Nigel Owens is a Welsh international rugby union referee. He is an international and Heineken Cup referee and was the only Welsh referee at the 2007 Rugby World Cup in France, as well as the 2011 Rugby World Cup in New Zealand and is regarded as the first openly gay man to referee at the highest level.

Nigel was appointed as an international referee in 2005, and that year officiated his first international between Ireland and Japan in Osaka. Owens made his World Cup debut in Lyon, France on 11 September 2007 in the Argentina vs. Georgia match. He is one of only two referees to be appointed to referee two consecutive Heineken Cup finals. He has since done a third final, this as well as two Amlin finals makes a total of five European Finals making him the most capped referee in European competition.

In 2011 he was made a member of the Gorsedd of Bards. Nigel Owens was raised in the small village of Mynyddcerrig, Carmarthenshire, Wales. He is a fluent Welsh speaker. His autobiography, Hanner Amser (Half Time), was published in Welsh in 2008, then in English in 2009. He was a patron of the LGBT Centre of Excellence Wales, until its disbandment in late 2012, but he is still that of the Wooden Spoon Society rugby charity. In 2013 Owens became a patron of Bullies Out charity in Wales.