidt, a man who had thrived as an assistant in New Zealand and at Clermont Auvergne, but was untested as a head coach.

The rest as they say is history as Joe makes time this summer to join the Emerging Leaders Board in New York and share his thoughts on his career to date.