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Super Rugby Aupiki: Return to rugby daunting proposition for new mum, former Black Fern Chelsea Semple

Theme:
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 Super Rugby Aupiki: Return to rugby daunting proposition for new mum, former Black Fern Chelsea Semple

Co-authored by Natasha Payne, NewsHub

New Zealand is full of female athletes who return to professional sport after having children, but one rugby player admits doing so was a lot harder than she ever expected.

Chelsea Semple has returned to Chiefs Manawa this Super Rugby Aupiki season, hunting another title, which is looking rather hopeful, with her side on top of the table.

Whether they go all the way or not, she already sees this season as a success.

"When I first became pregnant, I didn't think I would come back," she told Newshub.

Semple gave birth to her first child eight months ago - a baby girl named Cami - but despite all the doubts and concerns about returning to play, her love for the game pushed her forward.

"I came and helped in the management space with this Manawa team last year, and I got itchy feet on the sideline," she admitted.

That's hardly surprising considering her history. Semple, 31, made her Waikato debut as a teenager, before a test debut in the black jersey at the age of just 20.

Since then, she's won a World Cup, played rugby sevens and was part of the inaugural Aupiki competition, but she admits all those achievements don't even come close to her latest.

"Becoming a mum for the first time was one of the biggest challenges I think I've ever had, but I've had so many good role models in women's sport and particularly women's rugby."

Those trailblazers continue to push and encourage Semple, so she can continue to do what she loves.

"The feeling of running out onto the field and having your baby in the crowd to watch you, that's just something I never thought I would experience and it's very special," she said.

With the Chiefs unbeaten this season after another victory over the weekend, Cami might not only watch her mum play this season, but also win a title.

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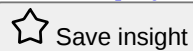
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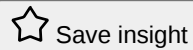


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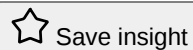


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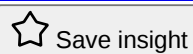
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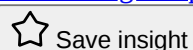
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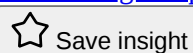


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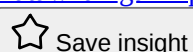


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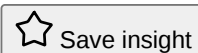
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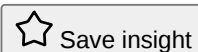


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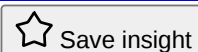


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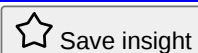


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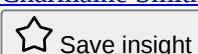
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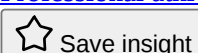
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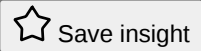
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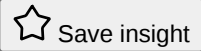
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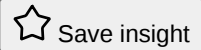
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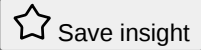
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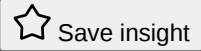
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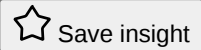
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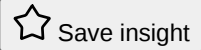
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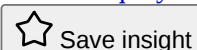
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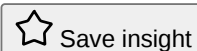
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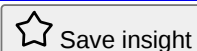
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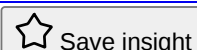
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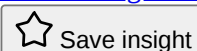
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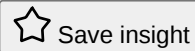
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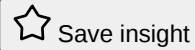
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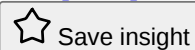
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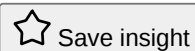


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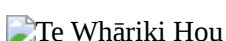
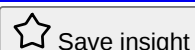
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