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TRYING RUGBY LEAGUE

Early Attempts to Establish Rugby Football's Other Code in the Central Provinces of New Zealand, 1908 - 1915

A Thesis
presented in part fulfilment of
the requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree (History)
at
Massey University,
Palmerston North, New Zealand.

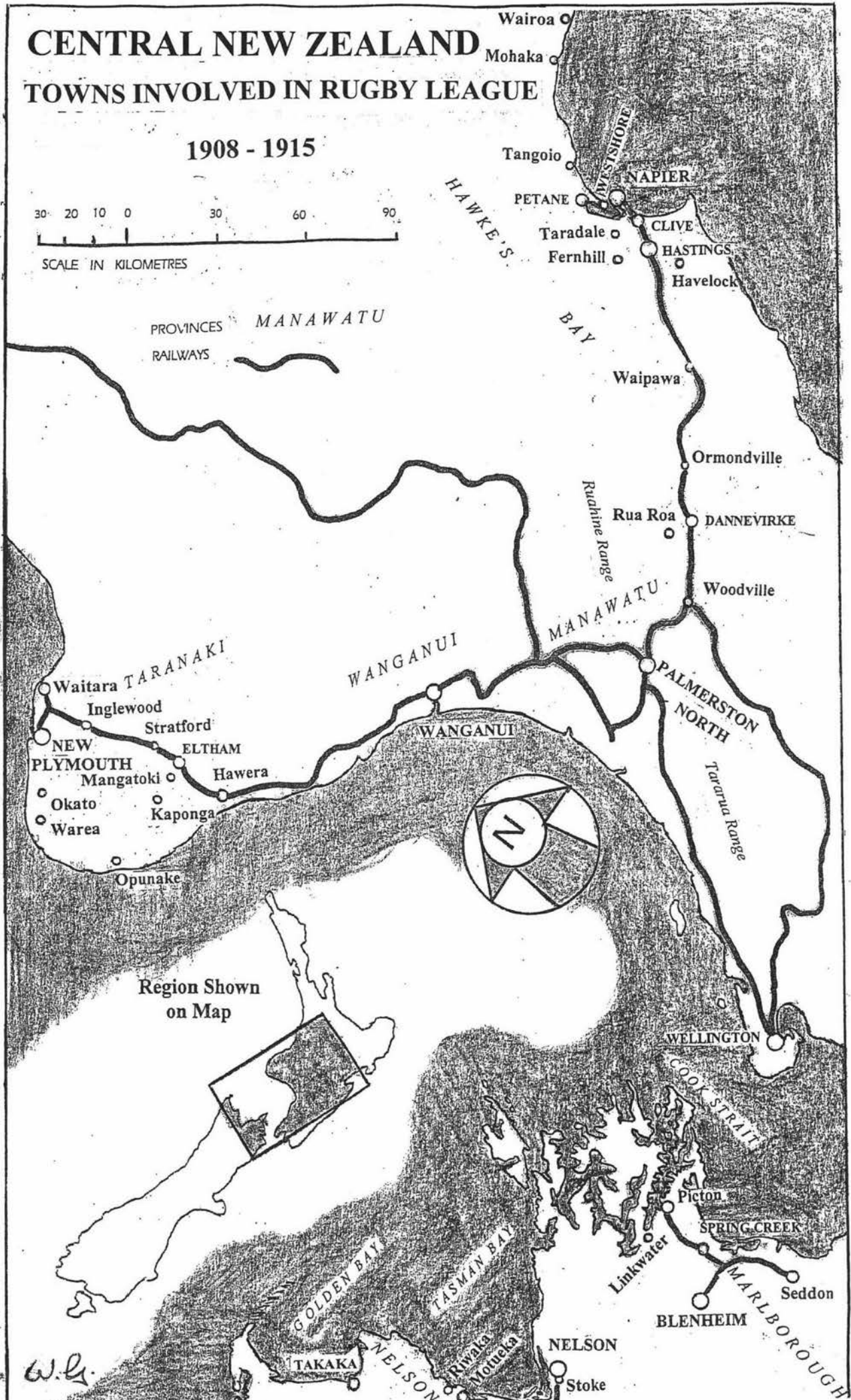
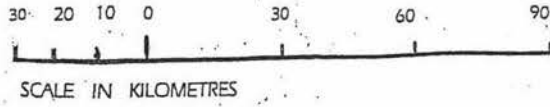
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2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor James Watson for his support, encouragement and helpful criticism of my work. And also for our intellectually stimulating conversations. Thanks also to Donna Todd, Wanganui District Library reference librarian, for the trouble she went to to obtain microfilms copies of all the newspapers that I needed to consult. And finally thanks to my wife Irene for her forbearance of my preoccupation with my research during the past two years.

CENTRAL NEW ZEALAND TOWNS INVOLVED IN RUGBY LEAGUE

1908 - 1915



W.L.

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ONE

LAUNCHING LEAGUE

Chapter One

Introduction

A rebel All Black rugby team toured Britain in the 1907-08 football season, playing teams from the Northern Rugby Football Union. Games were played under the new rules that had been developed during the decade following the Northern Union's breakaway from the Rugby Football Union in 1895. The extent of the support from New Zealand players came as a surprise to the New Zealand Rugby Football Union, which, whilst trying to stop players from joining the tour, had confidently predicted it would not go ahead due to lack of support. That more than three-quarters of the over 200 representative rugby players in New Zealand had applied to join the tour was a nasty shock for the Union. It certainly signaled that all was not well with New Zealand rugby.

By the beginning of the twentieth century rugby football in New Zealand had established itself as the premier winter team sport for men. With the introduction of the five-and-a-half day working week and reduction in working hours it became possible for working men to play football and they flocked into clubs. Rugby football also increasingly became compulsory in state schools and, with the extension of compulsory education to secondary schooling, and the enthusiastic support of male teachers, nearly all New Zealand schoolboys were thoroughly acquainted with the game by the time they left school.¹ The 1895 split in English rugby, and the formation of the breakaway Northern Rugby Football Union, did not go unnoticed in New Zealand; but it was the 1904-05 All Blacks tour of Britain that brought it to the serious attention of the New Zealand rugby fraternity.

The success of the All Blacks tour was due in part to playing games against weakened opposition, as the best clubs and players were with the Northern Union. This fact did not go unnoticed amongst the players, who must have wondered how they would have fared against the best opposition that Britain could offer. The Northern Union game had undergone a transformation during the ten years since the split, with rule changes making it a different game, though still recognisably 'rugby'. It was generally accepted, by proponents and opponents alike, that it had become a

much faster, more skillful game, and one which was much more entertaining to watch. It was this game which the All Blacks encountered, and were impressed with, on their tour.

The All Blacks were not happy with their 'expenses' allowance of three shillings a day, which was all they received whilst making a profit of over £10,000 for the New Zealand Rugby Football Union. They would certainly have noted the greater financial rewards received by the players with the professional clubs. Following their return to New Zealand there were rumours of a possible tour to play the 'professional' clubs in Britain and that a number of All Blacks were to take part.

Within rugby circles at this time there was much debate as to what could be done to meet the perceived threat from 'professional' rugby. Two factions, called 'rugby imperialists' and 'rugby nationalists' by Vincent and Harfield, espoused opposing views on the subject. The rugby imperialists advocated a tough stance, with strict adherence to the playing rules of the (English) Rugby Football Union, and the banning from rugby of anyone found to have infringed its draconian rules on 'amateurism'. The rugby nationalists, on the other hand, advocated a more flexible approach. They were prepared to change the playing rules to make the game more like rugby league², and hence more appealing to both players and spectators. They were also prepared to relax the rules on 'amateurism' to allow representative players to be paid for the loss of income incurred in taking time off work for travel to away games. This of course was the 'broken-time' issue which had led to the formation of the Northern Rugby Football Union in England. The 'nationalists' were prepared to submit their proposals to the (English) Rugby Union but were ready, if the proposals were rejected, to break with the (English) Rugby Union and, together with Australia, form an independent Australasian Rugby Union, to administer the game under the new rules.³ This conflict extended over several years with the imperialists' views prevailing in the end.

Whilst rugby union officials and administrators argued their respective cases, many players, including many representative players and a number of All Blacks, were eager to try the new game. It was the drive and determination of one man, Albert Henry Baskiville,⁴ that made this possible. Baskiville, a Wellington postal clerk, Oriental club player and promising representative winger, had never seen a rugby

league game played but had read of the new rugby code, was impressed with its possibilities, and decided to organise a team to tour Britain and play against Northern Union teams. The story of this tour is told elsewhere.⁵ It proved a great success, marred only by the tragic death, in Australia, of Baskiville on the way back to New Zealand. Despite the determined efforts of the New Zealand Rugby Union to stop it taking place, nine All Blacks, fourteen provincial representative players, four club players and 'Dally' Messenger, an Australian, joined the tour.

All the New Zealand players were banned for life by the New Zealand Rugby Union so they determined that, on return, they would set about establishing rugby league football in New Zealand. The first game to be played in New Zealand took place in Wellington on 13 June 1908 when two teams selected from the tourists played at Athletic Park before a crowd of about 8,000. The match was a benefit to help the widowed mother of A.H. Baskiville. A Wellington provincial team then travelled to Auckland where the first interprovincial match was played on 27 August and won by Auckland the score being 16 points to 14. Later in the year the Auckland team played a return match in Wellington on 12 September, the result being a 13 points all draw, before meeting a Taranaki representative side in New Plymouth on Thursday 17 September.

In the years between 1908 and the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 the new rugby code was introduced into much of New Zealand, from Auckland in the north to Invercargill in the south. This thesis will seek reasons for the varying successes, and the ultimate failures of attempts to introduce rugby league football into central provincial New Zealand - Taranaki, Wanganui, Hawkes Bay and Manawatu in the North Island and Nelson and Marlborough in the South Island - during this period. It will examine the problems that were faced, particularly the hostility of the New Zealand Rugby Union. It will also investigate the players and officials involved, who they were and why they adopted the new sport of rugby league football.

It has been said that '...studies of sports that are not also studies of the societies where the sports are played are studies out of context',⁶ and a study of New Zealand society in this period reveals a society in the process of fundamental change. The problems in capitalist society that had accumulated over the 150 years since the Industrial Revolution were coming to a head throughout Western society at the turn

of the nineteenth century. Industrial and political unrest was widespread, revolutionary socialists, anarchists, industrial unionists and syndicalists, who wanted to destroy the capitalist system, were gathering significant support. Many in the capitalist class were coming to realise that their world was in real danger of being overthrown and were determined to defend it. The outbreak of the Great War averted this incipient class war as nationalism triumphed over socialism, and workers from all the belligerent states joined their respective armies to fight each other.

As a part of Western society, New Zealand during this period also experienced the same industrial and political unrest.

In New Zealand, as elsewhere in the world in the early twentieth century, people who could not provide for themselves and their families an adequate standard of living in the present and hope of a better future were prepared to look very critically indeed at the existing economic system and the politicians who defended it. They were also willing to consider seriously the alternatives available....⁷

The outward manifestations of this unrest were the growth of militant trade unions and the bitter strikes they led, and the establishment of revolutionary socialist parties determined to overthrow the capitalist system. But it was the change in the way working men and women saw themselves and their relationship to the society in which they lived that made such movements possible, 'their traditional sufferings - low and irregular wages, poor housing, high unemployment, high risks of injury and even death - which once had pressed them down towards destitution and apathy now fired their rage and gave focus to their vision'. They were no longer prepared to acquiesce in being treated in such ways. They 'suddenly gained a sense of their power and dignity', they began to see themselves 'as important people, doing important work' and realised 'that they could be the cutting edge of historical change, heirs to the world and its wealth'.⁸ Although only a small minority wanted to overthrow capitalist society, their efforts had the tacit support of many who were determined that they too deserved a better life. They were no longer prepared to accept the position society had assigned to them, they had undergone a 'revolution in expectations'.⁹

It was into this society that rugby league football was introduced in 1908. People who were no longer prepared to accept the established ways in politics and in the workplace were less likely to accept them in other areas, and it was this willingness to challenge traditional ways and authorities, within a society open to change, that made possible the wide acceptance of the new football code.

Notes

1. Len Richardson, 'The Invention of a National Game: The Struggle for Control', *History Now*, 1:1 (1995), p.3.
2. The new rugby code, played under the rules of the Northern Rugby Football Union in England, only gradually became known as 'rugby league'. It was called variously Northern Union, Northern League and Northern Rugby as well as rugby league in its early years in New Zealand. To avoid unnecessary confusion the terms "rugby union" and 'rugby league' will be used in referring to the two codes
3. Geoffrey T. Vincent and Toby Harfield, 'Repression and Reform. Responses within New Zealand Rugby to the Arrival of the "Northern Game" 1907-8', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 31:2 (1997), pp. 221, 235, 241, 247.
4. There is some confusion over the spelling - his gravestone records Baskiville yet he wrote a book on how to play rugby using the alternate spelling Baskerville.
5. John Haynes, *From All Blacks to All Golds - New Zealand's Rugby League Pioneers*, Christchurch: Ryan and Haynes, 1996.
6. Eric G. Dunning, Joseph A. McGuire, Robert E. Pearton (eds.), *The Sports Process - A Comparative and Developmental Approach*, Champaign, Ill: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1993, p.2.
7. Barry Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence, the Origin and Establishment of the New Zealand Labour Party 1900 -19*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1980, p.95.
8. Eric Olssen, *The Red Feds, Revolutionary Industrial Unionism and the New Zealand Federation of Labour 1908 -1913*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988, p.58.
9. *Ibid.*, p.96.

Chapter Two Getting Started

On their return to New Zealand, most of the rebel All Blacks became involved in starting up rugby league football in their various provinces. As nearly all were from the metropolitan provinces of Auckland, Canterbury and Wellington, they played only a small part in establishing rugby league in the central provinces. Only three tourists were involved there, J.C. Gleeson, E. Tyne and Adam Lile. Gleeson was active in starting rugby league in Hawke's Bay in April 1910 and chaired the meeting held in September that officially launched the Hawke's Bay Rugby League. Tyne, a former Hawke's Bay rugby union representative player, played for Dannevirke in its inaugural game against Napier. The other tourist with connections to the region was Adam Lile, a regular soldier who played football in Wellington but who came originally from Taranaki. In 1908 he returned to Taranaki to help launch the game there and was one of the players in its early games.

Rugby union provincial representative players were much more instrumental in starting the game in the central provinces. This was the group most disadvantaged by the loss of wages through playing representative football; the three shillings per day expenses allowed by the Rugby Union were quite inadequate. The ten shillings per day allowed by the Rugby League was more realistic. Money was probably not the main attraction though. More than three-quarters of all New Zealand rugby union representative players had expressed an interest in joining the rebel tour despite being required to invest £50, half a year's wages at that time, in order to take part. Such a commitment suggests a strong desire amongst top class players to try the new game for themselves and to test themselves against its best exponents. Amongst the many not selected for the tour the chance to play the game in New Zealand, once it was introduced, was an attractive proposition. In Taranaki five representative players joined Adam Lile and other 'carefully selected' players who had 'shown exceptional form' to launch a representative rugby league team in 1908. In Wanganui eight representative players were in a squad of sixteen training for the first game of rugby league which took place in 1910. Manawatu representative players were so keen to play rugby league in 1912 that seven, from Palmerston North, changed codes and

play rugby league in 1912 that seven, from Palmerston North, changed codes and played in the Wellington league to gain experience before returning to launch the game in Manawatu. One of the players, Hugh McGuire, chaired the meeting at which the Manawatu League was formed and became its secretary. He was also active in attempts to form clubs. Also in 1912, it was rumored in Blenheim that all the Marlborough representative team were to go over to rugby league at the end of the season. This proved to be an exaggeration but seven of the eighteen representative players did indeed take up rugby league. Representative player Roy McArtney became secretary of the Marlborough League.

The influence of immigrants who had played or supported rugby league in England cannot be gauged with any degree of accuracy but it did make a contribution. Their presence is noted in Hawke's Bay where the meeting held to establish rugby league in the province heard from

several players who had taken a prominent part in the game in the Old Country [who] outlined the chief points and impressed upon all that form was the essential factor, as the game was fast and open from start to finish.¹

Whilst in 1913 it was reported that the Clive club had been strengthened by receiving two English League backs. Also in 1912 it was reported that some Wellington League players were 'late arrivals from the Old Country'. Two recent immigrants from England were prominent in establishing rugby league in Nelson province. Robert Kincaid, a painter from Barrow-in-Furness was coach of the Hornets club in 1909 and subsequently a referee. He had played rugby union before switching to rugby league shortly after the formation of the Northern Union. He played twelve seasons of league before coming to New Zealand. Fred Jackson, described as the foremost English forward of the day, had played for Leicester Rugby Union and was on tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1908 before being recalled by the Rugby Football Union for previously playing rugby league, under a false name, for Swinton. In 1909 he was back in New Zealand and was banned from refereeing rugby union on the West Coast. He then moved to Nelson and coached the other proto club, Northern, before playing for New Zealand against the British tourists in 1910.²

A non-player who was influential in starting rugby league was W.J. Perrett of Wanganui, a local grocer, who organised the initial game in 1910 and was secretary of the Wanganui League in 1911 before moving to Taranaki. There he joined a brother

in the family butchery business at Eltham and became involved with the local rugby league club. He became secretary of the Taranaki League in 1913. Perrett was also a New Zealand selector and moved to Auckland after the war.

Notes

1. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 23 September 1910, p.3.
2. Bernie Wood, editor, *New Zealand Rugby League Annual 2001*, Wellington: Publisher, Bernie Wood, p.132.

Chapter Three

Forming Clubs

As noted in the previous chapter rugby union representative players were prominently involved in introducing rugby league to the provinces and interprovincial representative matches were, with one exception, played prior to the formation of clubs. The formation of clubs was to prove more difficult than the fielding of a representative team.

In Taranaki, the first central province to take up the new game, initial efforts were based in New Plymouth. There the New Plymouth Northern Union Football League organised the two matches played by a Taranaki representative team in 1908. Over the summer months efforts were made to spread the game to other centres in Taranaki. Nine senior rugby union players from Eltham were rumoured to be going over to rugby league in protest against

the treatment meted out to Buckland...at Hawera in the Otago [rugby union] match. To some the selectors appear to have badly treated the Eltham lad; but there are two sides to every question. In the meantime Buckland is lost to amateur Rugby....¹

What it was that induced Buckland to quit rugby union and to so upset his team mates is not known. A team was said to have been formed at Hawera and another one was being formed. In his 1909 annual report to the League, the secretary reported being in correspondence with a number of towns and while Waitara, Inglewood and Stratford were unlikely to form teams, a league comprising teams from New Plymouth, Eltham, Hawera and Okato/Warea was a possibility.² Nothing came of these initiatives, the only club formed was New Plymouth and with no other teams to play against it did not survive. Rugby league was kept alive by the representative team which again played the Auckland representatives in a home-and-away series, winning at Auckland but losing at New Plymouth before travelling to Wellington, winning there by a score of 22 to 18.

No rugby league was played in Taranaki during the 1910 season but it restarted in 1911 with a representative team playing at Wanganui and Auckland and entertaining Wellington at New Plymouth and Nelson at Eltham. After the match at Eltham, efforts were being made to start a club there. It was reported that

there seems every possibility that next winter will see a team going here. For some reason or other Rugby players are "sour" on the Union, and it will take the club's committee all their time to get things moving now that the new game has been witnessed.³

This proved to be correct as an Eltham team beat a New Plymouth team by 23 points to 18 late in the 1912 season, the first club game to be played in the province. Also during 1912 a representative team travelled to Wanganui as did a South Taranaki team mainly composed of Eltham players. The highlight of the season was the visit of a touring New South Wales team, which played Taranaki at New Plymouth, attracting a less than expected crowd of 1,000.

The 1913 season saw a second attempt to form clubs but an insufficiency of players in any one of Taranaki's small towns to form a team produced a number of composite teams. Games were played by Eltham/Stratford, Kaponga/Opunake and New Plymouth/Waitara teams as well as by teams from Eltham and Inglewood. Only Eltham was a functioning club and was reported as 'going strongly' and playing other clubs.⁴ The Eltham rugby union club, on the other hand, was struggling to survive. After forfeiting several games due to a lack of players, it was forced to withdraw its senior team from competition. Its president said

Rugby here is dead as Caesar. Now the League game has a good hold here, those who hitherto were keen Rugby men are League men and making their keenness felt on those who are willing but cannot get Rugby Games.⁵

It was only in 1914 that the efforts finally bore fruit. The League secretary, W.J. Perrett, who had previously been instrumental in launching rugby league in Wanganui before moving to Eltham, reported that there were players interested in playing rugby league in Eltham, Kaponga, Mangatoki, New Plymouth, Stratford and Waitara. Clubs were formally established at Eltham, New Plymouth and Mangatoki. Rather than have more but weaker teams, a three team Cup competition was launched with Kaponga players joining Mangatoki and Stratford and Waitara players joining New Plymouth. Eltham was the only stand alone club.⁶ It appeared that the Taranaki Rugby League had finally managed to establish club football but all the efforts came to nothing in 1915.

Two main problems faced the promoters of rugby league in Taranaki. One was the pattern of settlement in that province. The late nineteenth century had seen dairy farming become Taranaki's main 'industry'. Many small, by New Zealand

standards, family-run farms supplied milk to a dairy factory. The farms had to be within a few kilometres of the factory as milk had to be delivered every day for conversion into butter or cheese. This meant there were many small factories scattered throughout the province each employing only half-a-dozen or so workers. The population was distributed fairly evenly with many small towns serving the needs of each locality. Only New Plymouth, with a population of 5,400, was big enough to support several rugby clubs, the other towns with populations of between 1,000 and 3,000 could each support just one club. This meant that unless the rugby union club had problems, as was the case at Eltham, it was difficult to get sufficient players in any one town to form a rugby league team. The League was forced to resort to composite teams to try to overcome this problem.

The second problem was that in Taranaki two different half-days holidays were observed. Some businesses observed Thursday as their half-day, others observed Saturday. This caused problems for both clubs and players in all sports. The Taranaki Rugby Union played its games on Thursday afternoons, making it difficult for players whose employers observed the Saturday half-day holiday. This problem was partly resolved in New Plymouth where there was a separate Rugby Association that organised a Saturday afternoon competition up until 1911. Thus in New Plymouth at least players had a choice of playing on Thursday or on Saturday. The Saturday competition, however, was considered of an inferior standard to the Thursday competition. In 1911 the Saturday Association merged with the Taranaki Rugby Union and became its Saturday division. Rugby clubs found it difficult to function in this situation. There was movement from Thursday to Saturday football and vice-versa as clubs tried best to accommodate the working conditions of their members. Clubs in the smaller towns which had no choice other than Thursday football found it difficult to survive. A number had to withdraw from competitions at various times. Finally in the 1914 season the Rugby Union decided to play all senior fixtures on Saturday and all junior fixtures on Thursday.

This situation, two separate half-day holidays, must have made it even more difficult to form rugby league clubs, relying, as they must have, on a much smaller player base. They seem to have opted for Thursday football, which made difficulties for players with a Saturday half-day. This is one possible factor in Taranaki's muted

response to rugby league. With it proving so difficult to establish clubs, representative football was the means by which the code was kept alive through most of the period.

The situation was quite different in the provinces of Wanganui and Hawke's Bay, where one large town dominated each region. Wanganui, a busy port and industrial town with large meatworks and railway workshops, had a population of over 10,000 people and was the only town of any size in the region. In Hawke's Bay it was Napier, long the commercial, business and social centre for the wealthy station owners, that dominated the province. It was also a busy port and its industries supported a large working class population. Hastings, an inland town about 20 kilometres to the south west, was the centre for stock and station agencies and their associated industries and by the start of the twentieth century had a large freezing works and dairy factories. It was starting to challenge Napier, but its population was still less than half Napier's 11,000.⁷ Both Wanganui and Napier were large enough towns to support several rugby clubs and were the only towns in which a sufficient number of rugby league clubs were formed to make club competitions possible.

The formation of clubs was made easier in Napier by the dissatisfaction felt in local rugby union circles at their treatment by the Hawke's Bay Rugby Union. The Union covered a large area from Dannevirke in the south to Gisborne in the north but was dominated by officials from Hastings. Napier rugby union clubs felt that they were being neglected and that Napier players were being overlooked by the selectors of representative teams. This dissatisfaction made it easier for the promoters of rugby league to persuade clubs to switch codes. Between the first rugby league game played, a representative match against Auckland on Saturday 8 October 1910, and the start of the 1911 season, five rugby union clubs had gone over to rugby league from the Napier region. A new rugby league club had also been formed, so that the first season of rugby league saw a four team senior competition comprising teams from the Ahuriri, City, Clive and Kia Ora clubs and a five team junior competition with teams from Ahuriri, Clive, Kia Ora, Petane and Westshore. Senior rugby union ceased in Napier with the only senior club surviving, Napier High School Old Boys, being forced to play in the Hastings competition.

The advent of rugby league in Napier did not stop the dissatisfaction in the rugby union ranks and, at the start of the 1912 season, a meeting of players and

supporters was held which proposed that the Hastings dominated Hawke's Bay Rugby Union control only interprovincial matches, whilst six sub-unions from Napier, Hastings, East Coast, Waipawa, Dannevirke and Wairoa controlled the game in their own regions. It was hoped that Napier would field four senior teams but, due to the advent of rugby league, they would be weak and should not have to play Hastings teams.⁸ The 1912 season also witnessed further growth for rugby league with the introduction of third and fourth grade competitions with teams from the Ahuriri, Petone and Westshore clubs playing.

In Wanganui, the formation of rugby league clubs took longer, possibly due the absence of any major friction within the local Rugby Union. The story has been told elsewhere.⁹ A game against an Auckland representative team was organised by Walter Perrett, a well known local grocer, and played at the end of the 1910 season. The Wanganui players, including six rugby union representatives, came predominantly from one club, Pirates Rugby Union Club. During the 1911 season these players were active in the formation of two rugby league clubs, City and St. John's. A third club was formed in Wanganui East when Eastern, a recently formed rugby union club, split with the majority going to the Eastern Rugby League Club. Two club matches were played towards the end of the season and the overwhelming majority of the players involved, whose rugby union affiliations could be found, came from two working class clubs. Eighteen were from the Pirates club, which drew players from the meatworks, and thirteen from the Eastern club, with its players drawn from the railway workshops. Wanganui's two middle class clubs, Kaierau and Wanganui, only contributed two players each. The three clubs established towards the end of the 1911 season proved to be the only rugby league clubs in Wanganui and yet they proved to be very stable. All three fielded both senior and junior teams in the 1912 and 1913 seasons, but lack of players saw the demise of the junior teams in 1914.

In the South Island, the paths taken by Nelson and Marlborough provinces to establish rugby league football were quite different, yet the problems they faced were similar. In neither province was a sufficient number of clubs established to make a championship competition possible and attracting representative teams from other provinces proved difficult because of geographical isolation.

Nelson province experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity from the

turn of the century as Port Nelson was widened and deepened so that by 1906 it was capable of accommodating large ocean liners. This, together with the rapid growth of both dairy farming and fat lamb growing, enabled small farmers to move into the export economy. Freezing works and butter factories were established and Nelson city experienced rapid economic growth. Two big food manufactories, a jam factory and a biscuit factory were established and engineering workshops were kept busy supplying machinery for them as well as for the freezing works and butter factories. By 1910 Nelson city's population was almost 9,000.¹⁰

Rugby league was introduced to Nelson in 1909, the initiative being taken by a recent immigrant from Britain, Robert Kincaid. The Nelson Northern Union Football League was formed at a well supported meeting on Friday 4 June. Much preliminary work had already been done and it was announced that over thirty players had come over to the new code, that the Council had granted the League the use of Trafalgar Park, a pay ground, on certain days, and also Victory Square. It was reported likely that the New Zealand national team and an Auckland team would play in Nelson soon.

The first practice took place two weeks later at a local soccer club's ground. Then a series of Saturday afternoon practices were held at Victory Square as attempts were made to form clubs. Towards the end of the season three matches were advertised to be played at the pay ground, Trafalgar Park. They were Hornets vs Jackson's Team on Saturday 14 August, Northern vs Hornets on Saturday 28 August and Hornets vs Rangers on Saturday 11 September. About 150 spectators, curious to see 'the 1st game in Nelson under Northern Union rules', turned out to watch Jackson's side win by 31 points to 21, with neither team able to field thirteen players. The other two matches could not be played due to an insufficiency of players and only practices were held. None of the proposed representative games eventuated, so that in the first season of rugby league in Nelson only one match was played and that one with players short. Some of the thirty players reported to have come over to rugby league must have had second thoughts and the League was unable to get two full teams together on any one day. None of the various proto clubs survived the season.

Two thirds of the 27 players known from the 1909 season returned to play rugby league in 1910 and they were joined by 32 new recruits as efforts were made

once again to launch clubs. Attempts were made to form two new clubs, Alhambra and Kia Toa. Practices were held and a number of practice matches were played. The same problems that had been experienced the previous year appeared once again and most of the matches were played between teams unable to field thirteen players.

Towards the end of the season it was announced that the Auckland representative team was to play in Nelson and a couple of trial matches were organised to select the Nelson team. The chance to play representative football must have been the incentive needed as it was reported of the second of the trial matches that

the practice on Saturday attracted a large mustering of new players and a number of spectators. The game was the best of the season under the new rules and gave evidence that players and public are taking an interest in the Northern rules.¹¹

It had been a long struggle and had needed the anticipation of a representative match to stir the interest of a sufficient number of players.

The first representative game of rugby league played in Nelson took place at the end of the 1910 season and resulted in a 24 points to 13 victory for the Aucklanders. There was a fair attendance of spectators despite the bad weather and the League officials were optimistic that with 'the support that has lately been promised there should be enough teams next season for an interesting competition'.

After two seasons of struggling to survive, the League finally made progress in 1911. An influx of 42 new players joined the 20 returning from the previous year to increase player numbers to 63. Greater player numbers made it possible for the first time to establish viable clubs. The Kia Ora club was relaunched as the Albion Northern Union Football Club and a new club, St. Mary's Football Club, was formed by members of the congregation of St. Mary's Catholic Church. The two clubs played each other throughout the season, alternating between practice matches and a series of Medal Competition matches. At the end of the season a Nelson representative team undertook a three match tour of the North Island, losing to Auckland and Wanganui but winning its match against Taranaki. Two years of effort had been needed before enough players could be recruited to form viable clubs in Nelson, and then it was only possible to establish two. Unlike in other provinces this was achieved without assistance from rugby union representative players and with only one representative match, played at the end of the second season, to generate support.

Marlborough province was a latecomer to rugby league, the game being

introduced only at the end of the 1912 football season. It was, at first glance, a province in which it was unlikely that rugby league would prosper. With a small population, no large towns, and little industry, even rugby union found it difficult to survive. Blenheim, with a population of only 3,500 was the largest town but was essentially a farming centre with a few subsidiary industries, flaxmills, flour mills, fellmongeries and breweries. Picton, with 1,000 people, was the port of the province and also had a large meatworks, lime and cement works, sash and door factory, fellmongery, and flax and wool grading plants. The smaller settlement of Spring Creek, between the two, also had a meatworks and a dairy factory.¹²

Rugby union was in disarray in Marlborough during the 1912 and 1913 seasons and this was undoubtedly a factor favouring the proponents of rugby league. The Marlborough Rugby Union officials seem to have been apathetic and neglectful, much to the disgust of supporters and players. They were accused of neglecting clubs, allowing schoolboy football to disappear and failing to arrange representative matches. The disquiet of supporters was articulated by the rugby union columnist of the Blenheim newspaper who, in his review of the 1912 season, wrote

...not only has there been a lack of interest [in rugby union], but what is of more vital import, the controlling authority has not displayed any particular zeal in sustaining public interest or catering in a proper manner for the wants of the players.

It seems rather strange that this season we have had only one Rugby Union representative match in Blenheim, yet the League, which has only been in existence for about a month, has arranged two such fixtures.¹³

Early in the 1913 season the same columnist wrote, in an article headed 'The Apathy of the Rugby Union', of the 'incurable exhibition of apathy by the Marlborough Rugby Union' and how 'local football enthusiasts [were] making valiant efforts to sustain interest in the game and to make up for the deficiency of the controlling body in the way of controlling matches'. The annual general meeting, which should have been held in the last week of March, had still not been held by the middle of May, prompting a further lament

This delinquency is greatly to the discredit of the Union, and it is little wonder that footballers generally are disgusted with the Union's inability to realise its responsibilities. It is one way of opening the door to the League game.... In other Rugby centres the controlling authorities have arranged competitions which are now in full swing; but locally the rugby rulers are content to adopt a Rip Van Winkle attitude.¹⁴

Rugby league enthusiasts capitalised on this situation to launch the game at the end of the 1912 season recruiting over forty players, including seven rugby union representatives, and playing two trial matches, followed by representative games against Wellington and Nelson. By the start of the 1913 season the Marlborough League had secured, through incompetence on the part of the Marlborough Union, the use of the Wairau Cricket Ground for its matches. Several practice matches were played there before a representative team was sent to play in Nelson. Meanwhile, as the outcome of well supported meetings, two clubs were formed, Omaka and Awarua, the latter based on the small town of Spring Creek located about 10 kilometres north of Blenheim. Teams from these two clubs played a series of matches for the McArtney Banner. Later in the season the Awarua club formed a second team and a second series of matches between the Awarua 'A' and 'B' teams and Omaka was played for the Rofe Banner.

To have had two clubs fielding three teams in its first season of football was a creditable achievement for the Marlborough Rugby League. Nelson, with a much bigger population base, had needed three seasons to reach this stage. However, a mainly new and energetic executive elected to the Marlborough Rugby Union revealed the frailty of the new code in the 1914 season. The Rugby League was unable to secure grounds in Blenheim, causing the Omaka club to fold and a newly formed club, Wairau, was forced to play its games at the Spring Creek ground of the Awarua club. The lack of grounds on which to play in Blenheim caused a number of players to try to return to rugby union and further weakened the League. Only four games were played, all in June, then the Wairau club also folded, leaving the Awarua club with no other team to play and rugby league in Marlborough ended.

Manawatu was the only province that failed completely in the attempt to establish rugby league football. Two attempts were made, the first was shortly following the return of the rebel tourists in 1908. At the end of August there were rumours that 'professional footballers' were attempting to gain a foothold in Palmerston North. One 'well known Rugbyite' claimed to have seen a list of ten names, 'all good players, who had decided to become 'professionals'.¹⁵ They were said to be influenced by the fact that the Wellington team had made over £500 from their match in Auckland. The first match was already arranged and the team chosen

according to another rumour. It was claimed that the number of rugby union players offering to join the Northern Union was in excess of requirements, that the movement was well supported and financial arrangements complete. The claim that the players were driven by the desire for financial gain was refuted by a spokesman, who said

As regards payment to players, there is no foundation for the statements, for all those who are willing to take part have signified that they do not want payment, nor will they or the promoters benefit to the extent of one shilling over the venture. The players who are to take part are most of the leading lights in Rugby, and their main object is to try and place a more attractive game before the public.¹⁶

All reports commented on the secrecy behind the moves and that it was difficult to obtain hard facts. The promoters did not succeed in their endeavors and no rugby league was played in Palmerston North.

Another attempt to introduce rugby league was made three years later when, in 1911, it was rumoured that a 'Northern Union League' was being formed and was to play a Dannevirke team in June. Dannevirke were also given permission by the Hawke's Bay League to play Nelson in Palmerston North, in July. Neither match took place. Efforts continued in 1912 when a request was made to Napier to send a team to play in Palmerston North where 'there was a splendid chance of forming a league'. It was also reported that a group of Manawatu representative players were converting to rugby league and going to play in Wellington to learn the game prior to launching it in Palmerston North.¹⁷

Palmerston North, the chief town of the province, lacked the enthusiasm for rugby football displayed by many much smaller towns. Despite having a population of over 12,000, it could only support three senior rugby union teams in 1913, after the amalgamations of a number of struggling teams the previous season. It was always going to be hard to introduce another rugby code in this situation and, despite the return of several players from Wellington, it proved to be too difficult a task for the officers of the Palmerston North Northern Union Football League. The League had been formed at a well attended meeting following an exhibition game between Wellington and Wanganui teams on Saturday 6 September 1913. This was to be the only rugby league game played in Palmerston North. The League secured a ground and organised a series practices during the 1914 season as attempts were made to form clubs. But despite reports of four clubs being formed there are no records of any

matches being played. Presumably insufficient players were attracted to the game to make the establishment of viable clubs possible.

Attempts to establish rugby league clubs were often made easier where there were problems within rugby union: at Eltham where the local club was forced to withdraw from competition due to lack of players, at Napier where there was widespread dissatisfaction with the domination of the Hawke's Bay Union by Hastings interests, and at Blenheim where the Marlborough Rugby Union was in a state of disarray. Despite attempts at obstruction by some Rugby Unions, grounds were secured by the Leagues in most provinces. A big problem was in recruiting sufficient players to form clubs in small towns with populations sufficient only to support one rugby club. League was most successful in larger towns such as Napier and Wanganui with populations large enough for both league and union clubs to function. League was least successful in Palmerston North, population 12,000, and the largest town in the region. Here for some reason even rugby union was not well supported so despite the efforts of some enthusiasts league could not gain a foothold.

Notes

1. *Taranaki Herald*, 13 October 1908, p.3.
2. *Taranaki Herald*, 16 April 1909, p.7.
3. *Taranaki Herald*, 11 September 1911, p.8.
4. *Taranaki Herald*, 12 June 1913, p.8.
5. *Taranaki Herald*, 25 June 1913, p.4.
6. *Taranaki Herald*, 6 May 1914, p.4.
7. M. B. Boyd, *A History of Hastings*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1984.
8. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 3 April 1912, p.3.
9. William Greenwood, 'The "Famous Northern Union Game": The Introduction of Rugby League to Wanganui, 1910 -1915', research exercise, Massey University, 2000.
10. Jim McAloon, *Nelson - A Regional History*, Queen Charlotte Sound: Cape Catley Ltd., 1997.
11. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 4 October 1910.
12. *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Volume 5*, Wellington, 1906, pp.313, 385 and 373.
13. *Marlborough Express*, 21 October 1912, p.3.

14. *Marlborough Express*, 6 May 1913, p.3.
15. *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 25 August 1908, p.5.
16. *Wanganui Herald*, 27 August 1908, p.6. (Reprinted from the *Manawatu Times*)
17. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 27 July 1912, *Supplement*, p.4.

TWO

CLASS DIVISIONS

Chapter Four

Rugby League and Class

The breakaway from the English Rugby Football Union by clubs from the north of England and the establishment of the Northern Rugby Football Union, was a consequence of the incompatible views of the two bodies on the question of amateurism. The mainly 'middle class' clubs in the south of England rejected the possibility of any payment to rugby players. On the other hand, 'working class' clubs in the north of England saw nothing wrong with such payments. Therefore rugby league came to be regarded as a working class game and rugby union as a middle class one. In the rigid class society of late nineteenth century England the antagonism on the part of Rugby Union authorities towards the working class game was intense.

In early twentieth century New Zealand, with its much smaller population, a simplistic division between "middle class" and "working class" clubs was not possible. Middle class New Zealand was too small to support exclusive middle-class clubs; all clubs needed working-class players to maintain viability. Unlike England, 'New Zealand society was not one of severe social differences...' but there were class divisions which influenced the membership of sports clubs. 'There is evidence that "people of a kind" formed sporting clubs and that it was rare to find anyone very "different" in their membership.'¹ This same tendency was also commented on by Gustafson who noted that with increasing urbanisation

communities grew larger [and] there existed far greater numbers of social groupings. The institution of the sporting 'club' served to represent these different groups as they were often joined according to occupation or status.²

When rugby league was introduced into New Zealand, rugby union clubs that went over to the new game, or had a significant number of players defect, were those with a high proportion of working-class players. This can be seen in Wanganui, where the Pirates rugby union club, which contributed many of its senior players to rugby league, drew support from the local meatworks. The Eastern rugby union club, which had been formed by workers from the Eastown railway workshops, split and a majority of its members formed the Eastern rugby league club. Yet the two other rugby union clubs, Wanganui and Kaierau, both with middle class origins,

contributed hardly any players to rugby league.³

It was a similar situation in Hawke's Bay where it was rugby union clubs from Napier, a port with a substantial working - class population, which went over to rugby league. The name of the only Napier club to remain with rugby union, the Napier Old Boy's club, betrays its middle class origin. At nearby Hastings, a much more middle - class town and a service and supply centre for the farming community of Hawke's Bay, rugby league was unable to establish a presence.

Of the many names found during the research, those of over 750 players and nearly 400 officials were used in the subsequent analysis. An attempt was made then to match these names with those on the Parliamentary Electoral Rolls. From the matches made, it was possible to establish the occupations of a significant number of players and officials. Only the 1911 Electoral Rolls were found to be applicable to this investigation. Although a 100 percent match was unattainable, over 300 players, 41 percent of those known, and 220 officials, 56 percent, were matched with names on the Rolls. From these results, assumptions as to the class affiliations of rugby league players and officials were inferred. Because of the numbers involved, only players from the early years, 1910 - 1911, of the Wanganui and Hawke's Bay Leagues were used; however all players in the Taranaki, Nelson and Marlborough Leagues are included. As smaller numbers were involved, all officials whose names are known are used.

When these matches had been made, the occupations of both players and officials were divided into four groups: skilled workers, unskilled workers, non - manual workers and middle class. A decision had then to be made as to into which group a number of occupations were to be placed. For example, a baker or a barber, a printer or a coachbuilder could be a wage earner or a self-employed small businessman. In 1910, the New Zealand Year Book records that there were 46,936 men in business on their own account and not employing others. A further 41,476 were employers and there were 203,987 wage earners. Clearly there was a significant number of small businessmen in this period. Players, being young men, would have been unlikely to be in business on their own account so those with occupations in this problem category have all been taken as wage earners. Officials would tend to have been older men and therefore more likely to be in business on their own account. For this reason those whose occupations are in the problem category have been arbitrarily

placed in either the skilled worker group as wage earners, or the middle - class group as small businessmen. The allocations being made to ensure equal numbers in each group.⁴ The skilled worker group comprises such occupations as blacksmith, carpenter, painter and plumber. Labourers, carters, porters, farm workers and similar occupations are included in a group of unskilled workers. The third working class group comprises the mainly 'white collar' occupations of clerk and shop assistant plus a few otherwise difficult to assign, such photographer and musician. These are classed as non-manual workers. Farmers, small businessmen, shopkeepers and professionals are grouped together as a middle-class group.

A large majority of rugby league players were either unskilled or skilled workers, there were very few non-manual workers. Similarly, there were few players from the middle class, though their numbers were boosted, in some provinces, by the participation of farmers. Amongst officials, the middle class and the skilled workers predominated, but unskilled workers were present in significant numbers. Non-manual workers were least represented amongst officials.

Notes

1. J. R. Barclay, 'An Analysis of Trends in New Zealand Sport from 1840 to 1900', MA Thesis, Massey University, 1972, p.37.
2. Barry Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1980, p.69.
3. William Greenwood, 'The "Famous Northern Union Game": The Introduction of Rugby League to Wanganui, 1910 -1915', Research Exercise, Massey University, 2000.

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4. See Appendix A.

Chapter Five

Players and Class

In all the provinces except Nelson, rugby league was started by groups of rugby union representative players getting together to play the new game and recruiting other players to form teams and play interprovincial matches. These early representative games generated interest in rugby league and led, in most cases, to the formation of clubs. Newspapers from this period printed team lists for matches played in all codes, thus enabling the names of rugby league players to be obtained. In order to find out what kind of person took up rugby league, the 1911 Parliamentary Electoral Rolls were used to obtain players' occupations and an analysis of these results was made. For this analysis players have been divided into four occupational groups, skilled workers, unskilled workers, non-manual workers and a middle class group of business and professional people and farmers.

During the 1908-1909 seasons, five representative games were played by a Taranaki representative team involving 18 players. Also an attempt was made to form a club in New Plymouth with 25 player-members, 11 also being representative players. Of these 32 players the occupations of 17 were found: seven unskilled workers (six labourers and a soldier), seven skilled workers¹, one non-manual worker (a clerk), Whilst a draper and a farmer represented the middle class.

In the seasons following the re-launch of rugby league in 1911, 86 players were identified and the occupations of 28 were found. Farmers now constituted the largest group, six of them together with a draper and a sawmiller making up the middle-class, 32 percent of the players. Eleven unskilled workers, made up 40 percent of players². There were seven skilled workers³, 25 percent of players. A postmaster, the only non-manual worker, accounts for the remaining three percent. Over the two periods the percentages of unskilled and non-manual workers remained relatively unchanged but there was a large drop in the percentage of skilled workers matched by a large increase in the percentage of middle-class players (See Table 1)

Table 1 Occupations of Taranaki Rugby League Players 1908-1915

Seasons	Skilled worker		Unskilled worker		Non-manual worker		Middle-class	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
1908-1909	7	41	7	41	1	6	2	12
1911-1915	7	25	11	40	1	3	9	32

The increase in the numbers of middle-class players was due to the rise in the number of farmers playing rugby league. The earlier attempt to establish rugby league was centred in the town of New Plymouth where one would expect to find skilled workers. The later attempt was based in southern Taranaki, a region of small, family run, farms and scattered dairy factories, serviced by a number of small towns. Here the small farmer was almost certainly closer to the worker than to the wealthy station owners of some other farming regions, and was more accepting of the new code.

Rugby league was launched in Wanganui with a representative game at the end of the 1910 season. A further six representative games were played during the 1911 season, in all involving 28 players. In addition, three clubs were formed and played two games at the end of the season, involving 65 players, 16 of whom were also representative players. The occupations of 29 of these 49 players were found and were evenly divided between 13 (45 percent) skilled⁴ and 12 (41 percent) unskilled workers⁵. There were no non-manual workers, the remaining four, 14 percent, were two settlers, a fruit grower and a chemist.

Hawke's Bay, like Wanganui, saw rugby league launched with a representative team playing a game at the end of the 1910 season. The occupations of seven of the 13 players were found to be two labourers, two blacksmiths, a boilermaker, an ironmonger and a baker. A full season of club football was played in 1911 with four senior and six junior teams competing. One hundred and thirty-four players were involved in senior rugby league during the season. The occupations of sixty-nine (51 percent) were found. Twenty-one labourers made up 30 percent of all players whose occupations were known and together with fifteen other unskilled workers made-up 52 percent of all players. Twenty-four skilled workers⁶ constituted a further 35 percent of players. Three clerks, a club steward and a customs officer were

the only non-manual workers, making seven percent, and two drapers, a ship's chandler and billiard room proprietor, representing the business and self employed, made up the remaining six percent. No professional people were involved.

One hundred and thirty-two played junior rugby league in 1911, of whom twenty-two also played senior rugby league. Of the one hundred and ten who played only junior rugby league the occupations of forty (36 percent) were found. This lower percentage could be due to the players being younger and more transient, thus being less likely to appear on the electoral rolls. Labourers once again predominated, with twelve accounting for 30 percent of the total. Together with a further nine unskilled workers⁷ they constituted just over half (52.5 percent) of the total. Eleven skilled workers⁸ constituted a further 27.5 percent. Four non-manual workers (two clerks, a draper's assistant and an inspector) made up a further 10 percent whilst a grocer, a draper and two farmers, comprising another 10 percent, represented the middle class players.

The occupational profiles of senior and junior players were remarkably similar. In both grades eighty percent of players were manual workers with non-manual and the various middle-class occupations accounting for the remaining twenty percent.

At the start of the 1910 season Napier had four senior rugby union clubs. One, Napier,⁷ was forced to withdraw from competition due to lack of players and two more, Awahuri and Kia Ora, went over to rugby league in the 1911 season, being joined by the nearby Clive rugby union club. One hundred and thirty-eight men played for these four clubs in the 1910 season. The majority of Ahuriri (57 percent), Kia Ora (60 percent) and the Clive (65 percent) players went with their clubs to rugby league in the 1911 season but only a few (14 percent) of the defunct Napier club joined the new City rugby league club.

Of the 68 players whose occupations are known, 34 went over to rugby league and 34 did not. There is a marked contrast between the occupations of the two groups (see table 2). Those who did not go to rugby league comprised twelve (35 percent) unskilled⁹, nine (27 percent) skilled¹⁰, seven (20 percent) non-manual workers¹¹ and all six (18 percent) of the middle-class group¹². Labourers made up half the unskilled group whilst clerks predominated (five of the seven) amongst the non-manual workers. Of the thirty-four who went over to rugby league twenty-one (62

percent) were unskilled¹³, eleven (32 percent) skilled¹⁴ and only two (6 percent), a club steward and an inspector, were non-manual workers. There were no middle-class players. Labourers again made up half the unskilled workers. As can be seen, rugby league had no appeal to the 'white collar' worker and the middle class.

Table 2 Comparison of Occupations of Napier Rugby League and Rugby Union Players 1910-1911

	Unskilled no. percent		Skilled no. percent		Non-manual no. percent		Middle-class no. percent	
Occupations all players	33	48.5	20	29.5	9	13	6	9
Occupations rugby union players	12	35	9	27	7	20	6	18
Occupations rugby league players	21	62	11	32	2	6	0	0

Marlborough province was late to start rugby league. The game was introduced only at the end of the 1912 season with the playing of two trial games followed by two representative matches. Forty-one players took part in the trial matches or the representative games, the occupations of 18 of these were found and they fell overwhelmingly into two categories, labourers and farmers. There were eight labourers (44 percent) and seven farmers (39 percent). The remaining three identified (17 percent) were a clerk, a carrier and a commission agent. During the 1913 season two clubs functioned and 110 players took part in rugby league. An attempt was made in 1914 to start another club and a further 20 players took part. Of the 130 players known from the 1913 and 1914 seasons, the occupations of only 31 were found. Within this sample twenty unskilled workers (18 labourers, a farmhand and a drover) constituted by far the largest group, 65 percent. Only seven, 23 percent, were skilled workers¹⁵. The middle class group was composed entirely of three farmers, 10 percent. There was one non-manual worker, a clerk.

Nelson was the only province in which rugby union representative players were not involved in starting rugby league, nor were matches against other provinces

played until the end of the 1910 season. The code was introduced at an early date, 1909, and struggled for two seasons to recruit enough players to form clubs. Over the whole period during which rugby league was played, the five seasons from 1909 to 1913, a total of 148 names appeared on club team sheets. Of these, 48 were also representative players. Eight representative players do not appear on club team sheets. The occupations of 66 were found, 45 per cent of the total. There were no significant differences between club and representative players occupation groups. Thirty-one skilled workers, 47 per cent, made up the largest group¹⁶. A further 18 (27percent) were unskilled workers.¹⁷ Seven non-manual workers¹⁸ constituted 11 per cent and there were 10 middle class players¹⁹ accounting for the remaining 15 per cent.. Painters, tailors and carpenters were the most frequently occurring skilled occupations. Nine labourers accounted for half the unskilled workers, whilst the non-manual group included two musicians, a chef and a photographer. The middle class group included two farmers, two hotelkeepers and the only professional to be recorded, a solicitor. The Nelson Rugby League centred on the town of Nelson, but a Golden Bay sub-league was also established based in the small town of Takaka . Golden Bay players were included in Nelson provincial representative teams and a Golden Bay representative team played matches against a Nelson town team. The occupations of nine of the 16 known Golden Bay representative players were found to be four farmers, four labourers and one cordial manufacturer.

In Napier, where three rugby union clubs went over to rugby league, a direct comparison between union and league players was possible. It revealed that nearly two-thirds of the players who went to rugby league were unskilled workers and nearly one third were skilled workers, but that few non-manual workers and no one from the middle class deserted rugby union. On the other hand, not going to rugby league were just over one third of the unskilled workers, half of the skilled workers, nearly all the non-manual workers and all of the middle class players. Rugby league in Napier was an overwhelmingly working-class game but it had little appeal to the non-manual worker and was shunned by the middle class. This pattern is also seen in the other provinces where working-class players constitute the overwhelming majority, 87 percent in Wanganui, 84 percent in Marlborough, 68 percent in Nelson and 67 percent in Taranaki.

Notes

1. A carpenter, a tinsmith, a plumber, a blacksmith, leatherworker, a cycle engineer and a painter.
2. Three labourers, two millhands, a carter, a storeman, a dairyman, a stockman, a policeman and a billiard hall marker.
3. Two carpenters, a cycle engineer, a cheesemaker, a blacksmith, a stopcock and a compositor.
4. Four carpenters, two blacksmiths, two painters, a shoemaker, a machinist, a baker, a pipemaker and a tailor.
5. Seven labourers, a carter, a porter, a factory hand, a dredge hand and a chainman.
6. Five carpenters, four butchers, three blacksmiths, three tailors, two engineers, an iron moulder, a fitter, a coppersmith, a plumber, a baker, a tanner and a sawyer.
7. Two storemen, two firemen, a carter, a driver, a carter, a dairyman and a watersider.
8. Two carpenters, two painters, two sawyers, a shipwright, a blacksmith, a spinner, a fellmonger and a cooper.
9. Six labourers, three storemen, a carter, a shunter and a nightwatchman.
10. Two blacksmiths, a boilermaker, a machinist, a plumber, a butcher, a printer, a sadler and a marine engineer.
11. Five clerks, a draughtsman and a customs officer.
12. A cab proprietor, a merchant, a chemist, a newspaper editor, a mechanical engineer and an accountant.
13. Eleven labourers, three storemen, a warehouseman, a carter, a driver, a brickmaker, a porter, a wool presser and tanner.
14. Three carpenters, two butchers, two engineers, a plumber, a blacksmith a taitor and a patternmaker.
15. Two carpenters, a shearer, a wheelwright, a butcher a saddler and a drover.
16. Five painters, four tailors, four carpenters, two tinsmiths, two blacksmiths, an enameler, an upholsterer, a defence department instructor, a bricklayer, a butcher, a cabinetmaker, a french polisher, a bootmaker, an express driver, a sergeant of police, a woodturner, a butcher, an engineer and a chef.
17. Nine labourers, two carters, a bushfeller, a warder, a gas stoker, a slaughterman, a driver, a chainman and a mariner.
18. Two musicians, a telegraphist, a civil servant, an insurance agent, a bailiff and a grocer's assistant.
19. Two hotel keepers, two farmers, a grocer, a solicitor, a contractor, a soapmaker, a photographer and a fruit expert.

Chapter Six

Officials and Class

Although rugby union representative footballers played a prominent part in starting rugby league in most provinces, there was no shortage of non-players keen to be involved in administering the game at both provincial and club levels. Information about officials is dependent on material published in local newspapers such as reports of annual general meetings, management committee meetings and other activities. The quantity of such material published varied from province to province.

From such sources, the names of 46 Wanganui Rugby League officials involved in the game during the years 1912 to 1915 were obtained. The occupations of 27 of these were obtained by matching names with those on the 1911 Parliamentary Electoral Rolls. A further separation of these occupations into four groups was made. The largest group comprised 52 percent of the total and consisted of 14 officials following middle-class occupations¹ The next group consisting of seven officials, 26 percent, were skilled manual workers² Three unskilled workers (two labourers and a gardener) accounted for a further 11 percent. The remaining 11 percent was made up of three non-manual workers (a bank clerk and a traveller and a customs and forwarding agent).

The names of 48 club officials were also found, 12 of whom were also League officials. The occupations of 27 of these club officials were found. Twelve middle-class officials³ accounted for 44.5 percent whilst seven unskilled workers⁴ accounted for a further 33.5 percent. There were five skilled workers⁵, 18.5 percent, and three non-manual workers (a club steward, a traveller and a commercial traveller) made up the remaining 11 percent.

Skilled workers and the middle classes were prominent in the League administration, whilst unskilled workers played a greater part in club affairs than they did in the League. Non-manual workers were the least represented amongst both club and League officials.

The Hawke's Bay Rugby League was launched at the end of the 1910 season following a number of well supported public meetings. One hundred and seven people

were elected to committees at these meetings and the occupations of 55 were found. The largest group were the 22 unskilled workers,⁶ 40 percent. There were 14 (26 percent) from the middle classes⁷, and 15 (27 percent) were skilled workers.⁸ The least represented were the non-manual workers (two clerks, an agent and a wool-classer) at 7 percent. Unskilled workers were the most numerous amongst those launching the game. Skilled workers and middle-class supporters were also prominent. Non-manual workers, on the other hand had little involvement.

In contrast, the occupations of eleven of sixteen Hawke's Bay Rugby Union officials for 1910 were found. They indicated that Union officials were overwhelmingly from the middle classes. Nine officials (73 percent) were middle class,⁹ whilst the remaining two (a labourer and produce salesman) were the only unskilled and non-manual workers involved.

A further comparison can be made in the 1911 and 1912 seasons as rugby league became established. The occupations of 20 of 34 League officials were found. Five, 25 percent, were unskilled workers (three labourers, a platelayer and a storeman), three were skilled workers (a printer, a decorator and a carpenter). Another four, all clerks, were non-manual workers, each group representing 20 percent of officials. There were eight middle-class representatives¹⁰ comprising 40 percent of officials. The occupations of 11 of 17 Union officials for 1911 were also found. Five, 46 percent; were middle class (a veterinarian, an accountant, an assistant master, a manager and a grocer). Three (27 percent) an engineer, a fitter and a master mariner, were skilled workers. There were two non-manual workers, 18 percent, a clerk and a cadet, and just one unskilled worker, 9 percent, a gardener. The differences between the two codes were now less noticeable but still significant. There was a preponderance of the middle class amongst Union officials but hardly any unskilled workers. In the League, unskilled workers still comprised 25 per cent of officials but were now outnumbered by officials from the middle class, who accounted for 35 per cent.

Twenty-eight Nelson Rugby League officials were identified during the period 1909 to 1913. Twenty-two of them were matched with their occupations. Ten (45.5 percent) were skilled workers.¹¹ The next group of nine, 32 percent, were from the middle classes.¹² There were only three non-manual workers, 13.5 percent; a

seedsman, a solicitor's clerk and a bailiff. No unskilled worker was identified.

Sixty-one officials from the three clubs, Kia Toa, Albion and St. Mary's were identified. Eight were also League officials. The occupations of 46 were found. The involvement of seven hotel keepers boosted the numbers of middle-class officials¹³ to 20 (43.5 percent). Skilled workers were also well represented with fifteen officials¹⁴ constituting a further 32.5 percent. There were six non-manual workers,¹⁵ accounting for 13 percent, whilst unskilled workers were represented by two labourers, an expressman, a warden and a driver, 11 percent of officials.

Differences between League and club officials are minor. Skilled workers together with those from the middle class are predominant amongst League officials, together accounting for over 85 per cent, but no unskilled workers were involved. Club officials, with the appearance of a large number of hotel keepers, were still predominantly middle class, but there were also a few unskilled workers involved. Hotel keepers, together with the presence of a few unskilled workers caused the percentage of club officials who were skilled workers to fall. Only a small number of either club or League officials were non-manual workers.

Fewer officials were identified in the remaining three provinces. The Marlborough Rugby League was only formed at the end of the 1912 season and seems to have been active only during the 1913 season. The names of only six officials were found and only two could be matched with their occupation. Twenty-nine officials from the two clubs Awarua and Omaka were identified and 15 matched with their occupations. Of the 17 League and club officials eight (47 percent), were unskilled workers,¹⁶ and there were also nine (53 percent) from the middle class.¹⁷ There were no non-manual or skilled workers amongst the officials. This distribution of occupations set Marlborough apart from most of the other Leagues. Both the absence of any skilled workers, and the preponderance of unskilled workers who, together with the middle classes, account for all the officials, was not found in any other province.

Only five officials from the 1908-1909 period have been identified in Taranaki and the only officials identified in the later period, 1911-1915, are the 22 who were present at the 1914 and 1915 annual general meetings of the League. The occupations of 15 of the officials were found. Eight (53 percent) were unskilled workers.¹⁸ A

further 27 percent were middle class; two farmers, a storekeeper and a butcher's shopkeeper. Three skilled workers (a bricklayer, a carpenter and a turncock) accounted for the remaining 20 percent of officials. There were no non-manual worker officials

Only five Manawatu League officials were found. The occupations of three of them were insurance agent, plasterer and hairdresser.

Of the 21 officials of the Dannevirke sub-League known from 1911 and 1912, the occupations of nine were found. Four skilled workers (a blacksmith, a turner, a fitter and a coach builder) accounted for 45 percent. Two unskilled workers (a labourer and a wool assistant) constituted a further 22 percent as did the two middle-class officials, a contractor and a livery stable proprietor. One non-manual worker, a clerk, made up the remaining 11 percent. Skilled and unskilled workers predominated, constituting two-thirds of known occupations.

In contrast, the occupations of 13 of the 23 officials of the Dannevirke Rugby Union in 1911 show a quite different distribution. Six from the middle class¹⁹ predominated, accounting for 46 percent. Three non-manual workers (a clerk, a salesman and a journalist) and three skilled workers, a telegraphist, a painter and either a blacksmith or a plumber, each account for 23 percent whilst a shepherd was the solitary unskilled worker. The clerk reappears in 1912 as a rugby league official, the only union official known to have changed his allegiance.

The predominance of the middle class amongst rugby union officials is further illustrated by the Dannevirke Rugby Union Football Club. Twenty-five club officials are known from the 1911 season and the occupations of 19 were found. Ten of the 19 (52.5 per cent) were from the middle classes.²⁰ Four skilled workers (a carpenter, plumber and two saddlers) comprised 21 percent and three unskilled workers (a labourer, a storeman and a bullock driver) made up 16 percent. Two non-manual workers (a clerk and a journalist) accounted for the remaining 10.5 percent.

Overall three hundred and ninety-seven officials were found from all the provinces, both League and club, and two hundred and twenty-four, 56 percent, were matched with their occupations (see Appendix A). Labourers constituted the largest group, there being 30 in all. There were 14 hotel keepers, 12 farmers, 11 clerks and 7 carpenters. There were only eight professionals; three dentists, a doctor, a surgeon, a

solicitor, a barrister, a lawyer and a technical teacher. Just over half the officials were manual workers, 25.5 per cent unskilled and 26 per cent skilled. Few were non-manual workers, only 10 percent. The biggest group of officials, 38.5 percent, were from the middle classes.

Unlike rugby union, in which officials were predominantly middle class, rugby league was a sport in which workers, both skilled and unskilled, were much more involved in administration. Non-manual workers were the least likely to be involved. Also many of the middle-class officials involved in rugby league could be described as 'lower middle-class' people, publicans, tradesmen and small shopkeepers, who may well have moved into self-employment from a working class background. Rugby union officials, in contrast, were more likely to be professionals or managers.

Notes

1. Two hotel keepers, two turf accountants, a coal merchant, a grocer, a farmer, a doctor, a surgeon, a clothier and mercer, an auctioneer, a hairdresser, a baker and a tailor.
2. An engine driver, an engraver, a carpenter, a stonemason, a painter, a saddler and a blacksmith.
3. Two barbers, two hotel keepers, a horse trainer, a pork butcher, a draper, a clothier and mercer, a hairdresser, a grocer, a baker and a tailor.
4. Four labourers, two gardeners and a dredgehand.
5. Two saddlers, a painter, a carpenter and a plasterer.
6. Eleven labourers, two gardeners, two storemen, a stevedore, a miner, warehouseman, a carrier, a woodcutter, a bottler and a groom.
7. Three farmers, two sheep farmers, two grocers, a horse-trainer, a clothier and outfitter, a manager, a publican, a billiard room proprietor, a dentist and a lawyer.
8. Three carpenters, two coopers, two blacksmiths, two plumbers, two coachbuilders, a boilermaker, a bricklayer, a fellmonger and a signwriter.
9. A headmaster, an assistant master, a solicitor, a publican, a grocer, a 'Frocker and hardware', a draper, a tailor and a manager.
10. A merchant, a technical teacher, a lawyer, a master mariner, a baker, cab proprietor, an hotel keeper and a hotel proprietor.
11. Two priests, two hotel keepers, a butcher, a baker, a tailor, a draper and a farmer.
12. Two priests, two hotel keepers, a butcher, a baker, a tailor, a draper and a farmer.
13. Two farmers, two priests, a sheep farmer, a grocer, a draper, an auctioneer, a solicitor, a dentist, a chief postmaster, plus two hotel proprietors and seven hotel keepers.

14. Two joiners, two painters, two printers, an engineer, an express driver, a plumber, a cabinet maker, a watchmaker, a french polisher, a sign writer, a shoemaker, and a tinsmith.
15. A solicitors clerk, a postal clerk, an insurance agent, a collector of customs, a bailiff and a hospital clerk.
16. Five labourers, a fisherman, a farm assistant, and a carter.
17. A commission agent, a dentist, a clothier, a barrister, a flaxmill manager, a farmer, a draper, a cycle agent and an outfitter.
18. Two labourers, two storemen, two factory workers, a billiard marker and a railway employee.
19. A builder, a printer, a sheep station manager, a school teacher, a solicitor and an accountant.
20. Two solicitors, an overseer, a storekeeper, a merchant, a tailor, a draper, an ironmonger, an hotel keeper and a sheepfarmer.

THREE

UNION OPPOSITION

Chapter Seven

Amateur/Professional

Rugby league football came into being in England against a background of class conflict. In the late nineteenth century most rugby players in the south were from the middle classes and were financially secure enough to have no need of payment for time taken from work to play football. In the north the situation was reversed; most players were working class and could not afford to lose part of their wages in order to play football. Northern clubs, in defiance of the Rugby Union rules against professionalism, paid their players for loss of wages, 'broken-time', incurred through playing football. They concealed these payments in a variety of ways and the Union authorities found it difficult to prove that they were occurring. Attempts by the northern clubs to have such payments made legal were rejected by the Rugby Union. The northern clubs finally broke away from the Rugby Union when it introduced new, more stringent, rules requiring clubs accused of professionalism to prove their innocence rather than the authorities having to prove them guilty. This put the clubs in an impossible situation and, in 1895, the leading northern clubs resigned from the Rugby Union, founded the Northern Rugby Football Union, and sanctioned payment for 'broken-time'. The Northern Union did not sanction professionalism, and only clubs in the Northern Rugby Football League, established by the leading clubs, actually made 'broken-time' payments. Most clubs in the north of England played in local leagues, and did not pay their players even when they joined the Northern Union, as most of them did. Over the next few years rugby league football underwent a number of rule changes and 'broken-time' payment for Northern League players was replaced by a system of payments for each game played. The great majority of clubs, and players who did not play in the Northern League, remained amateur. Despite all evidence to the contrary, the Rugby Union authorities maintained that all rugby league players were professionals and banned for life anyone who played so much as one game of rugby league. Not satisfied with this, the Rugby Union introduced even more draconian rules. All players in a team that included a player who had played rugby league were also deemed professional and banned for life, as

were all the players in the opposing team! Still not content, the Rugby Union also ruled that any ground on which a game of rugby league had been played was tainted with professionalism and no rugby union games could henceforth be played on it.¹

Following the return of the rebel All Blacks from their successful tour of Britain, the New Zealand Rugby Union faced the prospect of rugby league being introduced into New Zealand. It had already declared the tourists to be professional and banned them from rugby union, despite the tourists maintaining that they were amateurs who had not been paid to play rugby league. The facts supported their contention. Each tourist had been required to pay £50 towards tour expenses, approximately six month's wages for a workingman at that time, and they only received an allowance of £1 per week during the tour. Any profit was to be divided equally amongst the tourists at the end of the tour. Had the tour not been a success they would have lost their initial £50 investment.

One of the stratagems adopted by the New Zealand Rugby Union to combat rugby league was to enforce the rules of the English Rugby Union governing professionalism. In particular it insisted on regarding all who played rugby league as professionals rather than only those who were paid to play. It was thus not just combating professionalism as such but attacking the game of rugby league itself. This approach caused concern within rugby union circles, at least at provincial levels. As late as September 1912 this concern was being expressed by the president of the Marlborough Rugby Union, Mr. J.F. Bennett, who wrote to the local newspaper, that if

Rugby, is menaced by the dark cloud of the League game [it] is no fault of our amateurs properly so called, but is entirely due to the hidebound and conservative attitude of those controlling the game in England. Really, if it were not so serious it would be amusing to note how the main question is side stepped. The New Zealand Union, in mistaken loyalty to the effete English Union, pretend that their object is to nip professionalism in the bud, when actually professionalism is only a side issue. Mark this point, that the New Zealand Union will disqualify for life a man who plays League football even if he does not accept a penny. Why? Simply because they do not so much fear the bogey of professionalism as the influence of a more skillful and more attractive game.

What creates professionalism in any branch of sport? Is it not increasing population in the cities, where thousands demand a skillful exhibition of any sport as a mental relaxation after work in offices or shops or stores? Do you tell me that, under any rules, we have in Blenheim a large enough population to support professional football for one season? Why then do we worry? Merely because, let me reiterate, the authorities are not afraid of professionalism, but of the League game itself. The edict is you must not play under League rules- not that you should not accept money for playing. Six men may be disqualified for kicking about a

football in practice under League rules. Is that attitude fostering true sport? Why not disqualify a man for playing Association? It's nearly all professional in the Old Country.

...let us kill professionalism in football by adopting some of their rules and so encourage our schoolboys to play the better game. Let us be honest about it; we are out to beat professionalism, not the League game as a game. Let us play the ball, not the man.²

The branding of all rugby league players as 'professionals' was deplored by the promoters of the new code and they were at pains to maintain that in New Zealand rugby league was an amateur sport. At a general meeting of the New Plymouth League in 1909 the chairman 'wished it to be clearly understood that the Northern Union players in Taranaki were not professionals. They received no payment for their services, but only their actual travelling expenses.'³ In 1911, Mr. W.J. Perrett, secretary of the Wanganui League, in addressing a meeting called to form a rugby league club there, stressed that rugby league was as amateur as rugby union. He pointed out that the difference between the two codes was just a matter of seven shillings. The All Blacks, whilst on tour, were allowed three shillings each man per day, whereas when a Northern Union team was touring each player was paid ten shillings per day. Hence the seven shilling difference. At a meeting in 1912, the founders of the Marlborough League emphasised that it was being established 'on a purely amateur basis, and the players of the new Rugby code [would] not be debarred from competing in other amateur sports'. A league supporter wrote to the local newspaper protesting against league players being labelled professional, saying that it was

very unsportsmanlike to term the players of the new game in New Zealand "pros.," meaning, of course, that they receive payment for playing. They are, in fact, just as good amateurs as the players of the Rugby code. They are not paid to play in any match (club or representative); but in the case of a representative match the players receive payment equivalent to the amount they have forfeited through absence from their regular employment.⁴

Taranaki was the first province in central New Zealand in which rugby league was played. Local rugby players were unsure what the attitude of the Rugby Union to the new game was, whether members of Rugby clubs affiliated to the Rugby Union would be liable to disqualification by playing a match under Northern rules. The High School Old Boys rugby club from New Plymouth was reported to be taking up the Northern Union game but on a 'purely amateur basis' and arranging a match, 'under

Northern Union rules', against Palmerston North High School Old Boys. The club expected 'to make a good profit by the match'.⁵ Nothing more was reported on this venture. However, for two, by the evidence of their names, solidly 'middle class' clubs to think they could play rugby league as amateurs and make money from the game does indicate the degree of uncertainty prevailing. At the start of the 1912 season, the Eltham Rugby Union club was unable to hold its annual general meeting due to lack of support. Only one of the senior players from the previous season was available, several had left the district and others had gone over to rugby league. A second attempt was made a week later with only two committeemen, the treasurer, two seniors and a few thirds present, so

To make the meeting look more comfortable from an attendance point of view, a few Northern Union enthusiasts assisted, and at times took a prominent part in the discussions. One of the points brought up at the meeting was regarding the position of non-players and Rugby and Northern Union games. One man thought that he could accept positions as committeeman on both clubs and so far has been elected to the Rugby club.⁶

This indicates that confusion still prevailed in both union and league camps but also illustrates the lack of enmity between the two at club level.

Even in 1911, the Nelson Rugby Union was still prepared to accept ignorance of the rules as an excuse for playing rugby league. Following a complaint that a player in a union game had previously played league, the Union accepted his explanation 'that he did not know he broke any rules and was not paid'.⁷

Elsewhere relations were less cordial. The Hawke's Bay Rugby League tried to combat the claims of the Rugby Union that it was a professional sport by advertising its games as 'Northern Rugby Amateur Football' and 'Hawke's Bay Northern Amateur League.' The local Rugby Union responded by advertising its games as 'Amateur Rugby Football.' Despite the objections of rugby league promoters, the Rugby Union continued with its policy of branding all rugby league players as professionals and continued to discriminate against them on that basis.

The Rugby Union was on shaky ground in its condemnation of rugby league as a professional sport as it was an open secret at this time that leading rugby union players were being given 'under-the-table' payments. The prospect of the introduction of rugby league into Marlborough prompted a spate of letters to the local newspaper and both union and league supporters acknowledged such payments were being made.

‘Amateur’, a union supporter, wrote that

Rugby Unions in many instances are not the most innocent parties in the world, because I from personal knowledge know that Unions have allowed professionalism to be carried on and the money to be passed under the table. Thus they are able to clap themselves on the back and say they are still amateur.⁸

‘Player No. 2’, a league supporter, wrote that ‘ [a]s for the desire of the “filthy lucre”, it is a notorious fact that many of our leading [rugby union] players in Marlborough require something of this kind before they can be induced to play the game.’⁹ Further evidence of such payments was given by Mr. G. Gillett, an ex Auckland and All Black rugby union player, now a rugby league organiser, speaking to a meeting of the Hawke’s Bay League in Napier. He said that

In connection with Rugby football there was in New Zealand today a system of veiled professionalism. Most prominent Rugby players were receiving, had received, and would continue receiving money “underneath the table.” He himself had had his share of under the table money.¹⁰

At another meeting in Dannevirke he claimed to know ‘100’s’ who moved from one town to another with ‘promise of a job’ to get them to play for a particular club. He and other prominent rugby union players ‘were offered and accepted £20 to join the Ponsonby club’.¹¹

By its insistence that all rugby league players were professionals, the New Zealand Rugby Union had to face up to the implications of enforcing the English Union’s rules regarding professionalism. To ban from rugby union anyone who had played rugby league was to force that player to stay with rugby league even though he might want to return to rugby union. Clubs were reluctant to see this happen, preferring to take players back. But clubs that included a league player in their team rendered all that team and all the opposing team liable to being banned for professionalism. No provincial Union could contemplate such action, as it would destroy the Union and force hordes of union players to play rugby league or not play rugby at all. Understandably then, provincial Unions tended to turn a blind eye to this practice unless events forced them to take action. When action was taken it inevitably involved dissemblance and pretence as Unions tried to evade the consequences of enforcing their own rules.

Two cases in Marlborough illustrate this. In the 1914 season, the Waitohi rugby union club from Picton was found to have included a rugby league player in its team for a match against the Awatere club. The Union wrote to the club ‘pointing out

that this action had rendered them liable to disqualification, and if a repetition occurred the Union would have no option but to suspend the team'. It also pointed out that 'Awaterere should not, of course, have consented to play while there was a "black sheep" in the Waitohi Rugby fold'. It also noted that referees had been advised of the names of disqualified players, and had been instructed not to allow disqualified players to participate in any matches.¹² It can be seen from this report that the Union was not prepared to enforce the rules even though both the teams and the referee were aware of the presence of the "black sheep" but let the game take place anyway. The action of the Union 'aroused a good deal of scathing...comment in Rugby circles in Picton'. It was felt that the Picton club had been unfairly singled out when 'other League players were allowed to participate in Rugby contests'. The Union, on its part, maintained that

no recognised League player [was] at present in the Rugby ranks, and exception cannot even be taken, as it has been done, to Mr.Neal's inclusion in the Moutere team. Neal may have participated in a League practice game, but on no occasion, so the Union understands, has he played in a match which renders him liable to suspension under the rules of the New Zealand Union.¹³

A.Neal had been a regular player for the Awarua Rugby League club during the 1913 season and was also playing for the same club in 1914. His name had been included in team lists printed in the local newspaper so the Union had no excuse for not being aware of this.

Another suspension involved J.McDonald, one of a league playing family of father and three sons, who was a regular player with the Awarua club during the 1913 season. The Marlborough Union had suspended him for allegedly playing in a League final game in September, when he was one of the team named for the match, but not for the earlier games of league in which he had played. McDonald maintained that the match had not taken place and that a 'scratch' game was played instead in which he took part 'for about ten minutes'. He applied to the Rugby Union to have his disqualification for playing rugby league lifted. A sub-committee was appointed to enquire into the matter and recommended that

the New Zealand Union be asked not to enforce the suspension. McDonald had made a legal declaration to the effect that he had not participated in a recognised League match, and this placed the Union on a proper footing.¹⁴

In this case the New Zealand Union accepted the recommendation and removed the disqualification.

Whilst the New Zealand Union was still deliberating on his case, McDonald was so eager to return to rugby union that he played in a junior rugby match between Opawa and Moutere while still under suspension. An 'error' had been made by the club official who published his name as a team member, but the captain had been given implicit instructions not to play him. McDonald showed the referee a telegram notifying him of the removal of his suspension, so the game was allowed to take place. Apparently McDonald's suspension had not been removed and the club captain was blamed for allowing the match to be played. It was pointed out that all players who took part in the match were, strictly, liable to disqualification in consequence of McDonald's participation. The Union again chose not to enforce the rule.

These two cases illustrate the difficulties that the Marlborough Union incurred in trying to appear to be applying the rules on professionalism without actually doing so. It originally appeared to be taking a hardline approach to defectors. Prior to the introduction of rugby league at the end of the 1912 season, it sought to deter players from playing the game with threats of strong action and the following notice appeared in the local newspaper:

Football!

Notice to RUGBY PLAYERS. The Marlborough Rugby Union desires to inform all players that anyone taking part in a League practice match renders himself liable to EXPULSION, and as far as this Union is concerned it intends to strictly enforce such provisions.

Marlborough Rugby Football Union
R. Wanden secretary.¹⁵

Shortly after this notice, the newly formed Marlborough Rugby League invited the public to the Blenheim Domain 'to witness the first trial in Marlborough of the improved game of Rugby'. The trial took place on Saturday 21 September and on the following Tuesday the Marlborough Rugby Union held a meeting to consider what steps to take with regard to the players who took part in the league game. It was decided that all players be asked to attend a meeting on 7 October to show cause why they should not be disqualified. The League held a second trial match at Picton on Saturday 28 September, followed by two representative games on Saturday 5 and Saturday 12 October. After the second representative game, the Marlborough Union held another meeting to decide how to deal with the players who had taken part in the representative games. The names of twelve players, a referee and two touch judges

were forwarded to the New Zealand Rugby Union to be dealt with as they had breached the rules of professionalism.

The question of the players in the trial matches was then addressed. The players, not unexpectedly, had not turned up to the meeting, as requested, to explain their participation. The Union stated that 'it was not the Union's intention as yet to deal harshly with players who had taken part in practice games on private grounds or in cases where there were extenuating circumstances'. It then passed a motion that 'participants in a League practice game held on a recent Saturday who had been circulated were suspended during the pleasure of the Union for not attending the inquiry as requested'. The players who had earlier been disqualified for taking part in a League representative game were not included as they had already been dealt with. A total of eleven players were then suspended. In all twenty-three players, a referee and two touch judges were either suspended or disqualified. The cases of a further three 'offenders' were deferred as they could not be contacted. As 42 men had played rugby league, this leaves 14 neither disqualified, suspended nor 'missing'. Three had played in both practice and representative games and eleven just in practice games.

In its actions the Union had softened its original hardline attitude to would-be league players. No longer were they to be expelled for taking part in 'League practice matches', but only for playing in representative matches. No longer was the Union to 'strictly enforce' the rules on professionalism. Instead it was not going to deal harshly with 'players who had [only] taken part in practice games on private grounds'.

At the start of the 1913 season the Marlborough Rugby Union was in a state of disarray, the annual general meeting scheduled for the end of March had not been held and no competitions had been organised. The AGM was finally held at the end of May and an almost completely new body of officials was elected. It was reported to have 'awakened with a renewed body with keener appetite and renewed energy'. The new executive decided to revert to the hardline approach to rugby league and to 'enforce stringently the rules affecting players who had been converted to the Northern Union code'. The secretary was instructed to write to the clubs pointing out that 'if they play any disqualified member, or include in their team any man who has participated in League football this year, the match shall be forfeited to the opposing side'.¹⁶ This action would not have enforced the rules of professionalism and forfeiting a match for

fielding a league player was a rule made up by the Marlborough Union.

The Union had another aboutface at the start of the 1914 season when a management committee meeting in early May discussed the question of what steps to take in connection with players suspended for participation in League football. It was decided that

the suspension be removed from those players whose names had been forwarded to the New Zealand Rugby Union...and those who were suspended at the end of the 1912 season, together with those suspended at the latter end of last season, provided that a favourable reply is received from the New Zealand Union.¹⁷

It would appear that the Union was turning its back on its hard line approach of the previous season and was now proposing to welcome back all players it had 'banned' in the past. This new approach was not welcomed by all union supporters as 'Spectator' wrote in his column 'The Coming Rugby Season'

It is to be noticed that the Union is taking steps to reinstate several recognised League players into the Rugby fold. This is probably alright in its way, and will certainly have the effect of swelling the ranks of several of the clubs. When the defaulters from Rugby joined the new regime, however, they knew full well the consequences of their step, and that as far as Rugby was concerned they were ostracised.

...at the present juncture, it does not seem at all likely that the "new idea" will seriously threaten the Rugby position for many years to come, if ever. The Union might be doing a gracious act in adopting such a fatherly attitude to those "prodigal sons" but they are establishing a precedent which might have a far reaching effect in years to come. It is far better, one would think, to vitalize interest among the players in the lower grades and give them a chance to prove their quality than to resuscitate those whose loyalty to the game apparently can be so easily swayed.¹⁸

Marlborough was not the only Union to try to evade the consequences of enforcing the rules on professionalism. The Nelson Rugby Union became involved in a controversy when the Old Boy's rugby union club complained that the Riwaka club had included a rugby league player in the team that played against them in a recent match. The Union had also received a letter from Palmer, the player in question, which stated that

whilst on a visit to Nelson recently he had been asked to play a game with the Northern Union. He said he was not aware that he was breaking any rule, and he did not receive any money for his services and did not desire in any way to belong to that body.¹⁹

It was decided that this was a satisfactory explanation and no action was taken, the Union choosing to ignore the rules on professionalism.

The matter did not stop there though as the assistant secretary of the Nelson

Rugby League, in a letter to the editor of the local newspaper on another issue, had written

If the Rugby Union is so concerned over the professional aspect of football, how is it that a player whose receipt the Nelson League holds for 22s 6d expenses is still allowed to play under the Union's jurisdiction, and thereby, according to its own constitution, professionalizing the club this man plays for, and the clubs he plays against.²⁰

The secretary of the Union, Mr. Franks, then offered to 'deposit £3 of his own money if any League member could show him any receipt that this player had signed'. This provoked a long article by 'Spectator' the football correspondent of the *Evening Mail*, attacking the hypocrisy of the Rugby Union. He claimed to have been given a receipt by a Rugby League official which was dated 22 April 1911 and was signed by the player in question. It said 'Received from the Northern League the sum of £1 2s 6d expenses in connection with match played 22nd April.'²¹ An embarrassed Mr. Frank then denied that he offered £3 for the receipt but that, as League officials were reluctant to produce it, he offered to deposit £3 as a guarantee that the receipt would be returned. His letter did not address the point at issue, a rugby league player was playing club rugby union and by the Union's own rules he, all his team mates and all opposition teams they played against should have been barred from Rugby Union. This was the point that 'Spectator' was making. Not to abide by the rules strictly was hypocrisy.

The Union most affected by the introduction of rugby league was Hawke's Bay. With the defection of so many players to the league game, the Rugby Union in 1912 was understandably keen to take back any league players who were having second thoughts. With this in mind it wrote to the New Zealand Rugby Union 'with the object of obtaining the re-instatement of all professional footballers; failing the re-instatement of all professional players that those under 21 years of age be re-instated to the Rugby Union'.²² What the reply of the New Zealand Union was is not known, but the Hawke's Bay Union adopted a policy of accepting most league players back. This did not please the League authorities who would have preferred to have had the Union strictly enforce its ban on league players, thus forcing them to stay with rugby league.

The problem of players switching codes was a source of contention between the two codes throughout the 1912 season. It was in the interest of the Rugby Union

to re-admit some players, both to strengthen its own ranks to and weaken the Rugby League. On the other hand, to re-admit too many players would largely nullify the deterrent effect of expulsion and encourage more players to try the league game. The Rugby Union opted to re-instate some players but not others; the Rugby League retaliated by banning players who had been re-instated by the Rugby Union. They were particularly incensed when players who had played rugby league for most of the season, but then failed to gain representative selection, returned to rugby union, were immediately re-instated, and introduced into the rugby union representative team.²³ This policy of tit-for-tat banning by the two codes was criticised by the league commentator in the local newspaper:

The League should not disqualify players for taking part in Rugby football, as players should be allowed to participate in any game they please. Both organisations are amateur, therefore the authorities should remove the disqualifications from players that have been disqualified.²⁴

The Union continued to allow the return of league players, much to the disadvantage of the Rugby League. In the 1914 season the League was driven to write to the Union pointing out that league footballers over the age of seventeen were taking part in rugby union football. It even resorted to enclosing a list of names of those players involved.

This chapter has examined one of the ways in which New Zealand Rugby Union authorities sought to discourage the spread of rugby league in the country. Rugby league was founded in New Zealand by attracting recruits from rugby union, and its very existence depended upon continuing to do so. At a national level the New Zealand Rugby Union aimed at discouraging such defections in two ways. It laid claim to the moral high ground as the superior amateur sport and decried rugby league as a professional sport which degraded its participants. Furthermore it threatened to enforce the English Rugby Union's rules regarding professionalism and ban for life all who played rugby league.

At provincial level a more pragmatic attitude prevailed as the Unions sought to best promote the interests of rugby union in the light of the new situation. Whilst quite prepared to threaten to enforce the rules of professionalism, there is little evidence of their actually carrying through on the threats; no teams were banned for including a league player nor were any teams banned for playing against a team containing a

league player. Players were banned for playing rugby league, but were frequently taken back if it served the interests of a Union. At a club level there was little antipathy to league players, who were taken back readily enough. A blind eye was turned to the practice of clubs including such players in their teams unless circumstances forced provincial Unions to take action.

Problems arising from league players returning to rugby union are given extensive coverage in Marlborough, Nelson and Hawke's Bay newspapers. No similar problems are reported in Wanganui and Taranaki newspapers. Whether this indicates that such problems did not arise, or that they did arise but were dealt with in a less public manner by the local Unions is not known. Possibly the personalities involved in the various Unions determined whether problems were settled quietly and without fuss, or were allowed to escalate and attract the attentions of the press. Given the high turnover of players in all Leagues, numbers returning to rugby union must have been considerable and breaches of Union rules on professionalism not infrequent.

Notes

1. Trevor Delaney, *The Roots of Rugby League*, Keithley: Trevor R. Delaney, 1984.
_____, *Rugby Disunion- A Two-Part History of the Formation of the Northern Union. Volume One- Broken- Time*, Keithley: Trevor R. Delaney, 1993.
2. *Marlborough Express*, 3 September 1912, p.6.
3. *Taranaki Herald*, 16 April 1909, p.7.
4. *Marlborough Express*, 29 August 1912, p.8.
5. *Taranaki Herald*, 13, 15, 29 September 1908, pp. 7,2, 2.
6. *Taranaki Herald*, 16 April 1912, p.6.
7. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 17 May 1911, p.2.
8. *Marlborough Express*, 28 August 1912, p.7.
9. *Marlborough Express*, 28 August 1912, p.8.
10. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 1 April 1912, p.4.(Supp.)
11. *Dannevirke Evening News*, 29 May 1912, p.4.
12. *Marlborough Express*, 29 May 1914, p.2.
13. *Marlborough Express*, 12 June 1914, p.3.

14. *Marlborough Express*, 23 June 1914, p.5.
15. *Marlborough Express*, 27 August 1912, p.3.
16. *Marlborough Express*, 7 July 1913, p.8.
17. *Marlborough Express*, 12 May 1914, p.5.
18. *Marlborough Express*, 21 May 1914, p.3.
19. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 17 May 1911, p.2.
20. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 24 May 1911, p.2.
21. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 25 May 1911.
22. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 3 April 1912, p.3.
23. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 30 July 1912, p.3.
24. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 29 June 1912, p.4. (Supp.)

Chapter Eight

Grounds to Play on

One of the problems faced by the promoters of rugby league was that of obtaining access to grounds on which to play. Being newcomers to the New Zealand sporting scene, they found other codes had prior rights to many municipally owned grounds. In addition to this, the New Zealand Rugby Union authorities adopted a deliberate policy of obstructing the efforts of League officials to obtain grounds. One method of doing this was succinctly described in a newspaper interview with Mr. J.L. Short manager of the 1910 New Zealand rugby union team touring Australia. He said that the 'Wellington Rugby Union [had been] very far-seeing in collaring all the grounds so rugby league cannot be launched'. The tactic was not entirely successful as rugby league was launched in Wellington, but it certainly created difficulties for the Wellington League. In 1911 the proposed representative match against Wanganui had to be called off at the last minute due to the Wellington League being unable to secure a ground. Wellington's match against the Nelson representative team in 1912, was originally scheduled to be played on Anderson Park, but the League was denied access and the game had to be played on St. Patrick's College ground, described by the Nelson players as 'the worst they had ever played on'.¹

The Nelson League, unlike Wellington, established a harmonious relationship with the local Union regarding the use of grounds. At its inaugural meeting in June 1909, the League announced that the Council had granted it the use of both Trafalgar Park, the local council's pay ground, and another ground, Victory Square, on certain days. A committee was appointed to meet with the Nelson Union to discuss the sharing of these grounds. The meeting took place later in the month and after a friendly discussion the League was allotted Trafalgar Park for four Saturdays. It was also agreed that 'should either Union have a representative game that any of the forgoing dates could be exchanged'. This arrangement was made 'as each body was uncertain what dates would be suitable for representative games'.²

This agreement between the two bodies seems to have worked to their mutual satisfaction and there were no ground disputes during the existence of the Nelson

Rugby League. Victory Square, the other ground allocated to the League, was by all accounts in poor condition for both players and spectators. When the League gave up one of its dates at Trafalgar Park so that a rugby union representative game could be played, there was player discontent and 'a number of players would not tackle the Square after repeated mud baths experienced on previous Saturdays, in consequence both sides were short handed'.³ Despite the poor condition of the ground, the League considered it worthwhile to persevere with Victoria Square, considering it to be a 'pretty little ground [that] would be better still if a few seats were available, it [was] up to the clubs to play a benefit for the ground'.

In nearby Marlborough, the inability to secure a ground in Blenheim was a major factor in the demise of league football in 1914. The Marlborough Rugby League was established at the end of the 1912 season and two clubs were formed the following year. One club, Awarua, was formed in the small community of Spring Creek about 10 kilometres north of Blenheim and played on the local sports ground. The other club, Omaka, played on the Blenheim Cricket Ground, which was used for football during the winter months. That the League had managed to secure the use of this ground was due to an 'incurable exhibition of apathy by the Marlborough Rugby Union' which was in a state of disarray at the start of the 1913 season.⁴ As a rugby union supporter complained, the 'Rugby League has secured the cricket ground for its game, a thing the Union should have done if it possessed any energy'.⁵ The following season, 1914, under an almost completely new body of officers, the Marlborough Union did secure the cricket ground for rugby union, leaving no ground in Blenheim on which rugby league could be played. This season it was the League which exhibited the apathy and it was left to Awarua officials to persuade Mr McCartney of the Junction Hotel to make a ground available. The Omaka club was informed of this offer but did not take it up and the club ceased to function. Attempts to form a new club in Blenheim foundered as the club had to play its games at Spring Creek. Perhaps the travelling proved too much as this club also ceased to function, leaving Awarua with no one to play against.

The Taranaki League encountered an antagonistic response from the Rugby Union in their attempts to launch the game. The organisers of the inaugural match against an Auckland representative side applied to use the Recreation Sports Ground,

a municipally owned pay ground in New Plymouth. The application caused considerable discussion:

The members of the committee felt that the New Zealand Rugby Football Union from whom such a large amount of money had been obtained for the ground, should have a voice in the matter. Eventually it was decided that the committee would grant the use of the ground provided the N Z Rugby Union had no objection. The N Z Rugby Union replied that it [did] object to the ground being so granted to the Northern Union team, and would probably disqualify the ground for amateur matches if it were so let.⁶

The ground committee buckled under this threat and withdrew its permission to use the ground. The other council ground, Western Park was unavailable as it was being ploughed up, and the Racecourse was needed by the North Taranaki Hunt Club, so there appeared to be little chance of the game being played. But due to the determination of the Rugby League officials, it was played although on an out-of-the-way ground used by a local rugby union club for practices. The local newspaper even felt it necessary to publish instructions on how to reach the ground. Despite these difficulties, and 'the very unpleasant, wet weather...', the match attracted about five or six hundred spectators. The following season the League was able to secure the use of the Recreation Sports Ground to once again play Auckland and a crowd of about fifteen hundred witnessed the match.

The Taranaki Rugby union was still trying to use threats to try to stop the League using municipally owned grounds in 1913. The last match of the season was to be against a New South Wales touring side and

It appear[ed] that the League people moved round and secured consent to play their big match, Taranaki v. New South Wales, on the Hawera showgrounds. Having secured the necessary permission, The League got their posters out, but lo and behold! As soon as the public placards were stuck out word was received that the use of the grounds was cancelled. Naturally the League men were vexed; in fact, the word "vexed" is a mild expression and hardly suits the occasion. We are told here now that the reason the Hawera grounds are cancelled is that the Rugby Union will disqualify the grounds should League matches be played.⁷

It was pointed out that not only was the Rugby Union unable to stop rugby league being played on grounds it did not own, but by trying to do so it risked destroying rugby union in the province-

This may be believed by some people, but a little reasoning will show the absurdity. The Rugby Union does not own one ground in Taranaki, and its disqualification, instead of hurting the Leaguers, would rather kill its own game. If the Rugby Union had the powers of disqualification it would ere this have refused Rugby games to Taumata Park [Eltham] and New Plymouth Recreation Ground, and

where would the Rugby crew be without the "Rec." The "disqualification bogey" is nothing more than bluff, and the Leaguers know it.⁸

In this instance the Leaguers called the Rugby Union's bluff and the match went ahead on the Hawera Showgrounds.

Both the Wanganui and the Hawke's Bay Rugby Leagues encountered ground problems. In Hawke's Bay the Recreation Ground, a Napier Council owned pay ground, had long been used for rugby union games. At the end of the 1910 season its use was secured by the newly formed Hawke's Bay Rugby League for the staging of the inaugural game of rugby league in the province. For this game, against the touring Auckland representative team, the League officials asked the Rugby Union for the loan of their goalposts, standards and ground marker. It is not known what the response of the Union was to this request, but the game went ahead and was watched by 'a large body of spectators'. The introduction of rugby league led to the collapse of senior rugby union in Napier with only one senior team, Napier Old Boy's, remaining at the start of the 1911 season. The Hawke's Bay Rugby League had four senior teams in its competition, three having switched from rugby union and one a newly formed team.

Under these circumstances, the League applied for the use of the Recreation Ground, but the Council refused, preferring to allow the Rugby Union to renew its lease. It offered a newly acquired ground, McLean Park, to the League. Problems with McLean Park were to bedevil the League throughout the season. First it had to come to an agreement with the Hockey Association over the use of the ground. The Hockey Association agreed to relinquish its lease on the Park in return for hockey players being admitted free to league matches and their having the use of the ground every morning and Wednesday afternoons. Unfortunately the ground was in a poor state and subject to flooding if it rained. Matches had to be called off on several occasions until finally the drains were relaid midway through the season. This entailed McLean Park being unavailable for three Saturdays in mid-July. Fortunately for the League, the ground at Clive was in excellent condition and all fixtures were transferred there. The new drains seemed to solve the problem as match reports commented on the much improved condition of the pitch.

At the 1912 annual general meeting of the League dissatisfaction was again

expressed at the 'poor state of the ground' at McLean Park, but it was reported that 'it was to be improved for the coming season.' It is not clear whether the dissatisfaction was with the state of the pitch or the ground facilities. In either case the League was involved in a dispute with the Council over the rental terms and following the opening matches of the season, played on Saturday 4 May, further games were postponed as the dispute was still unresolved. Club matches were eventually resumed at McLean Park on Saturday 25 May, the dispute having been settled.

The League was keen to expand beyond the Napier district, in particular to the other large town of the province, Hastings. During the 1912 season it made considerable effort to obtain a ground there, but with little success. It finally managed to secure the use of 'Graham and Gebbie's' field. Graham and Gebbie was a old established transport company which had used horse-drawn vehicles. The first motorcar to appear on Hastings' streets made its debut in 1902 and by 1904 there were a sufficiently large number on the roads for the Council to enact a by-law regulating their speed. Graham and Gebbie moved with the times and ran the first taxi service in Hastings. By 1912 they had expanded their business, adding more taxis and motorcars.⁹ Their field, which was close to the centre of town, would have been used as a pasture for their horses, but with motor transport replacing horse drawn transport it would no longer be needed, hence their willingness to lease it to the Rugby League. The first match to be played there was an end-of-season challenge match between Ahuriri from Napier and Kaitere from Dannevirke when, 'despite the unsatisfactory state of the weather', a large crowd of football enthusiasts assembled to witness the contest. The ground was reported to have been in excellent condition.

It was also during the 1912 season that a dispute between the League and Union over a temporary grandstand gained nationwide publicity for rugby league and general opprobrium for the action of the Rugby Union. The Hawke's Bay Rugby Union was to host the season's premier game, the Inter-Island match, at Napier on Saturday 13 July. This generated great interest, with supporters coming to Napier from all the surrounding districts. The Rugby League was probably wise to cancel senior games for that day, as the game attracted 5,000 spectators. To accommodate the anticipated crowd, the Union spent £50 on timber to erect a temporary stand at

the Recreation Ground. It did not dismantle the stand after the match. Two months later, on Wednesday 11 September the Rugby League was to host a New South Wales touring team and secured the Recreation Ground for the fixture. It approached the Rugby Union to negotiate a rental agreement for the temporary stand. The Union saw this as an opportunity to recoup some of the cost of the stand and asked a rental of £25. The League rejected this offer as excessive and, as no mutually acceptable figure had been reached by the day before the match, the stand was dismantled by rugby union supporters and the timber stored at a nearby builder's yard. This action incensed league supporters, who assembled at midnight, removed the timber from the builder's yard and started to re-erect the stand. The task was completed the next morning and the stand was ready for use by the time of the match.

The Union defended its action in dismantling the stand by arguing that it had made second offer of £10 or 12½ percent of the stand takings and that the League had not responded. The decision to dismantle the stand was only taken when 'it appeared that the League had made up its mind to obtain for nothing what had cost over £50, and had not the courtesy to enter into negotiations in a businesslike manner'. The Union further maintained that it had contracted with a Mr. Holt to remove the stand. The League's reply to this was that it had come to an agreement with Mr. Holt to pay him 'so much for the use of it'. It went on to say that '[t]he Rugby people did not own it and had nothing to do with it. Our deal was with Holt's, and that's the whole question in a nutshell.' Whatever the facts of the matter were, and there appear to have been faults on both sides, the animosity between the two bodies precluded the possibility of an amicable agreement.¹⁰

The League encountered further ground problems in the 1913 season. McLean Park was unavailable, possibly because it was being used for military purposes, and the town council was unable to come up with a satisfactory substitute. The start of the season had to be postponed '[o]wing to grounds not having been allotted...'. Deputations from the management committee and the clubs waited on the Mayor to try and resolve the issue. The outcome did not please the League. They were given the use of Nelson Park, which was also used by the Rugby Union, so that rugby league and rugby union matches were played on adjacent pitches. The main problem of this arrangement was that as two codes were sharing the Park, admission could not

be charged by either. The League was thus losing an important source of income. The League did manage to obtain sole use of the Park for its first representative game of the season against Wellington, played on Wednesday 3 June and also for its match against the Great Britain touring team on Saturday 18 July. For this match the Council undertook to improve Nelson Park and gave the League permission to remove the stand from McLean Park to Nelson Park for the occasion, 'the League to pay the cost of removing and replacing the same'. Inability to obtain grounds also forced the League to cancel some fourth grade matches during the season. McLean Park was once again available for league matches during the 1915 season.

Like other provinces, Wanganui Rugby League was dogged by ground problems, but here they appeared to have been largely of its own making. Wanganui Council owned two pay grounds, both in the centre of the town. One, the Recreation Ground, now Spriggins Park, was leased to the Wanganui Rugby Union, which had invested its own money in its development. The other, Cook's Gardens, was developed by the Council and rented out to any organisation prepared to pay the rental. The promoters of rugby league in Wanganui secured Cook's Gardens for a match against an Auckland touring team on Thursday 22 September, which was to be the launch of rugby league in the town. The Council was to receive 20% of the gate money as rental. The League also rented Cook's Gardens for its three home representative games during the 1911 season.

With clubs having been formed during the 1911 season, the League was in need of a permanent ground on which to conduct its competitions. Prior to the advent of rugby league other codes had used Cook's Gardens, usually to stage representative games. The League applied to rent Cook's Gardens for the whole of the 1912 season, but the council would only agree whilst reserving the right to let the ground on six Saturdays and two Thursdays as it pleased. The League grudgingly accepted these conditions but nevertheless it managed to use Cook's Gardens for the whole of the season.

For the 1913 season the Council decided to put the use of Cook's Gardens up for tender whilst retaining the right to cancel bookings at 14 days notice. Again the League grudgingly accepted these conditions and again managed to play on Cook's Garden all season. Prior to the 1914 season the League's dissatisfaction with the

Council's rental policy came to a head and it did not even apply to use Cook's Gardens. Instead it started the season by staging its games on the Racecourse, a most unsatisfactory venue. Even free admission could not attract spectators and after a few weeks the League abandoned the Racecourse and applied once more to use Cook's Gardens. Once back at Cook's Gardens spectator support returned and the League played its matches there for the remainder of the season.

In 1915 the League was apparently conducting negotiations to secure its own ground and again did not apply to use Cook's Gardens. These negotiations were unsuccessful. But in the meantime the Hockey Association had secured Cook's Gardens for the whole season. The League was left with no grounds on which to stage rugby league and the game ceased to be played. The League had resented the restrictions placed by the Council on its use of Cook's Gardens and considered the cost of renting the ground to be excessive, yet it had successfully conducted its competitions there for three seasons and the ground had proved popular with spectators. Its decision to turn its back on Cook's Gardens without securing a suitable alternate ground was a major factor in the demise of rugby league in Wanganui.¹¹

The difficulties encountered by Rugby Leagues in obtaining suitable grounds described in this chapter relate mainly to pay grounds on which club championship and representative matches could be staged. These were invariably municipally owned grounds and in demand by other sports. Local councils tended to give preference to rugby union concerns when allocating such grounds, and when providing grounds for rugby league charged what League officials considered excessive rentals. Rugby Union officials tried to deny ground access to rugby league by obtaining exclusive use of as many grounds as they could. When unable to obtain exclusive use, they were prepared to use threats of 'disqualification' of grounds on which rugby league was played in order to dissuade councils from allowing Rugby Leagues to rent council owned grounds. Problems encountered by rugby league clubs in obtaining suitable grounds for training and playing junior games can only be surmised. Such problems were never reported in the local press but anecdotal evidence from Napier¹² tells of the Westshore club playing in a paddock behind the Bay View Hotel and Ahuriri on a 'ground which was more sand than grass' as the land had just been reclaimed.

Notes

1. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 10 June 1912, p.3.
2. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 5 June 1909, p.1.
3. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 23 July 1909.
4. *Marlborough Express*, 6 May 1913, p.3.
5. *Marlborough Express*, 13 May 1913, p.5.
6. *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 7 September 1908, p.5.
7. *Taranaki Herald*, 29 July 1913, p.8.
8. *Taranaki Herald*, 29 July 1913, p.8.
9. M.B.Boyd, *City of the Plains, a History of Hastings*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1984, p. 127.
10. *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 11 September 1912, p.5.
Marlborough Express, 17 September 1912, p.6.
Napier Daily Telegraph, 21 September 1912, p.4. (Supp.)
11. William Greenwood, 'The "Famous Northern Union Game": The Introduction of Rugby League to Wanganui, 1910-1915', Research Exercise, Massey University, 2000.

 Bill Greenwood and James Watson, 'The "Famous Northern Union Game": The Rise and Fall of Rugby League in Wanganui, 1910-15', *Sporting Traditions, Journal of the Australian Society for Sports History*, Volume 18, Number 1, November 2001, 33-41.
12. Personal correspondence with Des Burrows, Napier

Chapter Nine

Schoolboy Rugby

By the early years of the twentieth century, rugby union football was firmly established in New Zealand secondary schools as the winter team sport for boys. Masters, educated in the English public schools, or the private secondary schools of New Zealand, were well imbued with the amateur sport ethos of those institutions. To them rugby union football epitomized all that was manly and noble in sport. Not surprisingly, they endeavored to impart these ideals to their pupils.

Secondary education had been the preserve of the wealthy until the end of the nineteenth century and only a small number, less than 3 percent of 12 to 18 year olds, received a secondary education.¹ The introduction of free places in secondary schools in 1903 and the appearance of technical day schools from 1905, combined with a desire on the part of working-class parents for their children to receive a secondary education, saw a rapid increase in secondary school students in the early years of the twentieth century. The increasing numbers of secondary school pupils meant that an ever growing stream of potential players became available each year to rugby union clubs.

The advent of rugby league in New Zealand challenged the hegemony of rugby union football and provoked bitter opposition from the Rugby Union. It was particularly hostile to any attempts to introduce rugby league into schools, appreciating their value in inculcating the rugby union ethos into the minds of young New Zealanders. Rugby League promoters, on their part, appreciated the importance of schoolboy football to the future of rugby league in New Zealand and tried to introduce the game to schoolboys.

Evidence of efforts by Rugby League officials to have their game accepted as a sports option in New Zealand schools is scarce. Such efforts seldom appeared in the press, usually only if some dispute arose with Rugby Union authorities. That such efforts were being made is apparent from the concern evinced by the New Zealand Rugby Union and its intemperate attacks on those making them. During the 1912 season the Rugby Union sent a warning to all provincial Unions to be on their guard against League representatives influencing schoolboys. It went on to say that 'a

number of young players have been misled by misleading statements...to play the League game in the belief that they would retain their amateur status'. It suggested that circulars be issued to counter the possibility of League influence and advising the boys 'as to the evils of professional football, making it clear that the League's constitution is essentially professional'. The Unions were asked to 'treat the matter as important in the interests of Rugby'.²

The unlikelihood of schools taking up rugby league is illustrated by the experience of the Stoke Industrial School near Nelson which received nationwide publicity when it was reported that its boys were to play rugby league in 1911. The Nelson Rugby League had, after two years of struggle, finally succeeded in establishing two clubs. The Stoke Industrial School was a Catholic orphanage for boys. One of the newly established clubs had been started by parishioners of the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nelson. Members of the St. Mary's Rugby League Club would have been aware of the fact that no organised football was played by the boys at the School and would have communicated this to the Nelson League. Officials of the League approached Mr. Flaherty, the manager of the School, offering to provide coaches should the boys play rugby league and it was understood that an agreement had been reached for the school to field three junior teams. As soon as this agreement became public, the Nelson Rugby Union called a meeting to decide its response. The secretary was directed to write to the Minister of Education:

Sir,-I am directed to call your attention to the fact that the Stoke Industrial boys are about to affiliate to the Northern Union football organisation (a professional body), and ask if such a step has the sanction of your department? Apparently the manager of the institution has not recognised the danger of such a proceeding. It should not be necessary to point out the danger of corruption in sport by introducing the professional element, and I do not think your Department will consider it judicious that this spirit of indulging in sport for individual monetary gain should be inculcated in the boys. However, the strong protest I wish to place before you is that a great injustice would be done the boys by allowing their affiliation to a professional football organisation, as after once participating in this game they are debarred from all the privileges of amateur football and the boys on leaving the institution would experience a great hardship. My Union in the past has made a donation from the N.Z.R.U. grant towards the institution, and as we hold a school championship the boys are provided with competition, if they desire to enter for such. I would point out that no school, private or public-college or university-has embraced this professional game, recognising in it a grave danger to youth by encouraging a professional spirit in sport. This is not only the case throughout the Dominion but throughout the whole Empire. In regard to the manager, I think it is only want of knowledge on the subject that has led him to permit this circumstance to arise.³

The secretary was also instructed to call on Mr. Flaherty and 'put the matter

before him'. Mr. Flaherty claimed he had been approached by a member of the Nelson League but had not pledged the boys to that game. Before taking any action he had wanted to be quite certain what effect any action of his might have upon the boys when they left the institution. He did not want to prejudice them in any way. It appeared that Mr. Franks had 'put the matter before him' forcefully enough to be able to announce that 'in all probability the Stoke Industrial School will be competing in the schools championship arranged by the Nelson Rugby Union'.

A letter to the editor from Mr. A.K. Baxter, assistant secretary of the Nelson Rugby League, gave the League's side of the story:

The facts of the case are...three weeks ago Mr. Doyle and self honorary officials of the Nelson Rugby League approached Mr. Flaherty at the school and found that it had no connection with any football body. We put the claims of League and it was mutually agreed the boys would play league as amateurs and some members of the Nelson Rugby League would coach them. Rugby Union has taken a quarter of a century to discover the existence of the school and the obvious deduction is that they want them to stop the Northern Union from having them.⁴

A further letter from Mr. A.G. Shrimpton, a member of the Nelson Rugby Union, refuted the claim that the Union had ignored the Stoke Industrial School and claimed that it had repeatedly approached the managers to allow the boys to enter the Union's cup competitions. A final letter from Mr. Baxter accepted that the Union had approached the managers to allow the boys to play rugby union, but insisted that until the League came along nothing was happening.

It would appear that the Rugby Union had been content not to actively encourage the school to play rugby union until the League became involved. Once the manager, rather naively, accepted the League's offer to coach schoolboy teams, the Rugby Union stepped in and the manager had to get out of his agreement with the League with what dignity he could. This was the only known attempt to introduce rugby league into Nelson schools.

There is no evidence of any attempts from Wanganui or Marlborough to introduce rugby league into schools, but in 1914 the Taranaki League used the visit of a British touring team to try to interest schoolboys in the game. The match against Taranaki was played at Eltham and the League invited all Eltham schoolboys to the watch the game. Before play commenced, the manager of the British team spoke to the schoolboys on the game and 'hoped they would uphold the traditions of their race'. He then presented them with a football.⁵ There is no record of any schoolboy

rugby league being played in Eltham as a result of this promotion.

Hawke's Bay was the only League to succeed in introducing rugby league into schools. For the 1912 season the League inaugurated time third and fourth grade competitions. The fourth grade, with teams from the Ahuriri, Petane and Westshore clubs, was comprised mainly of schoolboy players. As well as this, at least two schools played rugby league, these being Ahuriri School and Napier South School. Teams from these two schools played each other in a curtain-raiser to a Charity Cup match at McLean Park towards the end of the season, Ahuriri School winning by a score of nine points to five.

Nothing more is known of schoolboy football until the 1914 season, when a team was formed at Napier Technical College which competed against teams from Ahuriri and Westshore in the fourth grade competition. The team enjoyed a very successful season, winning all its matches. The College team returned for the 1915 season, but the inability of other clubs to field sufficient players forced the League to discontinue the fourth grade competition.

The working class affiliations of rugby league are evident in that it was a technical school that adopted rugby league. Technical schools had been started a few years earlier with the intention of providing a secondary education for the children of working class parents. They were considered inferior to the academic secondary schools which required a higher standard for admission.⁶ A school catering to working class children would have been much more likely to take up rugby league than the academic secondary schools which were still largely the preserve of the middle classes.

Notes

1. Geoffrey W. Rice, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.276.
2. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 29 August 1912, p.3.
3. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 17 May 1911, p.2.
4. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 24 May 1911, p.2.
5. *Hawera Star*, 24 July 1914, p.8.
6. Geoffrey W. Rice, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.276.

FOUR

PLAYING THE GAME

Chapter Ten

Attracting Players

Rugby league was started in most provinces by rugby union representative players who wished to play what they perceived as a more skillful and attractive form of rugby and representative football was to be a major part of rugby league throughout the period. However, representative football alone was not sufficient if the new code was to progress: it was necessary to attract average club players in sufficient numbers to make possible the establishment of rugby league clubs. Only one of the provinces, Manawatu, failed entirely to do this. However, Nelson and Marlborough had too few clubs to enable championship competitions to be run. Taranaki finally succeeded in starting a club competition in 1914, after seven years of effort. Wanganui and Hawke's Bay were the only provinces where there were sufficient clubs for championship competitions to be held.

One noticeable feature of rugby league in all provinces was the high attrition and recruitment figures. Up to fifty percent or more of players in any given season failed to play rugby league the following season. Player numbers were maintained by similarly high intakes of new players each season. This high turnover of players initially restricted the number of clubs and eventually led to player shortages. Another feature common to all provinces was the high proportion of casual players, those named to play in just one or two matches who never appeared again.

Sixty-five Wanganui players were named in teams for the two games played at the end of the 1911 season. Only twenty-four of these played rugby league in 1912, an attrition rate of 63 percent. Two out of three players were lost to the game. Those players who did return were joined by an influx of 123 new recruits, making a total of 147 players, and each of the three clubs fielded senior and junior teams in championship competitions. For the Eastern club 56 players were involved in either the senior or the junior team. The City club had fewer players, 44 in all, and there were 47 players with the St. John's club.

The 1913 season again witnessed a big loss of players, with only 41 senior and 30 junior players returning from the 1912 season. This represented a loss of 76

players. Twenty-four Eastern players returned for another season and were joined by 35 new players. Eighteen returned to City which recruited a further 26 players whilst St. John's had 29 returnees and 21 new recruits. In total 71 players returned for the 1913 season, less than half the 147 who had played the previous year.

Fewer players returned for the 1914 season, all three clubs together had only 48 returnees, a massive attrition rate of 69 percent. New recruits were also fewer, Eastern had 16, St. John's 17 and City only 11. The number of new recruits, 44, was for the first time less than that of the returnees. Many junior players were therefore promoted to the senior ranks with the result that there were insufficient players for a junior competition. The pattern of big player losses being made up for by a large number of new recruits each season did not recur in 1914. Fewer returnees and even fewer new recruits meant that player numbers fell from 153 the previous season to 92 in 1914.

Despite heavy player losses from season to season, new recruits appeared sufficient to maintain player numbers at a healthy level, 147 in 1912, 153 in 1913 and 92 in 1914. But these numbers conceal a less healthy situation. Forty-seven players only appeared once in 1912, 70 once in 1913 and 42 in 1914. These players could hardly be considered converts to rugby league and yet they account for 40 percent of all players, 159 out of 392 players. Without these 'one off' players the clubs would have been unable to each field two teams.¹ The need to be constantly persuading players to have a go at rugby league precluded any hopes of expansion. When those numbers dropped in 1914, clubs found themselves unable to field junior teams and the League could only run a senior competition.

Events in Hawke's Bay followed a similar pattern to Wanganui. The 1911 season saw five clubs (Ahuriri, City, Clive, Kia Ora and Westshore) field four senior and four junior teams. Over the season 132 senior and 134 junior players were named in teamsheets. Thirty-seven senior and 36 junior players, 27 percent of the total, appeared only once.

A new club, Petane, entered the League for the 1912 season, and four senior, five junior, three third grade and three fourth grade teams were entered into the various competitions. Seventy-three senior players and 63 juniors returned for a second season of rugby league, but 59 seniors and 71 juniors did not return, attrition

rates of 45 percent and 53 percent. There were one hundred and forty-six senior players, a slight increase over the previous season, but 34 percent, 49, appeared only once. Junior player numbers, 132, were virtually the same as the previous season with 53 appearing once only, 40 percent of all players.

There was once again a four team senior competition in 1913, but the Clive club was barely surviving. It fielded only a senior team, but with none of its 1912 players returning, it was forced to recruit a completely new team. Of only 23 players known five appeared only once. Petane, new to senior ranks, replaced the City club, which ceased to function. Petane, Ahuriri and Kia Ora all had healthy player numbers so that in total 136 players took part in the senior competition. But only 35 Ahuriri, Clive and Kia Ora senior players returned from the previous season, an attrition rate of 68 percent. Casual players once again figured largely, with 44 accounting for 32 percent of the total. There were only three teams in the junior competition and a total of 110 players. There were only 63 returnees from the previous season, an attrition rate of 52 percent. Forty-eight, 43 percent of players, appeared only once.

The same four teams contested the 1914 senior competition and player numbers held up despite the threat of war. Fifty-four players returned from the previous season and 115 players appeared on teamsheets. The attrition rate was 61 percent, but fewer players appeared only once. The junior grade was also well supported with once again a three team competition. The Kia Ora team returned after a year's absence, replacing the Westshore team, which dropped out. Eighty-six players took part as compared with 110 in the previous season.

The effects of the war became apparent in the 1915 season. The efforts to keep the junior, third and fourth grade competitions going were unsuccessful due to a lack of players. The only competition to survive was the senior, which was reduced to three teams early in the season. Clive was unable to raise a team and dropped out, but a new club, Old Boys, was formed and fielded a senior team. Kia Ora was also having difficulties recruiting players and was forced to drop out early in the season, a number of its players going to the new club, Old Boys. Fifteen players were named for the two games that Kia Ora played and of these five went to Ahuriri and four to Old Boys. Forty-eight players represented Ahuriri and 36 played for Old Boys. Team lists for the third club, Petane, did not appear in the local newspaper so the number of

players is not known. But over 100 players must have appeared for the three clubs.

Third and fourth grade football was started in the 1912 season, each grade having three teams. Ninety-five played third grade football, with over one third appearing only once. There were 65 fourth grade players, mainly schoolboys. The following season fourth grade numbers increased, with the same three teams fielding 93 players. The third grade was struggling though and, with the Westshore team dropping out due to a lack of players, it was reduced to only two teams. Only 47 played third grade football in 1913. There was a revival in the 1914 season, with four clubs fielding third grade teams and over 100 players taking part. The fourth grade competition comprised three teams Ahuriri, Westshore and a new team from the Napier Technical College. Player numbers for the Westshore and College teams are not known, but 26 players for Ahuriri represent a substantial fall from the 36 who played the previous season. The only club able to raise a team for either third or fourth grade football in the 1915 season was the Technical College, but with no other teams to play it too dropped out of competition.

From its initial season in 1911 to the 1914 season the Hawke's Bay Rugby League was able to conduct a four team senior competition, though the City club was forced to drop out due to player shortages and was replaced by Petane. The junior grade had varying fortunes, with four teams in 1911, five teams in 1912 and three teams in 1913 and 1914. Only Ahuriri and Petane were able to consistently field teams in this grade. City was never able to raise a team, whilst Clive, Kia Ora and Westshore all experienced difficulties at one time or another. The third grade had the most varied fortunes. Starting with three teams in 1912, it was reduced to only two teams the following season and had its best season in 1914, when four teams competed. The fourth grade had four teams each season, with Ahuriri, Westshore, Petane and Technical College fielding teams at various times.

Neither of the two South Island Leagues was able to attract sufficient players to enable club competitions to be played. The Nelson League was started in 1909 and about 30 players took part in practice games towards the end of the season. There were never enough players at any of the games for full teams to take the field and, despite the efforts of officials, no clubs were formed. Seventeen players from the previous season, 63 percent, returned in 1910. They were joined by 39 newcomers,

nearly doubling player numbers. Two proposed clubs, Alhambra and Kia Toa, held practices and played several games against each other, but both struggled to field full teams. Would-be players appear to have had a cavalier attitude to the game and often did not bother to attend practices and games. The biggest turnout of players was towards the end of the season when practices were held to select a representative team to play Auckland.

The 1911 season saw a slight increase in player numbers, up to 62 from the previous season's 56, but a much greater attrition rate. Twenty-four players returned, but 32 were lost to the game, an attrition rate of 66 percent. The 1911 season finally saw two clubs established. The Kia Ora club from the previous season underwent a name change and emerged as the Albion Northern Union Football Club whilst a new club, St. Mary's Football Club, was formed. These two clubs were to be the only rugby league clubs for the remaining years of the Nelson venture.

The 1912 season was very much a reprise of the previous year with much the same number of players, a high attrition rate, and newcomers to the game greatly outnumbering returnees. Twenty-four of the previous season's 62 players returned, an attrition rate of 61 percent, to be joined by 37 new comers, but 38 players were lost to the game. Player numbers were such that the two clubs were able to field full teams for a series of Cup matches and a number of practice games.

An influx of younger players during the 1913 season enabled both clubs to launch junior teams for the first time. The attrition rate was higher than in any previous season, with only 18 players returning for the new season, a massive loss of 70 percent. This loss was more than offset by 79 new players taking part in rugby league matches. Thirty-four were senior players and 45 were juniors. This level of participation enabled the League to stage both senior and junior Cup series between the two clubs. Nearly 100 players were involved in rugby league during the 1913 season, yet no rugby league was played in the following season.

The Marlborough Rugby League only functioned for one full season. It was formed towards the end of the 1912 season when 42 players took part in two practice games and two representative matches. Only 19 of these players turned out in the 1913 season, an attrition rate of 55 percent. Two clubs, Awarua and Omaka, were formed for the 1913 season and the 19 returnees were joined by 83 new recruits to

make a total of 102 players, but 37 of these, over one third, appeared only once. The Omaka club had 44 players in 1913, but did not function in the 1914 season. Only five of these players appear to have played rugby league in 1914, for a newly formed club, Wairau. This new club played only a handful of games, in the early part of the season, before it also ceased to function, leaving Awarua the only remaining club. Only 20 players are known from the Wairau club and of these five had played for Omaka in 1913 and six for Awarua. Only nine new players were recruited and six of its players appeared in one game only. Twenty-nine players are known for the Awarua club in 1914. Only twelve returned from the 1913 season whilst another six from that season played for the Wairau club. This made the attrition rate from the previous season a massive 69 percent.

Despite losing over half the players who helped launch the game in 1912, the two clubs formed in 1913 received a big influx of new players and, even if those appearing only once are disregarded, at least 65 played rugby league regularly. Yet the 1914 season saw a collapse in player support; only five of the 44 players from the Omaka club in the previous season are known to have played in 1914. The Awarua club was better supported, but even this club could only retain 12 of its 58 players with an additional six joining the Wairau club. The two clubs together were only able to recruit 20 new players.

Rugby leagues clearly did not have problems recruiting new players. The problem was in retaining players, half or more players in any one season failing to turn out the following season. This meant player numbers tended to remain static from year to year and a core of experienced players was slow to develop. Wanganui, with a population of over 10,000, managed to support six teams with a base of about 150 players. Napier, also with over 10,000 population, supported eight teams from a player base of nearly twice this size. Between 250 and 300 men played senior and junior league football each year. Nelson, with a slightly smaller population of 8,800, operated with a much smaller player base. Only about 60 men played rugby league each year from the establishment of the League in 1909 up to the 1913 season. These small numbers meant that only two teams were possible. Only in the 1913 season, when an influx of younger players nearly doubled player numbers, was it possible to field four teams. Marlborough, in its one full season of rugby league, managed to

attract about 100 players and its two clubs fielded three teams. With Blenheim, population 3,500, being its biggest town, Marlborough lacked a sufficiently large population base on which to establish rugby league. With only 18 players returning to play in the second season and with few new recruits, only one team survived.

Rugby league had to rely for its players on securing recruits from rugby union. Whilst it was not a problem persuading young men to give the game a try, retaining their longer term allegiance was. Many played a game or two and then, for whatever reasons, returned to rugby union. This constant turnover of players restricted growth, limited the number of clubs and severely hampered expansion attempts.

Notes

1. William Greenwood, 'The "Famous Northern Union Game": The Introduction of Rugby League to Wanganui, 1910-1915', Research Exercise, Massey University, 2000.

Chapter Eleven

Expansion

In the years following the return of the rebel All Blacks from their tour of Britain, enthusiasts for the new game introduced rugby league to centres throughout New Zealand. They realised that for the game to succeed they had to challenge the hegemony of the New Zealand Rugby Union and they set out to replace rugby union by rugby league as the premier winter team sport of New Zealand. To do this most Leagues strove to spread the game to centres throughout their provinces.

Taranaki was the first central province to take up the new game. As early as 1908 a New Plymouth Northern Union Football League was formed but, despite organising a representative team and successfully staging rugby league games against other provinces, attempts to establish clubs were unsuccessful. Possible reasons for this failure are examined in chapter 3, and it was not until 1914 that a club competition involving three clubs was finally inaugurated. Any hopes of this initiative being successful and leading to the formation of more clubs came to nothing with New Zealand's entry into the Great War. The competition was suspended for the duration of the war and was not revived after the war.

Rugby league was started in Nelson in 1909 and its early years were devoted to trying to form clubs in the town of Nelson. It was not until 1911 that two clubs were established and by this time rugby league was also being played in the Golden Bay district. There is no evidence of involvement in this development by the Nelson League. During the 1911 season players from Golden Bay were invited to take part in a trial match at Nelson to enable selectors to nominate players for the New Zealand team to tour Australia. Also six Golden Bay players were part of the Nelson provincial team that toured the North Island at the end of the season.

At the start of the 1912 season the Nelson League entertained a representative side from Wanganui. One match was played against Nelson at Nelson whilst the second match was played at Takaka, where a Golden Bay team lost by a score of 20 points to seven. There was a large attendance at the Takaka game and the visitors were given a great reception. That rugby league had only recently been introduced to

Golden Bay is suggested by the comment that whilst the 'locals were deficient in the finer points of the game [they] should with more experience develop into something out of the ordinary'.¹ Later in the season the Nelson League further helped the development of the game in Golden Bay by sending a team to Takaka play a Golden Bay representative side. There was a large crowd at Takaka Football Ground and gate takings of £9 suggest attendance of about 200. At least two clubs were functioning in Golden Bay during the 1912 season as the Kia Toa club narrowly defeated Kia Kaha by 11 points to ten to head the club competition. The Kia Toa club were then invited to play the St. Mary's club in Nelson for the Tall Cup. The Golden Bay club won by a score of 12 points to five before a large crowd.

Nelson opened the 1913 season by taking a representative team to Motueka, about 50 kilometres along the coast, where they played a Golden Bay side 'to give Motueka and Riwaka players a chance of seeing the game played'.² A crowd of 200 - 300 spectators saw Golden Bay win by a score of 28 points to 3. Later in the season a Nelson team made the trip to Takaka where they were well beaten by the Golden Bay side. With the collapse of rugby league in Nelson the following season nothing more is known of the game in Golden Bay. The region had produced a number of good players, with eleven appearing for the Nelson provincial representative team and three, Byrne, Feary and Mason, being chosen to tour Australia with the New Zealand team.

During its short existence, the Marlborough League made a couple of attempts to spread the game beyond the Blenheim/ Spring Creek district. Prior to its launch at the end of the 1912 season, the League played one of its two trial games at Picton, population about 1,000, and the second largest town in the province, where '[c]uriosity to see the much vaunted League game drew a large attendance...to see the exhibition match between two local teams, with the inclusion of some keen Picton players'.³ At the start of the 1913 season attempts to form a club at Picton were unsuccessful, but a number of players from Picton played with the Awarua club formed at Spring Creek. At the end of the season the Picton players formed a club, Mahakipawa, and the Omaki club from Blenheim travelled to Picton to play them. The Picton club did not survive to play during the 1914 season.

The second attempt at expansion was 25 kilometres to the south, in the

Awatere district. Towards the end of June 1913 a meeting was held at the small town of Seddon to form a rugby league club. A team was selected to play the Omaka club from Blenheim whose members travelled by train down to Seddon for the game. But again the club did not survive and this is the only game known to have been played. There is also slight evidence of an attempt to form a club at Linkwater, a small settlement 24 kilometres from Picton. At a special meeting of the Awarua club held in June 1914, 'it was resolved that the Linkwater match be arranged for Spring Creek on Saturday, June 13th', but the match did not take place. With the collapse of the Marlborough League during the 1914 season there were no more expansion attempts and rugby league ceased being played.

Three rugby league clubs were formed in Wanganui during the 1911 season and the same three clubs were still playing during the 1914 season, the last season of rugby league in Wanganui. There is no evidence of any attempts to form new clubs in the town nor to extend the game into surrounding districts.

The Hawke's Bay League, on the other hand, was continually attempting to expand and to encourage other centres to take up the game. Even before rugby league was officially launched at the end of the 1910 season, it was rumoured that a league was being formed at Wairoa, 120 kilometres north of Napier, and a book of rules was sent. The Petane club was to play a match there during the 1911 season, but there is no record of a match taking place. The following season, 1912, it was announced that Petane was to play matches against both Wairoa and Mohaka natives, but again nothing resulted from these initiatives, nor from reports that a Tongioia native team was to play Clive and that a Maori team was being formed at Fernhill. Also during the 1912 season the formation of a league at Waipawa was reported with 36 members and junior and senior teams, and a Woodville team was said to be considering playing league. The only centre to actually form a club was Havelock, a small settlement five kilometres south of Hastings. The club was formed at the end of the season and played the Kia Ora club at Napier as a curtain raiser to the Hawke's Bay versus Canterbury representative game. Havelock won the game by 11 points to 2, but did not survive to play during the 1913 season.

There were several attempts to introduce rugby league to Taradale, a small town a few kilometres south of Napier. At the end of the 1910 season, a number of

meetings were held at various venues around Napier to gain support for the new game. The meeting at Taradale attracted a large, enthusiastic, attendance and over 50 names, including several Maori, were put forward for an organising committee. No team emerged during 1911, but it was announced at the end of the season that a junior team would play the next year. There must have been little support for rugby of either code, as there was no rugby league team in 1912 and although a rugby union club was formed and entered a junior team in the competition, it was forced to withdraw due to lack of support. The final attempt to introduce rugby league to Taradale occurred in 1914. An Ahuriri team travelled to Taradale in early April, expecting to play a local team, but although a team was being formed, organisers were unable to recruit enough players at that stage to field a team. The visitors therefore, took part in a practice game.⁴ Despite this setback, a Taradale club was formed, at a 'largely attended meeting of enthusiasts', held at the Taradale Hotel on 20 April. Officials were elected, it was decided to call the club Awarua, and its first match was to be against a junior team from Napier. On the following evening, at the same Hotel, a well attended meeting of rugby union enthusiasts decided to form a club to be called Suburbs, and to enter a junior team into competition. Taradale's population proved too small to support two rugby clubs and it was the union club that survived. There is no record of the league club playing any matches.

During the 1911 season there were rumours of rugby league starting up in Gisborne and at the start of the 1912 season delegates from Napier visited the town. They reported that 'prospects of a good number of players in that city are very encouraging', and that a League had been established. They undertook to send a team to play in Gisborne and to entertain a Poverty Bay side at Napier. Their report was overly optimistic and it was not until the 1913 season that 'a large number of enthusiasts attended the first meeting held in Gisborne to start League there'.⁵ Two clubs, Turanganui and Gisborne, were formed at the meeting, whilst two other clubs, Taruhere and a Maori club, were being formed. Eighty players had gone over to rugby league. Napier again undertook to send teams to play in the town and in June the Kia Ora club travelled to Gisborne and played an exhibition game against a Gisborne XIII. A Poverty Bay representative team then came to Napier, where they were beaten by 34 points to 8. The next season, 1914, Kia Ora again visited Gisborne,

this time to play a representative team chosen from the four local clubs. The conduct of the Kia Ora players was reported to have been exemplary, 'the host at the hotel where they stayed said he had never had a better behaved team in the house'.⁶

The Hawke's Bay League made repeated efforts to establish the game in Hastings, Hawke's Bay's second largest town after Napier. A meeting of rugby league enthusiasts was held in Napier early in the 1910 season and from that meeting a delegation was elected to visit Hastings 'at an early date with a view to getting the game taken up in that town'. Hastings was one of the venues for a series of meetings held during September to launch the game in the province. It was the least well supported of the meetings, though 'the Napier Executive Committee of the Northern Union Football League discussed the game with a number of local supporters'. Fourteen names were added to the general committee and the meeting adjourned until the following week. Nothing resulted from these initiatives, but in June the following year it was reported that Rovers, a Hastings rugby union club, was prepared to go over to rugby league 'if they can get another team to play them in Hastings'. No team was prepared to join the Rovers and no rugby league was played during 1911.

Efforts to start rugby league continued and in April 1912 it was reported that Hastings players were forming a senior team. In May the League announced its intention to play two senior games in Hastings to generate support and that application had been made to the local council for the use of a ground. The application was not successful and a month later the League set up a committee to secure a ground in Hastings, 'this being the outcome of a deputation from Hastings supporters of the game'. The committee entered negotiations for the lease of a ground and was hopeful of 'soon getting a footing in the sister town'. By the end of June it was announced that a ground had been secured and a committee was to go to Hastings to get it marked out. This announcement was apparently premature, as in early July it was reported that another committee was to go to Hastings 'in reference to the securing of a football ground in that town'. This latest committee finally met with success and secured a ground 'only three minutes walk from the railway station'.

The League was now optimistic that the game would soon win the support of the public. The first match on the newly acquired ground was to be a Hawke's Bay 'A' vs 'B' trial match on 20 July to enable selectors to pick a representative team. All

the effort put in by the League came to nothing as all sport was cancelled on that day due to bad weather and the match had to be abandoned. There had been considerable interest in the game and had it been played 'there would have been a fair number of spectators notwithstanding the rain'. When it was decided not to play the game 'great disappointment was noticeable amongst the large number of people waiting about'.⁷ Bad weather had not apparently dampened the enthusiasm of would be spectators.

The weather was once again inclement when a month later the League staged a Charity Cup match. This time the game was played, 'so that the public of Hastings [would] have the opportunity of witnessing a League Rugby game'. Then,

[d]espite the unsatisfactory state of the weather on Saturday afternoon, a large crowd of football enthusiasts assembled on Graham and Gebbies ground at Hastings to witness the football contest between Kaitere and Ahuriri clubs.⁸

The ground was in excellent condition and a fast and exciting game eventuated. Following the match a 'meeting of delegates and supporters' was held. There appeared to be plenty of spectator support for rugby league in Hastings and the League hoped to build on this and have two or three teams formed for the next season. It was once again over optimistic and no teams emerged in Hastings.

Early in the 1913 season '[a] goodly crowd of spectators assembled on Messrs Graham and Gebbies paddock' to watch a rugby league match, but it was between two Napier teams. Still the League persevered and another committee was formed to foster the League game. A number of 'natives' had signified their intention of playing, as also did some players from the stillborn Havelock club of the previous season. But support was insufficient and, once again, no league team was formed in Hastings. The only activity in 1914 occurred at the end of the season, shortly after the outbreak of war. The League authorities staged a Challenge Cup match between Ahuriri and Kia Toa to raise money for the Patriotic Fund. It applied to the Rugby Union for permission to use the Recreation Ground for the match and the Union let patriotism outweigh prejudice and gave its permission. It was reported that the attendance 'was not as large as expected, but the fund should benefit by a good amount as a result of the match'.

The League was not deterred, even by the war, in its continued attempts to introduce rugby league to Hastings. In May 1915 it advertised that '[at] the request of numerous intending League players at Hastings, a meeting has been called to take

place at the Grand Hotel...for the purpose of forming a League club'.⁹ Support was sufficient for officials from Napier to return the following week 'to fix up final details for forming a League club'. They were promised 'hearty support from a large number of supporters'. Once again this support proved insufficient to produce a viable club. During six years of effort the Hawke's Bay League was never able to establish the game in Hastings, despite strong spectator support for the games it staged in the town, and the presence of a number of interested players.

The only successful initiative outside the Napier region was at Dannevirke, over 100 kilometres to the south of Napier. A meeting was held on Saturday 1 April 1911 'for the purpose of forming a Dannevirke branch of the Northern Union League'. The meeting considered the possibility of forming a club, and it was asked if there would be other teams. The Chairman replied that he thought there might be a team from Woodville and others from Rua Roa and several other outlying districts. The union was unable to pay its members, who could only expect their travelling expenses.¹⁰ A team from Napier was to play a game on Easter Monday and a subscription was opened to provide a dinner for the visitors. A motion to form a club to be called the Rovers was carried and players were urged to practice assiduously for the match.

Two days later the first executive meeting was held. A letter had been received from the secretary of the Ormondville (rugby union) club asking for someone to attend a meeting it was holding. The club was apparently considering playing rugby league. It was decided to send three Dannevirke members to explain the rules and inform the Ormondville members of other teams that were entering the competition. What eventuated at the meeting is not known, but a new rugby union club, United, was formed and entered a junior team in the Dannevirke Rugby Union competition. Possibly the Ormondville club had split. If this was so then the rugby league section did not survive and nothing further is heard of rugby league from Ormondville.

The Dannevirke Borough Council gave permission for the use of the Recreation Ground for the match against Napier and the League officials decided not to charge admission in order to attract the maximum support. The match created a good deal of interest and 'as it was their first game together they did fairly well' in losing by 15 points to 10. E. Tyne, a former Hawke's Bay rugby union representative

who had been one of the rebel All Black team to tour Britain, played for Dannevirke. '[A] large sprinkling of natives were present' at another meeting of the League at the end of April. 'It was decided to ask the Maoris to form a separate team, and there [was] no doubt that such a team [would] enter the field.'¹¹ The Maori team was formed and called 'Kiatere'. During the season the two clubs played a number of games against each other whilst combining to form a Dannevirke team to play two more matches, home and away, against Napier. There was considerable interest in the match played at Dannevirke and for this game the League charged one shilling admission. The promoters of the new code failed to recruit any other teams from around Dannevirke and in the town itself only the Maori club flourished.

The Rovers club struggled to obtain recruits and were unable to field a full team for several games later in the season. Its recruitment problems continued in the 1912 season and after playing a couple of early games the club found itself unable to field a team. It eventually went out of existence, the last record being of its game against Kaitere on 29 June which was 'postponed on occasion of the wet'. The Kaitere club, on the other hand, was prospering, having experienced an influx of new members, but with no other club to play against in Dannevirke it had to confine itself to playing a few games against Napier teams. It was joined by several Rovers' players to form a Dannevirke team to play a Napier XIII at Dannevirke in late June and at Napier in early July. The earlier match resulted in Dannevirke's only win against Napier, the score being 17 to 8. The last game played by a Dannevirke team took place at Hastings on 24 August, when Kiatere lost to Ahuriri in a Charity Cup match. With no local teams to play against in 1913, most of the Kiatere players went over to rugby union and the attempt to launch rugby league in Dannevirke came to an end.

In the years following the return to New Zealand of the rebel All Black tourists, interest in playing the new form of rugby was not confined only to the large towns. Clubs and players in many small towns and settlements were also interested and numerous attempts were made to start clubs in these places. Unfortunately the chances of success were slim. Small towns did not have the population base needed to support both union and league teams, and unless a local rugby union club was willing to go over to league, there were insufficient players for a league club to be viable.

This situation is seen in Taranaki, where there were players keen to play

league in half a dozen small towns, but never in sufficient numbers to form a team. The solution to this problem, composite teams composed of players from more than one town, was possible as towns in Taranaki were in reasonably close proximity to each other.

This was not the case in Hawke's Bay and the many attempts to form clubs in the small towns of that province failed due to isolation and insufficient players. Hastings, however, was not a small town. Yet despite the persistent efforts of League officials, strong spectator interest and players keen on taking up the game, it proved impossible to establish a league club there. Hastings was the service centre for the large sheep stations of the region and its main businesses were service industries associated with them. The station owners dominated the social life of the town and their support of rugby union could well have been the one of the reasons for this failure. With its failure to establish a presence outside of a few large towns rugby league ceased to be a threat to the hegemony of rugby union and became marginalised sport.

Notes

1. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 8 April 1912, p.3.
2. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 15 May 1913, p.3.
3. *Marlborough Express*, 30 September 1912, p.5.
4. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 6 April 1914, p.3.
5. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 17 May 1913, p.4. (Supp)
6. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 4 July 1914, p.6.
7. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 27 July 1912, p.4. (Supp)
8. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 26 August 1912, p.3.
9. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 13 May 1915, p.6.
10. *Dannevirke Evening News*, 3 April 1911, p.3.
11. *Dannevirke Evening News*, 24 April 1911, p.5.

Chapter Twelve

Representative Football

Representative football played an important part in the early years of rugby league. Rugby union representative footballers took an active part in launching the game in most provinces. The inability to form clubs in Taranaki meant that for several years the only rugby league played in that province was by a representative side. In Nelson and Marlborough, with only a small number of clubs, representative football, and trials to select representative teams, considerably increased the number of games played. Even in Hawke's Bay and Wanganui, where club competitions were played, representative football was important in maintaining the credibility of the game.

Representative rugby league was popular with superior players as it gave them the opportunity to compete at a higher level in a game considered by many to be faster and more skillful than rugby union. Representative football was also popular with spectators. Matches against other provinces, and particularly against touring sides from Australia and Britain, attracted large crowds and were an important source of revenue for the various Leagues.

Rugby league was launched in four provinces by representative matches played by teams of rugby union converts, many also representative players, against touring Auckland sides. Taranaki was the first of the central provinces in which the game was played. A team containing five local rugby union representatives, Adam Lile, a rebel All Black tourist, and other players who had shown exceptional form that season, was announced to play an Auckland representative team in New Plymouth on Thursday 17 September, 1908. Despite Rugby Union efforts to sabotage the game, it went ahead, albeit on an obscure ground where, '[d]espite the very unpleasant, wet, weather...about five or six hundred spectators assembled...to witness the match'¹. Although it was their first game of rugby league, the Taranaki side won by the narrow margin of five points to three. Taranaki lost the return match, played in Auckland on Saturday 10 October, by an equally narrow margin of 22 points to 18.

Rugby league was not played in either Wanganui or Hawke's Bay until the 1910 season. In Wanganui a team dominated by players from the Pirates rugby union

club, and including six representative players, met an Auckland representative side at Cook's Gardens on Thursday 22 September. The home side put on a strong display, despite it being their first game of rugby league, only losing by the narrowest of margins. The match was played with a strong north-westerly gale blowing, which restricted the crowd, but even so between seven and eight hundred spectators witnessed the match. The same Auckland tourists played a Hawke's Bay team at the Napier Recreation Ground on Saturday 8 October to launch rugby league in that province. The Hawke's Bay team, which contained several rugby union representative players, was beaten by 19 points to 14 before 'a large body of spectators'.

Nelson was the only province where representative football was not used to introduce rugby league. The game had already been played for two seasons before the first representative game took place at the end of the 1910 season. A number of practice matches and trials preceded this match to make the Nelson players more familiar with the new game. The match was against the same Auckland touring team and was played at Trafalgar Park on Wednesday 5 October. There was a 'fair attendance' of spectators, despite heavy showers and squalls which 'must have kept numbers away'. Auckland won the match by 24 points to 13.

The province latest in taking up rugby league was Marlborough, where a representative team, including seven local rugby union representatives, played teams from Wellington and Nelson at the end of the 1912 season. The games were extensively advertised and strong spectator support was anticipated for the first games of rugby league in the province. However spectator support was poor at both games. The only other game played by the Marlborough representatives was an away match at Nelson early in the 1913 season.

In all provinces except Marlborough, and to a lesser extent Taranaki, representative football generated considerable spectator interest and support. Taranaki's second season of rugby league was again restricted to three representative matches. Two were against Auckland, home and away. The home match at New Plymouth excited considerable interest, with trains' departure from New Plymouth delayed until after the match and a special train run from Hawera. Fifteen hundred spectators witnessed the match. The third match was at Wellington where Taranaki beat the home side by 22 points to 18.

No rugby league was played during 1910, but the game was revived in the 1911 season with a representative team playing matches against Wanganui, Wellington, Nelson and Auckland. The Wellington match, played at New Plymouth, attracted only 'a fair attendance'. The other home match was played at the small town of Eltham where, despite a crowd of 600 spectators, attendance was described as 'hardly up to expectations'. Three games were played in 1912. Taranaki and a South Taranaki selection both lost their games in Wanganui, but the main game was against a touring New South Wales team.

More games were played in 1913, Wanganui and Auckland were met at home and away, and Canterbury and New South Wales were faced at home. Eltham again hosted a game, against Wanganui, but rain and hail made the ground very heavy and caused a fall in the temperature so that the attendance was 'only fair.' The Canterbury match, played in New Plymouth, was reported as 'being eagerly looked forward to by a large proportion of the football loving public. There [being] not a few, even in Taranaki, where the game has not flourished as it has in other provinces, who claim that the new style of play has many points of advantage over the Rugby game'.² The game attracted between 500 and 600 spectators. The Auckland match, played in glorious weather and with the prospect of a fast, open game, was not sufficient to draw a large attendance and only about 300 spectators attended. The 1914 representative season was curtailed by the outbreak of war and only three matches were played, against Wanganui and Auckland away and against Great Britain at home.

Nelson's first representative match was played in 1910. The next season Nelson undertook a three match tour of the North Island, playing Auckland, Taranaki and Wanganui. With no home matches, this tour was important as a means of attracting players to the game. North Island provinces were reluctant to undertake trips to the South Island and the only northern province to play in Nelson was Wanganui. It undertook a two match tour early in the 1912 season playing Nelson in Nelson and Golden Bay at Takaka. The gate for the Nelson match was £13/17/6, suggesting an attendance of 200 to 300 spectators. The match at Takaka, only a small town, attracted a large crowd and the visitors were given a great reception. Still in 1912, Nelson sent representative teams to play in Wellington, Marlborough and

Takaka (where the Golden Bay team beat them by 42 points to six before a large crowd even though the weather was 'doubtful').

The 1913 season was a busy one for the Nelson representative team, despite still not being able to attract North Island teams. Golden Bay was played three times, Marlborough once, and another North Island tour was undertaken, with games played at Auckland and Hamilton. Early in the season Nelson travelled to the small settlement of Motueka to meet a Golden Bay team and 'to give the Motueka and Riwaka players a chance of seeing the game played'. A crowd of 200 to 300 spectators watched the match. Marlborough were then entertained at Nelson and about 500 spectators witnessed 'a brilliant exhibition of passing by the Nelson backs' which clearly outclassed the visitors, who lost by 35 points to none. For their second match against Golden Bay, the Nelson team travelled on the '*Wairoa*', which made a special trip across the Bay, leaving at 6 o'clock in the morning and returning the same night. The representative season ended on a high note with the visit of the New South Wales touring team.

Both Wanganui and Hawke's Bay had robust representative programmes, playing each other on a regular basis. Wanganui also played Taranaki each season and Hawke's Bay used representative fixtures to help the game to expand. Wanganui's three home matches in 1911 all attracted good crowds. Against Taranaki, 'notwithstanding the strong counter attraction' of the College vs Waverley rugby union game, fully 1000 spectators watched Wanganui win by 19 points to eight. A cold southerly wind probably affected the attendance at the Hawke's Bay match, but there was still 'a fair crowd, quite 1,000', and 700 spectators took advantage of the fine weather to watch Wanganui easily beat Nelson.

The representative team started the 1912 season with a trip to the South Island, playing matches in Golden Bay and Nelson, then hosting Taranaki in Wanganui. 'The weather conditions could not have been worse' for this game with 'very heavy rainfall in the morning and...some severe rain squalls in the afternoon, which naturally seriously affected the attendance on Cook's Gardens. Still the grandstand was filled with interested spectators'.³ The game with Hawke's Bay was also affected by the weather conditions 'it being very cold with rain threatening'. There was, nevertheless, a fair attendance of spectators. The next two matches

attracted 'very satisfactory attendances and the season ended with a visit by the touring New South Wales team.

Only four representative games were played in 1913. At home the Wanganui vs Taranaki match 'drew a big crowd of spectators'. Two away games were played, against Hawke's Bay and Taranaki, the season again ending with a visit by the touring New South Wales team. All four representative games in 1914 were played in Wanganui, attendances at the Taranaki, Manawatu and Hawke's Bay games being described as 'fair'. The visit by the tourists from Great Britain was the highspot of the season.

The first season of rugby league in Hawke's Bay was 1911 and a representative team played home and away matches against Wanganui. Also a Maori team played Auckland and a representative team played two matches at Dannevirke to help the newly established sub-league there. A representative team again played in Dannevirke early in the 1912 season and travelled to Auckland and Wanganui to play away matches. The New South Wales tourists were played at Napier, as was a Canterbury representative team. Hawke's Bay travelled to Auckland once more in the 1913 season and entertained Wanganui, Poverty Bay and New South Wales at Napier. About 1,000 spectators watched the Wanganui match, whilst about 1,500 turned out in beautifully fine weather to witness the match against Poverty Bay. Poverty Bay was a sub-league formed at Gisborne with help from visiting teams from Napier.

The 1914 season started with a visit by the Wellington representative team, who won by 18 points to nine before 1,000 spectators Gate takings were £34/15/6. The Great Britain tourists played later in the season and in early August the Hawke's Bay representative team undertook a tour, playing Canterbury at Christchurch, Wanganui and Wellington. Unfortunately it was 'a disaster from the financial point of view mainly due to the fact that War was declared right in the middle of the tour, the public quite naturally being unable to settle down to sport of any kind'.⁴ The League suffered a loss of £80.

Touring teams from overseas proved to be a big attraction and drew large crowds. In 1912 a New South Wales team played Wanganui, where 'attracted, no doubt, by the reputation of the visitors for brilliant play, and also out of curiosity, the

public rolled up in force, the attendance being very large'.⁵ The tourists played Taranaki at New Plymouth where 'fully a thousand people wended their way to the Park in spite of the early hour and threatening rain.'⁶ Whilst in Napier the 'public rolled up in a great crowd to view this new game - the game that had caused all the talk'.⁷ An interesting point was raised by the rugby union correspondent of the New Plymouth newspaper. After remarking that rugby league was a fast and spectacular game needing highly trained and fit men, he went on to say that 'the fact of the matter is that the game is too fast for ordinary club football'.⁸

Another New South Wales team toured in 1913, playing Taranaki, Wanganui, Hawke's Bay and Nelson. The Taranaki game was played at Hawera to promote the game in the south of the province. The railways charged excursion fares from New Plymouth and delayed the departure of trains from Hawera until after the match. Well over a thousand enthusiastic spectators witnessed the match. At Wanganui the game was played in steady rain. 'This had the effect of keeping many away from the match although the attendance in the circumstances was good.' The Hawke's Bay match, on the other hand, was played in 'delightful weather' and was watched by a crowd of 4,000 spectators. The match against Nelson was a major event for the province. On arrival the visitors were given a civic reception at the Council Chambers and then taken on a trip to the country. The Mayor called for a half-holiday to be observed on the afternoon of the match. Trains leaving Nelson were delayed to enable country visitors to see the whole game. About 1,500 spectators witnessed the match, which the tourists won easily by 66 points to two. 'It was not expected that the Nelson representatives would be a match for such a team', but the demonstration given by the visitors was anticipated to 'have a good effect on the game in Nelson'.⁹ The next day a large number of locals gave the tourists a hearty send off as their steamer moved away from the wharf.

In 1914 a Great Britain team toured New Zealand and matches against Hawke's Bay, Taranaki and Wanganui were on its itinerary. The Hawke's Bay game at Napier created great interest and spectators came from all parts of the province. The Rugby Union, realising that it could not compete, cancelled all games in Napier and on a 'beautifully fine' afternoon between four and six thousand spectators witnessed the match.¹⁰ The Taranaki League took its match against the British to the

small town of Eltham to attract spectators from central Taranaki. The railways charged excursion fares from New Plymouth and Hawera, and spectators were even expected from Wanganui as the noon train from there would reach Eltham in time for the game. The efforts of the Taranaki officials were rewarded as a crowd of 2,000 witnessed the game.¹¹ The British team sailed down the Wanganui river for their game against the locals. Their visit created considerable excitement and the team was given a civic reception. On the evening following the match they were entertained at a banquet by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Societies. The weather outlook for the match was 'unpromising and when the match commenced steady rain was falling and it continued for the opening quarter of an hour. Nevertheless there was a good attendance the crowd probably numbering between two thousand and 2500.'¹²

As well as giving players the opportunity of playing for their province against touring teams from overseas, rugby league also provided them with the chance of representing New Zealand at a higher level. The 1912 and 1913 tourists from New South Wales and the Great Britain tourists of 1910 and 1914 all played internationals against New Zealand teams, whilst New Zealand teams toured Australia in the years 1909 to 1913. In the early days of rugby league there was not the big gap in playing standards that developed later and players from all provinces were represented in New Zealand test teams. Twenty players from the central provinces played for their country in the years prior to the Great War, eight from Hawke's Bay, five from Taranaki, five from Nelson and two from Wanganui.¹³

Representative football provided the better player with the opportunity to play more games and to test himself against players of a similar standard. It also gave him the chance to represent his country both at home and in Australia. Representative football, particularly against overseas sides, proved a popular attraction and large crowds drawn to such matches provided much needed revenue for the fledgling Leagues. The chance to play representative football was also an added incentive to players contemplating taking up rugby league.

Notes

1. Taranaki Herald, 18 September 1908, p.7.
2. *Taranaki Herald*, 13 August 1913, p.7.
3. *Wanganui Herald*, 3 June 1912, p.6.
4. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 13 April 1915, p.3.
5. *Wanganui Herald*, 19 September 1912, p.7.
6. *Taranaki Herald*, 30 August 1912.
7. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 12 September 1912, p.3.
8. *Taranaki Herald*, 31 August 1912.
9. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 25 September 1913, p.3.
10. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 20 July 1914, pp.3.
11. *Taranaki Herald*, 24 July 1914, p.4.
12. *Wanganui Chronicle*, 31 July 1914, p.3.
13. Bernard Wood, editor, *New Zealand Rugby League Annual 1975 -2001*, Wellington: Publisher, Bernie Wood.

Hawke's Bay

J.Banks, Britain 1914, J.Barclay, Britain 1914, T.Cottrall, Australia 1911, H.Duval, New South Wales 1912 and 1913, D.Evans, Australia 1912, J.Johnson, New South Wales 1913, C.Manning, Australia and New South Wales 1913, G.Smith, Australia 1911.

Taranaki

E.Buckland, Australia 1909 and 1911, Britain 1910, G.Hooker, Australia 1912, C.King, Australia 1912 and 1913, New South Wales 1912 and 1913, C.Moir, Australia 1912, J.W.Parker, Britain 1914.

Nelson

C.A.Byrne, Australia 1908, 1909 and 1913, F.Feary, Australia 1911, E.Hannigan, Britain 1910, C.James, Britain 1910, D.Mason, Australia 1911.

Wanganui

J.Hogan, Australia 1913, R. Siddells, Australia 1911, New South Wales 1913.

Chapter Thirteen

Maori involvement

The Maori population of New Zealand in 1910 was just less than 50,000 and still mainly rural. In the provinces being investigated, Taranaki with 2,700 had the largest Maori population, followed by Hawke's Bay with 2,000, Wanganui with 800, Manawatu with 250, Marlborough with 150 and Nelson just over 100.¹ Only in Hawke's Bay were there Maori rugby league teams. In the other provinces the only evidence of Maori participation is from Maori names appearing on team sheets. How many Maori had adopted non-Maori names by this time is not known, but players with Maori names were very few. In Wanganui the largest number of players with Maori names occurred in 1913 (7), in Taranaki only two Maori names were ever recorded, Nelson had one and Marlborough none. One of the Taranaki players, R.Pukere from Waitara, was a representative player as was one Puki, who played in the Manawatu representative side in 1914. A photograph of the Wanganui representative team taken at Napier in 1913 contains one player who appears to be of Maori descent, yet all the players names are non-Maori.

In Hawke's Bay the paucity of players with Maori names in the teams from the towns of Napier and Clive is apparent, only one or two appearing in any year. In 1912 a club from the Petane Pa, about 15 kilometers up the coast from Napier, was formed. The players from this club were overwhelmingly Maori. About 50 with Maori names, as opposed to about 12 with non-Maori, played in the junior and third grade teams, but in the fourth grade team, the schoolboy grade, there were only six Maori names but 15 non-Maori. In 1913, when the club also entered a team in the senior competition, the players in all grades were about evenly divided between those with Maori names and those with non-Maori. In 1914, when Petane had teams in three grades, senior, junior and third, players with non-Maori names outnumbered those with Maori names by nearly two to one. Occasionally first names were given on team sheets and a number of players with non-Maori surnames had Maori first names, suggesting that more Maori played rugby league than the presence of Maori surnames would indicate. Why the ratio of Maori to non-Maori names decreased over the years

is not known, either more non-Maori started playing for the Petane club or more Maori were adopting non-Maori names.

Despite the presence, from 1912, of a strong Maori club, there were few Maori players at representative level. The one representative player in the 1911 season with a Maori name was called Puru and came from Dannevirke. In 1912 two more Dannevirke players, J. Hoppy and Karaitiana, were the only Maori players in the representative teams. In 1913 and 1914 two players from the Petane club, P and S. Hiha (or Heha) were the only Maori representative players.

During the 1911 inaugural season of rugby league the Hawke's Bay League staged a match at McLean Park advertised as Northern Maori vs Dannevirke Maori in response to a request from Dannevirke for a Northern Hawke's Bay Natives vs Southern Hawke's Bay Natives match. The local newspaper reported the match as Dannevirke vs Petane. The game, watched by 'a fair attendance', was won by Dannevirke by a score of 17 points to three. Following this match an Hawke's Bay Maori representative team was selected to tour the North Island. The team lost to Auckland by 22 points to ten and to Waikato by 16 points to seven. It was also to play Taranaki and Wanganui.

The other Maori team to play rugby league in Hawke's Bay was the Kiatere club from Dannevirke. It was one of two clubs involved in the attempt to establish rugby league in Dannevirke and was strongly supported by the Maori community. Waipawa County which included Dannevirke had a Maori population of nearly 500 in 1910, whilst Dannevirke's population was 3,500. Thus Maori were nearly 15 percent of the population, a significant presence. Nearly fifty players appeared for the club in the years 1912 and 1913 and only 11 of these had non-Maori names. The club was well supported and fielded strong sides. The other, non-Maori, club struggled to find players from the Pakeha community and only two players with Maori names appeared in its team lists. Kiatere were invited to take part in the Hawke's Bay Charity Cup competition at the end of the 1912 season and travelled to Hastings, where they lost to Ahuriri by 11 points to three.

Kiatere players were also strongly represented on the Dannevirke representative teams. Fourteen of its players took part in representative games and three were also selected for the Hawke's Bay province representative team. The

collapse of the only other team in Dannevirke left Kiatere with no teams to play against and most of the players returned to rugby union in the 1914 season.

Rugby league was a working class sport which appealed particularly to the growing urban working class. At this time few Maori lived in the towns, so it is no surprise that few played rugby league. In the South Island especially, the small Maori population precluded any significant Maori participation in the game. Maori teams that were formed in Hawke's Bay were successful and well supported by the Maori community. The Petane club was formed around a rural Pa and enjoyed strong support from spectators as well as being enthusiastically embraced by the players. One player was reported to ride '30 miles to play for his club and 30 miles back to his employment after the game'.² The Kiatere club from Dannevirke was formed in a district with a strong Maori presence and had no difficulty in recruiting players. It only disbanded when there were no 'Pakeha' teams for it to play in Dannevirke. Attempts made to form clubs in small rural communities around Hawke's Bay did not succeed, but the fact that the attempts were made indicates that interest was shown by Maori in playing rugby league.

Notes

1. *New Zealand Official Yearbook*, 1910
2. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 12 August 1911, p.4. (Supp)

FIVE

FALLING APART

Chapter Fourteen

Falling Apart

Nineteen-thirteen was a good year for rugby league. In Taranaki, after several years of relying on representative matches to keep the game alive, moves were once again being made to form clubs. In Wanganui the three team senior and junior competitions were well established and it was reported that 'The popularity of the league game is growing and great interest is being taken in the game by spectators.'¹ Rugby league was also attracting large crowds in Hawke's Bay, including 'many of the fair sex, who barracked loudly for the local team' and who, 'judging from the noise made, must have [had] great lungs'.² The League was running senior, junior, third and fourth grade competitions. The Nelson Rugby League was experiencing its best season ever. Its two clubs had established senior teams and an influx of young players had now made possible the formation of junior teams as well. Marlborough was having its first season of rugby league, with two clubs fielding senior teams. Later in the season one of the clubs had sufficient players to launch a junior team as well.

Even in Palmerston North, a representative game played at the end of the season between Wanganui and Wellington was used to introduce rugby league to the town. Following the match, a 'Northern Union League' was formed at a meeting 'attended by a large number of enthusiasts' and a handsome silver trophy, the Marriott-Kennedy Cup, was presented for competition the next season.³ Appearances would suggest that rugby league in the region had overcome its teething troubles and was becoming an established winter sport.

Yet there were worrying signs. League had ceased being played in Dannevirke. Despite strong spectator support, teams in Wanganui and Hawke's Bay, rugby league's two strongest provinces, were having difficulties retaining players. Games were being played between teams fielding less than 13 players and in some cases games could not be played at all as one side was unable to raise a team. In Hawke's Bay, one Napier club was forced to withdraw from competition through having insufficient players.

Nineteen-fourteen was to bring further problems. War started in Europe in

August and New Zealand's entry into the conflict was to seriously affect all sports in New Zealand. However, its affect on rugby league was particularly severe. Although war did not start until towards the end of the football season, the prospect of war had already caused problems. Preparations for war were underway early in the year, with both the territorial army and the cadet corps holding training camps during May. The absence of players at these camps caused the Hawke's Bay Rugby Union to postpone the start of its senior, third and fourth grade competitions for two weeks, whilst the Rugby League postponed all its junior grades, but not its senior competition.⁴ Later in the season the League was again forced to postpone all junior matches in August due to 'expeditionary movements'.⁵

Over 100,000 young men were to serve overseas, causing a huge reduction in player numbers. This player loss was becoming apparent as the season progressed and increased considerably once the war started. In Wanganui the League 'lost a number of their good men', which meant fewer senior players were available and many juniors had to be brought into the senior teams. This left clubs unable to field junior teams and the League was forced to abandon the junior competition. The Taranaki League launched its most ambitious season ever, with a three team senior club competition and an extensive programme of representative matches. Two early season representative games, including the match against Great Britain in July, were played, but only one of the later matches took place. A team weakened by the loss of players already enlisted in the army travelled to Auckland to be heavily defeated by 25 points to 4. Also the final rounds of the club competition were unable to be played.

Rugby league ceased to be played in both Nelson and Marlborough. After a successful 1913 season no rugby league appears to have been played in Nelson. No reason for this has been found and what happened to the players and officials is not known. In Marlborough the League does not appear to have been functioning and it was left to the Awarua club to try to keep the game alive. League inaction allowed the Rugby Union to secure all the grounds in Blenheim, causing the Omaka club, with no ground to play on, to withdraw from the League. Wairau, a newly formed Blenheim club, also withdrew after having to play its first few games at the Spring Creek ground, leaving only one club still functioning. Plans to play end-of-season representative matches did not come to fruition. Under these circumstances many

players went back to rugby union and rugby league ceased to be played. The collapse of rugby league in the two provinces at the start of the 1914 season almost certainly cannot be blamed on the impending war and what caused the sudden change of fortune is not known.

The full effects of wartime conditions on sports became apparent during the 1915 season. Not only had many young men enlisted in the army, but the patriotic mood made it difficult for any man of military age to take part in sport without being accused of shirking his duty. The Pirates rugby union club of Wanganui, for example, felt the need to explain that its 'teams were made up of players who were too young to enlist, married men, and others who were detained against their inclination, by calls of duty of which outsiders knew nothing'.⁶

Rugby union, being a well established sport, was much more able to cope with wartime conditions than was rugby league, a relative newcomer. Some rugby union clubs amalgamated for the duration of the war, but most managed to carry on due to their having strong junior sections. Senior competitions were kept going by promoting junior players and by bringing college and high school teams into the competition. In Wanganui the Collegiate Old Boys' and the Wanganui clubs amalgamated, whilst the Collegiate School team were brought in to make up a four team senior competition. With many juniors playing senior football, the junior grade was abandoned but the third and fourth grades continued. The Hawke's Bay Rugby Union responded in much the same way, with the junior competition being abandoned and many juniors being brought into the senior teams. A six team senior competition was made possible by the inclusion of two school teams, Te Aute College and the Maori Agricultural College. As the war continued, the dominant position of rugby union in schools became of major importance. Each season a group of young men, knowing only rugby union football, left school and moved into the lower grade competitions, thus maintaining the strength of rugby union.

Prior to the start of the 1915 season a meeting of delegates of the Taranaki Rugby League was held at Inglewood on Thursday 22 April. Officers elected were Patron, Mr B.Dive, president Mr V.J.Latham, secretary /treasurer, Mr W.J.Perrett and a ten member management committee with delegates from Mangatoki, New Plymouth, Kaponga, Waitara, Eltham and Stratford. The League appeared to be in

good health.

A good deal of discussion took place as to the advisability of playing cup fixtures [during the season]. Finally it was decided that as so many league footballers [would] be fighting in the trenches at any moment, it would be unfair to continue the cup fixtures, but a few friendly games and representative matches [would] be played to keep the game going.

[It was also decided that] the future prospects cannot be considered this year, on account of the unfortunate international war. We consider it would be advisable to play as little as possible this season; just sufficient to keep the men in good trim. The finances of the league are very satisfactory. Our assets amount to £20 and our liabilities are nil.⁷

It was then decided to send a touring team to play Manawatu, Wellington, Canterbury and Hawke's Bay during the season. This showed the members of the League to be in an optimistic frame of mind, despite the war. They appear to have expected an early end to the war, enabling things to return to normal for the 1916 season, with a few friendly games plus some representative fixtures being sufficient to tide things over for 1915. They underestimated the seriousness of the situation. Some friendly games may have been played, but there were to be no representative games. It was to be three more years before the war ended and the Taranaki League did not survive.

The Wanganui Rugby League held its annual general meeting in May 1915 and a healthy financial position, with £25/14/11 assets over liabilities, was reported.

The report went on to say that

owing to a difficulty in obtaining grounds the operations for the year [1914] were not as successful as could be wished. Despite the great crisis the outlook for the game was bright. The League players had responded well to the Empire's call, 26 players having gone to the front.⁸

There [was] an element of doubt in regard to competition matches, but at least one representative match against Taranaki...[was] mooted. The local League, like the hockeyites, were under a great disability in regard to playing areas, and, until a solution is found no great headway can be expected. It is too much to ask every footballer to remain idle, perhaps for several Saturdays in succession, simply for the reason that a place cannot be found for recreative purposes. Certain negotiations [were] in progress however, and it [was] quite possible that the ground difficulty may be got over in a satisfactory manner.⁹

What these negotiations involved is not known, but the League officials were certainly expecting to have a ground available. Whether a competition would have been possible, given the big loss of players to the war, is problematic, but no rugby league was played during 1915. Whether this was due to the lack of a ground, a lack of players, or a combination of both is not known.

Prior to the start of the 1915 season a new rugby league club was formed at

Napier. A 'most successful' meeting was held on Saturday 1 May and a club called Old Boys' was formed. A full slate of officers was elected, 30 new members enrolled, and it was decided to enter teams in all four grades. This proved to be over optimistic and only a senior team was to compete. Player numbers in Hawke's Bay decreased and the advent of a new club was more than offset by the loss of three existing clubs, Clive, Kia Ora and Westshore, and the inability of clubs to field lower grade teams. Only the senior competition survived but it was reduced to three teams, Ahuriri, Petane and Old Boys'. The loss of '130 players [who had] left the district to go to the front' was mentioned by the management committee in its end of the season report. This is the equivalent of ten rugby league teams and the League was only just managing to survive in the face of such losses. It did manage to survive the war, but in a much weakened state and after struggling on for a few seasons finally succumbed.

The efforts to form clubs in Palmerston North during the 1914 season were unsuccessful. Reports appearing in the press in other centres mention four clubs being formed, but nothing of this was reported by Palmerston North papers and no mention was made of any club games being played. On the other hand, regular practices were held and a representative side travelled to Wanganui at the end of the season, where it put up a respectable performance against a much more experienced team. There were players keen to take up the new game and a group of enthusiastic officials, but any further attempts to progress the game in 1915 would have been destined to failure given the wartime conditions. The attempt to launch the game in Palmerston North came to an end.

Only one of the Leagues survived the 1915 season. Rugby league had already ceased to be played in Nelson and Marlborough provinces the previous year. It was unable to carry on in Taranaki and Wanganui. Attempts to start the game in Palmerston North came to an end, and it was only in Hawke's Bay that rugby league survived.

Rugby league was adversely affected by the war in a number of ways. Like all sports, it lost many of its senior players to the army. But it also lost many potential new players, as it had in the past relied on converts from rugby union to bolster player numbers. These possible converts were now serving overseas with the armed forces. The exclusion of rugby league from schools meant also that it was denied the opportunity of augmenting its player numbers by having ex-schoolboys moving into

its lower grades. Young lads fresh from school and knowing only rugby union would be unlikely to take up what was to them a virtually unknown sport when they were being courted by the Rugby Union. These factors meant that rugby league was not only losing players and potential players to the army, but was denied access to the only possible source of new players, ex-schoolboys.

Rugby league not only suffered a loss of players, it also lost officials that it was not able to replace. Being a recently introduced sport in New Zealand, rugby league had not had time to build up a base of older ex-players able to step in and take over administrative duties when the younger officials went to the war. Rugby union, on the other hand, being a long established sport, could call on a large body of older supporters and had no difficulty in maintaining its organisational infrastructure intact throughout the war years.

Notes

1. *Wanganui Herald*, 29 May 1913, p.7.
2. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 28 June 1913, p.4. (Supp)
3. *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 9 September 1913, p.6.
4. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 30 April 1914, p.3, 14 May 1914, p.3, 16 May 1914, p.4. (Supp)
5. *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 14 August 1914, p.6.
6. *Wanganui Chronicle*, 18 May 1915, p.3.
7. *Taranaki Herald*, 24 April 1915, p.7.
8. *Wanganui Chronicle*, 13 May 1915, p.8.
9. *Wanganui Chronicle*, 15 May 1915, p.8

Chapter Fifteen

Conclusion

The years preceding the Great War were ones of social unrest in New Zealand. A paradigm shift in the attitudes of many working people was taking place. They were no longer prepared to accept their traditional roles in society. To achieve a better life for themselves and their families, they looked for alternative remedies to those offered in the past by politicians and employers. As well as challenging political and industrial authority, many were also willing to challenge traditional authority in sport by defying the New Zealand Rugby Union and introducing the league game to New Zealand.

Conditions were very favourable for the launching of rugby league in 1908. The game had never been played in New Zealand but it had been much discussed amongst rugby players in the years following the return of the 'official' All Blacks from the 1905 - 06 tour of Britain. These rugby players had taken the opportunity to see for themselves the new rugby being played. They were favourably impressed by the speed and skill of the game, and believed that the new rules made for a much better form of rugby. Many rugby officials also came to accept that the new rules much improved the game, and feared for the future of rugby union if ever rugby league was introduced into New Zealand.

Rugby league, therefore, was seen as a threat to rugby union even before it was played in New Zealand. Many rugby players, especially representative players, were keen to try the new rugby, and many applied to join the proposed rebel All Black tour when it was first mooted in 1907. The success of the tour provided valuable publicity for the game and ensured that when rugby league was finally launched in New Zealand in 1908 it already had a reputation of being a 'better' game than rugby union, a public eager to see the game played, and players keen to try the new rugby for themselves.

Analysis of the occupations of league players and officials in the central districts indicate that it was much more a working-class sport than rugby union. Whilst drawing players from all walks of life, the administration of union was firmly in

hands of the middle class. Rugby league, on the other hand, was overwhelmingly a working class sport. Not only were most players from the working class, but many of its officials also were working men. Hardly any players were from the middle class, and even its middle-class officials appear to often have had working-class backgrounds, being small shopkeepers, publicans and self-employed tradesmen.

Rugby Union authorities in the central provinces were caught unawares by the extent of the support for the new game and took time to react to the threat to their game. Before they recovered and began their fight back, the rugby league enthusiasts had successfully launched the new rugby code. The New Zealand Rugby Union chose to fight rugby league not on its merits as a game, but on the spurious claim that it was a professional sport. In doing this it adopted, and attempted to enforce, the rules on professionalism of the English Rugby Union. This entailed attempting to deny rugby league players access to grounds, banning for life players who had taken part in a game of rugby league, rigorously enforcing the exclusion of the game from schools and denouncing as professionals all who played rugby league.

These tactics caused some problems for rugby league in the central provinces. The game in their region was as amateur as was rugby union, as its promoters never ceased maintaining, but Rugby Union propaganda prevailed, and rugby league was saddled with the social opprobrium of being a professional sport. The efforts of the New Zealand Rugby Union to have the use of publicly owned grounds denied to rugby league, and its successful campaign to have rugby league excluded from state, as well as private, schools created further problems.

Had the Rugby Union been able to enforce the English Union's rules on professionalism the consequences might well have been the the collapse of rugby union locally, with most players banned and most grounds forbidden. Fortunately for the union game, Unions, and particularly local clubs, in the central provinces, took a much more pragmatic approach and made sure that most players who had tried league and wanted to return to union were able do so. With this being the situation many rugby union players in the central region were willing to give rugby league a try, but many did not persevere with the game and went back to union.

This high turnover of players was an ongoing problem for the Leagues as it created a constant need to train new players, and made building up a core of

experienced players a slow and difficult task. It was the more skillful players, those capable of playing representative football, who tended to stay with, and develop a loyalty to, the game. They were encouraged by the successful promotion of representative games, both against other provinces and against touring teams from Australia and Great Britain, by the Leagues.

The perception that rugby league was just the other rugby code was widely held in New Zealand. To rugby union players rugby union *was* rugby; the game they had played at school, then in the junior grades, on to senior football and, for some, representative honours. Rugby league players shared this background. They too had played rugby union at school and through the grades, only later had they chosen to play the other rugby, secure in the belief that they could always go back to their original game. To break this mindset rugby league authorities needed to encourage a commitment to rugby league as a different game to rugby union, a game to be played for itself and not just as an alternative to rugby union. This they found difficult to do, and an increasing number of rugby league players drifted back to rugby union.

Despite the difficulties created by the hostile attitude of the Rugby Union, league enthusiasts in the central provinces had considerable achievements to their credit. To introduce a new sport, and to have it played by large numbers of sportsmen in just a few years was no mean achievement. League gave working men the opportunity to successfully undertake an administrative role in sport, previously the domain of the middle class. It also gave many talented footballers the chance to fully develop their abilities by playing a faster, more skillful, form of rugby, and by organising an extensive programme of representative games it gave them plenty of opportunities to demonstrate their talents. League also provided the public with another sport to watch, one which rivalled rugby union in spectator appeal, particularly when Australian and British teams were on tour.

League was most successful in large towns, such as Napier and Wanganui, which had substantial working class populations. Attempts made to expand the game to smaller towns and rural areas met with mixed success. Smaller populations were often only sufficient to support a single club, and where league was successful it was at the expense of an existing union club, as was the case at Eltham. Maori, at this time predominantly rural dwellers, showed an interest in taking up the new game. A

number of attempts to form teams in rural Hawke's Bay Maori communities were made and two successful clubs, Petane and Kiatere, were established.

The 1914 season was one of mixed fortunes for rugby league. Club football ceased to be played in Nelson and Marlborough. Wanganui and Hawke's Bay, with smaller numbers players taking up the game, had fewer teams. Taranaki, on the other hand, was able to launch a club competition for the first time, and efforts were underway in Palmerston North to start rugby league in that city. What could have been temporary setbacks assumed much greater significance in August with the entry of New Zealand in the Great War.

The Nelson League was still active in 1915, and represented at the New Zealand League annual general meeting in that year, but attempts to keep league alive there came to nothing under wartime conditions. Marlborough had plans to maintain interest amongst players by organising a series of games for a representative team, but again these plans were thwarted by the war. The situation in Wanganui worsened in 1915. The League was unable to obtain a ground and club football ceased. The League remained active and was represented at the New Zealand League annual general meeting that year, but, once again, wartime conditions made it impossible to restart league football. The Taranaki League's club competition did not take place, and plans to play representative games to keep the game alive did not eventuate. In Palmerston North, efforts to start the game were continuing and arrangements were made to send a representative team to play Hawke's Bay. This game did not take place and the league initiative came to an end.

Of the six central provincial Leagues only one survived the upheavals of the Great War. Even this League, Hawke's Bay, emerged from the war years in such a weakened state that it was able to struggle on for only a few more years.

All sports were seriously affected by the war, but rugby league, being a relatively new sport in New Zealand, suffered most of all. The loss of players during the war was a serious problem for all codes. However, rugby league lost not only players but also the potential players, those who, in the past, had usually been recruited from rugby union. Compounding the problem was the fact that, unlike rugby union, rugby league was not played in schools. Rugby union clubs were able to keep going by recruiting school leavers. Rugby league clubs, on the other hand, had

difficulty interesting youths in playing a sport in which they had had no previous experience.

Arguably of even more importance in the longer term was the loss of officials, and potential officials, to the war. Rugby league had been started mainly by rugby union players wanting to experience the new game and many of its officials came from amongst these young men. Many went to war: some did not return, and those who did would most likely have had other priorities. Rugby league could not make good these losses. With few men available to take up administration duties, and with the game now virtually unknown to a new generation of rugby union players, the task of relaunching the game in the post war era proved to be too great and rugby league ceased to be played in the central provinces.

Appendix A

OCCUPATIONS OF TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY FOUR RUGBY LEAGUE OFFICIALS FOUND IN THE 1911 ELECTORAL ROLLS

There is a group of occupations which it is difficult to assign to a category as those listed could be either in business on their own account (therefore middle class), or wage earners. I have allocated them somewhat arbitrarily as skilled worker or middle class as follows to ensure equal numbers in each class.

Skilled workers- 4 printers, 3 saddlers, 2 coachbuilders, 2 watchmakers, a signwriter.

Middle class- 3 tailors, 3- bakers, 2 butchers, 2 hairdressers, a barber

<u>Unskilled Worker</u>	<u>Skilled Worker</u>	<u>Non-manual Worker</u>	<u>Middle Class</u>
Billiard marker	Blacksmith (3)	Agent	Auctioneer (2)
Bottler	Boilermaker	Bailiff	Baker (4)
Carrier	Bricklayer	Clerk (7)	Barrister
1 Carter	Cabinet maker	Bank Clerk	Billiard room
Dredgehand	Carpenter (7)	Postal clerk	proprietor
Driver	Coachbuilder (2)	Public hospital clerk	Builder
Expressman	Cooper (2)	Solicitor's clerk	Butcher
Factory worker (2)	Decorator	Club steward	Butcher's shopkeeper
Farm assistant	Engine driver	Collector of customs	Pork butcher
Fisherman	Engineer	Commercial traveller	Cab proprietor
Groom	Engraver	Traveller	Catholic priest (4)
Gardener (4)	Express driver	Customs and	Chief postman
Labourer (30)	Fellmonger	forwarding agent	Clothier
Miner	Fitter	Insurance agent (3)	Clothier and mercer
Platelayer	French polisher	Seedsman	Clothier and outfitter
Railway employee	Joiner (2)	Wool classer	Coal merchant
Stevedore	Painter (6)		Commission agent
Storeman (5)	Plasterer		Contractor
Warden	Plumber (2)		Cycle agent
Warehouseman	Printer (4)		Dentist (3)
Woodcutter	Saddler (3)		Doctor
Wool assistant	Signwriter		Draper (4)
	Shoemaker		Farmer (9)
	Stonemason		Sheep farmer (3)
	Tinsmith		Flaxmill manager
	Turncock		Grocer (4)
	Turner		Hairdresser (2)
	Watchmaker (3)		Barber (2)
			Horse trainer (2)
			Hotel keeper (11)
			Hotel proprietor (3)
			Publican
			Lawyer (2)
			Livery stable
			proprietor
			Manager
			Master mariner
			Merchant
			Outfitter
			Solicitor
			Storekeeper
			Surgeon
			Tailor (3)
			Technical teacher
			Turf accountant

Appendix B

TARANAKI RUGBY LEAGUE FIXTURES AND RESULTS 1908 - 1914

1908

Thursday 17 September	representative	Taranaki 5 Auckland 3	New Plymouth
Saturday 10 October	representative	Auckland 21 Taranaki 18	Auckland

1909

Saturday 7 August	representative	Auckland 7 Taranaki 8	Auckland
Thursday 16 September	representative	Taranaki 11 Auckland 27	New Plymouth
October	representative	Wellington 18 Taranaki 22	Wellington

1911

Saturday 1 July	representative	Wanganui 19 Taranaki 8	Wanganui
Thursday 10 August	representative	Taranaki 15 Wellington 23	New Plymouth
Thursday 31 August	representative	Taranaki 16 Nelson 8	Eltham
Saturday 2 September	representative	Auckland 26 Taranaki 15	Auckland

1912

Monday 3 June	representative	Wanganui 19 Taranaki 15	Wanganui
Saturday 24 August	representative	Wanganui 27 South Taranaki 13	Wanganui
Thursday 29 August	representative	Taranaki 0 New South Wales 24	New Plymouth

1913

Tuesday 3 June	friendly	Eltham/Stratford 30 New Plymouth/Waitara 12	Eltham
Thursday 3 July	trial	South Taranaki 3 North Taranaki 10	Eltham
Thursday 10 July	representative	Taranaki 11 Wanganui 2	Eltham
Saturday 12 July	representative	Auckland 24 Taranaki 8	Auckland
Thursday 24 July	friendly	Eltham 12 Kaponga/Opunaki 22	Kaponga
Saturday 2 August	representative	Wanganui 14 Taranaki 12	Wanganui
Thursday 14 August	representative	Taranaki 9 Canterbury 10	New Plymouth
Wednesday 27 August	representative	Taranaki 5 New South Wales 16	Hawera
Thursday 25 September	representative	Taranaki 21 Auckland 11	New Plymouth

1914

Thursday 21 May	friendly	New Plymouth vs Eltham (cancelled motor vehicle breakdown)	New Plymouth
Thursday 28 May	friendly	Mangatoki lost to Eltham	Mangatoki
Wednesday 3 June	friendly	Eltham 18 New Plymouth 9	Eltham
Thursday 11 June	championship	Eltham 18 Mangatoki 10	Eltham
Thursday 18 June	championship	New Plymouth 13 Eltham 6	New Plymouth
Saturday 27 June	representative	Wanganui 3 Taranaki 16	Wanganui
Thursday 16 July	trial	Taranaki A 19 Taranaki B 5	Eltham
Thursday 23 July	representative	Taranaki 11 Great Britain 45	Eltham
Thursday 6 August	friendly	Eltham vs Mangatoki	Eltham
Saturday 15 August	representative	Auckland 35 Taranaki 4	Auckland

Appendix C

NELSON RUGBY LEAGUE FIXTURES AND RESULTS

1909 - 1913

1909

Saturday 19 June	practice		Warren's Paddock
Saturday 26 June	practice		Victory Square
Saturday 3 July	practice match	Northern vs Hornets	Victory Square
Saturday 17 July	practice		Victory Square
Saturday 14 August	practice match	Hornets 21 Jacksons's Team 3	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 28 August	practice match	Northern vs Hornets	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 11 September	practice match	Hornets vs Rangers	Trafalgar Park

1910

Saturday 7 May	practice match	Alhambra vs Kia Toa	Victory Square
Saturday 14 May	practice match	Alhambra vs Kia Toa	Victory Square
Saturday 28 May	practice match	Alhambra vs Kia Toa	Victory Square
Saturday 4 June	practice match	Alhambra Vs Kia Toa postponed due to bad weather and state of ground	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 11 June	practice		Victory Square
Saturday 18 June	friendly	Alhambra 26 Kia Toa 17	Victory Square
Saturday 25 June	'scratch' game	J.James' Side 21 Cullinane's Side 19	Victory Square
Saturday 1 July	friendly	Alhambra vs Kia Toa abandoned due to bad weather	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 8 July	friendly	Alhambra 15 Kia Toa 9	Victory Square
Saturday 15 July	practice match	Alhambra vs Kia Toa	Victory Square
Saturday 27 July	practice		Victory Square
Saturday 6 August	friendly	Alhambra vs Kia Toa	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 27 August	rep trial		Victory Square
Saturday 17 September	rep trial		Victory Square
Saturday 24 September	practice		Victory Square
Saturday 1 October	practice		Victory Square
Wednesday 5 October	representative	Nelson 13 Auckland 24	Trafalgar Park

1911

Saturday 8 April	friendly	St.Mary's 17 Albion 17	Victory Square
Saturday 22 April	friendly	Albion 15 St.Mary's 12	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 6 May	friendly	Albion 12 St.Mary's 5	Victory Square
Saturday 13 May	trial	to nominate players for Australian tour	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 20 May	practice		Victory Square
Saturday 10 June	medal comp.	called off due to heavy rain	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 17 June	friendly	Albion 16 St.Mary's 18	Victory Square
Saturday 1 July	10-a-side	Albion defeated St.Mary's by big margin	Victory Square
Saturday 8 July	medal comp.	Albion 14 St.Mary's 6	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 15 July	practice		Victory Square
Saturday 22 July	medal comp.	St.Mary's 7 Albion 2	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 29 July	practice		Victory Square
Saturday 5 August	trial	to find players for northern tour	Victory Square
Saturday 12 August	medal comp.	Albion 28 St.Mary's 14	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 19 August	practice		Victory Square
Saturday 26 August	representative	Nelson 12 Auckland 36	Auckland
Thursday 31 August	representative	Nelson 16 Taranaki 8	Eltham
Saturday 2 September	representative	Nelson 7 Wanganui 8	Wanganui

1912

Saturday 6 April	representative	Golden Bay 7 Wanganui 20	Takaka
Monday 8 April	representative	Nelson 6 Wanganui 25	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 18 May	practice		Victory Square

Saturday 25 May	practice	to chose team to play Golden Bay	Victory Square
Saturday 8 June	representative	Nelson 6 Wellington 19	Wellington
Saturday 15 June	Tall Cup game	not played	Victory Square
Saturday 29 June	Tall Cup game	Albion 21 St.Mary's 10	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 6 July	representative	vs Golden Bay cancelled due to bad	
Saturday 13 July	practice	weather. Practice game instead	Victory Square
Saturday 20 July	Tall Cup game	St.Mary's 42 Albion 12	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 27 July	representative	Nelson 7 Golden Bay 27	Takaka
Saturday 10 August	Tall Cup game	St.Mary's beat Albion score not known	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 14 September	club final	Kia Toa 11 Kia Kahu 10 (Golden Bay)	Takaka
Saturday 28 September	Tall Cup final	St.Mary's 5 Kia Toa 12	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 12 October	representative	Nelson 21 Marlborough 0	Blenheim
1913			
Saturday 3 May	representative	Nelson 3 Golden Bay 28	Motueka
Saturday 17 May	friendly	St.Mary's (easy winners) vs Albion	Victory Square
Saturday 24 May	friendly	Albion 27 St.Mary's 17	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 1 June	practice match		Victory Square
Tuesday 3 June	representative	Nelson 35 Marlborough 0	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 7 June	Tall Cup game	seniors Albion 8 St.Mary's 5	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 21 June	representative	Nelson 6 Golden Bay 42	Takaka
Saturday 28 June	Tall Cup game	seniors Albion 8 St.Mary's 7	
Saturday 5 July	trial	for representative matches	Victory Square
	practice match	Junior players vs Senior players	
Saturday 19 July	trial	for representative matches	Victory Square
Saturday 26 July	representative	Nelson 3 Golden Bay 11	Trafalgar Park
	Nelson-Cann Cup	juniors St.Mary's 12 Albion 2	
Wednesday 30 July	rep. practice	Representative team vs Next sixteen	Trafalgar Park
Saturday 2 August	representative	Nelson 2 Auckland 16	Auckland
Wednesday 6 August	representative	Nelson 2 Country Districts 14	Hamilton
Saturday 9 August	seven-a-side	senior final Albion 10 St.Mary's 5	Trafalgar Park
		junior final Albion A 27 St.Mary's 2	
Saturday 30 August	Tall Cup	senior final Albion (substantial win) vs St.Mary's	Trafalgar Park
	Nelson-Cann Cup	juniors Albion 4 St.Mary's 0	
Saturday 13 September	Nelson-Cann Cup	junior final Albion 11 St.Mary's 0	
Saturday 24 September	representative	Nelson 2 New South Wales 66	Trafalgar Park

Appendix D

WANGANUI RUGBY LEAGUE FIXTURES AND RESULTS 1910 - 1914

1910

Thursday 22 September representative Wanganui 14 Auckland 15 Cook's Gardens

1911

Saturday 15 April representative Hawke's Bay 8 Wanganui 9 Napier
 Saturday 1 July representative Wanganui 19 Taranaki 8 Cook's Gardens
 Saturday 5 August representative Auckland 16 Wanganui 8 Auckland
 Thursday 10 August representative Taranaki 15 Wanganui 23 New Plymouth
 Saturday 26 August representative Wanganui 22 Hawke's Bay Cook's Gardens
 Saturday 2 September representative Wanganui 40 Nelson 0 Cook's Gardens
 Saturday 16 September club friendly St.John's vs Eastern Cook's Gardens
 Saturday 30 September club friendly City vs St.John's Cook's Gardens

1912

Saturday 6 April representative Golden Bay 7 Wanganui 28 Takaka
 Monday 8 April representative Nelson 9 Wanganui 28 Nelson
 Saturday 11 May seniors City 21 Eastern 15 Cook's Gardens
 juniors City 10 Eastern 0
 Saturday 18 May seniors St.John's vs Eastern cancelled due
 juniors St.John's vs Eastern to bad weather
 Saturday 25 May seniors St.John's 28 City 11 Cook's Gardens
 juniors St.John's 12 City 0
 Saturday 1 June representative Wanganui 20 Taranaki 15 Cook's Gardens
 Saturday 8 June senior St.John's 18 Eastern 8 Cook's Gardens
 junior St.John's 11 Eastern 0
 Saturday 15 June senior City 19 Eastern 15 Cook's Gardens
 junior City 15 Eastern 0
 Saturday 22 June senior City 8 St.John's 8 Cook's Gardens
 junior St.John's 3 Eastern 0
 Saturday 29 June senior Eastern 19 St.John's 5 Cook's Gardens
 junior City 17 Eastern 0
 Saturday 6 July senior Eastern 11 City 11 Cook's Gardens
 junior City 6 St.John's 5
 Saturday 13 July senior City vs St.John's cancelled due to
 junior City vs Eastern state of grounds
 Saturday 20 July senior City 10 St.John's 5 Cook's Gardens
 junior St.John's 12 Eastern 8
 Saturday 27 July charity match Wanganui A vs Wanganui B Cook's Gardens
 gate to Wanganui Orphanage
 Saturday 3 August representative Wanganui 8 Hawke's Bay 12 Cook's Gardens
 Saturday 10 August rep. trial Wanganui A vs Wanganui B
 junior Eastern 5 City 8 Cook's Gardens
 Saturday 17 August representative Wanganui 14 Wellington 14
 Saturday 24 August representative Wanganui 27 South Taranaki 18 Cook's Gardens
 Thursday 19 September representative Wanganui 24 New South Wales 52 Cook's Gardens

1913

Saturday 10 May senior Eastern 3 City 16 Cook's Gardens
 junior St.John's Eastern not played
 Saturday 17 May senior St.John's 5 Eastern 17 Cook's Gardens
 junior City 0 St.John's 17
 Saturday 31 May senior City 28 St.John's 19 Cook's Gardens
 junior Eastern 2 City 9
 Tuesday 3 June representative Wanganui 6 Hawke's Bay 23 Napier
 Saturday 7 June senior City 16 Eastern 22 Cook's Gardens
 junior Eastern 0 St.John's 21

Saturday 14 June	senior	Eastern 20 St.John's 10	Cook's Gardens
	junior	St.John's 16 City 8	
Saturday 21 June	senior	St.John's 12 City 18	Cook's Gardens
	junior	City forfeited to Eastern	
Saturday 28 June	senior	Eastern 16 City 7	Cook's Gardens
	junior	St.John's 25 Eastern 2	
Saturday 5 July	senior	St.John's 7 Eastern 8	Cook's Gardens
	junior	City forfeited to St.John's	
Wednesday 9 July	representative	Wanganui 2 Taranaki 11	Eltham
Saturday 12 July	senior	City 17 St.John's 12	Cook's Gardens
	junior	Eastern vs City not played	
Saturday 19 July	senior cup final	Eastern 11 City 5	Cook's Gardens
Saturday 26 July	senior	Premiers 21 Combined 8	
Saturday 2 August	representative	Wanganui 14 Taranaki 12	Cook's Gardens
	junior	St.John's 19 Combined 0	
Saturday 16 August	senior challenge	Eastern 5 City 3	Cook's Gardens
Thursday 11 September	representative	Wanganui 9 New South Wales 44	Cook's Gardens

1914

Monday 13 April	friendly	St.John's 20 Palmerston North 0	Palmerston North
Saturday 30 May	senior	St.John's 13 Eastern 10	Racecourse
Saturday 6 June	senior	St.John's 13 City 3	Racecourse
Saturday 13 June	senior	Eastern 15 City 15	Drill Hall
Saturday 20 June	senior	Eastern 11 St.John's 7	Cook's Gardens
Saturday 27 June	representative	Wanganui 3 Taranaki 16	Cook's Gardens
Saturday 4 July	senior	City 3 St.John's 14	Cook's Gardens
Saturday 11 July	rep trial	Wanganui A vs Wanganui B	Cook's Gardens
Saturday 18 July	representative	Wanganui 18 Manawatu 6	Cook's Gardens
Thursday 30 July	representative	Wanganui 12 Great Britain 57	Cook's Gardens
Thursday 6 August	representative	Wanganui 15 Hawke's Bay 21	Cook's Gardens

Appendix E

HAWKE'S BAY RUGBY LEAGUE FIXTURES AND RESULTS 1910-1915

1910

Saturday 8 October representative Hawke's Bay 14 Auckland 19 McLean Park

1911

Saturday 8 April	benefit match 10-a-side	City 10 Ahuriri 16 Clive beat Kia Ora	McLean Park McLean Park
Saturday 15 April	representative	Hawke's Bay 8 Wanganui 9	McLean Park
Monday 17 April	representative	Napier 15 Dannevirke 10	Dannevirke
Saturday 29 April	benefit match	Kia Ora/City 31 Clive/Ahuriri 8	McLean Park
Saturday 6 May	senior	City 14 Kia Ora 6	McLean Park
	senior	Ahuriri 16 Clive 10	McLean Park
	junior	Westshore 11 Petane 6	Petane
Saturday 27 May	senior	City 8 Ahuriri 3	McLean Park
	senior	Clive vs City not played, ground unfit	
Saturday 3 June	representative	Napier 15 Dannevirke 2	McLean Park
	junior	Ahuriri vs Westshore	McLean Park
Saturday 10 June	senior	Ahuriri 3 Kia Ora 5	McLean Park
	senior	Clive 5 City 8	Farndon Park (Clive)
	junior	Petane 0 Westshore 5	Petane
Saturday 17 June	senior	Ahuriri 6 City 11	McLean Park
	senior	Clive 16 Kia Ora 2	Farndon Park
	junior	Westshore 0 Ahuriri 9	
Thursday 22 June	friendly	Napier 19 The Port 29	McLean Park
Saturday 24 June	senior	City 10 Kia Ora 3	McLean Park
	senior	Clive 16 Ahuriri 5	Farndon Park
	junior	Westshore vs Kia Ora	
Saturday 1 July	junior	Petane beat Westshore by one point	
Saturday 8 July	senior	Kia Ora 5 Ahuriri 23	McLean Park
	senior	Clive 17 City 10	Farndon Park
	junior	Westshore 19 Kia Ora 0	McLean Park
	junior	Ahuriri 20 Clive 5	Farndon Park
Wednesday 12 July	representative	Napier 7 Dannevirke 6	Dannevirke
Saturday 15 July	senior	Ahuriri 21 Clive 4	Farndon Park
	senior	City 8 Kia Ora 2	Farndon Park
	junior	Petane 13 Kia Ora 0	Farndon Park
	junior	Westshore 17 Clive 7	Farndon Park
Saturday 22 July	senior	City vs Ahuriri not played due to	
	senior	Clive vs Kia Ora state of weather	
	junior	Clive vs Kia Ora not played due to	
	junior	Ahuriri vs Petane state of weather	
Saturday 29 July	senior	Clive 17 Kia Ora 0	Farndon Park
	senior	Ahuriri 24 City 7	Farndon Park
	junior	Ahuriri 8 Kia Ora 0	Farndon Park
	junior	Petane 13 Clive 2	Farndon Park
Saturday 5 August	senior	Ahuriri 8 Kia Ora 5	McLean Park
	senior	Clive 5 City 3	McLean Park
	junior	Clive 7 Kia Ora 5	Farndon Park
	junior	Ahuriri 10 Westshore 7	Farndon Park
Wednesday 9 August	representative	Northern Maori 3 Dannevirke Maori 17	McLean Park
Saturday 12 August	senior	Clive 2 Kia Ora 6	McLean Park
	senior	City forfeited to Ahuriri too few players	
	junior	Kia Ora 23 Ahuriri 5	McLean Park
Saturday 19 August	friendly	City/Clive vs Ahuriri not played teams	did not turn up

Saturday 19 August	junior	Westshore 9 Clive 2	
	junior	Ahuriri vs Petane	Petane
	representative	Hawke's Bay 13 Auckland 17	Auckland
Wednesday 22 August	representative	Hawke's Bay 5 Rotorua 12	Rotorua
Saturday 26 August	junior	Westshore 11 Kia Ora 0	McLean Park
	junior	Petane 16 Clive 11	McLean Park
	representative	Hawke's Bay 3 Wanganui 22	Wanganui
Saturday 2 September	senior	Clive 8 Ahuriri 13	Farndon Park
	senior	City forfeited to Kia Ora too few players	
	junior	Kia Ora 31 Clive 0	Farndon Park
	junior	Ahuriri 9 Westshore 5	Farndon Park
Saturday 9 September	senior	Clive 24 City 0	McLean Park
	senior	Kia Ora 10 Ahuriri 3	McLean Park
	junior	Ahuriri vs Clive	Farndon Park
	junior	Petane vs Kia Ora	Petane
	representative	Hawke's Bay Maori 10 Auckland 22	Devonport
Saturday 16 September	trial	A Representative 15 B Representative 6	McLean Park
	junior final	Ahuriri 26 Petane 0	McLean Park
Saturday 23 September	senior	City forfeited to Ahuriri too few players	
	junior	Ahuriri 17 West shore 6	McLean Park
?	representative	Hawke's Bay Maori 7 Waikato 16	Waikato
Saturday 30 September	senior final	Ahuriri 5 Clive 2	McLean Park

1912

Saturday 20 April	friendly	Clive 18 Kia Ora 2	Farndon Park
Saturday 27 April	senior	Kia Ora 23 Clive 0	McLean Park
Saturday 4 May	junior	Clive 5 Kia Ora 0	McLean Park
	thirds	Petane 4 Westshore 8	Petane
	senior	Ahuriri vs Kia Ora	McLean Park
Saturday 11 May	senior	Clive 10 Ahuriri 7	Farndon Park
	junior	Kia Ora vs City	Farndon Park
	junior	Ahuriri vs Westshore postponed ground rental terms not settled for McLean Park	
		Petane 22 Kia Ora 0	Petane
Saturday 18 May		games postponed-inclement weather	
Saturday 25 May	senior	Clive 29 City 3	Farndon Park
	senior	Ahuriri 7 Kia Ora 17	McLean Park
	junior	Kia Ora 5 Westshore 15	
	junior	Petane 9 Ahuriri 2	Petane
	thirds	Petane 19 Ahuriri 0	Petane
	fourths	Ahuriri 5 Westshore 18	Westshore
Saturday 1 June	senior	no matches due to representative game	
	junior	Ahuriri 4 Westshore 18	
	fourths	Petane 17 Westsore 0	
Monday 3 June	representative	Hawke's Bay 24 Wellington 37	Wellington
Saturday 8 June	senior	Kia Ora 20 City 0	McLean Park
	junior	Petane 11 Westshore 6	McLean Park
	thirds	Westshore 0 Petane 11	
	fourths	Ahuriri 9 Petane 0	
Saturday 15 June	senior	Clive 8 Kia Ora 24	McLean Park
	senior	Ahuriri 11 City 5	McLean Park
Saturday 22 June	senior	City 0 Kia Ora 24	McLean Park
	senior	Ahuriri 17 Clive 5	McLean Park
	junior	Ahuriri beat Westshore	
	thirds	Ahuriri beat Westshore	
	fourths	Ahuriri beat Westshore	

Thursday 27 June	representative	Napier 8 Dannevirke 17	Dannevirke
Saturday 29 June	senior	Ahuriri 5 Kia Ora 15	
	junior	Ahuriri 3 Petane 5	
Saturday 6 July	representative	Napier 13 Dannevirke 0	McLean Park
	thirds	Ahuriri 11 Petane 3	McLean Park
	fourths	Petane vs Ahuriri	
Saturday 13 July	junior	Petane beat Westshore	Petane
Saturday 20 July	rep. trial	abandoned due to bad weather	Hastings
	thirds	Petane vs Westshore	Petane
	fourths	Petane vs Westshore	Petane
Saturday 27 July	junior	Westshore vs Ahuriri did not take place	McLean Park
	thirds	Petane vs Westshore -unfavourable	Petane
	fourths	Petane vs Westshore weather	Petane
	representative	Hawke's Bay 8 Auckland 26	Auckland
Saturday 3 August	friendly	Petane Juniors 9 Combined Seniors 0	McLean Park
	thirds	Petane 6 Ahuriri 3	McLean Park
	fourths	Petane 3 Ahuriri 8	Petane
	representative	Hawke's Bay 12 Wanganui 12	Wanganui
Saturday 10 August	senior	Clive vs City	McLean Park
	senior	Kia Ora 11 Ahuriri 18	McLean Park
	fourths	Westshore vs Petane	
Wednesday 14 August	Charity Cup	Ahuriri 33 Petane 2	McLean Park
Saturday 17 August	senior final	Kia Ora 6 Clive 3	McLean Park
Saturday 24 August	Charity Cup	Ahuriri 11 Kaitere (Dannevirke) 3	Hastings
Saturday 31 August	Charity Cup	Kia Ora 5 Ahuriri 14	McLean Park
	schoolboys	Ahuriri School 9 Napier South School 5	McLean Park
Saturday 7 September	rep. practice	representative team vs select team	
Wednesday 11 S'tember	representative	Hawke's Bay 9 New South Wales 42	Recreation Ground
Saturday 21 September	representative	Hawke's Bay 8 Canterbury 10	McLean Park
	Charity Cup	Havelock 11 Kia Ora 2	McLean Park
1913			
Saturday 3 May	senior	Petane 5 Kia Ora 12	McLean Park
	junior	Petane vs Ahuriri	McLean Park
	thirds	Petane vs Ahuriri	McLean Park
	fourths	Petane vs Ahuriri	McLean Park
Saturday 10 May	senior	Ahuriri 15 Kia Ora 11	Hastings
	junior	Ahuriri vs Petane	Petane
	thirds	Kia Ora vs Petane	Petane
	fourths	Westshore vs Ahuriri	McLean Park
Saturday 17 May	senior	Petane 0 Ahuriri 2	McLean Park
	junior	Ahuriri 8 Westshore 0	McLean Park
	thirds	Westshore forfeited to Petane	Petane
	fourths	Ahuriri 3 Petane 5	McLean Park
Saturday 24 May	senior	Petane 8 Kia Ora 5	
	senior	Ahuriri 24 Clive 3	
	junior	Ahuriri vs Kia Ora	
	junior	Westshore 3 Petane 17	
	thirds	Westshore vs Petane	
	fourths	Ahuriri 0 Westshore 0	
Saturday 31 May	senior	Ahuriri 2 Petane 5	
	senior	Clive 2 Kia Ora 12	
	junior	Ahuriri A 0 Petane 3	
	junior	Westshore 5 Ahuriri B 8	
	fourths	Ahuriri vs Petane	
Tuesday 3 June	representative	Hawke's Bay 23 Wanganui 6	McLean Park
Saturday 7 June	senior	Ahuriri 0 Kia Ora 16	McLean Park

Saturday 7 June	senior	Clive 9 Petane 15	McLean Park
	junior	Ahuriri A vs Ahuriri B	McLean Park
	fourths	Petane vs Westshore	McLean Park
Saturday 14 June	senior	Clive 5 Ahuriri 18	McLean Park
	senior	Kia Ora 8 Petane 10	McLean Park
	junior	Westshore vs Ahuriri A	McLean Park
	junior	Petane vs Ahuriri B	McLean Park
	junior	Petane 5 Ahuriri 27	McLean Park
Saturday 21 June	senior	Kia Ora 8 Clive 8	Farndon Park
	senior	Westshore 8 Ahuriri A 5	
	junior	Petane 16 Ahuriri B 8	
	junior	Petane 5 Ahuriri 6	
	fourths	Petane 9 Clive 3	
	senior	Petane 5 Westshore 15	
Saturday 28 June	junior	Ahuriri A 2 Ahuriri B 3	Gisborne
	junior	Westshore 9 Petane 0	
	fourths	Kia Ora 4 Gisborne 7	
	exhibition	Ahuriri 17 Kia Ora 10	
	senior	Westshore 0 Ahuriri B 7	
Saturday 5 July	junior	Petane vs Ahuriri A	McLean Park
	junior	Westshore 0 Ahuriri 5	McLean Park
	fourths	Westshore 0 Ahuriri 5	McLean Park
	senior	Clive 5 Ahuriri 8	McLean Park
Saturday 12 July	senior	Kia Ora 7 Petane 24	McLean Park
	senior	Westshore 9 Ahuriri A 2	McLean Park
	junior	Petane 10 Ahuriri 8	McLean Park
	thirds	Petane 0 Ahuriri 6	McLean Park
	fourths	Kia Ora 7 Clive 9	McLean Park
	senior	Petane vs Ahuriri postponed due to	
	senior	Petane vs Westshore smallpox scare	
Saturday 19 July	junior	Ahuriri A vs Ahuriri B	McLean Park
	junior	Petane vs Westshore postponed	
	fourths	Hawke's Bay 7 Auckland 34	Auckland
	representative	Married Men vs Single Men	Petane
Saturday 26 July	senior	Ahuriri B vs Westshore	
	junior	Petane vs Westshore	
	fourths	Ahuriri A vs Westshore	McLean Park
Saturday 2 August	thirds	Ahuriri B 12 Petane 0	McLean Park
	fourths	Westshore 9 Ahuriri 0	McLean Park
	senior	Ahuriri 8 Petane 5	McLean Park
Saturday 9 August	junior	Westshore 0 Petane 3	McLean Park
	fourths	Ahuriri 8 Westshore 12	McLean Park
	senior	Kia Ora 2 Ahuriri 52	
Saturday 23 August	senior	Clive forfeited to Petane	
	junior	Ahuriri B 2 Petane 2	
	fourths	Westshore 0 Ahuriri 4	
Saturday 30 August	Charity Cup	Petane 16 Ahuriri 19	
	junior	Westshore 4 Ahuriri B 11	McLean Park
Saturday 6 September	Charity Cup	Kia Ora 9 Ahuriri 10	McLean Park
	junior	Petane vs Ahuriri B	
Saturday 13 September	fourths	Westshore 11 vs Ahuriri 2	
	representative	Hawke's Bay 34 Poverty Bay 8	McLean Park
Wednesday 17 Sept	fourths	Ahuriri vs Westshore not played no ball	
	representative	Hawke's Bay 10 New South Wales 31	Nelson Park (Napier)
Saturday 20 September	friendly	Kia Ora 12 Poverty Bay 8	Nelson Park
	fundraiser for local bands	Ahuriri 24 Petane 13	McLean Park
		Westshore 13 Ahuriri 12	McLean Park

1914

Saturday 2 May		all games	cancelled-bad weather conditions	
Saturday 9 May	senior		Kia Ora beat Clive by default	Farndon Park
	senior		Ahuriri 27 Petane 7	Nelson Park (Napier)
	junior		Kia Ora beat Ahuriri by default	Nelson Park
	thirds		Westshore 23 Petane 6	
Saturday 16 May		all games	cancelled-bad weather conditions	
Saturday 23 May	senior		Ahuriri beat Clive by default	Farndon Park
	senior		Petane 3 Kia Ora 0	Petane
	junior		Ahuriri 8 Kia Ora 0	Nelson Park
	junior		Westshore 0 Petane 6	Petane
	thirds		Petane 6 Westshore 0	Petane
	fourths		Technical College 26 Ahuriri 0	Nelson Park
Saturday 30 May	senior		Ahuriri 6 Kia Ora 3	Nelson Park
	junior		Ahuriri beat Petane	Petane
	thirds		Petane vs Ahuriri	Petane
	fourths		Clive 16 Ahuriri 16	Clive
	fourths		Technical College 14 Westshore 0	Nelson Park
Wednesday 3 June	representative		Hawke's Bay 9 Wellington 18	Nelson Park
	thirds		Ahuriri 12 Westshore 0	Nelson Park
Saturday 6 June	senior		Clive 8 Kia Ora 0	Nelson Park
	senior		Ahuriri 23 Petane 8	Petane
	thirds		Petane beat Westshore by default	Petane
	thirds		Ahuriri vs Clive	
	fourths		Westshore 2 Ahuriri 0	
Saturday 13 June	senior		Kia Ora 13 Petane 3	
	senior		Ahuriri 21 Clive 3	Farndon Park
	junior		Kia Ora 3 Ahuriri 2	
	junior		Ahuriri vs Petane	
	thirds		Clive 5 Westshore 3	
	fourths		Technical College 16 Ahuriri 0	
Saturday 20 June	senior		Ahuriri 19 Kia Ora 5	
	senior		Clive 2 Petane 0	
	junior		Ahuriri 11 Petane 0	
	thirds		Clive 6 Petane 0	
Saturday 27 June	senior		Ahuriri 36 Petane 0	Nelson Park
	junior		Kia Ora vs Petane	Nelson Park
	thirds		Ahuriri vs Petane	Nelson Park
	fourths		Technical College 16 Westshore 3	Nelson Park
	exhibition		Kia Ora 2 Poverty Bay 19	Gisborne
Saturday 4 July	challenge		Ahuriri 33 Combined Selection 6	Nelson Park
	junior		Ahuriri 0 Kia Ora 3	Nelson Park
Saturday 11 July	rep. trial		Senior A 36 Senior B 5	
	junior		Petane 3 Kia Ora 9	
	thirds		Ahuriri 2 Clive 23	
	fourths		Ahuriri 0 Technical College 19	
Saturday 18 July	representative		Hawke's Bay 7 Great Britain 30	Nelson Park
	junior		Ahuriri vs Kia Ora	
Saturday 25 July	senior		Ahuriri 27 Clive 6	
	senior		Kia Ora beat Petane by default	
	junior		Kia Ora 15 Petane 0	
	thirds		Ahuriri vs Clive called off - no referee	
	fourths		Technical College 8 Westshore 2	
Saturday 1 August	representative		Hawke's Bay 8 Canterbury 25	Christchurch
Thursday 6 August	representative		Hawke's Bay 21 Wanganui 15	Wanganui
Saturday 8 August	representative		Hawke's Bay 16 Wellington 62	Wellington
Saturday 15 August	Charity Cup		Ahuriri beat Clive	

Saturday 15 August	junior matches	postponed 'expeditionary movements	
Saturday 29 August	junior	Petane 8 Kia Ora 3	
Saturday 5 September	Charity Cup	Ahuriri 34 Kia Ora 0	Recreation Ground -
	thirds	Petane vs Clive curtain-raiser	Hastings
Saturday 12 September	thirds	Petane vs Ahuriri	

1915

Saturday 15 May	senior	Old Boys 10 Petane 11	benefit match	McLean Park
Saturday 22 May	senior practice	Ahuriri vs Old Boys		McLean Park
	fourths practice	Ahuriri vs Technical School		McLean Park
Saturday 29 May	senior practice	Ahuriri vs Kia Ora		McLean Park
	junior practice	Ahuriri vs Clive		McLean Park
Saturday 5 June	senior	Ahuriri 0 Petane 18		McLean Park
	senior	Kia Ora vs Old Boys		McLean Park
Saturdays 12,19,26 June		no games scheduled - race meetings		
Saturday 3 July	senior	Old Boys 8 Petane 10		Petane
	junior	* Ahuriri vs Kia Ora		McLean Park
	fourths	* Technical School vs Westshore		McLean Park
Saturday 10 July	senior	Old Boys vs Ahuriri		McLean Park
	junior	* Kia Ora vs Petane		McLean Park
	fourths	* Technical College vs Clive		McLean Park
Saturday 17 July	senior	Old Boys 11 Ahuriri 10		McLean Park
	junior	* Kia Ora vs Petane		McLean Park
	fourths	* Technical College vs Clive		McLean Park
Saturday 24 July	senior	Ahuriri 6 Petane 15		Petane
Saturday 31 July	senior	Old Boys 2 Petane 20		McLean Park
Saturday 7 August	senior	Ahuriri vs Old Boys		
Saturday 14 August	senior	Petane 8 Ahuriri 0		McLean Park
Saturday 21 August	no games played -Thirty Thousand Club carnival			at McLean Park
Saturday 28 August	sen. Charity Cup	Petane 12 Ahuriri 0		McLean Park
Saturday 4 September	sen. Charity Cup	Petane 5 Old Boys 0		McLean Park

* Games probably not played due to teams having insufficient players

DANNEVIRKE SUB-LEAGUE FIXTURES AN RESULTS

1911 -1912

1911

Monday 7 April	senior	Rovers 12 Napier 15		Recreation Ground
Saturday 13 May	senior	Rovers 11 Kiatere 8		Domain
Saturday 27 May	senior	Rovers 6 Kiatere 16		#1 Ground
Saturday 3 June	representative	Dannevirke 2 Napier 15		Napier
Saturday 10 June	senior	Rovers vs Kiatere		
Saturday 8 July	senior	* Rovers vs Kiatere		Recreation Ground
Wednesday 12 July	representative	representative		Domain
Saturday 22 July	senior	Rovers vs Kiatere		Recreation ground
Saturday 5 August	senior	Rovers vs Kiatere		
Wednesday 9 August	representative	** Dannevirke 17 Petane 3		Napier

1912

Saturday 25 May	senior practice	Rovers vs Kiatere		Domain
Saturday 15 June	senior	Rovers 8 Kiatere 40		Domain
Wednesday 26 June	representative	Dannevirke 17 Napier 8		Domain
Saturday 29 June	senior	Rovers vs Kiatere	postponed due to wet weather	
Saturday 6 July	representative	Dannevirke 0 Napier 13		Napier
Saturday 24 August	Charity Cup	Kiatere 3 Ahuriri (Napier) 11		Hastings

* insufficient Rovers players turned up so only a practice match was held

** advertised in Napier as Northern Maori vs Southern Maori

Appendix F

MARLBOROUGH RUGBY LEAGUE

FIXTURES AND RESULTS 1912 - 1914

1912

Saturday 21 September	trial match	A Team vs B Team		Blenheim Domain
Saturday 28 September	exhibition match	A Team vs B Team		Picton
Saturday 5 October	representative	Marlborough 8 Wellington 8	Blenheim	Show Ground
Saturday 12 October	representative	Marlborough 6 Nelson 21	Blenheim	Show Ground

1913

Saturday 10 May	practice match		Wairau	Cricket Ground
Saturday 17 May	practice match		Wairau	Cricket Ground
Saturday 24 May	practice match		Wairau	Cricket Ground
Tuesday 3 June	representative	Marlborough 0 Nelson 35		Nelson
Saturday 14 June	senior	Omaka 2 Awarua 3		Cricket Ground
Saturday 21 June	exhibition match	Awatere vs Awarua		Seddon
Saturday 27 June	senior	Awarua vs Omaka		Spring Creek
Saturday 5 July	senior	Awarua 18 Omaka 0		Cricket Ground
Saturday 12 July	exhibition match	Marlborough Reps. 19 Awarua Old Timers 13		Cricket Ground
Saturday 19 July	senior	Awarua vs Omaka		Spring Creek
Saturday 26 July	McArtney Banner final	Awarua 26 Omaka 3		Cricket Ground
Saturday 2 August	senior	Awarua A vs Awarua B		Spring Creek
Saturday 9 August	senior	Awarua B vs Omaka		Spring Creek
Saturday 16 August	senior	Awarua A 8 Omaka 6		Cricket Ground
Saturday 23 August	senior	Awarua A vs Awarua B		Spring Creek
Saturday 30 August	senior	Omaka vs Awarua B		Cricket Ground
Saturday 6 September	senior	Awarua A vs Omaka		Spring Creek
Saturday 20 September	senior	Awarua A 16 Awarua B 9		Spring Creek
Saturday 27 September	Rofe Banner final	Awarua A vs Awarua B		Spring Creek
	friendly	Mahakipawa vs Omaka		Picton
Saturday 4 October	representative	Marlborough A vs Marlborough B		Spring Creek

1914

Saturday 6 June	friendly	Awarua vs Wairau		Spring Creek
Saturday 13 June	rep. trial	Marlborough A vs Marlborough B		Spring Creek
Saturday 20 June	friendly	Awarua vs Wairau		Spring Creek
Saturday 27 June	friendly	Awarua vs Wairau		Spring Creek

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