Abstract

The game of rugby has changed significantly in the course of its history. In the early part of the 19th century it evolved from a folk game played by ruffians to a recreational activity of custom and ritual for public schoolboys (Collins, 2009, Harris, 2010, Smart, 2009). From the 1820s rugby represented an opportunity for gentlemen to demonstrate physical prowess and masculinity and in more recent times it has developed into an activity that reflects the changing attitudes towards professional sport. For the most part of the last one hundred years, rugby union has been arguably the dominant winter sport of the British upper and middle classes, predominantly the male members of the emergent entrepreneurial class. Over the same period it became an important international sport that represented the nationalistic ideals of a number of countries (Black & Nauright, 1998; Collins, 2009; Dine, 2001; Dunning & Sheard, 2005; Ryan, 2008). However, developments within the media industry, professionalism and the transference to a business ethos within sport during the latter decades of the twentieth century exposed rugby union to the realities of commercialism and the influences of a more diverse participating and spectating public. Rugby Union had to become a sport that embraced the demands of the commercial and entertainment sectors in order to survive and develop in the modern sporting environment.

This research explores the historical developments associated with the erosion of amateurism and the development of professionalism within the elite level of Rugby Union. Analysis of the development and impact of the professional game in France, New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia provide a basis for comparison with the professional game’s trajectory and impact within the British Isles.

Using archival sources, handbooks, interviews with players, manuals and a wide range of other sources, the thesis traces the evolution of attitudes towards professionalism from a players’ perspective and the results developed throughout argues that the very nature of the change in structure of rugby union was not so much a desired direction but rather a necessity.

Keywords: Rugby Union, Professionalisation, Money, and Television
The Impact of Professionalisation on Elite level Rugby Union: Players’ Perspective

The thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, of the University of Portsmouth

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June 2015
Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award

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## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ARU</td>
<td>Australian Rugby Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Channel</td>
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<td>EFDR</td>
<td>English First Division Rugby Ltd</td>
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<td>ELVs</td>
<td>Experimental Law Variations</td>
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<td>EPCR</td>
<td>European Professional Club Rugby</td>
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<td>EPRUC</td>
<td>English Professional Rugby Union Clubs</td>
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<td>EPS</td>
<td>Elite Player Scheme</td>
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<td>ERC</td>
<td>European Rugby Cup</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>Football Association</td>
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<td>FFR</td>
<td>Federation Française de Rugby</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIFA</td>
<td>Fédération Internationale de Football Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRA</td>
<td>Federation Internationale de Rugby Amateur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIR</td>
<td>Federation of Italian Rugby</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>Global Positioning System</td>
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<td>IPL</td>
<td>Indian Premier League</td>
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<td>IOC</td>
<td>International Olympic Committee</td>
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<td>IRB</td>
<td>International Rugby Board</td>
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<td>IRFB</td>
<td>International Rugby Football Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRPA</td>
<td>International Rugby Players' Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRU</td>
<td>Irish Rugby Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>LFA</td>
<td>Long Form Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNR</td>
<td>Ligue Nationale de Rugby</td>
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<tr>
<td>NBA</td>
<td>National Basketball Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFL</td>
<td>National Football League</td>
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<td>NGB</td>
<td>National Governing Body</td>
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<td>NLPBC</td>
<td>National League of Professional Baseball Clubs</td>
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<td>NU</td>
<td>Northern Union</td>
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<td>NSWRU</td>
<td>New South Wales Rugby Union</td>
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<td>NZRFU</td>
<td>New Zealand Rugby Football Union</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZRU</td>
<td>New Zealand Rugby Union</td>
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<td>PRL</td>
<td>Premier Rugby Limited</td>
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<td>PRP</td>
<td>Premier Rugby Partnership</td>
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<td>QRU</td>
<td>Queensland Rugby Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFC</td>
<td>Rugby Football Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFU</td>
<td>Rugby Football Union</td>
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<td>RRW</td>
<td>Regional Rugby Wales</td>
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<td>RWC</td>
<td>Rugby World Cup</td>
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<td>SANZAR</td>
<td>South Africa New Zealand Australia Rugby</td>
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<tr>
<td>SARB</td>
<td>South African Rugby Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>SARFU</td>
<td>South African Rugby Football Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>South Pacific Championship</td>
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<td>SRU</td>
<td>Scottish Rugby Union</td>
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<td>SRFU</td>
<td>Southern Rugby Football Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVNZ</td>
<td>Television New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAR</td>
<td>Argentina Rugby Football</td>
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<tr>
<td>UEFA</td>
<td>Union of Football Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFU</td>
<td>Wales Football Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRU</td>
<td>Wales Rugby Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRC</td>
<td>World Rugby Corporation</td>
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Acknowledgements and Dedication

I am indebted to many people who have helped me to complete this thesis.

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Finally, thanks to Trevor Driver. Although you are no longer with us, it was your presence alongside my parents at numerous rugby matches and conversations about rugby that inspired me to seek opportunities to conduct research within the sport; I have thought of our conversations at many periods throughout the research process.

For all the people to whom I am grateful, I hope I have the opportunity to repay you some day.
Dissemination

Presentations

‘An Overview of my Research’ - presentation at the Departmental Research Seminar series, University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom, October 2010.


“Professionalisation in Rugby Union – A Critical Analysis” presentation at the 39th annual convention of the North American Society for Sports History, University of Texas at Austin, United States of America, May 2011.


‘The build up to Professionalisation – an International Comparative analysis’ – presentation at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, September 2011

‘The Impact of Professionalisation on the English Rugby Football Union’ - presentation at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, September 2011


‘Professionalisation in Rugby Union: New Playing fields’ – presentation at the British Association of Sport and Exercise Science Conference, University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom, April 2014.

Journal Submissions


Book Submissions

Chapter One - Introduction

1. Chapter Overview

Sport occupies a conspicuous place in contemporary society. Professional sport in particular has an unrivalled popular appeal and considerable economic and cultural significance. The middle years of the nineteenth century saw sporting activities become codified, organised and governed, subject to national sport governing bodies and in due course their international equivalents (Wigglesworth, 2007, p. 93). From the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century one sport after another embraced professionalism and became more business-like and commercially orientated (Smart, 2005, p. 191). As a consequence of this evolution there have been significant economic and commercial changes alongside an increase in international competitions throughout the twentieth century that have helped transform the structure of professional sport (Miller, Lawrence, McKay, & Rowe, 2001, pp. 62-76). This economic transformation has had consequences for the ethos of sport in general and the values that have traditionally been part of the game, all of which are evident in the development of rugby union. The increased profile of sport, and in particular rugby union, has resulted in the necessity for uniformity, which has in part, been driven by the increase in television exposure which is arguably one of the most significant developments in the game.

The growth in television provision and the accessibility to matches that it provides has done much to increase the popularity of rugby union (Malin, 1997). Television and rugby union became irrevocably intertwined in the 1960s and evolved together as did television and its relationship with other sports such as Association Football and cricket. However, there is an argument to suggest that this relationship has shifted, insofar as rugby union now requires this affiliation more than television. Elite level clubs have an increasing need for highly priced television deals to cover their associated running costs (Boyle & Haynes, 2004, p. 16). Nevertheless, the growth of global television coverage, following the development of satellite communication technology, has enabled professional rugby union to benefit from increased exposure. The political economy of rugby union especially the relationship between economics and organisational governance has changed considerably as the ‘cash-nexus’ has become increasingly associated with playing success, through enhanced financial benefits derived from winning tournaments, championships, income from television rights,
sponsorship, and also merchandising. In particular there has been a significant increase in the
television coverage and global diffusion of rugby union, especially in the countries
considered in this thesis – England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, South Africa, Australia
and New Zealand (Owen, 2002, pp. 5-7).

Increased media exposure, as well as an apparent growth in popular cultural and commercial
interest, has raised the profile of those involved in rugby union, including the players,
managers, referees and administrators of the game. As a consequence there is a heightened
accountability for decisions, performance and organisational control within the game of
rugby union. The next part of this chapter provides an insight into the history of the rugby
union game culminating in the acceptance of professionalism in 1995. This chapter discusses
the concept of ‘amateurism’ that evolved within the rugby game during the nineteenth
century while also introducing some of the developments occurring within rugby union
during the twentieth century that resulted in the eventual acceptance of professionalism into
the sport. Finally, this chapter provides an overview of the overall design and rationale for the
thesis.

2. A Chequered Past

The International Rugby Football Board (IRFB) declared rugby union an ‘open game’ on the
27th of August 1995, resulting in the removal of all restrictions on payments or benefits
arising from the game. This was the result of a committee conclusion that the only way to
keep control of the game was to end the hypocrisy of ‘shamateurism’ and to create an ‘open’
game1. These changes were, in part, the effect of significant threats posed by professional
rugby league clubs in countries where the game had a significant following and could offer
large payments to players. To some, the acceptance of professionalism represented a
challenge to the structure of the rugby union game. The fear was that the traditions of the
game would be eroded and any benefits would apply only to a small group of talented players
(Ryan, 2008, p. viii). However, the suggestion that prior to 1995 rugby union had been
conducting itself as a sport under the strict regime of amateurism is a naïve view of the

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1 Defined by Morgan (2002, p. 44) as the ‘unofficial payments or benefits in kind to players’, shamateurism
describes the unofficial payments made to players for their services and or performances within sport, despite a
clear distinction between amateurs and professionals. Payments were received in the form of player
testimonials, nominal employment as club secretaries and monetary reimbursement (Vamplew, 1988, pp. 200-
203).
financial practices that were occurring at both local and international level. Throughout the rugby playing countries, various levels of professionalism had been referred to or even acknowledged throughout the twentieth century and the governing bodies were forced into making a decision that contradicted the original ideals of the game to ensure consistency and equality throughout the rugby playing world (Fleuriel & Vincent, 2007, p. 36). The decision on the 27th of August 1995 was simply the removal of the last remaining barrier to open payment for playing and signalled the final demise of the amateur ethos that had systematically constructed the identity of rugby union.

In order to understand the path towards professionalism, it is imperative to understand the origins of the sport. Rugby Union, alongside other modern sports such as Rugby League, Association Football and American Football, is a direct descendant of mob football that evolved throughout Europe dating back to the Middles Ages. The Public Schools of England were credited with organising and civilising football in the early 19th century, although Richards (2007, pp. 44-48) indicates that the development of the football game was also occurring within the working classes but credit was given to the upper classes and recorded as such in history. Each public school devised its own version of the rules, Eton and Harrow developed a kicking version, while Rugby school preferred a game focused on handling the ball rather than dribbling (Collins, 2009; Houlihan, 2008). During the later decades of the 19th century a number of sports became centrally organised with common modes of play (Philpotts, 2000, p. 6). The formation of the Football Association (FA) in 1863 utilised ideas from the various versions of emerging football games to evolve into one form of football. Those who favoured the Rugby School mode of playing either did not join the FA or soon withdrew from the association and in 1871, formed the Rugby Football Union (RFU).

Hence, rugby was originally designed by the upper echelons of society but like many other sports it was embraced by the working class. Facilitated by the industrial revolution and the development of factory owners and an emerging entrepreneurial class, it was the northern working class that dominated the numbers participating in the sport during the late 1880s. At

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2 Research has suggested that a football culture existed outside the public schools in the nineteenth century (Harvey, 2005). The games played were comparatively sophisticated and rule-bounded and the culture was different from the mayhem in the villages or the forms played in the public schools. Furthermore, the football culture that appeared at Sheffield in 1857 was a key successor of the type of ideas that were circulating amongst the football-playing community, which existed outside the public schools (Hay, Harvey & Smith, 2014, p. 1).

3 During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, economic growth and industrialisation influenced the development of sport. This era defined as the ‘Industrial revolution’ saw a population shift from the countryside
this time, new factory owners and the emerging entrepreneurial class developed leagues and cup tournaments, and perhaps more importantly, the players received compensation for lost wages due to rugby playing commitments. This practice of financial reimbursement for playing rugby represents a complete contradiction to the ideals of those who wanted rugby to be maintained as a purely amateur and gentlemanly sport.

In 1886 the RFU officially announced the ideal of amateurism by forbidding any form of payment to players, with the exception of travel expenses. The development of the ‘amateur ideal’ within rugby is a clear indication of the social assumptions and affiliations of those who governed the game and illustrates that monetary gains were believed to be contrary to these principles. However, these stipulations heavily affected the rugby clubs in the north of England who were reliant on workers from particularly the coal mining and cotton industries obtaining time off work to participate in rugby. Consequently, clubs from the north of England proposed a campaign for ‘broken time’ payments to the RFU which was to provide financial compensation for players who took time off work to play. However, rather than agree to the terms proposed in the ‘broken time’ campaign the RFU accused a large number of clubs from the north of England of acting in contradiction to the code of amateurism, resulting in either the suspension or the banning of teams and players from playing rugby union. In response, on the 29th of August 1895 twenty two of the leading northern clubs resigned from the RFU to form the Northern Rugby Football Union, with a focus on developing payment for ‘bona-fide broken time only’ (Collins, 2009, p. 29).

In September 1895, the RFU unperturbed by the split of the Northern Rugby Football Union reiterated to its playing members the precise outline of the prohibited terms of professionalism (illustrated in Figure 1). Members of the Northern Rugby Football Union were defined as professionals and received life bans from the RFU. The split of the Northern Rugby Football Union from the RFU is a vital component in the history of rugby union, not only was it a catalyst for the formation of two different sports but it also acted as a key stimulus for the shaping of rugby union’s identity. The response of the RFU to define the

to the towns and cities of England a transformation that was triggered by industrialisation. The increased industrial processes changed the nature of working class leisure pursuits, the amount of free time and consequently the character of many traditional sporting pastimes adapted to suit the cultural change from a previous agricultural economy to an ‘Industrial’ economy.

The National Governing Bodies’ (NGB) that developed during the second half of the nineteenth century such as the Amateur Athletic Association in 1880 prohibited anyone who had been ‘by trade or employment for wages, a mechanic, artisan or laborer’ (Guttmann, 1978, p.30). It was perceived that anyone who had a physically strenuous occupation achieved an unfair advantage within sport.
exact terms of professionalism rather than stating the principles of amateurism caused further uncertainty as the term ‘amateurism’ was left as a subjective interpretation of details not outlined in their definition of ‘professionalism’. Ultimately, the RFU used the term ‘amateurism’ to develop and maintain a ‘perfect level’ of social and recreational association for the middle class male and control the influence of the working class within the game of rugby union (Collins, 2006a, pp. 387-389).
Figure 1: RFU Minutes (19th of September, 1895).
3. The Path Towards Professionalism

Prior to the ‘spilt’ between the Northern Rugby Football Union and the RFU, regular international rugby fixtures had begun in 1882 in the form of the Home Nations Championship. This was further enhanced in 1910 through the development of the Five Nations Championship with teams from Scotland, Wales, Ireland and France in addition to overseas tours from the southern hemisphere nations. Whilst the early part of the twentieth century was blighted by two World Wars and fluctuations in economic stability, rugby union continued to develop its profile through regular international fixtures during the intervening years (see Chapter Three). The increasing popularity of these international fixtures created a high demand for tickets, so much so that by 1960 the presence of ticket touts around Twickenham was raised as a problem for the first time in an RFU committee meeting (Gage, 1997, p. 13). However, while the game had grown in popularity in 1962 the RFU announced a net profit of only £6,235 over the previous ten years, a figure that was at odds with the increasing amount of money that was needed for administration, re-building work and loans to clubs (Gage, 1997, p. 14). More straightforward methods of increasing revenue, such as raising the cost of admission and the sale of match day programmes were reluctantly agreed to and in 1963 prices were increased by 50%. Although the increase in ticket prices provided an additional source of revenue for the RFU it was still not sufficient to finance the various expenditures of the governing body. The RFU received suggestions for a ‘rugby pool’ and were offered increased television coverage, however despite the increasing costs of administering the game these offers were continually rebuffed due to a perceived sense of threat to the amateur nature of rugby union.

The initial resistance by the RFU to a relationship with television corporations or indeed potential sponsors was based on a fear that an affiliation to commercial bodies was detrimental to the amateur ethos of the game (Tuck, 2003, p. 181). However, the increasing cycle of international competition and ease in air travel enhanced the attraction of rugby union to television corporations and increased pressure on the RFU. Eventually during the

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5 Examples of an increase in popularity include: Romania’s first rugby victory over France, The formation of Canadian Rugby Football Union and the Asian Rugby Football Union in 1965 and 1968 respectively, Furthermore, future President of the United States of America George W. Bush plays for Yale University’s rugby team in August 1968.

6 Introduced in 1925, the football pools provide a range of different gambling options for predicting the outcome of professional football matches (Forrest, 1999, p.162).
second half of the twentieth century the RFU’s antipathy towards television was ended and replaced with a motivation to negotiate the best (financially rewarding) deal available to raise the profile of the game, making it more accessible for both new participation and spectator based audiences. Furthermore, harsh economic realities forced the RFU to gradually relax their opposition to sponsorship and by 1972 National Governing Bodies (NGB) were permitted to allow advertising at matches, providing it was used to support the game on a national basis (Collins, 2009).

4. The Dawn of the Professional Era

During the last two decades of the 20th century, the term ‘shamateurism’ was contaminating rugby union’s sporting profile. Payments and financial inducements of various kinds were transforming the de facto contractual status of leading rugby union players. In Italy top Australian and New Zealand players such as David Campese, and John Kirwan were being lured to the Italian leagues with lucrative ‘job’ offers which provided the opportunity to play or coach rugby all year round. While in France there were clear signs of a semi-professional structure with players being recruited globally and enticed with houses and other financial benefits. Additionally, in South Africa which had been in international isolation since the mid-1980s due to the National Party’s polices on racial segregation under ‘apartheid’, the continuing appeal of international competition led to the financing of ‘rebel’ tours from other rugby nations in contravention of the anti-apartheid ban. Furthermore, the development of both amateur and professional rugby league (formerly the Northern Rugby Football Union) and the financial rewards provided by the sport resulted in a large number of players crossing from union regularly throughout the 20th century, either registering as amateurs with rugby league in hope of becoming a professional player or on signed professional contracts.

In March 1985, the International Rugby Football Board voted to stage a Rugby World Cup (RWC) in Australia and New Zealand in 1987. This was the result of several threats to the hierarchy of rugby union including the proposal of David Lord to sign up the world’s leading players and play tournaments around the world. It was evident that elements of the rugby world wanted a World Cup, but the RFU still held out for amateurism; a stance that was gradually losing its appeal amongst some of its elite players. One respondent in the current

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7 Tours such as the New Zealand ‘Cavaliers’ and a World XV (although sanctioned by the IRFB) have been documented by various authors (Collins, 2009; Ryan, 2008; Williams, 2002) as providing great financial benefit to the players.

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research study, who participated in elite level rugby union for England in both the amateur and professional eras commented on this matter:

‘A world tournament was certainly on the horizon but the RFU always wanted to take three steps back. It was as though they liked being in the dark ages and we as players were seen as troublemakers. Obviously we weren’t, we simply wanted rugby to do well and we all knew that a global tournament was the way to do it’. Participant: EO1

The financial opportunities and increased sponsorship revenue generated from the 1987 Rugby World Cup enticed the IRFB to confirm another World Cup in 1991 (Chandler & Nauright, p. 153). While some members of the RFU believed that commercialism would undermine the amateur ideal and would dissolve the community and recreational focus of the game the conclusion reached was that it would provide a financial future for the amateur game (Maguire & Tuck, 1998, pp. 114-120). Commercialism had originally been resisted by the higher echelons of the RFU, yet it was needed to create a stable future for the sport.

In February 1995, Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation outlined plans to create a Super League for rugby league. Although the idea was initially rebuffed by the Australian Rugby League, the financial opportunities were noted by rugby union administrators. In April 1995, members of the Australian and New Zealand Rugby Unions approached News Corporation and attempted to broker a financially beneficial deal to develop the rugby union game (see Chapter Four). On the 27th of August 1995 the IRFB legalised professionalism, just two days before the centenary of the dispute that had defined rugby union’s original identity. The money provided through television rights and sponsorship deals (highlighted by the development of the RWC) provided an irresistible opportunity for the sport and reduced the lingering attachment to outright amateurism. The amateur ethos in rugby union had been challenged and weakened by a trend towards sports spectating that started in the 1960’s with the development of television, the growing profile of rugby league and the pressure from the elite players to receive some financial reward for their efforts. However, the concept of professionalism was uncharted territory and its embrace brought further complications for rugby union.
5. The Future’s Bright

A new era dawned for rugby union with the announcement from the IRFB in August of 1995. For some players professionalism represented an opportunity, but to others it represented the beginning of the end (Dabscheck, 1998, p. 27). With the sport being officially open, there was a free market for commercialism, and perhaps more importantly, an opportunity for private investors to become involved in the game. In 1995 the administrators of the rugby union game had to quickly identify its niche in an industry with which its sporting counterparts were already very familiar having been engaged in commercial practices to promote their profile and enhance market share for some time. The majority of other established sports had undertaken this transformation much earlier than rugby union, for example, association football, tennis, basketball and American Football had accepted professionalism either during the late nineteenth or early part of the twentieth century.

Rugby union administrators soon acknowledged that the sport required new competitions, schedules and changes in relationships between different levels of the game’s stakeholders (Ryan, 2008, p. x). Within England the clubs appeared to want a structure based on Association Football’s Premier League while the RFU wanted to retain a strong element of control as it had prior to 1995. The idea of creating a ‘Premier’ league replica for rugby union attracted substantial investment into clubs from millionaires such as Nigel Wray, Frank Warren, Ashley Levett and Sir John Hall. However, unlike Association Football, the national team in rugby union was the pinnacle and dominant form of the game and the idea of placing club before country was soon dismissed by the RFU, although fiercely contested by the clubs themselves (Horton, 2006; O’Brien & Slack, 1999, pp. 24-25). The RFU’s emphasis on the international game caused disaffection with the new breed of club owners. Even with the heavy financial investment placed within the clubs, overall control remained in the hands of the RFU. Many of the owners soon withdrew their backing from the clubs, with Sir John Hall and Ashley Levett leaving Newcastle and Richmond in 1999, respectively.

During 1995, members of the South African (SARFU), New Zealand (NZRFU) and Australian Unions (ARU) formed an alliance called SANZAR in order to co-ordinate the future of southern hemisphere rugby union. On the 23rd of June 1995, they agreed a £340 million ten year deal with News Corporation. The funds were divided up as follows, 24% to the ARU and 38% respectively, to both the SARFU and NZRFU on the basis that New
Zealand and South Africa delivered more of a rugby product through their provincial competitions. In return for News Corporation’s substantial investment in rugby union, SANZAR was required to produce two new sports events or products, as the corporate world increasingly thought of sport. The first was a ‘Super 12’ competition consisting of five regional teams from New Zealand, four from South Africa and three from Australia. The second stipulation from News Corporation was a Tri-nations international test match series between the three countries. In New Zealand the transition to the professional era was a relatively uncomplicated one. The existing structure of the game, namely province and nation enabled the NZRFU to create five regional teams distinct from the provincial teams for the ‘Super 12’ competition. This was replicated in South Africa with the establishment of franchises based on traditional provincial teams. Unlike the situation occurring in England, the professional era in the southern hemisphere was driven by the NGBs and therefore the ‘club’ issues highlighted previously were avoided.

While the majority of changes following the onset of professionalism in the southern hemisphere went relatively smoothly, the same cannot be said for the remaining rugby playing nations. In France, the Federation Française de Rugby (FFR) established a commission to manage the professional element of the game. The commission concluded that the future of professional rugby in France should be based on the southern hemisphere model with the establishment of ‘professional provinces’. Nevertheless, with the exception of a successfully ‘provincialised’ Ireland, this model was not suited to the majority of the northern hemisphere rugby playing nations, including France, due to the historical trajectory and geographical nature of club rugby (discussed further throughout the thesis). Indeed, as a confrontation emerged between the clubs and the FFR regarding the structure of professionalised rugby union in France, the Ligue Nationale de Rugby (LNR) was formed in 1998 to resolve the disputes. This organisation aimed to reform professional rugby in France with priorities based around making rugby union more attractive to broadcasters, reducing the number of teams in the top league and establishing a new European club championship. The top league structure was reduced from forty clubs down to the ‘Top 14’ at the end of the 2005/06 season, and this was still the format for the 2014/15 season.

Rugby Union within Scotland, Ireland and Wales was presented with an opportunity with the advent of professionalism. The unions needed to expand their spectator base and develop rugby into a media friendly product for financial gain. On the 17th August 2001, the Celtic
League was formed which consisted of fifteen teams from the three unions, nine from Wales, four from Ireland and two from Scotland. The formation of the league illustrates the impact that professionalisation had on the rugby structure within the three unions. As previously suggested, rugby in Ireland had already operated on a provincial basis, but for Scotland and Wales the professional era provided the opportunity to develop regional sides and thereby rebrand rugby union in the respective countries. Rugby in Scotland had previously been constructed on a club system but it was clear that in order to take maximum advantage of financial opportunities and to expand its spectator base in the professional era a district system was required to exploit the spectator market. Similarly, in Wales the nine teams that entered the Celtic League in 2001 were dominant club teams from around the south of the country. However, given the economic realities of administering professionalism such as player contracts, facilities management and travel expenses, the clubs agreed to introduce a regional system in 2003. The club model was one that operated successfully only in England and France with their large player bases and significant public and media support.

In the northern hemisphere new European cup competitions were being formed in order to create a product that was desirable to the broadcast medium, and this represented a marked shift from the founding values of the sport. The need for clubs to secure additional revenue outside their national leagues and also to develop a larger supporter base led to the establishment of the ‘Heineken’ Cup in 1995 and the European Conference (known as the Amlin Challenge Cup) in 1996. Furthermore, in the southern hemisphere the teams that were contracted to the ‘Super’ competition were reconstituted with American style brand names to appeal to a larger market than the male ABC1 traditionally associated with rugby union. Team names such as the Auckland Blues, Canterbury Crusaders and the Natal Sharks were devised, retaining an element of local identity, which was imperative for the traditionalists on the governing bodies, while providing a potentially more commercial brand identity. This form of branding strategy was soon replicated in the northern hemisphere with the promotion of team names such as the Sale Sharks, Northampton Saints and the Glasgow Warriors. The teams that did not undertake this form of American style branding were typically those teams from Ireland and France who maintained their original amateur regional identity in the professional era. The development of new branding strategies at club level illustrates the diminishing control that the governing bodies had over the game in England. The clubs were
now developing a strategy to establish market share in the new ‘professionalised’ era of rugby union and were doing this without any consultation with the RFU.

In France, club administrators have endeavoured to promote their clubs’ specific localised identities and to maintain their competitive positions within the European elite clubs (Dine, 2001, p.145). For example, the Perpignan club changed its marketing strategy to emphasise its Catalan identity and modelled it on the Spanish football club, Barcelona. The home fixtures are now celebrations of the Catalan culture, in which colours, songs, local foods and wines are used as symbols of an identity that stretches well beyond the club and even crosses the national border (Dine, 2001, p.145). In a Heineken Cup game held in April 2011, Perpignan hosted Toulon at the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona selling out the 55,926 seater stadium. Similarly other teams across France have developed specific identities to encapsulate local culture. For example, Biarritz emphasize their communitarian dimension across national boundaries with a Basque identity and more conventionally Stade Français have created colourful merchandise designs to connect with its Parisian identity (see Chapter Six).

The continual development of club rugby was not a primary concern of the governing unions whose principal focus was on the international market. However, with the investment from millionaires in the northern hemisphere club scene and the financing provided by News Corporation in the southern hemisphere, international rugby had to once again focus on maintaining its position at the core of the rugby union world. Central to this struggle was a conflict of interest between the leading clubs, which now ‘owned’ the players, and the national governing bodies, which continued to ‘own’ rugby as a commercial product, including its most marketable asset, the national team.

The 1995 deal between SANZAR and News Corporation had established a yearly international tournament between the three nations. This brought about an established fixture system and a heightened national rivalry between the nations courtesy of regular club and international fixtures. However, there were continual wrangles over the value of both the Tri-Nations and ‘Super’ rugby, as each nation varied in levels of support for these tournaments with issues often arising out a conflict of interest between the clubs and country (explored further in Chapter Six). In 2012, the Tri-Nations was dissolved and the Rugby Championship
was formed to include the national team of Argentina following continued success throughout the history of the RWC.

In England, tension between the top clubs and the RFU was nothing new, the roots of the quarrel dating back to the 1995/96 season when the clubs acted quickly, with the financial backing of new millionaire investors, to prevent England adopting New Zealand’s system of central contracts for international players. The differing viewpoints between the clubs and the RFU was exacerbated further when the clubs refused to allow their contracted players to represent England in 1996. Furthermore, there was a players strike in November 2000 over the RFU’s refusal to increase the match fees for players selected for the national team (Cleary, 2000). In June 2004, the England Elite Player Squad (EPS) agreement was signed between the clubs and the RFU to ensure a better working relationship between the two parties. As part of this agreement, during each season England has access to the players chosen as part of the EPS squad for a full week ahead of autumn tests and the five six nations matches. Further, the total of fifty six days are supplemented by clubs releasing squad members for a further sixteen training sessions, with the squad players only playing a total of thirty two matches per year for club and country. This agreement has caused the clubs and the RFU to clash specifically over the subject of injury (Kitson, 2011). At present the clubs carry the financial burden of players who are absent through either injury or international duty, a consequence of the clubs devising player contracts as an instant response to the declaration of ‘open’ professionalism.

In France, the FFR has historically provided funding for elite players at specific times during the year and each player who is immersed in the international scene was required to sign a contract with the FFR. This contractual agreement enabled the FFR to call on players at will, irrespective of any contract a player might have with their club. Consequently a core of players selected for the French national team used to find themselves with conflicting contracts with both the FFR and their clubs (Fleuriel, & Vincent, 2007, p. 36). For example, from a player’s perspective they could be required to play as many as fifty games in a season due to their commitment to the FFR and their clubs; almost double the number of games of a player from a SANZAR nation on a franchise contract. From the clubs’ point of view there is also an outstanding issue that top players effectively receive a double salary, being paid for the equivalent of three months international duty each year by the FFR, while also being paid an annual salary by their clubs who are only being partially compensated for releasing the
players for international fixtures. Furthermore, only a small distribution of the considerable
revenues generated by television coverage of international fixtures was provided to the
domestic clubs. However, during the 2013/14 season a proposal similar to the England Elite
Player Squad programme was implemented throughout to ensure and facilitate a stronger
relationship between the top French clubs and the FFR.

6. Aims and Objectives

The rationale for the study emanates from a desire to produce research that explores the
development of rugby union in the professional era. The thesis presents a theoretical and
empirically informed analysis that employs empirical data to evaluate historical and current
developments before making proposals for improving the structure of elite level rugby union.
It is reasoned that by exploring the historical development of rugby union, areas of conflict
and problematic development that have emerged as the game has expanded will be
highlighted and serve to better inform the future development of the rugby union game.

There is a wealth of related research in rugby union, with a significant and important strand
emanating from England, perhaps due to the historical roots of the game. Eminent authors
(Black & Nauright, 1998; Collins, 2009; Dine, 2001; Dunning & Sheard, 2005; Ryan, 2008)
have considered the historical evolution of rugby union with specific reference to the
adoption of ‘amateurism’ within the game. There is also a significant body of research related
to the professionalisation of rugby union that, in recent years, has increased including a
number of studies that have focussed specifically on the physiology of rugby union players.
To elaborate, prior to 2000 there were a number of studies, with perhaps the seminal
publication in the area of physiology being, ‘Anthropometric and physiological
characteristics of rugby union football players’ by Nicolas (1997). More recent research in
the area of physiology and rugby union has tended to consider the activity profile of the
players and incidents of pain, injury and risk.

In addition, strands of sociological academic research on the professionalisation of rugby
union have emerged and developed including studies on Talent Identification, Sports
Migration, Competitive Balance, Violence and Globalisation. Despite the emergence of this

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8 For further detail regarding these studies see Hendricks and Lambert (2014), Howe (2004) and Vaz, Figueira
9 For further detail regarding these studies see Cobley and Till (2014), Harris (2010), Hogan, Massey and
work and the growing interest in rugby union and professionalisation, there has been comparatively little attention paid to the impact of professionalisation on the game of rugby in terms of the structure and development of the game. While there has been some research conducted on the professionalisation of rugby union (Collins, 2009; Harris, 2010; Ryan, 2008), there is a dearth of comparative analyses that consider the crucial elements of professionalisation from a player’s perspective and compare experiences from elite performers from both the amateur and professional eras.

The aim of this critical comparative analysis is to gain a better understanding of both the nature and complexity of the introduction of professionalism into rugby union from the perspective of the players. Such analysis requires an examination of rugby union with a specific focus on how rugby was administered and played in the period before professionalism and examines the impact of professionalism in the modern game. This can be categorised into several research areas:

1. The context of playing elite level Rugby Union before the introduction of ‘open’ professionalism in 1995
2. The consequences of playing elite level Rugby Union before 1995
3. The administration of elite level Rugby Union before 1995
4. The context of playing elite level Rugby Union in the professional era
5. The consequences of playing elite level Rugby Union in the professional era
6. The administration of elite level Rugby Union in the professional era.

7. Culture and International Comparative Analysis Research in Rugby Union

Before outlining the structure of the thesis, brief consideration is given to the study and application of cultural theory in order to further develop an international comparative analysis of the evolution of rugby union in the current research programme.

Establishing a precise definition of culture can be problematic given the complexities associated with the intricate and detailed layers and influences on conduct connected with the term. In terms of application to this research, culture is represented in people’s minds as well as expressed in their behaviour, interactions and memory recall (Sperber & Hirschfeld, 2004, p. 40). Culture is learned, frequently unconsciously, it is not biologically based. Culture is acquired through learning and experience, it is shared by people as members of a group,
organisation, or society. Furthermore, culture is transgenerational, and therefore cumulatively passed down from generation to generation (Hodgetts, Luthans & Doh, 2003, p. 94).

In relation to the current research programme it is important to understand the concept of national culture, which can be described as the shaping and influencing of ideas, values, assumptions and mundane forms of conduct integral to everyday life, which may distinguish one group or category of people from another (Hofstede, 1983, p.76). Nationality is identified as particularly important, with our thinking in part conditioned by national cultural factors, influenced by life experiences, the family, and later educational experiences in schools and organisations which may differ across national boundaries (Hofstede, 1983, p.76). With that in mind, there are significant cultural differences between nations and difficulties arise in respect of interpretation and conduct associated with events, competitions, and tournaments and related governing practices (Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2003; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2004).

Additionally, it is possible to classify outcomes and therefore individuals within countries, according to cultural and attitudinal dimensions (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985). The work by Ronen and Shenkar illustrates how clusters of countries are principally organised in terms of certain cultural dimensions, namely, the measurement of work goals, values, needs, and job attitudes. For example, the ‘Anglo’ cluster includes the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and the countries grouped in this cluster demonstrate specific cultural characteristics. Whereas countries grouped in the ‘Latin’ cluster, such as France, are believed to have different cultural characteristics (see Figure 2).
It is important to note the work of Ronen and Shenkar in the development of this thesis. While the thesis has developed an international comparative analysis between the countries of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and France; the research has developed an ‘Anglo-centric’ focus. Although this was not the intention of the thesis, Giulianotti and Robertson (2009, p.32) suggest that the ‘Anglo-centric’ focus could be, in part, due to national identity underpinned by the international systems in world rugby. As a consequence international tournaments, such as the RWC, the Rugby Championship and the Six Nations, provide cultural settings and arenas for the interplay and complex articulation of national-societal particularities and provide a fulcrum in which to structure the current research programme. As a result, while an international comparative analysis research project has been undertaken the narrative has an ‘Anglo-centric’ focus, a process which is justified in the work of both Ronen and Shenkar (1985) and Giulianotti and Robertson (2009).
8. Structure of the Thesis

The professionalisation of rugby union has had an influence at player, club, international and administrative levels. The commercialisation of rugby since 1995 has opened up opportunities for wealth accumulation for many top players; it has also injected a powerful dynamic into the media representation of the game and the structure of its competitions, and above all in the need to create and maintain successful teams. The thesis explores the trajectory of rugby union’s development in a competitive professional industry. The work presented in following chapters provides a critical evaluation of elite rugby union from the perspective of players who have contributed to the rugby union ‘product’ and explores the factors and influences that are shaping rugby union’s development.

The initial chapters of this thesis focus on the evolution of the rugby union game. Specifically, Chapter Two outlines the growth of the rugby game, the introduction of codification and establishes the boundaries of rugby union’s amateur ethos. Chapter Three explores the concept of amateurism that became embedded within the game of rugby union and provides an evaluation of the influence of British Imperial colonies on the structure and popularity of the game around the world. Chapter Four provides an explanation of the research design and methods employed to collect primary data which are presented in chapters five to seven.

Chapter Five focuses on the impact of commercialism and spectatorism that influenced the global development of the rugby union game throughout the twentieth century. Chapter Six explores elite level players’ opinions and perceptions regarding their experiences of professionalism. In Chapter Seven, using primary data, the attention shifts towards current developments within rugby union with specific focus on the match official, the British and Irish Lions and the concept and consequences of being a professional rugby union player in the modern sporting environment. Chapter Eight identifies implications for policy in the areas considered in the preceding chapters and provides considerations for how the present programme of research might inform the continued development of the rugby union game.
Chapter Two: The Rugby Evolution

1. Chapter Overview

This chapter examines the development of the various versions of football that evolved during the nineteenth century with a specific focus on rugby, its rapid growth and the rhetoric behind the internationalisation of the game. The chapter explores the influence of Dr Thomas Arnold and the values of Muscular Christianity that became a fundamental component of rugby’s identity. Furthermore, the chapter explores the eventual distinction between rugby union and rugby league as the game became exposed to heightened levels of spectatorism and commercialism in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This chapter is vital to understanding the emergence of rugby union in society and serves to illustrate how rugby union was played and administered during the nineteenth century.

2. Introduction

Entertainment or competitive activities with characteristics comparable to what are now universally described as sport, have a long and complex history. Various scholars (Allison, 2001; Collins, 2009; Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Harris, 2010; Smart, 2005) have researched the complex origins of modern sporting activity. For example, it has been argued that the family of modern football sports have their roots in classical antiquity and China. To elaborate Marindin (1890, p. 148) notes that elements of the game ‘Harpastum’, specifically the wrestling terms ‘dfia, avrDviqipis and TparjXur’ are considered to be components of phase play found in the early forms of football. Harpastum or ‘Pheninda’ (the Greek term) was a form of ball game played throughout the Roman Empire in which two teams using a small ball attempted to carry it to lines marked at the end of the field of play, requiring significant amounts of speed, agility, and physical exertion from the participants. Further examples exist in the British Isles with medieval Irishmen playing ‘Cod’, a game which involved carrying an inflated bladder into a goal and in Wales, a game called ‘cnappan’ was played on feast days and involved teams attempting to keep hold of a wooden ball (Richards, 2007, p. 26). A similar game called ‘cuju’ (translated as ‘kick ball’) created in China during
the Han dynasty (206BCE-221CE) is commonly referred to as a precursor of the modern day version of football (Goldblatt, 2006, p. 5).

An issue with referring back to examples of sport within ancient civilisations is that it is impossible to determine the genuineness of these theories. All that can be said with certainty is that rugby and football are descended from a type of medieval folk game, as there is direct evidence to support researchers’ statements on this. Nevertheless, the origins of these folk games still remain obscure (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, p. 19), with some analysts suggesting that the game Harpastum was brought to Britain in 217 AD by the Roman Legions, an ancient example of colonialism and sport as ‘cultural cargo’ (Braunwart & Carroll, 1980, p. 1). Alternatively, there may have been an entirely indigenous development of such games or they may have contained a mixture of native and foreign traditions.

Nevertheless, Henderson (2004, p. 11) explored the context of sport in Britain, more precisely England and football, by suggesting that different folk or mob football games were contested as early as the 14th century, and possibly extend back as far as the 8th century. Additionally, Magoun (1929, p. 33-45) explored a range of statements inferring the existence of football throughout medieval England; it is the term ‘inferring’ that is key to Magoun’s work. Magoun (1938, vii) suggested that games varied depending on locality and were often part of annual festivities such as Shrovetide with rival teams differentiated according to village parish, employment or age. What is evident from both Henderson’s and Magoun’s work is that participants were mainly male and most notably from the lower classes.

A range of folk forms of football have been identified; a medieval variant called ‘campball’ was played in Norfolk and Suffolk (Marshall, 1892, p. 7) while another variant called ‘hurling’ was played in Cornwall (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, pp. 22-24). Hurling matches were mainly organised by gentlemen and the goals were either gentlemen’s houses or two towns or villages spaced three to four miles apart. The object of these contests was to force a ball shaped object into a neighbouring village. These games were loosely governed, if at all, the exact rules of these games were not recorded and the result was more often than not based on physical prowess rather than sporting ability. There were no limits on the numbers that could take part in such games and matches would often take place on holidays. The eve of Lent was a particularly popular time for games between rival villages, with many taking place on Shrove Tuesday (Harvey, 2005, p. 6).
The violence within folk football was in fact one of its unifying elements. There may have been significant differences in the forms of play involved, but a common coarseness seemed to permeate all of its forms countrywide (Dunning, 1992, pp. 8-11). Eruptions of violence were fairly common in the folk-antecedents of modern football and there were no referees or relatively impersonal rules of conduct to keep players in check. Folk forms of football were a channel into which violent tendencies could be directed, a kind of ritualized fight in which groups could pit their strength against local rivals and secure release of the tensions generated by the inevitable frustrations of day-to-day life (Cashmore 2010, p. 306; Dunning & Sheard, 1979, p. 24).

During the latter half of the twelfth century, various forms of football had become established around London as well as throughout the North of England and the Midlands (Milton, 2007, p.11). The authorities regularly sought to ban these ‘violent’ games, usually to maintain work and public order (Walvin, 1994, p. 16). In 1314, Edward II of England banned ‘futeball’ in the city of London. This was further enforced by an outright ban throughout England by Edward III in 1364, because the game was argued to interfere with archery practice, which was deemed vital to the defence of the realm. Magoun (1929, pp. 37-38) quotes the statute decreed by Edward III:

‘To the sheriffs of London. Order to cause proclamation to be made that every able-bodied man of the said city on feast days, when he has leisure, shall in his sport use bows and arrows or pellets or bolts . . . for-bidding them under pain of imprisonment to meddle in the hurling of stones. Handball, football or other vain games of no value; as the people of the realm, noble and simple, used heretofore to practise the said art in their sports, whence by God’s help came forth honour to the kingdom and advantage to the king in his actions of war. And now the said art is almost wholly disused, and the people indulge in the games aforesaid and in other dishonest and unthrifty or idle games, whereby the realm is like to be without archers’ (Edward III quoted in Magoun, 1929, pp. 37-38).

The banning of football was continued by Edward III’s successors, Richard II and Henry IV. By 1410, Henry IV enforced a punishment of imprisonment for six days to anyone caught
playing ‘futeball’ (Henrick, 1982, p. 30). Similar stipulations were also endorsed by Philippe V and James I in France and Scotland respectively throughout the 14th and 15th centuries. Interestingly, in 1423 James I of Scotland was returned back to his kingdom after spending nineteen years in the captivity of the English. On his return James I presented the Scottish public with 27 Acts of Parliament. Young (1973, p. 35) notes one of the statutes decreed by James I:

‘It is statute, and the King forbiddis that ne man play at the futeball under the paine of fiftie schillings, to be raised to the Lord of the land als oft as he be tainted, or to the scheriffe of the land, or his Ministers, gif the Lordes will not punish sik trespassours’ (James I quoted in Young, 1973, p. 35).

In the seventeenth century, James I of England was still trying to dissolve the game of ‘futeball’. James I outlawed ‘futeball’ from his court because it was “meeter for lameing than making able the user thereof” (Braumwart & Carroll, 1980, p. 2). What is most significant about this pronouncement is that James wanted it removed from his court. Football had not only survived three hundred years of banning, but had progressed from an exclusively lower class activity to one with devotees among the nobility. Between 1314 and 1667 football related activities had received thirty one separate bans proclaimed by state and local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland (Richards, 2007, p. 27)

Pre-industrial football was a central part of the cultural life of much of Britain; however, during the nineteenth century it declined to a position where it ceased to be played in all but a few places. The reasons for this decline have interested historians and sociologists alike and a lively debate has arisen on the subject. One of the most significant contributions has come from Dunning and Sheard (1979, pp. 41-44), who argue that the central factor in the decline of the game was the withdrawal of aristocratic and gentry patronage in the period from 1780 to 1850. They believe it was part of a wider withdrawal from public life by the upper classes in the face of a perceived threat from the emergent bourgeoisie. Also, the end of patronage and the overt attempts at suppression that occurred were stimulated by a growing intolerance of the inherent violence of folk football.

However, the views expressed by Dunning and Sheard have been criticised by Goulstone (2000, p. 135). Goulstone refutes the claim that extreme violence was endemic in folk
football and suggests no one has produced what can really be called acceptable evidence that
genuine matches were any more dangerous than many modern sports or indeed than later
Victorian club and school football. Accounts from seventeenth century sports such as hurling
and the reports of Shrovetide football reveal them to be essentially ritualistic in nature and
they should not be confused with 'normal' football (Goulstone, 2000, pp. 135-136). The
common theme present in the critical response of Goulstone is that it was principally the end
of the bourgeois acceptance of football in towns rather than the withdrawal of the support of
the gentry that led to attacks upon the game. Folk football became increasingly problematic
with industrialisation and urbanisation encouraging the movement of the population from the
countryside and villages to towns and cities.

Folk football was disruptive of the social order required in the increasingly populated towns
and cities of a developing industrial society and was regarded as too violent for the ‘civilised’
tastes of the arbiters of what was deemed socially acceptable (Elias & Dunning, 1986, pp.
188-190). Between 1314 and 1667, ‘football’ and other popular games were banned on more
than thirty occasions. Over a period of a few years it was not simply the police force, but also
the army and a special force of police constables that were used to stop games as riots and
protests became common. The levels of participation in sport declined so dramatically from
the later decades of the eighteenth century that by the second quarter of the nineteenth
century little was left of a formerly vibrant mass sporting culture. The use of force resulted in
football being replaced by more acceptable ‘civilised’ forms of sport within the towns and
cities. Government’s attempt to stamp out football was a result of the general growing fear of
the mob and a by-product of the political climate of the times (Tranter, 1998, p. 11).

Although most forms of popular sport have their roots in a variety of folk games, ancient
civilisation recreational activities and traditional medieval leisure pursuits, it is in the
nineteenth century and associated developments that the foundations of modern sport really
lie (McRae, 1998; Richards, 2007, Taylor, 2008). It is from this point onwards that this thesis
will now focus; as these developments coincided with society undergoing protracted
industrialization and urbanisation which had a major influence on the development of modern
sport.
3. Constitutional Developments

The period between the mid-nineteenth century and the outbreak of the First World War was characterised by a transformation in the scale and nature of Britain’s sporting culture (Tranter, 1998, p. 13). The versions of football and rugby that exist in today’s society are resultant from a range of institutionalised national administrative organisations establishing rules and structures throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Historians (e.g., Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Golby, 1988; Hobsbawn, 1990) have suggested that the heritage of the games of football and rugby emerged out of conflict and rivalry between English public schools in the early to mid-nineteenth century. This conflict led to competition between the schools and while the rivalry was not necessarily on the playing field it became a tool for the measurement and societal status of the public schools within wider society (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 294).

While the previously discussed banning orders in reference to football made it more difficult for the ordinary person to play football, the expansion of public school provision in the early decades of the nineteenth century encouraged the institutionalisation of popular activities such as Hoops and marbles alongside bare-knuckle fights and mob football (Mangan & Walvin, 1991, pp. 1-4). Rugby school itself has a unique association to the sport of rugby, not only was it the first school to officially record rules in 1845 but it was also the first school to make structural stipulations in order to play the game\textsuperscript{10}. The rules developed at Rugby school intended to make the game distinctive in a number of ways as noted in Hughes (1993, pp. 108-109):

\begin{quote}
‘a sort of gigantic gallows of two poles, eighteen feet high, fixed upright in the ground some fourteen feet apart, with a cross-bar running from one to the other at the height of ten feet or thereabouts’ (Hughes, 1993, pp.108-109).
\end{quote}

The rules introduced the ‘\textit{H}’ shaped set of goal posts with a cross-bar (over which the ball was kicked for a goal), line-outs, scrummages, tries and a stronger incentive to carry the ball.

\textsuperscript{10} The oldest codified form of football is the Eton ‘field game’, which was first set down in writing in 1815 however this was and still is only played within the school confines (Taylor, 2008, p. 37).
forward. The concept of taking the ball across the oppositions line earning a ‘try’ at goal is the origin of the term used in the modern version of the game that signals when the ball has been grounded over the opposition’s ‘try’ line. The Rugby school rules also introduced teams with a limited number of players, uniforms to differentiate between teams, the choice of ‘ends’ and a change of ‘ends’ once a goal was scored (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, p. 90). Contrastingly the 1847 rules devised by Eton school stated that the ball could not be caught, carried, thrown or struck by the hand and a goal could only be scored underneath the cross-bar between the goal posts11.

A characteristic of the changing landscape of public and private education in the nineteenth century was the belittlement of the different variations of football games played within the public school educational system. Etonians regarded the iron-tipped boots used in the game by Rugbeians as “characteristic of a violent and ‘ungentlemanly’ game, popular with the ‘common people’ of Yorkshire” (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, p. 94). In reply, Rugbeians viewed the abolition of ‘hacking’ at Eton as an ‘emasculating’ of football. The legacy of these rivalries continued through to universities where students strove to have the version of sport from their public school adopted as the university’s preferred set of rules. The universities of Cambridge and Oxford were the institutions in which the modification of the competing football rules first took place. At Cambridge, the dominance of ex-public schoolboys from the most established and elite schools, including Eton and Harrow, ensured that the ‘kicking’ rules referred to as football became adopted as the rules in university matches12.

Outside of educational establishments ex-pupils established clubs which played according to the rules developed in their respective schools and universities. The clubs kept the traditions of ‘friendly’ school matches and provided the principal form of organising players both within and outside of educational institutions in England as well as in other regions and countries. This was the start of what later was to become known as the ‘old boys’ network; assisting their old schools’ social standing and confirming the former students as belonging to

11 The 1847 Eton rules stated that ‘hands may be used to stop the ball, or touch it when behind’ (Dunning & Curry, 2006, p. 44).
12 The ‘Cambridge Rules’, were first published in 1848 and specifically prohibited running with the ball and in so-doing established the first inter-public school standard for former public schoolboys entering the university (Cox, Russell and Vamplew, 2002, p. 243).
a distinctive and exclusive ‘class’ (Nauright & Chandler, 2007, p. 103). University connections also transmitted the game to Wales and Ireland. According to Richards (2007, p.31) there are records of the football game at Lampeter College in Wales during 1850 and at Trinity College, Dublin in 1854. Furthermore, the origins of club football in Scotland are accredited to John Hope, a graduate of Edinburgh University. While the examples in Wales, Scotland and Ireland do not refer to the ‘rugby’ game directly they are evidence of the ‘old boys’ network established throughout the university system.

4. Rugby School: Muscular Christianity and Dr Thomas Arnold

A consideration of the origins of rugby union at Rugby school must include reference to Dr Thomas Arnold and the doctrine of Muscular Christianity. Rugby Union’s ‘spiritual birthplace’, Rugby School, epitomised the spirit of mid-Victorian England. The school itself was founded in 1567 and originally designed as a ‘free grammar school’ for pupils of Rugby Town and its surrounding areas (http://www.rugbyschool.net/history). Conditions at Rugby school during the late eighteenth century and the early 1800s were overcrowded, violent and riotous. These conditions typified Rugby school at the time as the Rugby school website makes clear by using an example from 1797 of pupils blowing the door off the headmaster’s classroom and burning their books on the close. Only once local militia were requested at the school did the students yield (http://www.rugbyschool.net/history)13. However, by the early 1800’s the school had become the second largest public school in England, with a national representation within its student cohort albeit predominately from the aristocracy and with very little remaining of the ‘free’ ethos that the school was originally built upon.

Dr Thomas Arnold was appointed headmaster of Rugby School in 1828 and reformed the school in accordance with his belief in Christian values. Arnold’s concern was to create boys who had character, whose education would enable them to provide leadership to British society and the Empire (Nauright & Chandler, 2007, p. 103). Arnold’s philosophy epitomised the cultural shift that was occurring at the time. Arnold’s beliefs exemplified and expressed values of British society, combining free trade and opposition to aristocratic excess with loyalty to the monarchy and other symbols of traditional authority. The economic dominance

13 Dunning and Sheard (1979) discuss twenty-one public school rebellions between 1768 and 1832, illustrating that it was not just a Rugby School that the pupils were rebelling against the school hierarchy.
of the British Empire was based on competition in the struggle for new markets and colonies (Hobsbawn, 1990, p. 282). Arnold’s view of the importance of his values is expressed below:

‘I would rather send a boy to Van Diemen’s Land, where he would have to work for his bread, than send him to Oxford to live in luxury, without any desire in his mind to avail himself of his advantages’ (Cited in Briggs, 1977, p. 1471).

This quote reveals the sense of individual character and competitive drive that Arnold believed his values would empower within his pupils. Muscular Christianity was the embodiment of Arnold’s struggle for righteousness against sin, although, interestingly Arnold never referred to the term directly himself\(^\text{14}\). While Arnold had no interest in sport, his belief in Christianity was about action rather than contemplation. Muscular Christianity gave British middle class men of action, at home and abroad, a moral framework in which to justify their work (Collins, 2009, p. 7). The training instilled within the educational confines of Rugby school had an impact on a national and international scale as a large number of former pupils went on to careers within the military and political spheres; it was this moral control that Arnold had developed at rugby school that was to provide a layer of moral justification to both society and sport (Huntington, 1981, p. 22).

5. Cultural Transmission

The changes in the public school system and the emergence of codified sport and games coincided with Britain’s undisputed dominance as a world power in the nineteenth century. The British Navy controlled the seas and British shipping linked a global trading system (Black & Nauright, 1998, p. 24). The movement of British servicemen, their families, traders, administrators, engineers and all the accompanying trades and occupations associated with colonisation enabled their cultural cargo, language, tastes and sporting interests and pursuits to be disseminated throughout foreign lands. As a result the various versions of British sports such as cricket, horse racing and the variations of football soon spread to areas of British

\(^{14}\) Muscular Christianity was a term used to indicate that participation in sport could contribute to the development of Christian morality, physical fitness, and “manly” character (Winn, 1960, pp. 64-66).
influence overseas, most noticeably to America, Africa, India and Australasia (Black & Nauright, 1998, p. 24); as the maps in Figures 3 and 4 indicate:

![Figure 3: The British Territory in 1815 (Porter, 2009, p.2).](image1)

![Figure 4: The British Empire and Commonwealth in 1914 (Porter, 2009, p.3).](image2)
The international diffusion of British sports followed two trajectories (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009, p. 8). Sports like rugby and cricket were popularised across imperial outposts, while football spread through business and industrial routes and in relatively informal social ways (Appadurai, 1995, p. 25). The expansion of the British Empire in the nineteenth century enabled an increase in the number of foreign nationals educated within British-led schools, often returning home to teach sport to their compatriots. For example Tom Wills was born in Australia, was educated at Rugby school and established the first football club in Melbourne shortly after his return to Australia in 1856. Wills used his experience at Rugby School to establish the sport in Melbourne adapting a number of the original Rugby school rules, although the main regulations were followed. Specific adaptations included the eradication of the offside rule, changes in how the ball could be handled and the importance of the ‘mark’ call. These variations are of major cultural significance for Australian sport as they have been symbolised within the process of developing an independent national sport in Australia (Australian Rules football). However, these particular rule adaptations are simply a reflection of the time as similar conversations about rule clarification and change were occurring in Britain during the same period.

Rugby football was first introduced into North America by officers at a British Army garrison based in Montréal during 1865 (Collins, 2009, p. 17). Students from the local McGill University had been exposed to rugby football whilst socialising with the British military elite. In May 1874, the McGill captain challenged Harvard University footballers to two matches, one under the Harvard style football rules and another using the McGill's version of rugby rules. Despite a draw, the Harvard players were sufficiently impressed with the visitors’ game that they abandoned their own rules and took up the Canadian’s version (Fogel, 2012, p.50). Again the game that was adopted from the Canadians underwent a series of significant adaptations, most noticeably the scrum being dissolved into two lines facing each other; which is known today as the scrimmage line in the modern form of American Football (Kidd, 2013, p. 408).

The influence of Dr Thomas Arnold’s philosophy is further noted in the development of a sporting infrastructure within South Africa. The history of the colonisation of South Africa

15 Melbourne Football club was established in 1858.
16 Tom Wills also attended Cambridge University, obtaining a blue representing the university at cricket. It was cricket at which Tom Wills excelled captaining the state side Victoria throughout the late 1850s.
dates back to the Dutch settlements during the seventeenth century. However, the arrival of permanent British governance in 1806 allowed South Africa to grow economically, culturally and politically (Black & Nauright, 1998, p. 22). Public school life was adopted by English speaking white middle class schools and sports enthusiasts (particularly in the areas of Cape Town and Johannesburg) typically used British games to help instil values of British elite culture (Black & Nauright, 1998, p. 22; Hain, 1971, pp. 113-148). In 1859 Canon George Ogilvie became headmaster of the Diocesan College, introducing a variant of football that he learnt during his studies, first at Winchester and then at St Andrew’s College, Bradfield (Hill, 2010, p. 18). It was Canon George Ogilvie’s experience within England that led to the ‘Winchester’ game developing within Diocesan College, although by the 1870s the elite schools such as Diocesan College and Hilton College adopted the Rugby school rules. The influence of these social elite schools generated support for the growth of the game and by the mid-1880s the game had spread throughout the country.

The diffusion of sport throughout the British Empire followed imperial posts and international trade routes. However, the development of rugby in France followed an altogether different path. Following defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, Pierre de Coubertin, a member of the French aristocracy, believed that the public school system and especially sports had been vital to the success of the British Empire and could revive the French nation. Coubertin’s interest in education and sport led him to England in 1883, touring a number of leading English educational institutions including Harrow, Eton and Rugby schools and Oxford and Cambridge Universities. He was impressed by the curriculum at the public schools, where study was divided between intellectual subjects and physical education. In particular, Coubertin was inspired by the educational theories of Dr Thomas Arnold at Rugby School and returned for a further visit to explore the sporting structure within the school in 1886. On de Coubertin’s return to France he campaigned for a modern Olympic Games and eventually oversaw the organisation of English sports in France (Collins, 2009, p. 18). Pierre de Coubertin’s insistence that sport should adhere to the ‘Arnoldian’ values experienced at Rugby school enabled the rugby game to be promoted throughout elite schools and universities around France during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
6. The Formation of the Football Association and the Rugby Football Union

On the 26th of October 1863, The Football Association (FA) was formed at a meeting in the Freemason’s Tavern on Great Queens Street, London. The rationale behind the FA’s establishment was to formulate a level of governance and establish a set of unified rules to regulate the game. Historians (Alison, 2001; Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Harris, 2010; Walvin, 1994) have stated that the formation of the FA was the defining moment in the identities of the ‘soccer’ and rugby forms of football. However, to examine these claims it would be more pertinent to review the exact process that led to the establishment of these unified rules for the FA rather than simply discussing the development of a governing body.

The FA held six chaotic meetings before the final version of the rules were confirmed and disseminated to its members. The fourth meeting on the 24th of November 1863 only contained nineteen delegates representing just ten clubs and they voted to accept the following rules:

- A player shall be entitled to run with the ball towards his adversaries’ goal if he makes a fair catch, or catches the ball on the first bound; but in the case of a fair catch, he makes his mark, he shall not run.

- If any player shall run with the ball towards his adversaries’ goal, any player in the opposite side shall be at liberty to charge, hold, trip or hack him, or wrest the ball from him; but no player shall be held at the same time (Brown, 2013, p.43).

What is noticeable about the rules is the similarity to those played by Rugby school rather than the Cambridge rules. However, the secretary of the FA, Ebenezer Morley, was not a supporter of Rugby’s rules and proposed a motion to endorse the football rules of Cambridge University, which forbade carrying the ball and hacking. At a fifth meeting (which contained fifteen delegates and only eight clubs) a motion was passed to strike out the previously agreed rules that contained hacking and running with the ball. At the sixth and final meeting, most of the clubs supporting the Rugby rules did not attend and the final rules specifically
stated non-hacking and non-handling conditions. The FA states that there were eighteen founding members; six of them subsequently left because of their preference for the Rugby rules (Collins, 2009, p. 14).

The formation of the FA, and more specifically the intentions of Ebenezer Morley, created a distinctive and regulated version of football that differed from the Rugby rules; however it was not completely independent. There were some things that overlapped, for instance the initial FA rules still allowed handling a ball. A ball could be caught with the hands before it bounced and the catcher allowed to take an unimpeded kick, similar to the mark in rugby or Australian Rules football (Collins, 2009, p. 15; www.afl.com.au). These examples reveal not only the fluid state of the various rules of football at this time but also how little difference the FA’s formation initially made to the game. The FA rulebook became an accumulation of the various rules and preferences from a range of public schools, rather than any direct attachment to one specifically. However, the process of rule development does highlight the willingness of the stalwarts from Eton and Harrow to resolve their differences compared to those from Rugby who had belief in the supremacy of their code of football.

The social prestige attached to the larger public schools such as Eton, Winchester and Harrow, did not translate into their codes of football becoming popular adult sports. Reasons for this could have been the FA’s decision to only incorporate features from the range of football codes rather than adhering to one specifically, the stifled regulations of a governing body or even the one guinea membership fee. In the early 1870s, of all the public school codes of football, it was the Rugby code that flourished among adult clubs (Collins, 2009, p. 15). On the 26th of January, 1871, twenty one clubs represented by thirty two people met at the Pall Mall Restaurant in London and took two hours in which to form the Rugby Football Union (RFU). At this founding meeting two sub-committees were formed; the first, consisting of three Old Rugbeians, was tasked with writing the Laws of the Game. This sub-committee agreed upon fifty nine rules for playing rugby, including the abolition of hacking. This was an attempt to overcome the increasing concern about violence in the game of rugby and the variety of rules restricting the spread of the game. The second sub-committee was tasked with establishing the international profile of the game and choosing a team to play the Scottish members of the Union, who had already issued a challenge to the English members. On the 27th of March 1871, the first International rugby union match was played between Scotland and England at Raeburn Place in Edinburgh. The RFU intended to use the formation
of the governing body as a further springboard to develop the club game. However, once the FA Cup became popular in the 1870s the increased rivalry and competitiveness of the cup forced clubs to choose a code in which to specialise and thus increase their chances of success in the competition. Consequently, clubs playing the football rules increased whereas the development of clubs playing rugby did not progress as well as the RFU had intended.
Figure 5: Proposed Laws of the Game (RFU, 1871).
7. British Developments: The ‘Trendsetters’

The desire of the predominantly London-based clubs that founded the original national football organisation was for matches to be player-orientated, emphasising the intrinsic reward of playing for fun and pleasure (Obel, 2001, p. 14). However, for both FA and RFU affiliated clubs, competitive local rivalries quickly became the basis of organised competitions. The development of these competitive local rivalries encouraged the establishment of cup and league competitions. The success of these competitions expanded support for both rugby and football clubs particularly in the north of England in the second half of the 19th century. The consequence of this success was conflict and disputes over rules and values associated with the games between northern, regional and London-based national organisations.

The aforementioned cup and league developments provided a level of financial support for both codes in the north of England, with money from supporters and financial backers allowing clubs to retain and attract players with unofficial payments. During the late 1870s rugby union clubs in the north of England devised a number regional cup competitions starting in Yorkshire (1877), Northumberland (1880), Durham (1880) and Cumberland (1882) (Vamplew, 1988, p. 64). In 1888 leading FA clubs in the north of England went one step further and formed a National Football League, which involved twelve teams competing against each other with home and away fixtures.

The response to the formation of the National Football League, which the RFU vigorously opposed, was almost immediate. In 1889 the RFU introduced a national county championship, which was available to all affiliated RFU counties and sanctioned by the RFU due to the suspension of international matches (discussed later in the chapter). Furthermore, northern rugby clubs emulated the FA affiliated clubs and established league competitions. The Yorkshire Rugby Union introduced the first league competition in 1892, which by the 1894-95 seasons had evolved into four divisions. The increasing membership numbers within the northern gate-taking clubs was also reflected in inaugural English national team selection that contained seven players from the Manchester and Liverpool clubs (see Figure 6).
8. Professionalism vs. Amateurism; the development of a professional attitude

In the early nineteenth century the professional sportsman was regarded as the social inferior and for the amateur it was essential that sport was not associated with labour. The identity of the amateur was synonymous with the concept of the gentleman, an individual who did not need to seek reward for playing sport. The amateur played the game vigorously and intensely but never took the outcome too seriously and did not engage in unduly elaborate preparation (Baker, 2004, p.1). Amateurism in the nineteenth century was described by G. Lacy Hiller in the following terms:
‘The sportsman, then, is the man who has an amusement which may cost him something, but which must not bring him in anything, for an amusement which brings him in anything is not a sport but a business’ (G. Lacy Hillier quoted in Mangan, 2001, p.1).

The work of Mangan illustrates a clear distinction between the terms amateur and professional. To remain nominally amateur suggests that participation in a sporting activity was purely for the ‘love’ of the game without any need for excellence or success. Whereas being a professional refers to a ‘profession’ or ‘livelihood’ as a result of training and expertise within sport and more importantly the opportunity to be paid. However, these direct definitions neglect the unclear concept of being an amateur but having a ‘professional attitude’ towards sport. For example, an amateur could go for a run or play a spontaneous game with friends after work (activities with professional undertones) simply for fun rather than for the development of a set of techniques that could up-skill the individual. This example under Mangan’s classification would denounce the individual as an amateur and instead rebrand them as a professional. This was certainly evident in the early decades of the nineteenth century as a range disputes over the definitions and classifications of the concepts of amateurism and professionalism would shape the structure of sport for the next one hundred years (Allison, 2001).

The success of the gate-taking northern rugby and football clubs, due to the sports’ popularity amongst the working class, eventually led to disputes over player payments, league competitions and control over the selection of the national sides. Three years before the establishment of the Football League, in 1885 the FA accepted professionalism. The pressure for the FA to accept professionalism came from urban, commercially successful northern and midland based football clubs that also had a direct representation on the FA’s national council (Mason, 1980, p. 17). Professionalisation enabled the FA to establish a clear distinction between amateur and professional players and restricted players’ movement either through requiring them to declare their amateur status or through the enforcement of professional contracts. The FA’s acceptance of professionalism settled the disputes between the northern football clubs and the FA; preserving football as one game with a single controlling governing body.
Contrastingly, the disputes over professionalism between northern rugby clubs and the RFU increased after the establishment of regional league competitions in the 1890s. Similarly to football, the success of the northern rugby club competitions attracted large crowds as exemplified by a crowd of 22,000 watching a match between Bradford and Halifax in the Yorkshire Cup in 1893 (Latham, 1996, p. 80). The growth of ‘spectatorism’ in the north encouraged clubs to entice players with financial inducements to ensure success and increase crowds. However, in October 1886, the RFU voted to ban all payments to players, either directly or indirectly, with the sole exception of ‘legitimate travel expenses’. Transgressors would be punished by suspension or expulsion from the game. As had been the case in Association Football in 1882, amateur rules were tightened in an effort to discourage professionalism and the pursuit of profit through competitions.

The 1890s saw further expansion of league and cup competitions in the north of England, as the region was experiencing a significant level of economic growth (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, p. 150). The Yorkshire leagues that had been established evolved from a one league structure to four and interestingly without a promotion or relegation system. In 1893, a dispute arose between the senior rugby clubs in Yorkshire regarding the ‘promotion-relegation’ issue and the financial gains of the top clubs in a closed business market. The clubs in the top league were able to provide and entice players with higher-level ‘broken-time’ payments, which ultimately created a gulf in playing standards across the league. Yorkshire county representatives approached the RFU with a proposal that included three issues: that RFU meetings should be held on alternate years in London and at a northern venue, that broken-time payments be legalised, and that county unions be granted permission to set up leagues (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, pp. 147-149). The proposal did not encourage professionalism but rather sought to protect the leagues that had already been established within their regions and ensure their participation in the national county competition. The RFU dismissed the legalisation of ‘broken-time’ payments causing the Yorkshire Rugby Union (under protest from the senior clubs) to introduce a promotion-relegation system into their league structure. In 1895, twenty two northern clubs, including eleven of the twelve Yorkshire senior competition clubs, nine Lancashire clubs and two from Cheshire, resigned from their county unions and established a separate Northern Union (NU) of rugby clubs. In 1896, the NU introduced new rules to the game, most noticeably the abolition of lineouts,

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17Illegal payment to players covering a loss of earning whilst playing.
kicking to touch and the agreement to broken-time payments of six shillings a day. By 1898, professional contracts were introduced alongside tighter regulations on the movement of players between clubs.

Figure 7: RFU Minutes (8th of August, 1895, p.1).

Similarly to the development of the FA and the RFU, there was an initial surge in membership for NU clubs compared to a decline in RFU affiliated clubs. However, this initial increase in member clubs started to decline by the turn of the century. Even though the introduction of promotion-relegation remained there was a lack of financial distribution throughout the leagues, causing a number of clubs to either dissolve or transfer over to the FA or the RFU. Unlike the establishment of both the FA and the RFU, the NU was established by a number of senior clubs in the north, with a specific focus on further development of the already established leagues.

9. The game in Great Britain and Ireland

At the turn of the twentieth century, both rugby league and rugby union were undergoing periods of change which was exemplified by rugby league focusing on cup and league developments and the RFU attempting to preserve the values of amateurism despite
intimidation from commercial values. Support for the ‘amateur’ RFU increased as a number of public and grammar schools exchanged football for rugby union during the 1920s and 1930s, securing rugby union as a socially exclusive sport (Mason, 1980, pp.148-49). However, although the intentions of the RFU were to promote the values of amateurism it also had the objective of establishing the sport as England’s national game. Nevertheless, these aims were hindered by the developments of the FA Cup and the expansion of the football league that generated a growth in the popularity of football and established the sport as the ‘national’ game in England.

Although envious of the FA’s position within England, the RFU undertook a different approach to its development strategy and concentrated its focus on establishing the international game. Soon after the formation of the RFU in 1871 other countries formed their own unions: Scotland in 1873, Ireland in 1879 and the Wales in 1881. Once the first international had been played between England and Scotland in 1871, annual home-nation fixtures were contested.

The development of rugby in Scotland and Ireland was slow due to the popularity of indigenous games such as in shinty and hurling. Furthermore, the development of rugby in these countries was also complicated by the levels of conflict arising from the political and ideological domination by England (Cronin, 1998, p. 38). As within England, rugby union in Scotland and Ireland became embedded as a minor but exclusive sport. Football became the more established sport in Scotland ousting shinty as the national game and Gaelic Football, which identified with the Irish independence movement, gained popularity alongside football in the Irish Republic. The popularity and development of rugby union in Northern Ireland (as it is today) was dependent upon English or Gaelic affiliations both within educational institutions and local communities (Bairner, 2003, p. 520).

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18 In 1906 the rules of the RFU were altered as the number of players on the field was reduced to thirteen and in 1922 the game became known as Rugby League and distinct from the RFU (Greenhalgh, 1992, p. 363). Furthermore, the Challenge Cup originated in 1896 and the Northern Rugby Football League was established in 1901 when the Yorkshire and Lancashire leagues merged.

19 In 1801 the Irish Parliament was abolished with Ireland becoming a part of the new United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland under the Act of Union causing many bloody conflicts between the protestant settler (predominantly from England and Scotland) and the Catholic natives (Aretxaga, 1997). Similarly in Scotland, many battles have been fought for independence from England dating back to the thirteenth century. However, animosity was increased further in 1707 when the Scottish parliament merged into the English parliament (Davis, 1998, pp. 2-3). It was not until 1999 that Scotland reformed an independent parliament in the country.
The public school and university network that had diffused football throughout England during the mid-nineteenth century also introduced rugby union to Wales in the 1870s (Smith & Williams, 1980, p. 11). The first club was established in Llanelli in 1872 by John Rodgers, a former Rugby School pupil. Other clubs soon developed including Neath in 1873, Newport in 1874 and the South Wales Football Club in 1875. In 1881, the first rugby union international between Wales and England took place, with England eventual victors (Smith & Williams, 1980, p.40). The defeat of the Welsh national team hastened the formation of the Wales Football Union (WFU) in 1881 as the established clubs were unhappy with the national team’s performance against their English rivals. The opportunity to have central control over the game gave more prestige to the selection of a national team and also allowed for the development of local and national gate-taking competitions that generated income and spectator interest in the sport.

As with the formations of the FA, RFU and Rugby League, the establishment of the International Rugby Football Board (IRFB) was also accompanied by controversy. The RFU were in dispute with the Scottish Football Union (SFU) over the result of an international match between England and Scotland in 1884. The disagreement between the RFU and SFU forced the abandonment of the annual contest between the two sides after an agreement could not be reached at the annual Rugby Union Committee meeting. Consequently, at the Irish Football Union’s (IFU) annual general meeting in 1885, there was a proposal for the formation of a body that could independently settle any disputes between the home nations. In Dublin, 1886, all four home nations convened to discuss the IFU’s proposal; with the SFU willing to drop the dispute of the 1884 match providing that any newly constituted body was constructed with equal representation between the countries. However, this was not accepted by the RFU as they sought to retain their perceived dominant position as not only the founder of the sport, but also the country with the greatest number of affiliated clubs. A further

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20 The WFU was renamed the Wales Rugby Union in 1934.
21 The final game of the Home Nations Championship in 1884 resulted in England defeating Scotland. The result was based on WN Bolton converting a try (points were only scored for successful kicks at goal) by RS Kindersley who had received the ball to score after it had been ‘knocked back’. The Scottish team challenged the referee’s decision to award the score and even after the final whistle refused to accept the defeat, registering an appeal to the RFU.
meeting took place in Manchester in 1886 to officially establish constitutional terms of the IRFB; the RFU refused to agree to the terms and were not in attendance at the meeting.

The RFU’s resistance to the constitutional regulations and rule changes proposed by the IRFB forced the English team into international exile between 1888 and 1889. The RFU took their dispute with the IRFB to arbitration, which was presided over by the FA President Major Marindin. In 1890 the RFU joined the IRFB but only after arbitration had resolved that international matches should be played under one code of laws and that the IRFB should consist of six representatives from the RFU and two from each of the other countries (Smith & Williams, 1980, p.50). This position gave the RFU a controlling influence on the board and, more significantly, control over international games. The RFU held this position until 1948 when its votes were reduced from four to two (the RFU volunteered to reduce its count from six to four in 1910) and the New Zealand, Australian and South African national rugby unions were admitted to the board (Smith & Williams, 1980, p. 51)\(^22\).

In the early years of the IRFB, its members sought to establish consistency between the home nations. Rules were established and adopted between the home nations, allowing the international game to prosper. The rules used in matches within the individual countries were still designed by national administrators rather than the IRFB, but for the international game the rules were standardised. Arthur Gould’s (the most capped and highest scorer in Welsh rugby history) testimonial in 1897 was a catalyst for the first constitutional amendment of the IRFB. The process of establishing rugby union as the national game in Wales had led to flexible interpretations of the amateur regulations, with individuals and clubs often being sanctioned by the RFU. In 1897, Welsh supporters purchased the deeds to Arthur Gould’s house and this was supported by the WFU donating £50 to the cause.

\(^{22}\) In 1948 the ARU, NZRFU and SARB were given one vote each on the IRFB, with that increasing to two in 1958.
The testimonial and more importantly the £50 donation from the WFU was deemed as an act of professionalism and consequently the WFU were forced to temporarily withdraw from the IRFB. The RFU supported the IRFB’s stance on professionalism and banned any English club playing against Newport (Gould’s club). The English clubs protested against the sanction imposed by the RFU as the games against Welsh sides often attracted a large number of spectators. The position of the English clubs quickly forced the RFU to retract its stance providing the WFU thoroughly reviewed its affairs, and this allowed the WFU to rejoin the IRFB in 1898.

Despite the suspension from the IRFB, the WFU did not consider leaving the union game. Unlike in Scotland, Ireland and England, the rugby game in Wales was not an exclusive sport rather it was socially inclusive. Despite the public school origins, working men were never excluded, and they adhered to the discipline and the obligations imposed by the game and its formalities. The WFU were quite prepared to tolerate the over-generous payment of expenses to working-class players without officially sanctioning professionalism. Even though the WFU were investigated on several occasions for professionalism, the WFU refused to join with the NU in fear of being ostracised from the international rugby fraternity and being
reduced to a region playing the regional representatives of the north of England (Williams, 1985, p. 266).

The WFU’s resistance to the structure of professional rugby league allowed rugby union to become embedded into Welsh national culture. It was such a devotion to the rugby union game, centralised control and the rejection of professionalism that would be eventually mirrored in the game in the southern hemisphere. By the turn of the twentieth century, international networks were expanding and the rugby union game was becoming popular throughout the empire. The home unions, encouraged by the game’s rising international appeal, sent proselytisers throughout the Empire to promote the amateur values of the rugby union game and establish a worldwide international network.

10. The Antipodes

Football games had been played in the colonies since the 1850s and in Australia clubs and competitions emerged predominantly on the East Coast and in South Australia. As in the British Isles, the public school system was influential in the development and diffusion of the various versions of football played in Australia. The ‘game cult’, greatly influenced by the famous English public schools, the less famous grammar schools, and the distinguished universities of Oxford and Cambridge, became an established feature of the culture of the middle classes of Australia (Mangan & Hickey, 2001, pp. 105-106). However, cricket developed along regional lines in Australia allowing the game to become adopted as the national sport rather than any variation of the football code. The variations of the football game did not provide the emerging colonies with an opportunity to develop relations with Britain; thus, indirectly allowing cricket to prosper as there had been international fixtures between and ‘English Eleven’ and Australia since 1861. Nonetheless, the rugby game did develop in Australia, predominantly in New South Wales and Queensland. The first club established in Australia was the University of Sydney club in 1863 with Sydney Football Club (1865) and Wallaroo (1870) soon following. While in Victoria and South Australia, Victorian Rules football (an adaptation of the rugby game introduced at the Melbourne football club in 1856) developed an ‘iconic’ status and consequently became the dominant sport in the region.
The growth of the rugby game in New South Wales encouraged the formation of the Southern Rugby Football Union (SRFU) in 1874. As with the formation of the RFU, the SRFU evolved out of a demand for consistency in rules and competition regulations. The codification of rugby in Australia occurred in rivalry against the emerging sport of Victorian Rules football. As with most histories of the development of the rugby game, its continued evolution in Australia relied on ex-public school pupils establishing club networks on completion of their educational studies. For example, the establishment of the University of Sydney rugby club ensured a legacy that would see the number of clubs in Sydney increase from five in 1874 to seventy nine by the turn of the century.

Similar developments occurred in Brisbane where support for rugby came from the middle classes. Rugby increased in popularity around Brisbane after a Queensland rugby team successfully toured New South Wales in 1882 (Cashman, 1995; Crotty, 2001). However, the increase in popularity of rugby was rather a reflection of the isolated migrant population working in a community at a time when the dominant social groups subscribed to the imperial hegemony (Horton, 2006, p. 1362). Further, the Queensland team tour of New South Wales in 1883 and the establishment of inter-colonial competitions increased the popularity of rugby which was assisted further by the adoption of rugby in state schools in 1888.

International rugby matches were starting to appear on the rugby calendar with an unofficial British team touring Australia in 1888 followed by a New Zealand Native team in 1889. The opportunity for the SRFU (renamed to NSWRU in 1892) and the Queensland Rugby Union (QRU – established in 1892) to host international teams and develop inter-colonial contests not only popularised rugby in the respective regions, but also allowed the two administrative boards to have a sustained level of income.

The various levels of regional development of football codes in Australia had, by the turn of the century, led to the dominance of one football code throughout the country which was centred in Melbourne. By contrast, in New South Wales and Queensland, the popularity of rugby was tied to international contests, especially contests involving British and New Zealand teams. By 1890, the attendance figures at international rugby matches on the East Coast began to rival those of local Victorian Rules Football during the 1880s (Booth, 1997,
pp.13-14). Although the profile of the rugby game was starting to increase, so too were concerns about control and money. The rugby game in Australia was managed by the independent regional administration boards which created rivalry over the right to control the game and ultimately money. The rugby game’s stance on amateurism enabled rugby league to develop and eventually become the dominant rugby game on the East Coast. The opportunity to earn money from what was a previously un-paid hobby saw rugby league increase its profile and ultimately its player base in Australia. The split in the game, which led to rugby union’s marginal position in Australia, was ironically facilitated by the development of the international contests; a process which the IRFB thought would strengthen the rugby union game.

Sporting history in New Zealand follows the traditional trade route lines in which games moved from one place to another (see Figure 8). Indeed, the growth of rugby within New Zealand was assisted by the early influence of an educated middle class schooling system and the development of the international game, enabling rugby union to become the ‘national’ game of New Zealand by the turn of the twentieth century.
Figure 9: Trade Routes of the British Empire in 1890 (National Library of New Zealand, 1890).
It is suggested that the adoption of rugby in New Zealand was due to the game’s ability to enable socially and ethnically diverse groups to not only communicate but also to have a common bond (Phillips, 1987, pp. 90-92). As in Australia, clubs were originally formed around the cities and spread to rural areas once the educated secondary school pupils returned to their rural settlements. Teams and clubs including Maori players became established in the rural areas and a broad cross section of the population, including skilled and unskilled workers alongside judges, businessmen and editors, were involved in rugby clubs in the urban areas (Richardson, 1995, p.3). By the mid 1870s, rugby union was established in five dominant areas of New Zealand.

![Map of Dominant Rugby playing areas of New Zealand during the 1870s](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/)

The rugby game was assisted in its expansion throughout New Zealand due to the growth of inter-provincial matches and its ability to be a socially inclusive sport (Grainger, 2006, p. 54). Provincial unions formed in both the North and South Islands and established an administrative board to oversee the development of the rugby game. Inter-provincial matches were stimulated by the Auckland team tour of New Zealand in 1875 and this proved to be the
catalyst for the spread of the game nationally. Over seven hundred local clubs and eighteen provincial unions were established by the 1890s (Phillips, 1987, p.94). Furthermore, the inclusion of rugby into the curriculum of secondary schools in the late 1890s made it extremely difficult for other sporting codes to compete with rugby. Football’s failure to sustain a foothold in the education system in New Zealand restricted the game’s local diffusion and resulted in rugby union becoming the dominant sport for the educated elite (Keys, 2006; Ryan, 2008; Harris, 2010). By the turn of the twentieth century, rugby union had developed throughout New Zealand and the islands were the recipients of touring sides from NSW (1894), Queensland (1896) and the inaugural British and Irish Lions\textsuperscript{23} team in 1888.

In 1892, the provincial unions agreed that all matters relating to rugby should be controlled by the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU). A national governing body would foster the game as an amateur national game and would further promote international contact. The new administration designed an organisational structure that was hierarchal in nature with local clubs subordinate to the control of provincial unions who, in turn, were directly represented through national meetings. Ultimately it could be argued that the New Zealand rugby organisers copied the English cricket system in which “the nation was the exemplary unit, and ‘counties’, not communities, were the lower level constituencies” (Appadurai, 1995, p. 32). This mechanism of organisational structure was designed as a means of ensuring both protection against professionalism and the viability of clubs and competitions.

Prior to the NZRFU’s formation a range of disputes emerged between the provincial unions regarding fixtures and tournaments and eventually discussions took place regarding the need for a centralised authority, as the provincial bodies on the South Island believed that they should govern their own provinces. Although these disputes represented an initial stumbling block for the formation of a national union, the prominently North Island based provincial bodies did agree to a central authority as a way of promoting unity in the regulation of the game in New Zealand. This, they hoped, would encourage better games between provinces and provide control over the selection of New Zealand teams (Swan, 1948, p. 112). However, the formation of the NZRFU in 1892 caused a split in the game between northern

\textsuperscript{23} The British and Irish Lions are a combination of players from the Home nations who first toured in 1888 and have recently toured Australia in 2013.
and southern provinces. Canterbury, Otago and Southland initially refused to join the NZRFU, which consequently prohibited their provincial and club sides from competing against any teams affiliated to the NZRFU. Ultimately, within two years, the self-excluded provincial unions decided to join the NZRFU to ensure their representation on the board that controlled and regulated the game in New Zealand. However, as a punishment the NZRFU did not select any of the rebellious unions’ representative players in the first official tour by a New Zealand team to Australia in 1897.

The popularity of international touring sides with spectators convinced the NZRFU to establish a national team to travel worldwide (Ryan, 2005, p. 33). In 1905, the NZRFU sent a national team to the northern hemisphere to play fixtures in Britain, Ireland, France and North America. The New Zealand side were only defeated once during the tour and it was the dominance of this touring side that caused their northern hemisphere opponents to label the side as the ‘All Blacks’, based on the colour of their kit and the team’s dominance on the field. The popularity of international tours both in New Zealand and worldwide generated increased levels of income for the NZRFU. The financial success of the 1905 northern hemisphere tour contributed £12,000 (roughly £1.3million in modern currency) to the NZRFU while the tour also helped the financial welfare of clubs and national unions in Europe (Nauright, 1991, p. 243).
Establishing an international touring side increased the importance and prestige of national selection. From a player’s perspective, not only did they have the opportunity to travel but additionally the NZRFU sanctioned a three shillings a day tour allowance as a level of income without breaching the amateur regulations. However, this was not disclosed to the opposition unions for fear of being reported to the IRFB and being reprimanded as had previously happened to Wales after the Arthur Gould affair in 1897 (Haynes, 1996, p. 17). While players and some provincial unions unsuccessfully attempted to change the NZRFU’s stance on low tour allowances, the success of the 1905 tour would inspire a privately organised team to tour England in 1907-8. This tour would be the catalyst for the establishment of rugby league in New Zealand and Australia and increase the developing rivalry between rugby league and rugby union.
11. Summary

Disputes over player payments in Association Football and rugby emerged in the north of England during the second half of the nineteenth century where the development of local club and league competitions had proved commercially successful. The approach by the respective governing bodies differed greatly with the FA retaining control over both the professional Football League and amateur football. Whereas, the RFU activated a split in the game by rejecting the commercial practices that had made the game popular in the north, forcing the northern clubs to form a separate professional rugby code under the NU.

As part of the cultural cargo of the British Empire, sport was disseminated around the world, in both its amateur and professional forms. In Australia, club competition increased the popularity and participation of sport beyond the social elites. The increase in profile of sport in Australia encouraged the Victorian Football Association to accept professionalism in order to retain its authority over the sport (Obel, 2001, p. 43). However, the administrative bodies that were controlling rugby on the East Coast resisted professionalism and as in England triggered a split in the game in 1907. In New Zealand and Wales, rugby administrators were able to establish regular inter-provincial/regional matches and promoted the sport as a national commercially successful amateur game, albeit amidst allegations of professionalism. Contrastingly in Scotland and Ireland, the game developed as a minor, exclusive amateur game promoted in gentlemanly friendlies.

The institutionalisation of rugby in New Zealand and Wales characterised the game’s popularity as ‘inclusive’ within these two countries. Whereas, rugby developed a level of ‘exclusivity’ in England, France and South Africa by requiring players to either declare their amateur status or sign professional contracts. International rugby matches became the pinnacle of ‘amateur’ friendlies and were used to establish contact and enable the cultural transmission of an ‘amateur gentleman’s’ game throughout the British Empire, which is explored further in the following chapter.
Chapter Three: The Survival Game

1. Chapter Overview

In the decades leading up to the First World War the landscape of Britain’s sporting culture changed. The RFU’s 1895 classification of rugby union as ‘amateur’ enabled the sport to present its purity against increasing elements of commercialism and professionalism emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was this amateur ideology that inextricably shaped the game of rugby union for the middle classes of the white dominions of the British Empire (Collins, 2008, p. 1). In addition, the development of the NU not only reduced rugby union’s exposure to commercialism but also the levels of working class participation in the sport within England. Table 1 shows that of the two hundred and thirty three men who played for England between 1901 and 1931 whose occupations can be traced (out of a total 313 players) 92 per cent were from social classes I and II on the registrar general’s occupational scale.

Table 1: Class Composition of England Internationals 1902-1931 (adapted from Dunning & Sheard, 2005, p. 203)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Class</th>
<th>1902-11</th>
<th>1912-21</th>
<th>1922-31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III (non-manual)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III (manual)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Known</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The RFU’s authority among the rugby playing nations throughout the Empire was based on status and desire of the sport to represent ‘Britishness’ rather than any strongly held attachment to amateurism (Allison, 2001; Collins, 2009; Harris, 2010). While attempting to

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24 Amateurism can be considered as doing things for the love of them, without reward or material gain (Allison, 2001, p. 3).
establish and develop links with Britain, the colonies were not as rigid or inflexible with implementing the amateur principle. The distance from the ‘motherland’ allowed the rugby playing countries within the colonies to adopt a more open-minded outlook to the financial elements of the rugby game. For example the NSWRU were known to have paid Dally Messenger £2.10s to compensate him for loss of earnings in order to play in the second test for Australia against New Zealand in 1907 (Fagan, 2006, p. 155).

This chapter will analyse the RFU’s rigid stance on amateurism amidst the growth of professionalism in other sports. Further, the chapter analyses the increase of colonial influence on the development of rugby union during the first half of the twentieth century.

2. The First World War: Rugby Union’s gain.

The early years of the twentieth century was a period in rugby union’s history when it was still trying to define its amateur status against a range of reported infractions throughout the Empire\textsuperscript{25}. Consequently, the RFU used the outbreak of the First World War to demonstrate its ‘amateur’ values, emphasising that rugby union was a sport that represented more than recreation given its ability to train young men to be leaders of the Empire. The outbreak of the First World War provided an opportunity for the RFU to publically promote the number of former and current public school pupils who were ready to fight in defence of the Empire (See Figure 12). Within nine days of the outbreak of war the RFU cancelled all fixtures around the country dedicating their resources to the war effort. In contrast, the FA continued their fixtures through to the start of the 1915 season (amidst claims of being counterproductive to the war effort) as they had employed professional staff and functioned as a business.

The RFU promoted examples set by rugby union players during the war to further popularise the sport amongst a fiercely patriotic middle class. A particular example is the story of Edgar Mobbs, a former England International and Northampton rugby captain. Following the outbreak of First World War, and undeterred by the denial of an officer commission due to his aging years, Edgar Mobbs joined what became known as the ‘Sportsman's Battalion’. The Sportsman’s Battalion consisted predominantly of men from the world of sport and entertainment and allowed admission for individuals up to the age of forty five. Edgar Mobbs

\textsuperscript{25} Arthur Gould affair in 1897 and The NZRFU tour in 1905.

71
joined up as a private soldier but by April 1916 had risen to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and formed his own unit of two hundred and sixty four men as ‘D’ company, 7th Battalion, Northamptonshire regiment, of which only eighty-five survived the war. Unfortunately, Mobbs was not among them, having been gunned down leading an assault on a machine gun post during the Third Battle of Ypres. However, the RFU and the Northampton club used this example of gallantry to increase the profile and status of the game of rugby union both regionally and nationally. In 1921 thousands of people turned out for the unveiling of the Mobbs Memorial in Northampton's Market Square. That year also saw the first Mobbs Memorial Match between the East Midlands (more recently Bedford) and the Barbarians, a fixture that has been played ever since (www.northamptonsaints.co.uk). By the 11th of November 1918, one hundred and forty rugby internationals from nine national teams had lost their lives during the First World War (McCrery, 2013, p. 17).
Figure 12: World War One Recruitment Posters (http://www.absoluteastronomy.com).
The RFU’s publication of the contribution of rugby players to the war effort led to public criticism of the FA. The FA were slow to cancel their fixtures at the outbreak of the war and consequently received a level of public criticism, exemplified by the volume of critical letters to *The Times* newspaper in 1914. In response a Footballers' Battalion was formed in 1916 although it was claimed by its Colonel that only 122 out of 1,800 professionals had joined. The FA tried to limit the damage by claiming that half of the eligible footballers had already joined up and that the rest were married, but the harm was already done (Birley, 1986, p. 59).

‘There is no excuse for diverting from the front thousands of athletes in order to feast the eyes of crowds of inactive spectators, who are either unfit to fight or unfit to be fought for…Every club that employs a professional football player is bribing a needed recruit to refrain from enlistment, and every spectator who pays his gate money is contributing so much towards a German Victory’ (A.F. Pollard writing in the letter pages of the Times, 7th November, 1914. Cited in Taylor, 2008, p. 120).

Negative public reaction to the response of the FA to the First World War was led by the middle and upper classes of the population, whereas the working man was unfazed by the continuation of leisure time activity during the war time period (Branson & Heinmann, 1973; Collins, 2009; Perkin, 1989). Rugby used this period to promote its amateur values by identifying the sport as a hobby and something that was an obvious and appropriate sacrifice during the war period. The RFU demonstrated its players’ loyalty to the nation, which came before any notion of leisure or commercial gain during the war period. However, for full-time professional players sport was a method of earning a living and it is argued that the continuation of other non-essential industries, for example theatres, justified the delayed response by the FA to cancel its fixtures (Philpotts, 2000, p. 109). Furthermore, it might also be suggested that football could have provided a valuable boost to morale throughout the war-induced period of austerity.

26 The Military Service Act of 1916 saw the regulations regarding enlisting of unmarried men extended to conscription of married men. This was the first time that conscription was used by British Military in the First World War.
3. Changing Tides

The post war years of the 1920s saw a great revival in the fortunes of rugby union. After surviving the ‘great split’ in 1895 and competing against professional codes of sport, rugby union profited from a change in the landscape of society. The post-war years saw an increase in demand for civil servants and managers of services and industry and the proportion of salary earners rose from 12% in 1911 to 22% in 1921 (Birley, 1986, p. 86). Ultimately, the development of management within industry established an overall expansion of the middle class. The ‘new’ middle class attempted to behave in a way that they perceived was appropriate to their new station and status and this included embracing middle class manners, modes of behaviour and pastimes such as tennis and rugby union (Philpotts, 2000, p. 110). The resultant embrace and endorsement of rugby union’s virtues between 1920 and 1930 meant that the RFU expanded by two hundred and thirty-one clubs (Griffiths, 1982).

In the post-war years, rugby union’s popularity as a spectator sport increased significantly. The crowds gathering at Twickenham to watch internationals grew from 18,000 in 1910 to 49,000 in 1924, to 73,000 at the 1936 match against the All Blacks, spectator figures rivalling cricket fixtures at Lord’s, horse racing at Ascot and even Tennis tournaments at Wimbledon (Griffiths, 1982). As the numbers of spectators grew, so did the level of expectation placed on the players. To compete at the highest level required an individual to have a level of fitness that would enable them to perform, not only for themselves but also for the paying public. Nevertheless, the RFU and the IRFB insisted that training was contrary to the amateur ethos of the game and consequently banned formal training sessions, placing fitness as the responsibility of the individual (Vincent, 1998, p. 124). As Table 1 shows, the individuals playing international rugby union for England were from the social elite of society, which enabled them to find more time in which to develop their fitness to compete at the highest level. Towards the end of the 1920s it was acknowledged by the RFU that competing in international rugby placed a heavy demand on the players involved. To cope with such demand, players were starting to develop an awareness of the importance of training and conditioning, an attitude that the RFU believed was forming a ‘professional’ approach to the game within its membership body. Consequently, in 1935 the RFU declared that at least three years should elapse between major tours both in the interests of the increasing demands being placed on the players and to reduce the prospect of a ‘professional’ attitude forming.
By the end of the 1920s, football at the highest level was played almost exclusively by professionals, who were governed by contracts with the professional clubs that stated the expectations for training and playing while also identifying the salaries that the players were to receive. Amateur football clubs such as the Corinthians were unable to compete with their professional counterparts and eventually had to merge with Casuals FC in order to compete in the Isthmian League after World War Two. Contrastingly, the Barbarians Rugby Club were able to expand their fixture list and compete with top club sides; and thus benefitted from the association with heroism and the war, exemplified by the Mobbs Memorial Match. Indeed, the Barbarians continued to attract the best players from all over Britain and on the 31st January 1948 they were invited to provide the final fixture for the Australian team on their tour of the British Isles at the Cardiff Arms Park in Wales. The fixture attracted 45,000 spectators and subsequently a fixture against the Barbarians has become a traditional end of tour fixture for national sides touring throughout northern hemisphere. In light of the amateur ethos within rugby union and the concept of playing for ‘fun’, another tradition was established where at least one player in the Barbarian team would be a non-international, a practice which is still maintained today (Philpotts, 2000, p. 110).

During the 1930s the RFU’s stance on professionalism remained as cautious as ever, and minutes from various RFU meetings leading up to Second World War reveal that infractions of the professional ruling and defections to rugby league were relatively rare. However, the relationship with rugby league remained throughout this period. Following the declaration of war in 1939 the RFU relaxed the rules on professionalism so that professionals could be allowed to play rugby union in the armed forces until the end of the war in 1945. Immediately after the war the RFU reinstated their policy on professionalism and revived their stance towards players from rugby league.

4. International Inconsistencies: Northern and Southern Hemisphere Differences

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the RFU’s stance on amateurism was consistently tested, not only by international variation in the interpretation of amateurism but also by the continued development of rugby league. This caused the RFU to become meticulous in their attempts to identify and expel transgressors and they ruthlessly drove out anyone with the remotest connection to rugby league (Collins, 2009, p. 57). Examples range
from a schoolboy who played rugby league for a local club rather than his school union side to England full-back Tom Brown, who was banned for life from the game in 1933 merely for having a discussion with officials of a rugby league club (Collins, 2006b, pp. 131-3).

The next section of this thesis will examine the international conditions of rugby union beyond the home nations during the early part of the twentieth century.

*The Antipodean battleground and the Rise of South Africa*

‘It is better that a game should be played badly, and that no-one should go to see it, than that the price should have to be paid for professionalism,’ (Gallaher & Stead, 1906, cited in Collins, 2008, p. 1).

The above quote is cited from a book written by Dave Gallaher and Billy Stead, who were Captain and Vice-Captain respectively on the 1905 New Zealand Rugby Union tour of the northern hemisphere. The quote itself emphasises the value of amateurism and the distain for professionalism at the turn of the twentieth century, even to sides in the southern hemisphere. However, the success and the financial remuneration evident in the 1907 New Zealand Rugby League tour of Australia and Great Britain represented a change in the mind-set of how rugby union was to be structured and played in New Zealand. In an attempt to survive the threat posed by rugby league, in the early part of the twentieth century the NZRFU regularly (unbeknown to the RFU) revised the playing rules and also reinstated rugby league players\(^\text{27}\) in order to expand the popularity of the game. Rugby football was brought to New Zealand via the natural trade routes from Australia with Auckland being the nearest and most popular stopping point\(^\text{28}\). It was in Auckland where the intense rivalry between league and union was most evident.

The aftermath of the First World War saw the governing bodies of both New Zealand and Australia officially propose to the RFU a series of rule changes to entice more players and

\(^{27}\) An example of New Zealand liberalism is showcased in the career of Karl Ifwerson. Playing for both New Zealand Rugby League and Union between 1914 and 1924.

\(^{28}\) Auckland is the only New Zealand team that competes in the National Rugby League; which comprises fifteen teams from Australia and one from New Zealand, representing professional rugby league in Australasia.
spectators to rugby union and to stem the flow towards rugby league. Additionally, there was also a proposition to introduce an Imperial Rugby Board for the southern hemisphere to have equal representation on an international board of governance for rugby union. However, all suggestions were initially rejected by the RFU. Nevertheless, continuing disputes with rugby league throughout the early 1920s forced the RFU to officially recognise the southern hemisphere’s requests for rule alterations in order to help constrain or defeat the rugby league threat in the southern hemisphere.

On the 11th of May 1908, the QRU banned its players from taking part in rugby league matches in Sydney. The popularity of professional rugby league had increased to become the dominant code in Queensland after the First World War. Consequently, the QRU and the NSWRU were forced into a position of recruiting rugby league players to ensure the game existed amongst its professional counterparts. A similar practice was conducted in New Zealand at the outbreak of the Second World War when the NZRFU granted an amnesty to rugby league players, unilaterally extending the RFU’s lifting of its own ban for the duration of the war (Collins, 2009, pp. 59-64). With such distance between the southern hemisphere sides and the Home Nations, the Antipodean countries had the ability to control and govern the evolution of the rugby game in their respective countries rather than inflexibly embrace and uphold the entirety of the regulations being enforced by the RFU.

In South Africa in the early twentieth century rugby union served to unite a nation that had previously been at war. The South African War resulted in a high level of animosity between the British and the Afrikaner populations, especially over the high death tolls of women and children in British controlled concentration camps during the war (Black & Nauright, 1998, p. 33). The South African team tour of the British Isles in 1906 was the first time that a South African team, in similar fashion to the New Zealand team in 1905, were not only competitive with their British counterparts but also victorious. The touring side only communicated in Afrikaans to signify a sense of identity and to avoid moves being interpreted by opposing players. The South African team created their own nickname ‘Springbokken’ which the British media referred to as ‘Springboks’, which is a term still used

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29 The NSWRU remained the default governing body of Australian Rugby Union until the ARU was formed in 1947.  
30 Prior to 1908, there were no rugby league clubs in Queensland. 
31 Also known as the Boar War took place during 1899-1904 between forces from the British Empire and the Boer South African Republic (Transvaal).  
32 The South Africans were the first team to use a 3-4-1 scrum formation, designed to help them on wet grounds.
to identify the South African Rugby Union side and has been a symbol used on their playing shirt crest since the 1906 tour.

The period between the 1906 rugby tour of Britain through to the outbreak of the First World War saw an extraordinary transformation in relationships between England and South Africa. Although officially declared a dominion in 1910, the majority of South Africans still had a loyalty to the Empire. Upon the outbreak of war the Union of South Africa provided over 146,000 men in the Great War with over 6,000 men losing their lives, proving their commitment to the Empire. Furthermore, the inter-war years demonstrated the loyal support of the South African Rugby Board (SARB) to the RFU despite the Union of South Africa becoming independent of the British Empire in 1934. This is further evidenced by the high number of South African born England internationals during this period authorised by the SARB. However, the 1948 national election saw the National Party come to power and with it a heightened emphasis on Afrikaner identity throughout all aspects of South African society. The 1948 election success for the National Party empowered the newly elected political body to enforce existing policies of racial segregation under a system called ‘apartheid’ (Hain, 1971, pp. 16-18). Under apartheid the black and white populations were forced to live in separate areas, use separate public facilities and in relevance for this thesis, use separate sports facilities. In 1964 the South African Minister for the Interior explained the direct influence of apartheid on sport in South Africa, which is illustrated below:

‘The participation in international or world sports tournaments or competitions by mixed teams representing South Africa as a whole can in circumstances be approved… The South African custom, which is traditional, finds expression in the policy that there should be no competition in sport between the races, within our borders, and that the mixing of races in teams taking part in sports meetings within the Republic of South Africa and abroad should be avoided’ South

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33 In 1914 The Mauritz rebellion by Boer South African Republic supporters protested about helping the British. The rebellion was squashed by the pro-British government and several members of the rebellion group were imprisoned.
34 SARB was formed in 1889 and became the SARFU in 1992. Furthermore, England Internationals who played for England 1920-39 and were born in South Africa: Jannie Krige, Frank Mellish, Richard Lawson, Thomas Francis, Tuppy Owen-Smith and Herbert Freakes.
35 From 1961 to 1994, more than 3.5 million people were forcibly removed from their homes and deposited in townships (www.history.com).
African Minister for the Interior 26\textsuperscript{th} of June 1964 (cited in Hain, 1971, p. 35).

Despite strong and consistent opposition to apartheid within and outside of South Africa, its laws remained for over fifty years\textsuperscript{36}. With the National Party in power the SARB started to challenge the policies of the RFU and the IRFB. The SARB made a series of proposals to change the IRFB’s published rules and regulations, which were ultimately rejected. Unperturbed by the IRFB, during the 1958 French national team’s tour of South Africa player substitutions were introduced, an innovation which was openly criticised by the IRFB (Black & Nauright, 1998; Dunning & Sheard, 2005). Furthermore, in 1963 the SARB president publicly suggested that players should have their expenses payments increased whilst on tour representing their country\textsuperscript{37}. The IRFB did not respond to the request but, in turn, questioned the SARB’s interpretation of amateurism. Although all members of the SARB loudly proclaimed their adherence to amateurism, it was apparent that many Afrikaners, did not entirely share the ‘amateur’ enthusiasm of the RFU or even the IRFB (Collins, 2008, p. 11).

\textit{The French Revolution}

The relationship between the RFU and the FFR during the early part of the twentieth century was fractious at best. The FFR never embraced amateurism with the same enthusiasm as was requested by the RFU, which resulted in a number of accusations of professionalism from their English counterparts. In the years following the end of the First World War, French rugby resembled rugby in the north of England prior to the 1895 split. Allegations of payments for players, inducements to switch clubs and protests about violence in what became known as ‘le rugby de muerte’ (Rugby of Death) created intolerable tensions both within the French game and with the RFU (Dine, 2001, p. 69).

Rugby union in France required participation in the Five Nations Championship\textsuperscript{38} both to ensure a consistent level of international competition and to develop the profile of the game within the country. However, the French ethos was a determination to win rather than to

\textsuperscript{36} Apartheid was dismantled in the early 1990s with the first non-discriminatory political elections taking place in 1994.

\textsuperscript{37} Former South African international player, Danie Craven, was the serving SARU President.

\textsuperscript{38} The Five Nations originated in 1910 with national teams from England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and France.
adhere to the amateur principles being dictated by the RFU and the IRFB. Consequently, the
game of rugby union was played under a ‘win-at-all’ costs mentality in France, often
resulting in scenes of violence both on and off the field. When the Olympics were held in
Paris in 1924, the home nations refused to enter a team into the tournament\textsuperscript{39}, which was
ultimately contested by only three sides; France, Romania and the United States of America
(USA). After a series of physical encounters the USA were the eventual winners defeating
the French in the final. Spectators at the contest expressed great concern that American
supporters were being physically assaulted as the result went the way of the Americans, with
witnesses stating that bodies were being passed down to the field of play to be collected by
ambulances (Dine, 2012).

In 1931, fourteen French clubs attempted to break away from the FFR to set up a competitive
league structure\textsuperscript{40}. This led to the Home Nations excluding France from the Five Nations
Championship and removing them from the IRFB \textsuperscript{41}. This response was clearly a reaction by
the IRFB to the challenge to its control of the international game; something they believed
would serve as a warning to other national governing bodies:

‘Until the FFR comes to our way of carrying on, we cannot condone
what is going on in France without playing traitor to all that we in the
four Home Unions have been taught and believe about the game’
(Moses, 1960, p. 18).

The removal of France from the Five Nations Championship allowed rugby league to prosper
in France. In December 1933 a rugby league match took place between a British select side
and an Australian team, which was sponsored by \textit{L’Echo des Sports} (Dine, 2001, p. 86). The
opportunity for international competition greatly helped rugby league to recruit top French
rugby union players who were in international exile. An additional threat to the IRFB was the
emergence of the Federation Internationale de Rugby Amateur (FIRA), in the early 1930s,

\textsuperscript{39} The RFU had not entered a team into the 1920 Olympic Games due to late scheduling of domestic games and
lack of time to prepare (RFU minutes, 17\textsuperscript{th} October, 1919). Furthermore, the RFU did not enter a team into the
1924 Olympics due to continuous violence evidenced both in the crowd and on the field of play when playing
against French sides, something the RFU did not want illustrated on a global platform at the Olympic Games
(RFU minutes, 9\textsuperscript{th} April, 1924).

\textsuperscript{40} In 1933 Jean Galia compounded the FFR’s problems by leading a rugby league breakaway to form the Ligue
de Rugby à Treize, which soon began to rival the FFR (Dine, 2001, p. 86).

\textsuperscript{41} France were eventually reinstated to the Five Nations Championship in 1948.
representing other European rugby union governing bodies such as Romania, Italy and Germany. In response to the development of FIRA and the growth of rugby league in France, as well as attempting to show European solidarity in the face of the military threat of Germany, France were readmitted to the IRFB in 1939. Confirming the rationale for dismissing France in 1931, the IRFB again reiterated the importance of banning professionals for life and sent a reminder to all governing bodies on how they wanted the game of rugby union to be administered:

"The real foundation of the game as played in our countries is the friendly match between clubs" (Moses, 1960, p. 32).

During the 1950s, accusations of infractions in relation to the amateur ideal were once again made against France. However, the RFU were not as authoritative or severe in dealing with the situation. In fact the RFU simply wrote to the FFR asking for an investigation to take place; to which the FFR replied four years later in 1954 giving assurances over the amateur game in France. The reluctance of the RFU or even the RFU dominated IRFB to sanction France illustrates the diminishing power the two boards had within world rugby (Allison, 2001, Dine, 2001). Outright professionalism however, was still against everything that rugby union represented.

The reluctance of the IRFB and the RFU to act against the French in the 1950s reflected a shift of power occurring in rugby union. Both French rugby and the southern hemisphere countries had developed successful national sides, embedding the sport into their respective national cultures. Furthermore, France’s leadership of FIRA, which had seen the game expand into Eastern Europe, also illustrates the growing influence they were exerting on the world game (Collins 2008, p. 10). Although the RFU and the IRFB were losing overall control on the interpretation of amateurism from the early decades of the twentieth century onwards they were still committed to ensuring that an amateur ethos remained embedded within the game in some form. This initiated further conflicts over rules, competition and regulations between the constituent members of the IRFB as the century progressed and can be argued to have hindered the development of the game in an increasingly commercial and mediated sports industry in the twentieth century.
5. Summary

The period between the 1895 declaration and the end of the Second World War was a period in rugby union’s history that heavily shaped its identity as a world sport. The game had to endure a continual shift in power with battles against rugby league, the loss of players to the war effort, a challenge to the game’s traditional hierarchy and the slow erosion of the amateur ethos throughout the game. The dominance of the southern hemisphere national teams on the playing field which stems from the early half of the twentieth century established the international sides as the dominant teams in world rugby (see Table 2). The southern hemisphere sides developed their own interpretations of the rules and regulations in an attempt to defeat the ‘motherland’ and it has been argued as the central reason for their dominance in the international game (Black & Nauright, 1998; Dunning & Sheard, 2005). Furthermore, other developments were occurring in the southern hemisphere, such as training and performance analysis that was completely against the RFU’s interpretation of amateurism. For example in 1930, a South African scrum half named Dannie Craven invented the dive pass to speed up delivery of the ball to backs. Also in the 1930s, Australia was given permission to remove the law relating to kicking into touch on the full (without touching the ground beforehand), this gave them a thirty year head start on the British teams in playing a more open, running game42. In the 1950’s, New Zealand developed a tactic called ‘ten man rugby’ which enabled their sides to create a forward dominated game against foreign opposition.

Unimpeded as they were by the class based amateur ethos, the southern hemisphere nations used rugby to establish their identity on the global sporting landscape. As is evident throughout this chapter, although not openly professional, the southern hemisphere nations’ diluted interpretations of amateurism ultimately created a professional approach to rugby union decades before the move to ‘open’ professionalism in 1995.

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42 Known as the ‘Australian Dispensation’ stated that direct kicking to touch could only be conducted within the 22 metre line.
Table 2: Northern Hemisphere International Rugby Union sides win percentage versus Southern Hemisphere International Rugby Union sides from 1900 through to February 2014 (Adapted from http://rugby.statbunker.com/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Win</th>
<th>Lose</th>
<th>Draw</th>
<th>Win %</th>
<th>Win</th>
<th>Lose</th>
<th>Draw</th>
<th>Win %</th>
<th>Win</th>
<th>Lose</th>
<th>Draw</th>
<th>Win %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>40%</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>19%</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>33%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>27%</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>10%</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>4%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>32%</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>0%</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>21%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>29%</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>0%</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>19%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>40%</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>22%</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>28%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Four: Methods

1. Chapter Overview

The research conducted throughout this thesis is exploratory in nature and provides an examination of the phenomenon of the professionalisation of rugby union. This chapter will identify how empirical research was conducted, the key methodological issues in qualitative research and detail the specific research process which underpins the empirical work detailed in forthcoming chapters. Furthermore, this chapter will address the difficulties encountered while conducting academic enquiries, including issues surrounding data collection and the data analysis processes.

2. Research Strategy

The intention of the research was to explore the participants’ experience of the professionalisation of rugby union. Consequently, the very process of examining experience signifies that ‘meaning’ is central to the research question (Dubin, 1956, p. 131). It is the content and complexity of these ‘meanings’ rather than a measure of frequency that suggested a qualitative approach was the most appropriate design for the research project (Marshall, 1996, p. 524). Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 2) define qualitative research as a multi-method focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach which attempts to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Additionally, qualitative approaches allow the research to be more flexible to the range of interpretations that individuals may make of experiences in an attempt to interpret the sense of meaning (Lyons & Coyle, 2008; Smith, 2004). In line with this epistemological perspective, reality is considered to be socially constructed through individual or collective definitions of one’s situation, and cannot be appropriately represented or effectively assessed by numerical data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 84). Furthermore, Lyons and Coyle (2008, p. 36) indicate that qualitative research is more concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the individuals’ perspectives, which was the aim of the present research project.

Qualitative research is commonly used to understand and represent the experiences and actions of people as they encounter, engage and live through situations (Starks & Trinidad,
Researchers undertaking qualitative research must accept that it is impossible to completely dismiss one’s own perspective on the subject matter and do not claim to do so. However, they believe that their self-reflective attempts to “bracket” existing theory and their own values allow them to understand and represent their informants’ experiences and actions more adequately than would otherwise be possible (Elliott, Fisher & Rennie, 1999, p. 216). Therefore, it is useful to emphasise that qualitative research is a complex method of inquiry that often utilises self-reflection to assist the exploration of a research question. Hence, through the use of qualitative methods, the researcher becomes part of the research process itself, making necessary a detailed reflective examination of the research conducted.

3. The Research Design

In order to understand the ‘impact’ of professionalisation on rugby union, the research had to synthesise knowledge from a variety of perspectives and paradigms. The use of qualitative research enables the examination of how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced; based on methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced; and based on methods of analysis and explanation building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context (Mason, 1996, p.4; Mishler, 1979, pp. 3-7). Consequently, it was important to ensure that the research design for the current research programme provided the opportunity for the researcher to be aware of the interactive process being shaped by the researcher and the participants.

The research strategy for this programme of research can be broadly divided into two principal components which were designed to examine the conceptual framework used to formulate the research project. First, a historical overview utilised in the previous chapters examined the development of rugby union which was then concentrated more specifically on to the significance of ‘professionalisation’ on rugby union. Second, the research strategy involved an ethnographic enquiry incorporating the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to establish what impact the professionalisation of rugby union has had on rugby players themselves as well as the sport itself. The main aim of IPA is to explore in detail the processes through which participants make sense of their own experiences, by looking at the respondents’ account of the processes they have been through (Ross, 1989, p. 341; Smith, 1996, p. 264). Using the IPA lens, events and objects are to be understood by investigating how they are experienced and given meaning by an individual through that
individual's life/world and IPA is the most appropriate process of ascertaining such data in a systematic manner (Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p. 88).

IPA is phenomenological in that it is concerned with individuals’ subjective reports rather than the formation of objective accounts (Flowers, Hart, & Marriott, 1999, p.485). The utilisation of IPA requires the researcher to access the participant’s lived world. Chapman and Smith (2002, p.128) suggest that fully understanding a participant’s personal world is complicated by the researcher’s own conceptions. The added difficulty for researchers using IPA is being able to ensure that their dual roles of participant and investigator are clear. The distinction between the two roles is characterised in two components. Firstly, an ‘outsider’s’ perspective is where the researcher reviews issues from their own interpretive framework. Second, verstehen is reviewed from the ‘insider’s’ perspective on the interpretive framework of the study population (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011, pp.17-18). The term interpretative phenomenological analysis is therefore used to signal the dual facets of the approach and the joint reflections of both participant and researcher form the analytic account produced (Smith, 2004, p. 44).

IPA has three defining features: it is ideographic, inductive and interrogative (Smith, 2004, pp. 41-44). The ideographic nature of IPA means that the participant’s “lived experience” is accompanied with a subjective and reflective process of interpretation, in which the analyst explicitly enters into the research process (Goulding, 1999, p. 860). Each subject’s interview is analysed and a table of themes is individually constructed; only once the researcher has achieved closure does the next analysis begin. The inductive nature of IPA does not limit itself to any hypotheses from the beginning (unlike quantitative research), allowing the opportunity for unpredicted themes to emerge. The interrogative aspect of IPA ensures that the development of themes and patterns that emerge from the data do not exist in isolation but are linked to theoretical knowledge through critical evaluation and discussion.

IPA was chosen over other qualitative methods (e.g., oral history, grounded theory, narrative analysis and discourse analysis) due to the way that IPA assesses participants' experiences, understandings, perceptions and views, therefore creating a strong focus on the individual. Furthermore, IPA investigates what it is like to live through individual experiences and the

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43 Verstehen is the ability to reconstruct the meaning that social life has for those engaged in it through the researcher’s own ability to comprehend meaning and belief (David & Sutton, 2011, p. 78).
44 Closure represents the moment that the researcher has evaluated the individual transcript and no further themes are able to be identified in the documentation.
aim is to understand what an experience means for the person who has had this experience (Elliott, Fisher & Rennie, 1999, p. 219). In line with IPA, oral history allows the researcher to use memory recall to explore a particular research area (Starr, 1996, p. 40). However oral history does not have a specific data collection or analytical structure in comparison to IPA, which is vital to ensure consistency throughout the research process. Nevertheless, Collins and Nicolson (2002) suggest the commitment required to use IPA can create a ‘disaggregation and unitisation of the data’ and lead to a loss of focus on the exact topic being researched. Conversely, Smith (2004, pp. 46-51) suggests that this is a by-product of the idiographic commitment to the research and becomes a strong advantage of IPA when areas of investigation have been under-researched or new.

4. Participants and Recruitment

The aim of IPA is to select participants in order to highlight a particular research question and to develop a full and interesting interpretation of the data. In order to develop a full understanding of the impact of professionalisation on rugby union, individuals had to be carefully selected in order to address the aim of the research project. This strategy is known as purposive sampling, which refers to the process of specifically selecting individuals based on the purpose of answering the research aims (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 65).

In line with the purposive sampling strategy adopted here, the individuals identified for this project were selected on the basis that they could contribute a particular perspective on the phenomena being studied. Participants had to have experience of participation in elite level rugby union and consequently a sampling criterion was created insisting that participants needed to have made ten international appearances when participating in rugby union before, during or after professionalisation. The introduction of such a caveat was fundamental in identifying participants for the study, as the research population had to have appropriate knowledge and experience in order to contribute to the research process and from a practical perspective it narrowed the pool of potential participants.

Participants were initially contacted using a convenience sample via a range of different sources, ranging from current rugby coaches, business contacts or former schoolteachers. From the initial contact with a selected sample of the population, it was clear that there was a common interest in the project and they actively engaged in seeking out further potential participants for the study. On commencing the initial data collection snowball sampling
provided further access to individuals who could contribute to the overall research project; through the use of the initial participants acting as gatekeepers; a process also used by Kanemasu and Molnar (2013) in their study on Fijian rugby labour migration. Snowball sampling is a process that uses current participants to identify and provide access routes to additional respondents who may be included in the study (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, pp. 142-148).

According to Smith (1996, p. 56) small sample sizes are the norm in IPA studies due to the ideographic nature of inquiry. It was for this purpose that the research question was split into participating eras, so that the sample could be examined for divergence and convergence. Each era had a sample of sixteen participants representing the established Tier One rugby union playing nations (each union had two participants per era) in order to adhere to the requirements of an IPA project.

Table 3: Participants Overview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Playing Era</th>
<th>Playing Years</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Playing Era</th>
<th>Playing Years</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Playing Era</th>
<th>Playing Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
5. Difficulties Gaining Access to Participants

As previously stated, the initial source of research participants for this study was obtained from contacts with current rugby coaches, business contacts or former schoolteachers of the researcher. Although there was a common interest in the research topic, contact details for further participants were not forthcoming from these contacts in the early stages of the programme of research. Consequently, the researcher made use of rugby specific websites that detailed information on international rugby players in an attempt to create a list of potential participants. While this information was readily available, contact details were not. Therefore, contact was made with a large number of potential participants \((N=380)\) through a range of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Even though a large number of responses were positive regarding the research topic, the majority \((N=262)\) declined involvement in the research process.

Although the use of social media provided the opportunity to approach a large number of potential subjects it was not a particularly useful tool in attempting to communicate with the majority of players from the amateur era. As a result, a more traditional approach using a formal letter with the University of Portsmouth letterhead was used; however this only provided two further participants for the research project. Nonetheless, the researcher returned to social media and contacted the agents of a number of rugby union players from contact details contained on the various social media platforms. This process ultimately provided a further level of gatekeeping, with a number of agents either requesting financial remuneration or declining their clients’ participation altogether. However, as the data collection process began with the participants recruited from the various social media platforms, so too did the snowball sampling effect previously alluded to. The participants and contacts of the researcher were soon able to promote the research project to the rugby union community and within the first year of the research process, over one hundred potential individuals had agreed to participate.

6. Interviews

While it is possible to obtain data suitable for IPA analysis in a number of ways (e.g., personal accounts, diaries), Smith (1996, p. 266) argues that the best way to collect data for an IPA study is with the semi-structured interview; a method that was used in this study.
However, before reviewing the specific interview format used in this research project it is important to discuss the method of interviewing as a means of gathering data.

Interviews are an invaluable research tool that attempt to understand the world from the participants’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 1). It is important to choose the correct form of interview and for the researcher to be aware of their technique when trying to ascertain information from the participants (Roulston, 2010, p. 51). Indeed, there are four major types of interview method: structured, unstructured interview, group, and semi-structured interviews.

Structured interviews resemble written survey questionnaires, generating data based on a set of response categories but are rarely used by qualitative researchers. The structured interview exposes the participants to the same research conditions and any different responses are assumed to be genuine and not the result of any external differences created by the interview situation (Daymon & Holloway, 2011, p. 226). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003, p. 231) discuss the use of the structured interview by the U.S Census Bureau in conjunction with the Decennial Census. Some respondents of the census are interviewed by enumerators, who collect census data by visiting places where people live. These enumerators read the census form to the individuals, and then record the closed-ended responses. This standardised approach enables comparisons to be made between the participants’ responses. However, to be able to make any generalisations from the data it is important to have a suitably sized representative sample of the research population. This form of interview structure allows little interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and interaction is something that is fundamental in an IPA study.

Unstructured interviews are a contrast to that of the structured interview, as there are no formal interview guidelines to the interview process. Roulston (2010, p. 15) suggests that unstructured interviews are more like spontaneous conversations rather than interviews devised from pre-specified topics outlined in an interview guide. This approach provides an opportunity to develop a relationship between the researcher and the interviewee; however it is impossible to predict whether unstructured interviews will generate useful data as the topics can be changed at any point by either the researcher or the interviewee.
Group interviews are discussions between two to twelve pre-selected participants, led by a trained moderator and focused on a specific set of issues (O’Reilly, 2009, p. 79; Olsen, 2012, p. 77). The group interview has the advantages of being inexpensive, data rich, flexible, and stimulating to respondents. However, the quality of this method of interview depends on the level of control the interviewer has over the group and ensuring that there is a constant focus on the research topic (Mclafferty, 2004, p. 188).

The semi-structured interview utilises techniques from both the structured and unstructured approaches to interview. The semi-structured interview allows the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions are modified in the light of participants’ responses and the investigator is able to probe interesting and important areas that arise (Smith, 1996, p. 267). The interviewer’s role is to facilitate and guide rather than dictate exactly what will happen. Semi-structured interviews provide the flexibility to engage in a dialogue with participants and follow up on any areas of research importance or interest. Ideally, the interview should allow participants to discuss their experiences and structured interviews limit the ability to do this. As with all semi-structured interviews, questions are used as a guide only. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow participants to be the expert on their stories (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 57). This type of interview schedule is also iterative; therefore, questions can be added in light of the interviews conducted with participants.

The framework chosen for this study was a semi-structured interview method, due to its ability to develop a balance between the subjective relationship with the participant and the ability to be objective in discussing the subject matter. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview allows for an explorative approach something that is a specific requirement of an IPA study.

7. Data Collection

Interviews

Arrangements were made between the researcher and the participants to meet at a mutually convenient time either at their place of work, at the university, a social environment or through the use of a telephone interview. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants and on average lasted roughly sixty minutes (m=57.3min), with the
shortest interview lasting thirty-nine minutes in contrast to the longest interview, which lasted two hours and nine minutes. The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone and then transcribed verbatim by the author.

When conducting interviews, the interviewer-interviewee interaction should be seriously considered (Gratton & Jones, 2004; David & Sutton, 2011; Olsen, 2012; Seale, 2012). The participants need to believe or trust the interviewer and this is more often than not ensured through the use of anonymity or confidentiality. The strengths of the interview method are dependent upon the development of trust and rapport between the researcher and those being researched (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 14). To emphasise the importance of this within the research project, all participants involved in the study were informed of the underlying basis for the interview, how the interview data was to be employed, issues of confidentiality and anonymity, and the procedures employed for recording and transcribing interviews.

The interview schedule followed a similar format to that outlined by Smith and Osborn (2003, p. 57). By commencing with a general, open ended question, this meant that the researcher was not influencing the direction of the interview too much, but allowing participants to start with a subject with which they felt comfortable. The remaining questions were open ended and non-directive so as not to influence the possible emerging themes. Furthermore, the interviews were not a linear process, allowing the researcher to follow up on points discussed throughout the interview and probe areas of potential pertinence.

Three pilot interviews (with an individual from each era sampled) were conducted prior to data collection to ensure that the main research interviews could flow naturally without the need for clarity and further explanation from the researcher. The pilot interview provided opportunity to revaluate certain topics to be investigated and helped shape the final interview schedule and prompts for the main research interviews. The pilot interviews were not transcribed or used as part of the data analysis as the line of enquiry expanded as a result of studying the pilot interview responses.

At the end of the interviews, participants were asked if they wanted a copy of the transcript for their records. All participants received a copy of their consent form for their records; either directly before the interview commenced or via the post if the interview was conducted through the use of a telephone.
**Historical Research**

Smith (2004, p. 235) cites Yardley’s (2008) suggestion that a good process of analysis can be followed and replicated and ensures transparency of findings. It is important to note the procedures that were utilised in the construction of the present research project to ensure transparency with the data analysis. In addition to the interviews conducted, a range of national and international venues were visited to obtain as much information as possible throughout the research process. As is evident throughout this research project, data has been obtained from a range of committee reports, match reports and library texts. A list of places visited throughout the duration of research is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Research Visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>South African Rugby Museum</strong></td>
<td>Newlands Stadium, Cape Town</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>June 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IRFU Museum &amp; Memorabilia Sub Committee</strong></td>
<td>Aviva Stadium, Dublin</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>December 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>French Federation de Rugby</strong></td>
<td>Eaubonne, Paris</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>January 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Murrayfield Stadium</strong></td>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>April 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Museum Cardiff</strong></td>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>August 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Zealand Rugby Museum</strong></td>
<td>Palmerston North</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>September 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Waterfront Museum</strong></td>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Museum Australia</strong></td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 53) suggest that raw and unedited data transcripts should only be seen by the researcher; any data for wider use must be edited for anonymity. However, the current research project implemented the use of triangulation during the data analysis process. This required the raw data to be reviewed from an alternative viewpoint to that of the researcher (Jick, 1979, p. 602). Nonetheless, the anonymity of the participants was ensured through the use of a three-character pseudonym. The three characteristic pseudonyms consisted of a letter representing the nation of the participant, a letter representing their period of participation and a number to identify each participant in a sub-field. For example, EO1 refers to an English International who played rugby union in both the amateur and professional eras, and was one of two participants (of this particular classification) who participated in the research project.

In addition to the use of pseudonyms to anonymise the data, there are also further ethical practices to consider. Guenther (2009, p. 413) identifies the processes of informed consent, the right to privacy and the protection from harm as aspects that should be addressed when establishing levels of confidentiality and anonymity. These considerations were addressed with the participants being given a consent form to complete and sign. The form stated that the data would be kept confidential between the research team and anonymised for publication. For the participants who contributed to the research via a telephone interview, individuals were read the consent documents and requested to confirm their agreement to participate in the research.

9. Data Analysis

Content analysis is one of a range of research methods that can be used to analyse qualitative data. Other potential methods include grounded theory and discourse analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278); which were considered at the outset of this research process. However, content analysis was chosen to analyse the themes emerging out of the interview data, principally due to the vast quantity of data and the range of themes emerging. Whilst the data saturated relatively early in the analysis, care was taken to ensure a balance of the participants’ experiences were reflected in the thesis. Consequently, whenever appropriate, divergent views have been presented throughout the following chapters within the thesis. This form of data analysis enables the research to be disseminated to colleagues for peer
review, utilising the concept of trustworthiness in developing critical friends (Sparkes, 1995, pp. 161-168). Critical friends helped the researcher explore interpretations, explanations and consider alternatives, locate blind spots and omissions, access sampling procedures to highlight selection bias, examine judgements and make the research more public.

In addition to peer review, the participants each received a copy of their transcribed interview to confirm their transcripts and the themes derived from them. The process of establishing trustworthiness in the data is vital in the exploring the concept of ‘meaning’ when investigating experience (Dubin, 1956; Marrow, 2005). This process of data analysis and transparency allows the researcher to acknowledge their role as an instrument in the data collection and analysis process. It should be noted, however, IPA does not require the final interpretation to be a shared construction, as it ultimately represents meanings generated and owned by the researcher, rather than the participants, (McIlveen, Patton, & Hoare, 2008, pp. 12-13). However, it was a practice the researcher was encouraged to undertake as a learning process with the use of IPA and the vast quantity of data that was accumulated during the research process.

The use of IPA has underpinned the data collection and analytical processes conducted throughout this programme of research; informing the whole research process rather than just data analysis. Each recorded interview was transcribed and the transcripts were subjected to IPA (Smith, 1996; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The analysis required reading each transcript several times to familiarise the researcher with the content, allowing the researcher to become immersed in the narrative. Furthermore, the audio recording was also used to allow the researcher to recall the atmosphere of the interview, and the setting in which it was conducted. Notes on points of interest, initial themes and ideas that emerged relating to the experiences were made in the left hand column of the transcript. The transcript was then studied again and the preliminary themes were amended, developed, refined and noted in the right hand margin of the transcript, together with further thoughts and connections Analysis of the next transcript then began.
### Figure 13: An example of Abstraction from EPI interview Transcript.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw data from Transcript</th>
<th>Initial Raw Data Theme</th>
<th>Raw data from Transcript</th>
<th>Initial Raw Data Theme</th>
<th>Raw data from Transcript</th>
<th>Initial Raw Data Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think it was from the day I selected England, I could see how the team was built around me. It was a very different experience from what I had been used to.</td>
<td>Talent Identification</td>
<td>To be honest it was actually a case of trying to stay in the team. Obviously you had the support of the coaches and the players, but you also had the support of the media.</td>
<td>Performance support</td>
<td>I would have to play like *****, which was basically a must every Saturday.</td>
<td>Rugby league</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a week, it was inevitable. Although I trained a lot with the team, I never missed a session. More often than not the captain took the session.</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>The support was second to none. The players were always there to help each other.</td>
<td>Supporters</td>
<td>The media portrayal of the event was a bit shocking. I had to be careful not to let it get to me.</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obviously for England that was a totally different measure. We had specific training, fitness testing.</td>
<td>Nutrition and Diet</td>
<td>I was always going to play for Dad. It was the best thing that could happen.</td>
<td>Work Life balance</td>
<td>I got asked to play for a team in South Africa once the Lions had finished in 1990, but I really wanted to get back to the family.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The transcript from the first participant was then used to produce a list of themes on a separate sheet and the other transcripts were studied to identify further instances of these themes, contradictory or related themes and any additional themes. Nevertheless, this is still grounded in the particular detail of the participant’s account. A separate sheet was then used for each theme and participant identifiers and verbatim quotes were recorded on each sheet.

The themes were then analysed with continuous reference to the original text to check the validity of the interpretations and where they appeared to be linked and related, were clustered together to produce a list of super-ordinate themes (Patton, 2002, p. 264). Some of the initial themes were dropped as the researcher’s focus developed during the analytical process and these appeared to be isolated or unconnected to the emerging theme clusters. Utilising phenomenological reduction in the data analysis process enabled the data to be reduced allowing the research to focus on its central meaning and develop general dimension themes for the current research (see Figure 1).\footnote{Phenomenological reduction is the process of identifying something pre-scientifically familiar in the data, such as money, then making distinctions and reflective observations to ascertain a deeper understanding of the matter in question (Embree, 2012, p. 561).}

Personal bias is a topic that is well considered within qualitative research, and needed review within the undertaken research process. However, while it is possible to identify potential sources of bias, it is not as possible to specify procedures, which if followed systematically eliminate bias or error. Nonetheless, the use of critical friends illustrates an attempt to elevate personal bias within both the data collection and data analysis process during the research process.
Figure 14: General Dimension Themes.
10. Complications of the Data Analysis Process

The use of IPA signifies that the analysis is iterative and inductive; seeking the identification of emergent patterns within the research data through constantly returning to the data through the analysis process. Consequently, this process requires a fluid description and engagement with the data collected during the research process. Inevitably, the use of forty-eight subjects resulted in this process becoming time consuming, with transcripts needing to be read and re-read to understand the narratives developed within the data collection process in addition to the full data analysis procedure. Furthermore, the use of triangulation requires assistance from others in order to ensure that the research process is not only adhered to but also that the themes identified in the data analysis process reflect the content acquired during data collection. This process also seeks to check ‘inter-code reliability’ which is required to ensure consistency when more than one person is involved in coding data (Houghton, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013, p. 13). Implementing ‘inter-code reliability’ added a further level of dependency on the assistance and good will of others and delayed the report-writing process. As a result, the researcher in future research endeavours would use a smaller research sample if the research design were determined to be suitable for an IPA approach.

11. Reliability and Validity

Research should consider the concepts of reliability and validity to ensure that there is a level of consistency throughout the research process. Without rigour, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002, p. 14). Methods of examining reliability or validity are traditionally associated with quantitative research and not relevant to the qualitative research paradigm (Smith, 1984, p. 381). Criticisms of qualitative research methods suggest that the data produced lack the certainty of objective, numerical values and p values recorded in quantitative methods. However, when reviewing reliability in qualitative methods the concepts should not be directly compared to traditional quantitative methods due to the differing epistemological positions (Tracy, 2010, p. 841).

As alluded to above researchers should give considerations to issues of quality (e.g., credibility, trustworthiness) of qualitative research. Tracy (2010, p. 840) suggests that there are some key dimensions that qualitative methods should adhere to (a) Worthy Topic, (b) Rich Rigour, (c) Sincerity, (d) Credibility, (e) Significant Contribution, (f) Ethical and (g)
Meaningful Coherence as illustrated in Table 5. In addition, Elliott et al (1999, p. 221-222) considered a number of publishable guidelines pertinent to qualitative research, including: owning one’s perspective, situating the sample, providing credibility checks, coherence and accomplishing general vs. specific research tasks. However, the work of both Tracy and Elliot et al. is not a set of rigid rules and is subject to interpretation based on the individual characteristics of any qualitative research project.

Table 5: Characteristics of Good Qualitative Research (Tracy, 2010, p. 840).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for quality (end goal)</th>
<th>Various means, practices, and methods through which to achieve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worthy topic</strong></td>
<td>The topic of the research is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rich rigor</strong></td>
<td>The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical constructs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data and time in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sample(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data collection and analysis processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sincerity</strong></td>
<td>The study is characterized by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency about the methods and challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong></td>
<td>The research is marked by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulation or crystallization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multivocality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resonance</strong></td>
<td>The research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aesthetic, evocative representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naturalistic generalizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transferable findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant contribution</strong></td>
<td>The research provides a significant contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conceptually/theoretically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methodologically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heuristically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethical</strong></td>
<td>The research considers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedural ethics (such as human subjects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Situational and culturally specific ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relational ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaningful coherence</strong></td>
<td>The study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieves what it purports to be about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Triangulation**

Triangulation refers to exploring a phenomenon from different vantage points, on the assumption that similar findings from each perspective indicate that the research has presented a clear picture akin to the persuasiveness of corroboration of independent witnesses (Lyons & Coyle, 2007, p. 84). To ensure that the result of the interview process utilised in
this research study was not overly influenced by the main researcher, it was important that the subject area was viewed from differing perspectives (Smith et al., 2009, pp. 52-53). Consequently, triangulation was used at various points throughout the study, including the devising of the interview schedule, during the analysis of the interviews and subsequent identification of themes. Specifically, during the creation of the interview schedule, a psychologist independent from the research, along with a member of the research supervisory panel, ensured that the questions were appropriate for the participants and did not include leading questions. Further, during the analysis of the interviews and identification of themes, another member of the research supervisory panel checked the transcripts and developed the themes independently and these were compared with those of the researcher. Minimal differences existed and were debated prior to the data being presented in its final form.

Concerns have been expressed regarding the overuse of triangulation, which could potentially divert the research from an interpretive perspective to a ‘truth’ seeking perspective (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 126). The aim of this programme of research was not to attempt to seek a ‘truth’ perspective on the professionalisation of rugby union. Rather the use of triangulation was concerned with ensuring that the themes and interpretations made by the researcher were in line with the accounts reported by the participants. That is, the researcher was interested in the participants’ subjective, lived experiences; their truth.

12. Ethical Approval – BSREC 10/079

All the methodological processes presented in this thesis complied at all times with The Declaration of Helsinki, as adopted at the 18th World Medical Association (WMA) General Assembly, Helsinki, Finland, 1964 and last amended at the 59th World Medical Association General Assembly, Seoul, South Korea, 2008. All processes also complied with the Council of Europe (2005) and the convention on human rights and biomedicine concerning biomedical research; European Treaty Series No. 195, Strasbourg 25 January 2005. In addition, and prior to the participant recruitment process, the study in this thesis received ethical approval from the Biosciences Research Ethics Committee Review Board at the University of Portsmouth.
13. Concluding Comments

This chapter has discussed a range of qualitative methodological issues that have shaped the research process followed throughout this project. To elaborate, this research project has followed the philosophical designs of qualitative research by being self-reflective, systematic and multi-disciplinary. The researcher adopted this approach because it was deemed most appropriate for answering the aims of research programme.

Designed to investigate the impact of professionalisation on rugby union, it is suggested here that the research strategy documented in this chapter has enabled the integration of the conceptual framework for this project to align closely to the design of the research process. This process has enabled the project to move from an interpretation of the historical development of rugby union to a contemporary analysis of the impact that professionalisation has had upon the sport itself.
Chapter Five: A Commercial World

‘The first principle of our game is its amateur status without compromise or qualification’ RFU President Harry Cleaver (RFU minutes, July, 1951).

1. Chapter Overview

The first three chapters of this thesis have provided an outline of the evolution of rugby union from its routes in folk and mob games through to its position on the sporting landscape in the aftermath of the Second World War. In doing so, these chapters have illustrated the RFU and IRFB’s determination to keep amateurism as the central value in the game’s identity despite challenges to this central hegemony.

This chapter considers the impact of commercialism and spectactorism in relation to the effect they had on the global development of rugby union throughout the second half of the twentieth century. In addition, the chapter documents rugby union’s gradual approach to professionalism while attempting to remain nominally amateur. Where appropriate this chapter also draws on historical material to contextualise the rich quotations from primary interview data.

2. Commercial Opportunities and Initial Resistance

On the 15th of January, 1927 the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) conducted a live broadcast of an international rugby union match between England and Wales at Twickenham.

The broadcast on the 15th of January, 1927 was through radio, the first televised match occurred on the 19th of March, 1938 between England and Scotland.

The decision to allow the numbering of players caused animosity between the traditionalists of the game. SRFU President Jock Aikman-Smith was one such traditionalist and in the Daily Telegraph
made the suggestion that ‘our men are no cattle’ (Swanton, 1999, p. 40). Nevertheless, sports’ growing popularity in the first half of the twentieth century persuaded the governing bodies to bring their organisations more in line with the ways of a modern, commercially oriented society, rather than remain rooted in their traditional ‘amateur’ configurations. Already professionalised, the FA abolished the maximum wage in 1961 which was initially introduced in 1901 and set at £4. Furthermore cricket removed its classifications of the Gentlemen (amateurs) and Players (professionals) in 1962; rugby union and athletics were the only sports deciding to remain nominally amateur at the time.

From as early as the 1920’s the RFU was forced to review and reconsider the commercial realities of administering a national sport. As the game expanded so too did the demands placed on the governing body. Whether it was the cost of buying a sprinkler or the development and maintenance of a national stadium, these were quandaries that the RFU had not prepared itself for and the realities of its amateur status underlined the difficulty of getting it right. Advertising was denounced by the RFU and they abolished advertisements in international match day programmes in 1929 (Philpotts, 2000, p. 119). Additionally, the RFU were approached to host dog racing events at the national stadium in Twickenham, similar to occasions occurring at the FA’s national stadium, Wembley but the RFU refused. The RFU viewed the leasing of the ground as unacceptable and considered contact with any form of professional sport as likely to contaminate rugby (Moses, 1960, p. 4).

Twickenham Stadium is an iconic landmark in rugby union and it was the stadium’s value that commercial conversations were based around in the first half of the twentieth century. Aside from health and safety regulations, the increasing popularity of international fixtures with spectators meant that modernisation work was essential, as was provision within the stadium for the committee, the press, radio and eventually television. Car parking was not a provision that needed to be discussed when the stadium was first built, but when cars became

47 The SRFU became the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU) in 1924
48 Shamateurism which defined rugby union towards the later end of the twentieth century also plagued Athletics. Philpotts (2000, p. 147) discusses this further by stating that in athletics, some of the top British middle-distance runners, Chris Brasher and Steve Cram have all confessed to receiving cash payments when competing as amateurs.
49 In 1926 there was much deliberation at committee level before it was agreed to purchase a water sprinkler for £6 (RFU minutes, March 1926)
50 The land that Twickenham Stadium was built on was first purchased in 1907 and the first international match held at Twickenham was in 1910 between England and Wales.
the main mode of transport for spectators as the century progressed, ever increasing tracts of land had to be rented or purchased for car parking (Philpotts, 2000, p. 117).

Whilst Twickenham stadium was undergoing physical changes, the organisational structure of the RFU also had to adapt to reflect the modifications occurring within modern sport. Consequently, during the 1930’s the RFU adapted its once ‘amateur conservative’ organisational structure to a more centralised format with the introduction of a range of committee structures including the Finance Committee, The Four Home Unions Committee and The Referees Committee. With the implementation of a formalised organisational structure, money became more important. The new committees and their new members were offered match day tickets, free drinks, dinners and first class overseas travel; all of which had to be financed. Furthermore, the RFU sought to develop the club system within England by dispersing money in the form of loans and donations to clubs, even when this meant they had to borrow the money.

In 1946, England was the only home nation that did not increase the cost of admission to matches and they pledged not to do so for a number of years. However, in 1956 the economic
realities of administering the sport forced the RFU to introduce a 30% increase in ticket prices for games at Twickenham. In 1962, the RFU announced a net profit of only £6,235, a figure which was not enough for the administration, re-building work and loans to clubs from the RFU (Moses, 1971, p. 36). Consequently, in 1963, the RFU increased the ticket prices by a further 50% in order to maintain its organisational existence. However, despite the economic realities of administering sport the RFU still rejected the notion of sponsorship, a ‘rugby pools’ and further commercial opportunities from television.

3. Law Changes and Rule adaptations

Rugby Union throughout the middle of the twentieth century encountered challenges to its hegemony as an amateur sport. In the 1950s and 1960s a range of rule variations were introduced by the IRFB in an attempt to make the sport more attractive and compete with its professional counterparts for market share including the ‘knock-on’ rule, the introduction of replacements and structural changes to the scrum. In 1958, two of the most significant rule changes for rugby union occurred; the ‘knock-on’ rule and the law change that allowed players who were on their feet, to play the ball with their hands instead of just their feet after a tackle. This meant that players involved in difficult moves and close quarter passing were no longer penalised for the slightest nudge forward while the other law change allowed the first player to the breakdown to pick up the ball and run with it. Both law changes were designed to increase the speed of play, fluidity, and ultimately the promotion of more excitement, which is desirable in a spectator sport (Van Krieken, 2012, pp. 40-49) but not always supported by the players themselves as one research participant who played for France during the amateur era alludes to:

‘The rules were the rules. Throughout my time they chopped and changed them like crazy. They said it was safety or even to speed up the game. In my opinion it was just to make money for the governing authorities, I never liked the majority of changes and totally disliked that we were the crash-test dummies for the authorities to test their ideas that probably got suggested by somebody uninformed in the media’. Participant: FP1

51 This rule allowed players to fumble the ball as long as it did not touch the ground.
In 1960, the RFU stated that they would resist any further major changes to the laws of the game as they believed that they contradicted the amateur ideal. But by 1964 the commercially conscious RFU had retracted their stance. Over the next three decades the range of structural changes made to the laws of the game made it almost unrecognisable from the game first played at Rugby school in the nineteenth century.

Throughout its early evolution rugby union was, by modern standards, a barbaric and dangerous sport. It was this image that the IRFB had to resolve in order to develop the sport into a game that was enjoyable for both spectators and players. In 1968, the physical nature of rugby union forced the IRFB to allow replacements to be made for injured players to improve the sport as a spectacle. Nostalgic notions of masculine ability to deal with pain or even for a side to continue shorn of a player did not survive in rugby union from the mid twentieth century (Nauright & Chandler, 1999, pp. 227-229), a point which was confirmed by an amateur era Irish Rugby Union international within this research study:

‘On my debut I broke two of my fingers simply trying to catch a ball. The old phrase of a sponge and a bit of tape was no fairy tale. (Name removed) told me to man up and get on with it as there was no such thing as substitutions at that time. To be honest I didn’t need to be told that as I would have had to have been taken off kicking and screaming, there would have been no way I would have gone off! However, towards the end of my career substitutions were allowed for injuries and when I broke my fingers again in my final match for Ireland, thankfully I didn’t hurt the team by coming off injured and being replaced’. Participant: IP2

The comments illustrated by participant IP2 suggest that prior to the introduction of substitutions a player would have been reluctant to leave the field of play during a match despite suffering a level of physical pain. Following the IRFB’s decision to allow substitutions in 1968 the same player illustrates a comfort in the ability to leave the field of play as a result of the introduction of the new regulations. However, these comments contradict the work by Malcom and Sheard (2002, p. 154) who suggest that only in the professional era have players wanted to remain on the field of play despite sustaining a level
of physical pain. Their work suggests that the pressure and the financial stipulations of the professional era has enabled the players to become more tolerant of pain but to have a decreasing tolerance towards playing with injury due to the potential risk of longer term physical damage. However, comments made by participant IP2 clearly illustrate that despite remaining nominally amateur, players had a professional ‘attitude’ towards pain and injury and the introduction of the substitution ruling simply enabled them to better manage the process.

The introduction of the ‘Australian Dispensation’ rule in 1969 attempted to induce more running and handling with the ball into the game. However, the concept of winning became more important for the individual governing bodies and results became more important than the spectacle (Reason & James, 1979, pp. 178-221)\textsuperscript{52}. The game became dominated by set pieces and most games were won by kicks rather than tries, a point which is alluded to by a research participant who played for New Zealand during the amateur era:

‘I played against the Welsh on their tour in 1969 as a young 18yr old, for (place removed). The game in (place removed) was where the ball spent more time in the air than it did in any of our hands. I can’t remember any tries; it was mainly kicks if my memory serves me correct. The Welsh boys didn’t know how to run with the ball, they simply felt that by kicking the ball in our half they were going beat us up and win. If I remember correctly it was a (result removed), most of the fans and the sheep to think of it had left before the end of the game, and I know I wanted to. I can moan about the game, but to be fair to the Welsh they wanted to win and that was all that mattered to them, but they forgot we wanted to win and we could actually play. The Test team humped them in the test match a week later’.

Participant: NP1

Uncertainty of outcome, competitiveness, and attacking play are integral to a team sport like rugby union. It is qualities like these that make sport in general and rugby union in particular

\textsuperscript{52} The ‘Australian Dispensation’ allowed the Australasian unions to ban direct kicking into touch from outside the kicking team’s 25 yard line (Collins, 2009, p. 444).
compulsive for players and spectators alike. In 1971, the value of a try was increased to four points a change that had been welcomed by the game’s administrators and, as demonstrated by participant NP1 in the quote above, the players. The change was an attempt to encourage more open play and the prospect of more tries being scored in games, which it was hoped, would in turn increase the sport’s appeal to the sporting audience. The historical changes to the points awarded for scoring in rugby union are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Changes in points awarded for various point-scoring opportunities in rugby union (adapted from Griffiths, 1982).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Try</th>
<th>Conversion</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
<th>Dropped Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1886-1891</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891–1894</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1894-1904</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-1947</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-1970</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1991</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992 - Present</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The game of rugby union places emphasis on set pieces, requiring specialists in particular positions for the game to function. Abandoned by the NU in 1897, scrums were part of what made rugby union attractive to a wide range of physiques. The scrum required individuals to develop unique methods of dominating their opponent including engaging in conduct, such as violence, incompatible with the value of amateurism as is illustrated by a former England Rugby Union international player’s reflections on his experiences:

‘I remember going to the Arms Park and being told whatever I did, I wasn’t to take a step back in the scrum. You see scrums weren’t like they are today, with the referee guiding the contact and regularly penalising infractions. In my day, it was every man for themself. When we went down to the Arms Park this particular day, (Name removed) was making his debut. He was a beast of a man, a proper farmer but I knew that if I dominated him at the first scrum he wouldn’t dare come
after me again. I was wrong mind, he not only gave me an almighty whack he also dominated the first scrum. So at the next scrum I had to play my old favourite trick, biting his ear! He tried to swipe for me when the scrum broke up but by then we had won the ball and he had to get back into the game. All sorts of things like this went on in my day; you just had to deal with it. I always had sympathy for new boys in the front row but then again we’d all been there once and we learnt how to survive. Sometimes the very painful way’. Participant: EP1

During the twentieth century, there were a high number of scrum related injuries in rugby union. Haylen (2004, p. 49) states that between the years 1976 to 1985 there were on average 4.5 serious rugby union related spinal injuries each year in the British Isles\(^5\). As a result, the scrum became the most controlled and discussed element of the game. In 1965 the scrum law was changed to prevent the loose forwards and backs following the ball in its passage through the scrum, making the back foot of the scrum the offside line rather than the ball in an attempt to reduce uneven levels of pressure being placed on the front row forwards and decrease the numbers of recorded spinal injuries\(^6\). While there was a clear intention by the IRFB to implement rule changes for the safety of players, especially in the scrum, the players themselves believed there were more ‘media’ based incentives behind the majority of changes as one respondent alluded to:

‘I completely agreed with the majority of the law changes, especially as a back. It mean I could get the ball more, there were less stoppages of play, less chance of getting smashed and importantly there were hopefully less serious injuries, you’ll have to look that up though to be sure. But to me, whilst I’ll admit to being a beneficiary, the majority of changes were being driven by the media or at least the demands of television. You can’t tell me that the old guard in control really cared about injuries or even speed of play? No it was someone outside of the

\(^5\) In addition to the figures provided in regards to spinal injuries in rugby union within the British Isles, the average serious spinal injuries per year in rugby union between 1976-1985 in Australia was 3.1, New Zealand 5.4 and South Africa 6.1.

\(^6\) Bohu, Julia, Bagate, Peyrin, Colonna, Thoreux and Pascal-Moussellard (2009, p. 320) suggest the law alterations made to the scrum in the rugby union during the 1960’s are responsible for the low level of spinal injuries recorded in the professional era.
governing bodies that was telling them what to do and they did what they could to take the money albeit whilst trying to remain as an amateur sport’. Participant IP2

From the perspective of spectators seeking an open, entertaining, running game, the least attractive component of rugby union was regarded as the maul (Collins, 2006b; Nauright & Chandler, 1999; Walvin, 1994). Whereas Rugby League (NU at the time) had removed the maul in 1906 it has remained a key component of rugby union’s identity. The maul dominated rugby union in the twentieth century, with sides often using it as a method with which to grind down their opponents. The IRFB considered the paying public wanted to see a faster moving game with the ball being fairly and evenly contested. In an attempt to speed up the game, a law was introduced in 1992 that effectively gave a time-count for the use of a maul, which ultimately reduced the use of this aspect of play. That is, the new law decreed that when the maul ground to a halt, the team not in possession was awarded the scrum, effectively punishing the side that slowed the game down. Once the maul situation was addressed, the IRFB sought to review other aspects of the game in order to speed up play. However not all the players were happy with the new law alterations as one respondent alluded to:

‘The maul defined who we were. The Aussie’s hated it, the Welsh couldn’t handle it and for the French they just saw it as the ultimate battle ground. The few tries I ever scored were thanks to the maul; it was heart-breaking when the powers that be reduced its influence on the game. I suppose it was a good time for the rule to be reviewed though, I imagine you’re a bit young to remember the flying V maul that the Argentinian’s used against us, but that was simply unstoppable. The maul was basically a method of keeping the ball and making the other team panic about how to get it back’. Participant: EP2

In the early 1990s the IRFB introduced the rule that once a player’s body from the knee upwards came into contact with the ground, they were deemed to be tackled and therefore
had to play the ball immediately (‘A beginners Guide to Rugby Union’, 2008, pp. 2-3)\textsuperscript{55}.

This was designed to encourage players who go to ground in the tackle to keep the ball available for others. Previously a player who was tackled could keep hold of the ball provided it had not touched the ground, and this often resulted in a pile up of bodies competing for the ball and ultimately slowed the game down.

The rationale for each of the law changes outlined above was to speed up the game for spectators however it was not the only premise. The quote from participant EP2 illustrates that while the majority of law changes were devised to make rugby union more aesthetically pleasing for the spectator there was also a drive for law alterations by coaches and players who were seeking to devise strategies for competitive advantage on the field of play. Rugby Union was adopting a more pragmatic approach to professionalism; albeit in the guise of adaptions to the game for ‘spectating’ purposes. Nevertheless, the IRFB were complicit in allowing adaptions to be made to the structure of the rugby union game while still reiterating a distain towards the payment of players, which they continued to officially perceive as the epitome of outright professionalism.

4. Television and its impact on Rugby Union

In 1922, the BBC received a licence to produce regular radio broadcasts and following the Crawford Report in 1925 treated coverage of sports events as a vehicle to promote public interest in the service. The sports featured included the Grand National, the Boat Race, inter-varsity sport, rugby union, amateur golf, and the Wimbledon Tennis Championships and by 1938 71% of households owned a radio (Smart, 2005, p. 84). The emergence of television in the 1930s, allowed the BBC to develop their profile using the televised medium, evidenced by the first live broadcasting of Wimbledon in 1937 although television was not initially popular or a widely available medium until the late 1950s. The BBC sought to use the popularity of live radio broadcasts of sporting events and replicate their popularity with the televised service, increasing the range of sports to include cricket test matches, the FA Cup Final, football internationals, rugby internationals, amateur boxing, professional boxing title fights, and football league matches (Hundley & Billings, 2010; Rowe, 2004; Sayre & King, 2010). However, the outbreak of the Second World War and post-war austerity forced the

\textsuperscript{55} Rugby league had removed this ruling in 1907 with the introduction of the ‘chicken scratch’.
The late 1940s and early 1950s saw a shift in the cultural identity of Britain. The Labour government introduced the National Coal Board, a British Railways Board, an Electricity Board, a Gas Board, and the creation of the National Health Service. However, despite these changes the ‘professional’ middle class maintained their position of authority and the cultural values of pre-war society remained unchanged (Jackson, n.d., para 6). It was only by the late 1950s and 1960s that these views began to be questioned and that powerful cultural changes began to sweep across British society and television started to become part of the new British culture. The 1950s represented the beginning of a period of growing consumer expenditure as the wealth of the population began to increase following the relative austerity of the post-war era (Smart, 2005, p. 69).

According to Barnett (1990, p. 116) in 1950, only 2% of British homes (340,000) had television sets but by 1960, 82% of the population had access to television. The growth in popularity of television and the introduction of Independent Television (ITV) in 1955, BBC2 in 1964 and Channel 4 in 1983 allowed a greater range of sports to be broadcast either through a highlights package or as live entertainment. For example, the BBC2 programme "Pot Black" increased the profile of snooker in the 1970s and 1980s, whilst Channel 4 was responsible for popularising American Football in England (Maguire, 1990, p. 217).

Although the increase in television coverage of sport expanded the potential profile of rugby union to a new audience, in 1952 the BBC suggested that there was no great public demand for rugby and only requested to show six live games a season (Barnett, 1990, p. 108)58. By 1959, the BBC were paying £3,000 to show a live game, providing a much needed source of

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56 The monopoly of the BBC allowed them to dictate terms to the RFU and consequently, the years after the Second World War saw the fee of twenty five guineas offered to compensate for the inconvenience of the loss of seating space to press and filming boxes (Whannel, 1992, p. 22).
57 The BBC held a monopoly in Broadcasting in Britain until 1955 when a commercial company called Independent Television (ITV) was established. With the emergence of satellite and digital television later in the twentieth century, a list of sports events deemed to be of national interest were reserved for terrestrial television broadcast (Smart, 2007, p. 84).
58 The matches requested were four internationals, the Oxford vs Cambridge match and the inter-service final as part of their duty as a public service.
income for a reluctant RFU. From 1966 the Five Nations Championship was shown live on BBC1 and BBC2 ran a programme entitled ‘Rugby Special’, which was a highlights programme covering amateur ‘friendlies, the varsity matches and the county championship’. The RFU’s initial antipathy towards television was replaced by a growing need to develop the best financial deal possible, which ultimately provided the opportunity for sponsors to get involved.

The development of a commercial relationship with television in the 1960s encouraged the RFU to gradually change their stance on sponsorship, but the IRFB continued to argue that ‘Commercial sponsorship is contrary to amateur principles’ (Moses, 1971, p. 191). If rugby union was to survive and compete with professional rivals it needed to embrace the world of commerce. In 1972 the IRFB allowed advertising at matches providing the money was used to develop the game domestically. The profile of rugby union on the BBC and the IRFB’s new stance on advertising enabled the governing bodies to negotiate the best financial deals with willing commercial sponsors. The RFU was inundated with sponsorship offers and the financial remuneration proved too great to resist. Companies from the tobacco industry were the first to provide an offer to the RFU to sponsor rugby matches. Tobacco companies were seeking alternative methods of exposure as the television advertising of tobacco products was banned in the UK in 1965 under the Television Act 1964 (Abernethy & Teel, 1986, p. 52). This Act led cigarette companies to develop relationships with a range of sports such as darts, snooker, rugby league and eventually rugby union. In 1975 the John Player Cup was first played with the tobacco company providing the sum of £100,000 a competition in which Gosforth RFC defeated Rosslyn Park RFC in the final. Sponsorship money had become vital to the sports industry worldwide, growing from less than £1 million in 1965, to around £100 million in 1983 and currently around £38.5 billion (Rowe, 2004, pp. 17-35; http://www.statista.com). It was vital that rugby was on television if it was to continue to attract this type of sponsorship.

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59 This programme was discontinued in 2005.
60 Darts had the Embassy World Championship from 1978. Snooker had a range of international tournaments with sponsorships from Embassy, Benson and Hedges and Regal to name a few. Similarly rugby league had the Silk Cult Challenge cup which started sponsorship in 1985.
61 First established in 1972 and known as the ‘National Knock-Out Competition’.
Despite the development of a relationship between rugby union, television and corporate sponsors the rivalry between rugby union and rugby league that had been established at the end of the previous century endured. The IRFB reinforced its amateur stance and retained distinctly critical views towards rugby league in 1969:

In keeping with the principles underlying the rules as to professionalism, persons who are or who have been associated in any capacity with a Rugby League club, should be regarded as ineligible to participate in the affairs of rugby union clubs or teams (Moses, 1971, p. 195).

The IRFB and the RFU were still insistent on their amateur ethos and their views on rugby league remained firm. From the 1970’s, financial considerations and pressure from the government forced them to relax their stance. Government questioned whether or not the Sports Council should provide grants to rugby clubs as the IRFB and the RFU’s regulations regarding professionalism were deemed unfair and discriminatory. The removal of this source of funding would have left the burden of financing domestic club improvements on an already fiscally stretched RFU. Subsequently in 1974 the RFU signed a declaration that they would not refuse applications from former amateur rugby league players.

Television provided a platform that allowed various levels of commercialism such as sponsorship and advertising to become embedded within rugby union. However, improvements were also needed on the playing field to ensure these relationships were maintained. Full-time professionals in a range of other sports had the time to hone their skills and develop their athleticism through specific training sessions, and as they became more organised and coaching became more scientific, the sports themselves became more appealing to the spectating audience. Whereas rugby union, by comparison, had a playing base that had no formalised training or competition structures apart from the international game. Consequently rugby union players had low levels of fitness and had to rely on natural ability to compete. A point that is made by a participant within this study and supported by Jeff Probyn who is a former England Rugby Union international from the amateur era:
‘Training was an ad hoc thing. The club put sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays but if I was working I couldn’t go. Fitness sessions were certainly something I don’t remember doing, not like the poor sods these days. Living in Scotland was the best thing for fitness, hills, mountains, you name it I’d run up it but no-one ever told me to’.

Participant: SP2

‘When I joined the squad in 1985 match preparations were similar to a club’s (50 scrums, 50 lineouts and a bit of unopposed). But by 1990 we had athletic training and testing including aerobic, anaerobic, plyometrics, weights, special diets, body fat tests and the dreaded bleep test’ (Probyn, 2013, para.17).

The game of rugby union had to devise a strategy that would enable the players to develop their skills within the terms of amateurism. Consequently, rugby union underwent a series of adaptations during the middle decades of the twentieth century to ensure that the rugby union ‘product’ could develop and compete for market share against their professional counterparts.

5. Developing ‘Entertaining’ Competitions

During the 1960s the domestic club game sought to develop its profile alongside the developments within the international game. According to Williams (1989, pp. 312-334) the best-supported club was Gloucester with an average match attendance of 5,000, Leicester, Bristol and Harlequins were close behind with 4,000 and Bath and Coventry 2,000. Although these crowd attendances were a source of income for the clubs it was still not enough to allow the clubs to develop and compete nationally. While players were still not permitted to receive any financial benefit for playing rugby, clubs had to meet travel expenses and accommodation costs as one participant commented:

‘Petrol was paid and accommodation was always sorted. However, as the times went on if we had a local derby and I mean if it was less than fifty miles away we were told to make our way there and we would receive our travel expenses in the bar afterwards. Nine times
out of ten it would not appear but you kind of got used to that rather than make a scene. Some of the guys I played with had offers to play RL and some did take it as they could make a living and not be out of pocket for simply playing their hobby’. Participant: EP2

From 1889 the County Championship had provided a level of competition for selected club players throughout England. However, this competition only provided a level of financial remuneration to the counties involved rather than the individual clubs who provided games to players on a weekly basis. Although the competition had been designed to serve as a stepping stone between club and international rugby by the 1970s it had lost its appeal to most clubs outside the north of England due to the ever increasing costs of producing regular club fixtures to enable players the opportunity to be selected by their respective counties. Therefore, there was a call from the clubs to produce a significant competition that would not only produce more spectators but also in turn increase the playing standards of those players who eventually went on to represent their county and ultimately their country (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, pp. 236-301), as one current research participant comments:

‘Something needed to happen. While I wouldn’t say we were miles behind the other top national teams, the majority of our players, myself included, just couldn’t keep up. I remember a particular game against (game removed) when at half time my body felt like it had played two games already. Having regular competitive fixtures outside of the County Championship and the Five Nations needed to happen otherwise we would’ve been left behind. While the RFU will never admit this, they knew something had to give’. Participant EP1

A condition of the amateur ethos that had been ingrained into rugby union was that domestic club fixtures were defined as ‘amateur friendlies’. The matches were not truly competitive and left a large ‘playing standard’ gap between club and county games, which consequently meant the standard of English rugby remained variable, compared to southern hemisphere nations. The clubs themselves needed a regular competition with an ‘edge’ comparable with the competitive fixtures enjoyed by their professional counterparts in Association Football and rugby league. For the RFU, exposure to regular competition could have provided an
opportunity to increase the standards of play vital for the development of the international game. However, on a number of occasions following the 1895 split, some form of league system had been proposed and rejected by the RFU. For example, when Bristol made such a proposal in 1900, the idea of a league structure was opposed. Nevertheless, by the 1960s, attitudes had changed and the belief that leagues were inherently unacceptable was no longer universally held (Barrett, 1996, p. 127)\textsuperscript{62}. In an attempt to control any elements of competition the RFU sanctioned the formation of the Floodlight League in 1963 but in the same announcement stated:

The Union strongly disapproved of the formation of leagues of any description as being contrary to the best interests of the game (Moses, 1971, p. 82).

Continual unrest between the clubs and the RFU during the mid-twentieth century created a series of circumstances that could have resulted in a situation similar to the 1895 split. In the due course, the RFU set up a special subcommittee to look at ways of introducing some kind of competitive championship and in 1972 the committee agreed to the introduction of the ‘National Knock-Out Competition' but with no sponsor rights allowed or even a physical trophy and with TV exposure limited to a highlights package. Although the RFU’s control and low-key approach over the construction and the exposure of the competition resulted in only 10,500 spectators attending the first final, it was still a significant step in the development of rugby union.

The formation of a cup competition rather than any league competition was an attempt to keep the ‘amateur friendlies’ alive. However, as the cup competition developed the media published unofficial league tables, announcing unofficial champions and the RFU was powerless to act. Similarly throughout the 1970s the top clubs formed unofficial merit tables in their regions, whereby the winner was the team who had the best record when competing in the RFU’s ‘amateur friendlies’\textsuperscript{63}. Eventually in 1976 the RFU conceded and allowed four

\textsuperscript{62} Contrastingly in Scotland, the Inter District Competition had been formed in 1953, almost twenty years before their English counterparts considered anything similar (Rea, 1977, p. 52).

\textsuperscript{63} It should be stressed that although the RFU is a democratic organisation in so far as at any General Meeting each club has one vote regardless of its size or playing strength, the reality is that without the top clubs it is not a
regional tables under the name of the ‘Merit League’ to be developed, which was popular amongst the players as one current research participant comments:

‘Definitely, the Merit league was the making of rugby for me. We obviously had the John Player, but if you went out of that all you had was the county championship as meaningful club competition if you were lucky to get selected. Thankfully, the Merit league enabled us to not only develop a sense of rivalry but we were starting to get some substance into the club fixtures. Obviously we always had our local derbies but once we got measured there was no turning back. I was always buying the paper from that point on simply to keep an eye on other results but ultimately see where we stood on a national scale. I think there were calls that England sides were biased but once the league tables came out albeit unofficially, we could see as players who were the best in the country and could either argue or justify national selection’. Participant: EP1

In 1987, the Courage League was established in England with more than one thousand clubs taking part in over one hundred and eight leagues each with promotion and relegation (Collins, 2009, p. 196). The investment from the Courage brewery provided the RFU with £1.65 million over three years (Richards, 2007, p. 216). The league structures were constructed from the results of the previous merit league tables. The commercial investment from Courage enabled a transformation in the development of club rugby, although this was not immediate as Jones (1994, p. 135) recalls following a visit to Northampton Rugby Club in 1990; ‘The same rituals that had been evident in the 1980s were present; the turnstiles were not opened until twenty minutes before kick-off and middle aged and middle class men occupied the stands’. Yet on his return in the 1992/93 season he states that the ground was packed two hours before kick-off and a jazz band was entertaining the crowd. There were sponsored billboards and a TV gantry; the press was there in force as was the Mayor of meaningful organisation. The top clubs, therefore, were far more powerful and if they had broken away from the Union it would have had a seriously detrimental effect on the RFU (Philpotts, 2000).

64 The Courage Brewery sponsored Rugby Union from 1987-1997 and the top league in 1987 contained the teams Bath, Bristol, Coventry, Gloucester, Harlequins, Leicester, Moseley, Nottingham, Orrell, Sale, Wasps and Waterloo. Additionally, in 1973 the SRU established a six division club championship, fourteen years before the RFU.
Northampton and most of the Council. When the Northampton team came out to warm up, all identically dressed in their sponsored tracksuits, they were a far more cosmopolitan group than teams of previous generations’ (Jones, 1994, p. 135).

In addition to the introduction of commercial activities during the build-up to kick off, Northampton were the first club to employ a full-time Director of Coaching and, although the amateur laws prevented Barry Corless from coaching the 1st XV, he could direct others who did coach them. Additionally, Don Rutherford and Dick Greenwood were England coaches but it was stipulated as a condition of their employment with the RFU that they were not able to ‘directly’ coach the national side (Hazeldine & McNab, 1991, p. 7). Northampton was the first club to actively engage in recruiting overseas nationals to play for the club as the recruitment of Wayne Shelford demonstrated65. This measure of activity indicates that clubs were not only looking to develop themselves as serious competitors in the league but also as having serious ambitions to appeal to potential sponsors.

In the southern hemisphere in 1986 the South Pacific Championship (SPC) was established. This competition involved state teams from Australia, provincial sides from New Zealand and the national Fijian side66. Highlight packages were shown on New Zealand’s Channel One’s Saturday sports programme but in 1989, the highlights package was moved to the Sunday ‘Grandstand’ programme on Channel 2 a similar development to the ‘Rugby Special’ show in England (Barnett, 1998, pp. 86-89). Further developments occurred in 1989 when the CANZ67 competition was established and was included alongside the SPC in the Grandstand programme (Owen & Weatherstone, 2002, p. 7). In 1992, the SPC was renamed ‘The Super 6’ involving the same six sides from the inaugural tournament and in 1993 with the admission of teams from South Africa and the Samoan national team the ‘Super 10’ was formed68.

65 Wayne Shelford was a member of the World Cup winning All Black side in 1987 gaining 22 caps in total before his move to Northampton. Although not allowed to pay players, Northampton provided work that enticed Shelford to move to Northampton from Auckland.
66 The participating teams were Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, Queensland, New South Wales and Fiji.
67 CANZ involved three other New Zealand provincial teams which were Otago, Waikato and North Auckland, as well as the Canadian national team and two Argentinean teams: Banco Nationale and San Isidro (Chester, McMillian and Palenski, 1998, p. 239).
68 Teams in the Super 10 were Waikato, Auckland, Otago, North Harbour, Queensland, New South Wales, Natal, Transvaal, Northern Transvaal and Western Samoa.
The game of rugby union transformed itself from the mid-twentieth century with the RFU and IRFB being enticed to relax their stance on amateurism due the emergence of commercial opportunities and the development of competitive cup and league competitions. Money was now influencing the infrastructure of the game and the players were starting to question their position as amateurs in a commercially orientated sport (Barnes, 1995)

6. Growth and Development of the Professional Attitude

A gradual shift of power towards the players occurred from the 1960s. Ever since the formation of the RFU in 1871, players had been directed by the governing body. However, the development of relationships with television and commercial investors created a diminishing sense of authority within the game and the players could sense it (O’Brien & Slack, 2004, p. 419).

The enhanced playing standards and competitiveness of fixtures in the international game forced the home nations to review their respective national team’s performances, particularly against their southern hemisphere rivals. The game had become more competitive and winning had become increasingly important, making necessary an appropriate level of organisation and preparation. In order to compete with teams from around the world, the home nations recognised the need for coaches. Wales reacted first by appointing David Nash in 1967 while the RFU appointed Don White in 1969. The RFU also introduced a new selection process and official training sessions for the national team. The introduction of coaches and formalised training sessions led to accusations of an encroachment of a professional attitude within game in the home nations. However, in 1969, the IRFB accepted that they did not have the authority to prevent teams from being coached and in order to dispel any growing suspicions of professionalism within the game they declared that ‘voluntary amateur coaching is a sound feature of rugby union football’ (Duckham, 1980, p. 200).

The introduction of training and appointment of coaches combined with the establishment of television broadcasting changed the landscape of international rugby. Players were now part of a financially driven industry and by virtue of television coverage individual performances were starting to attract publicity. For example, thanks to television coverage Barry John
became the first global celebrity of world rugby after a successful British and Irish Lions tour to New Zealand in 1971 (Harris, 2010, pp. 61-62). Television exposure of the union game to a global audience and the expectation of a high calibre performance became the norm for the players. Yet according to respondents within this programme of research, at this point in time there was still no financial reward for the players:

‘Surely we had a right to some money? There was so much money flying around, staff, bars, restaurants etc. were all making money. Yet us players who were putting our bodies on the line weren’t getting a penny and we were the reason that everyone else was able to make money. It just wasn’t right’. Participant: WP1

Although the RFU and IRFB were consistent in their approach to amateurism, the same cannot be said for all the other member nations of the IRFB. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s it was the term ‘Shamateurism’ that defined the parameters of the IRFB’s definition of amateurism. Shamateurism was a term applied to individuals who received unofficial payment for playing albeit remaining amateur and importantly without any official sanction from the national governing bodies (Allison, 2003). For example players were offered housing and jobs in France and ‘boot money’ in South Africa, whilst also remaining nominally amateur to ensure they could still participate in rugby union. Some of these ‘shamateur’ practices are acknowledged by participants within this study:

‘Sure, I received some money, really good money in fact. I was originally playing for (club removed) but got offered a ‘job’ in (place removed) which was way more than a job. I had just received my first cap that year and coincidentally completed my university studies by the summer of 74. I was offered a ‘job’ that complemented my studies but if truth be told it was more like a gesture, as long as I played for the local team. They gave me a house, free food in the local restaurants and all the alcohol I could want. I literally paid for nothing and the first day I did any real work was probably when I retired from rugby’. Participant: FP2
‘Probably the last time I didn’t get paid to play was when I was at school. I would find money under my doormat, in my kit bag and yes as you probably already know in my boots. The funny thing about that is that it probably only became a thing for the British boys. Sure it would happen to us but it was normally additional money from sponsors or money for wearing specific boots. The administrators wouldn’t hide the money; it would normally just arrive in a nice little envelope at the end game. However, I do remember when the English came in 94, the money thing was very much hush hush and we didn’t get any rand until they were on their flight home’. Participant: SAP2

The globalisation of rugby union and the growth in popularity of the game around the world led to tension between the IRFB and the players during the 1980s. With the globalisation of the game players were able to play rugby in the offseason. The players, conscious of the liberal interpretations of amateurism in countries outside the direct control of RFU and IRFB took advantage of more financially rewarding playing opportunities. Italy was a country that provided a lucrative opportunity for top southern hemisphere players, especially David Campese who played for both Petrarca Padova and the Amatori club in Milan, while John Kirwin played for Benetton Treviso. The RFU attempted to counteract the possibility of all-year-round rugby for its players by enforcing a registration period of one hundred and twenty days, reducing any opportunity for a player to play in a rugby season outside of England. However, the implementation of such a contractual system contradicted the concept of amateurism that enabled players to play in ‘amateur’ friendlies in any country around the world, without restriction as one current research participant comments:

‘They tried to say no, suggesting that England was the only worthwhile country to play rugby in. While I was only going for the ‘experience’, if you catch my drift there was nothing they could legally do to stop me especially as we were amateurs at the time. There were some muted conversations about not getting selected for the national side and even a contract proposal but nothing ever materialised. However, the fear of not play for England again did
make me stop and think. I never went, wish I had but hindsight is a wonderful thing’. Participant EP2

By the 1990s a significant number of current and ex-internationals from the southern hemisphere had sought legalised opportunities off the field of play from which to benefit from their association with rugby union. For example a number of former players had become involved with media activities or written an autobiography of their sporting past69. However, the RFU were adamant that the players were only in demand because of their status in rugby, declaring that any engagement in media activities, autobiographies or even advertisements would, therefore, be rugby related and would not be authorised by the RFU (Moore & Jones, 1996, p. 246). The attitude of the RFU towards any form of remuneration attained from associations with rugby added a further strain to the relationship between the governing body and the players. The players were conscious of the developing wealth of the RFU which according to Jeff Probyn (2013, para.21) led them to attempt to emulate players in the southern hemisphere and look after their own financial interests:

At the time, it was against the laws of the game to pay professional wages so we tried to raise money ourselves by attracting our own sponsors and making personal appearances in the same way as the All Blacks. The England squad set up a company called Player Vision that would collect the money and hold it until a player retired and then, once out of the game, he would get his share based on how many years he had been part of the squad.

In the World Cup year we managed to attract around £250,000 in sponsorship and had some senior members of the squad including Will Carling, Brian Moore and Rob Andrew liaising with a company, Parallel Media that promoted us.

Despite paying only £3,000 to each of the 24 squad members somehow the rest of the money disappeared and despite investigative

69 Graham MOURIE, an All Black player from 1977 to 1982 and All Black captain between 1978-82, became the first New Zealand player banned from rugby for ten years by the IRFB because he openly accepted royalties from his rugby biography.
attempts, we never did find out where the rest went and Player Vision folded the following year (Probyn, 2013, para.21).

The purpose of Player Vision was not to provide full-time employment for the players but to provide a financial bonus that their performances on the field of play did not supply. The RFU continually refuted any requests for the players to receive money and did not help promote Player Vision or authorise any approaches from their sponsors to endorse the Player Vision directly. Similarly, the clothes manufacturer, Timberland, wanted to use the England team to promote its products, and whilst no money was on offer, the players were to receive free clothes (Moore & Jones, 1996, p. 246). However, the RFU refused Timberland the opportunity of putting a photograph of the team wearing the branded clothes in the match day programme, as it was interpreted that it was rugby related and in contravention of the amateur code (Philpotts, 2000, p. 212).

The stance of the RFU towards both Player Vision and Timberland reflects the increasing tension/conflict between the RFU, attempting to hold the amateur line against the encroachment of professionalism and commercialism, and the growing aspirations of the players for what they considered to be appropriate financial reward/return for their performances.

7. The Introduction of the Rugby World Cup

The IRFB’s resistance to professionalism was severely tested by the practices of southern hemisphere rugby-playing nations as it sought to maintain amateurism as the unifying philosophy of international rugby. Although, publicly the southern hemisphere nations were openly supportive of the RFU and IRFB’s stance on amateurism they were also at the forefront of moves to make the sport more serious and competitive and therefore, in respect of a range of matters, excluding upfront, open, direct payment for playing, more professional.

The frequency and ease of transport, particularly air transport, in the 1960s enabled tours to and from other rugby-playing countries to increase. This led to players spending frequent periods of time away from work and family and demanded greater commitment from them:

70 Similar instances were occurring around the world with Wallaby Promotions in Australia and the All Blacks supporters Club in New Zealand.
‘On one hand it was great to be able to go over to the British Isles so easily, but it also meant we were flying over to New Zealand a lot more, which meant more time off work and more time away from the kids. Some of the lads including myself were lucky to get some form of wages while we were away, others weren’t so lucky’. Participant: AP1

Before 1960, there had only been four tours to Britain by each of the southern hemisphere sides whilst the British and Irish Lions had toured their southern hemisphere opponents on thirteen occasions. Between 1960 and 1995, the British and Irish Lions visited their former colonies on twelve occasions and the British Isles and Ireland hosted twenty tours by Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The British and Irish Lions tour of South Africa in 1955 was the first to be made by air and although the journey took thirty-six hours and involved six stops, it was still two weeks quicker than going by sea (Thomas, 1996, p. 57).

International competition in all sport, including rugby union, increased with the developments of global communication facilitated by the increasing ease of air travel.

The increase in air travel allowed the home nations to begin touring independently rather than just in the form of the British and Irish Lions tours. Nevertheless, even though there were large sums of money generated by international tours, the players themselves were required to remain amateur and simultaneously maintain a professional career outside of rugby. This dual requirement frequently made it difficult for players to reconcile their commitment to the sport and to their ‘professional’ employer. Effectively, the financial backers of international rugby were either the employers who would give players time off for training, playing and travelling without cutting their wages, or the players themselves who financially subsidised the trips as illustrated by participant AP1. Ironically, the coaches were paid members of staff, which contradicted the amateur ideal that defined the rugby union game (Williams, 1976, pp. 15-20). Contradictions did not go unnoticed by players, and many became disgruntled with the increase in time and commitment they were required to devote to playing, leading them to question their position within the game. For example a former Welsh Rugby Union international stated:
‘Sure we got travel expenses and we got a daily allowance, but to see all the kit, the type of hotels we stayed in and the numbers of people watching in the stadiums certainly made us as players question our position in all of this. I mean without us, how would any of this money be ascertained? When I was playing, it was nice to stay in these hotels and visit all these lovely countries but it would have been nicer if I was getting my share of the money’. Participant: WP2

From the 1960’s the NGBs were increasingly exposing their players to more competitive match environments in an attempt to develop the prowess of their international sides and acquire additional revenue streams. However, this experience not only exposed the players to a higher standard of performance but in turn how the southern hemisphere nations interpreted amateurism (Collins, 2009, pp. 198-199), as one former Scottish Rugby Union international commented:

‘Back in ‘81, we were touring New Zealand. Fantastic country with lovely people and a real rugby nation. What was clear though was that their players, without being directly paid as far as I knew were clearly making money. There were so many newspaper adverts and clips on the radio where players were endorsing products or services. What really surprised me, was when (Name removed) turned up for the test match he was driving an Aston. I didn’t even think they could get them down under let alone for a rugby player to be able to afford one’. Participant: SP1

This situation was further complicated by the exclusion of South Africa from official rugby union international matches. South Africa had been excluded from all international sports competitions from the 1970’s because of its apartheid political system. However a number of unofficial tours took place including the 1986 tour from the New Zealand `Cavaliers', who were a team of New Zealand international players who went on tour to South Africa without

71 South Africa remained a member of the IRFB throughout the apartheid period. Apartheid South Africa’s last foreign tour was to New Zealand in 1981. Though contacts were restricted after the Gleneagles Agreement in 1977, there were tours by France and the British and Irish Lions in 1980, Ireland in 1981 and England in 1984. South Africa were also omitted from the first two RWC. (Starmer-Smith, 1986, p. 186).
the NZRFU’s approval. One participant who represented South Africa during the amateur era commented:

‘I personally felt that the Cavaliers were the best of the best. When they came over, they came to play rugby but I wouldn’t be surprised if there wasn’t something else on offer. We certainly had some good perks for playing against them’. Participant: SAP1

The players were investigated by the NZRFU to determine their reasons for going on the tour but the report only cited rugby reasons rather than any financial inducement. While the other rugby-playing nations did not trust the report’s findings the IRFB were forced to accept them as the alternative would have been to suspend or ban both New Zealand and South Africa, which would have led to a devastating international split (Black & Nauright, 1998, pp. 90-91). South Africa’s sporting isolation not only led to financial inducements being offered to overseas teams and players to participate in unofficial tours, it also helped to develop the profile of the provincial Currie Cup competition, with financial incentives also used to lure star domestic players across provincial borders (Grundlingh, 2008, p. 64).

The development of television and broadcasting from the mid-twentieth century provided the consumer with an alternative viewing option when it came to sport. This enabled sport in general to develop as a commercial spectacle and maximise profit by playing more matches and rugby was to be no different. However, unlike the majority of other sports rugby union was still amateur and the players were seen as small cogs in a larger wheel. For example, the power that Kerry Packer was able to exert over the sport of cricket was through financial incentives directly to the players, who were already performing as semi-professional and were happy to jump ship if the Australian Cricket Board did not accept the offer (Gupta, 2004, p. 259; Symanski, 2006, pp. 429-430). Whereas, in rugby union the power was with the NGBs or even the IRFB, which was evidenced by David Lord’s attempt to create a ‘rugby circus’ in 1984. David Lord’s proposal to the IRFB was based on Packer’s cricket model

\[\text{72 On the players’ return they were banned from playing in the next two test matches. Consequently seven of the players never regained their test places and ended their international careers by going on the ‘rebel’ cavaliers’ tour in 1986 (Black & Nauright, 1998; Ryan, 2005).} \]

\[\text{73 The rugby circus was a commercial enterprise that proposed to hold seven international tournaments over three years with players from the top eight international teams (Collins, 2009, p. 198).} \]
and it is suggested that over two hundred players signed up for the event with each of them promised £90,000 to participate (Bills 1986, p. 144). As one potential recruit recounted:

‘How could I say no? The money was incredible and for once we didn’t have to try and hide it as this really would have changed the face of rugby union. However, it did not go ahead and thankfully the terms of the contract meant that my anonymity was hidden from the FFR, like this project right’. Participant: FP1

‘I was coming to the end of my career; any opportunity to get money for playing rugby was a bonus. I played a position that meant my frame wasn’t naturally suited to league; otherwise I’d have converted years before. I was at a point in my career that I was seeing my friends from other sports making money and I wanted a piece of the pie, especially when I saw the sums of money involved. I certainly had no devotion to union, the players I knew were all starting to get annoyed about the lack of money they were getting and how big the game was starting to get’. Participant: AP2

The IRFB did not approve of the event and by the proposed start date of the 14th January 1984, the scheme was unable to find enough financial backers to pay the players and eventually it was dissolved. The driving force behind both David Lord’s and Kerry Packer’s initiatives was television. For television companies it was the quantity of international competition on offer that made rugby union appealing and the introduction of air travel made ‘short-tours’ possible; exemplified by the two-test tour of New Zealand by England in 1963.

David Lord’s proposal almost directly changed the history of rugby union. The significant number of players who had agreed to participate in the ‘rugby circus’ revealed that it was not the players’ devotion to amateurism that thwarted the proposal but the difficulty of financing the enterprise. The level of player support for the Lord proposal signified that if the IRFB were not prepared to develop an international tournament, someone else would and consequently the IRFB announced that there was to be a world cup hosted between Australia
and New Zealand in 1987\textsuperscript{74}. Although a world tournament had finally been agreed, payment for playing was still not reviewed. Rather than deal with the amateur code and philosophy that was at the heart of the problem, they chose to make concessions (Bills, 1986, p. 144).

In 1987\textsuperscript{75}, the first RWC began with New Zealand beating Italy by seventy points to six and ended with New Zealand defeating France in the final by twenty-nine points to nine. The inclusion of Fiji, Tonga and Romania provided these nations with associate membership of the IRFB (although this membership did not include a voting right) while the remaining six nations already had associate membership (Obel, 2001, p. 123). Although the tournament was designed to generate a greater level of interest in the game through a heightened level of competition between nations, the quarter finals only included one team from outside the top tier teams (Fiji) and it is suggested that was only possible due to South Africa’s continuing isolation from global competition (Richards, 2007, pp. 212-222). While the purpose of a sports tournament is to select and separate winners from losers through successive elimination rounds, there were complaints from ‘minor’ rugby nations related to the tournament’s qualification and seeding regulations. They argued that these were structured to benefit the eight IRFB members against the ‘invited’ nations. Their criticism forced the IRFB to introduce changes to the tournament to ensure that seeded teams had qualified through their performance rather than their IRFB membership as is illustrated in Figure 16 (Rosenbaum, 1990, p. 291).

\textsuperscript{74} Members of the IRFB voted 10-6, with the English and Welsh delegation split by casting one vote for and one against the proposal. If they had not split their vote then the motion for a world cup would have been rejected (Wyatt, 1995, pp. 30-31). According to Hutchins and Phillips (1999, pp. 149-164) the year 1987 was chosen for the first RWC so not to clash with the 1988 Olympic Games and the 1990 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup.

\textsuperscript{75} The invited teams were selected in an attempt to span all continents of the world to attract as large an international television audience as possible. Teams invited were Argentina, Italy, Romania, the United States, Canada, Japan, USSR, Fiji, Zimbabwe and Tonga in addition to England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, France and New Zealand.
Nonetheless, the event was financially successful as illustrated in Table 7. The financial distribution of the RWC ensured that the host nations received 48% of the net takings, with 24% split between the other six IRFB members, including South Africa. The other participating nations received 18% split between them whilst the IRFB received the final 10% of the net gross takings from the tournament (Wyatt, 1995, pp. 35-36). Although by the end of 1987 the NZRFU had a financial negative balance it had almost doubled its level of financial sponsorship from the previous year (Obel, 2001, p. 123). The financial opportunities and increase in sponsorship revenue enticed the IRFB to confirm another World Cup in 1991, yet the amateur ethos remained in place and few would have suspected the game was on the cusp of professionalism.
The second RWC was again a joint venture but this time between the home nations and France. Unlike the previous world cup where sixteen teams had been invited to the tournament, the 1991 competition included pre-tournament qualification rounds. Australia beat England by twelve points to six in the final at Twickenham to keep the trophy in the southern hemisphere. For the organisers, the 1991 World Cup was a great success with over 14,000 overseas travel and or ticket packages sold (Rugby World Cup, 2011) and with ITV securing the free-to-air rights to broadcast the tournament in England. As shown in Table 7, the commercial revenue generated by the RWC dramatically increased in the time period between the first and second world cups. The increase in commercial revenue of over twenty million pounds led more players to start to question their worth, as one former Irish international commented:

‘Any fool would have asked the same questions. If all this money was coming into the game where was my share? Sure, we got increased payments for playing in a world cup but £40 compared to the millions from spectators and investors. I tell you what, someone in the world of rugby was filling their boots and it certainly wasn’t the players, well not on that scale anyway’. Participant: IP1


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Match Attendance</th>
<th>World Television Audience</th>
<th>Broadcast Territories</th>
<th>Total hours Broadcast</th>
<th>Gross Commercial Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>0.6 million</td>
<td>0.3 billion</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>£3.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1 million</td>
<td>1.4 billion</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>£23.6 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1.1 million</td>
<td>2.38 billion</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>£30.3 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1.7 million</td>
<td>3.1 billion</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>2425</td>
<td>£70 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1.9 million</td>
<td>3.4 billion</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>5414</td>
<td>£81.8 million</td>
</tr>
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The end of the apartheid system during the early 1990s allowed South Africa to re-enter the rugby world and they were voted by IRFB members to host the 1995 RWC. It was a tournament that surpassed the previous two as a spectacle, attracting even more spectators and television viewers, generating a further increase in commercial revenue. The 1995 World Cup was broadcast to one hundred and twenty-four countries and an estimated 2.38 billion watched the South African team win the event.

The aftermath of the 1995 world cup again saw the IRFB introduce a new qualification process for the 1999 event, with all teams except the host nations and the top three teams from the 1995 World Cup required to compete in qualification rounds. The change in qualification structure was designed to increase the playing standards of the overall event and also to ensure that the third-placed play-off match had some value. The first eight years of the RWC had placed the tournament firmly onto the world’s sporting calendar with the tournaments developing into showpiece events every four years. The commercial revenue and the demands placed on players increased and challenged the amateur values that had shaped the identity of the union game for the previous century. The increase in frequency and intensity of competition, factors which appeared to have encouraged the players to develop a ‘professional’ approach to their sport allied with increasing commercial involvements, occurred while the players remained nominally amateur in status.

8. Summary: The Path to Professionalisation

The introduction of the RWC and the close association with television coverage and sponsors occurred at a time when media expansion, through telecommunication developments created a sellers’ market for the sport (Ford & Ford, 1993, p. 168). Formalised competitions at both club and international level meant the players had to take a more devoted and ‘professional’ approach to the game by paying specific attention to fitness, diet, coaching and tactical awareness (Hazeldine & McNab, 1991, p. 7). In return they were hoping to receive financial return for their dedication to the sport (Jones, 1994, p. 186). It was the development of an old adversary that finally forced the IRFB to deal with the concept of professionalism, namely rugby league.

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76 Wales (as hosts), New Zealand, France and South Africa were the only teams not made to qualify for the 1999 RWC.
During this period, rugby league was still a major concern to the rugby union NGBs, not only had it developed as a professional and commercial sport it also had the financial power to lure players from union. The admission of amateur rugby league players to rugby union had been forced through fear of legal action in England; however the opportunity to earn money in rugby league still tempted players to transfer codes throughout the 1980s and 1990s as two participants within the research discuss:

‘I played union as a lad growing up, but reality kicked in. I was able to earn good money playing league and I couldn’t turn down the opportunity. It was a case of getting paid to play or pay for playing, simple maths really’. Participant: W02

‘I was a union player in the late 80s and early 90s even got to play in the 91 world cup. It was so frustrating that the game was developing and we were surrounded by money, yet as players we didn’t get to see a dollar of it. To be honest when I got an offer from (club removed) to play League in England I jumped at the chance. New experiences with so much more money than I ever dreamed possible, how could I turn it down? I did come back to union when it turned professional though, might have won a few things in England but that’s for you to research’. Participant: N02

During the 1980s there were a large number of cross code transfers and unfortunately for the IRFB it was their players converting to rugby league. In the southern hemisphere the development of televised transnational club competitions, the SPC and CANZ, had intended to increase the consumer base of rugby union; however these competitions overlapped with the existing televising of Australian and English knockout rugby league competitions, often with the more commercialised sport of rugby league dominating airtime. The profile and financial wealth of rugby league increased further in the southern hemisphere with the development of TV3, a private terrestrial broadcaster, which increased the profile of rugby league and particularly the Winfield Cup in New Zealand; forcing Television New Zealand (TVNZ) to show more rugby league games to retain its national market dominance (Miller,
Lawrence, McKay & Rowe, 2001, pp. 27-30). The Winfield Cup and the State-of-Origin games popularised and increased the financial wealth of a game which was dominant in Australia and until the 1980s only regionalised in New Zealand. As a result, the NZRFU and the ARU continually reemphasised the values of amateurism in an attempt to keep players involved in rugby union but also relaxed the regulations of players returning to the game from rugby league (Collins, 2008, p. 15).

The 1995 RWC was the last competition in which the players performed as amateurs. The impact of rugby league and the commercial realities of modern sport were to play a major role in rugby union’s path to professionalism. In 1995, top Australian rugby league sides were in discussion with Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation about forming a ‘super league’ to rival Kerry Packer’s control of the domestic league, which was rejected by the Australian rugby league. Consequently, as Kerry Packer had done with cricket and David Lord had attempted to do with rugby union, players were being signed up to the potential ‘super league’; the difference this time was that both rugby union and rugby league players were targeted (Barnes, 1995, pp. 232-233). The IRFB seemingly had two options, either work with Murdoch or lose control of the sport.

According to Collins (2008, p. 15), on the 8th of April 1995 ARU and NZRFU representatives met and decided that to develop rugby union they needed to embrace their potential nemesis and approach Murdoch for a deal. Subsequently, on the 23rd of June at Ellis Park in Johannesburg, Leo Williams, Richie Guy and Louis Luyt, representing the southern hemisphere nations of South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, announced the formation of SANZAR which had signed a ten-year deal with News Corporation worth £340 million.

Rugby had never dreamed of such riches. The three big sides would play each other twice a year in an elite championship, while the Super-10 series would be enlarged to a Super-12. Newscorp had purchased exclusive broadcasting rights to all international tours in

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77The Winfield Cup was an Australian rugby league trophy awarded to the winner of the New South Wales Rugby League premiership's Grand Final from 1982 to 1994 (Hope, 2002, p. 246).
78Annual contest started in1980 between players who play for either Queensland or New South Wales which is where they either first played or played the majority of their rugby league games.
those countries from 1996, while the unions would keep control of their own destiny. That was the deal (Barnes, 1995, p. 233).

Despite securing this sponsorship SANZAR stressed that players would still not be paid, however Richie Guy stated that ‘the players would be happy with the deal we have struck’ (Barnes, 1995, p. 233). The formation of the World Rugby Corporation (WRC) created an instant rival to SANZAR in the battle for player contracts. The WRC approached players world-wide with a proposal for a further global professional rugby union competition. This proposal encouraged players to publically criticise the length of the News Corporation contract and to object to their national unions’ new plans for them (Obel, 2001, p. 141) as one player commented:

‘The money was good and for a change we were the ones making the deal. Can’t remember any of the players I played with at the time rejecting the WRC’s offer. It was a public battle of wills. We were told to say ‘this and that’ to the press in the hope that someone would trump the others hand’. Participant: AO1

Players from all over the world signed contracts with the WRC, highlighting an issue with the contract between SANZAR and News Corporation. At a SANZAR emergency meeting in 1995, Ian Frykberg, the CEO of Communications Services International, SANZAR’s London-based international brokerage house for television rights, stated the issue faced by SANZAR in light of the development of the WRC:

‘You’ve lost about 50 of your provincial players in New Zealand. In Australia you’ve lost all your Wallabies except maybe one or two, plus 30 state players! In South Africa you have lost 150 players!’ (Fitzsimons, 1996, p. 175).

Ultimately, the rejection of the SANZAR proposal and the escalation of the WRC forced the three southern hemisphere rugby union governing bodies to offer elite players professional contracts and thereby openly defy the IRFB’s global control over the game and erode the final amateur principle of the game. Players signed en-bloc with their national unions, with
Fitzsimons (1996, p. 244) noting that the South African World Cup squad were guaranteed contracts of approximately US$250,000 a year for three years when signing with their national rugby union.

The emergence of heightened levels of investment available to rugby union effectively meant that the IRFB were no longer in a position to defend amateurism and as a result on the 27th August 1995 professionalism was legalised just two days short of the centenary of the foundation of rugby league. In retrospect it might be argued that the introduction of the southern hemisphere nations into the IRFB in 1948 and the additional powers assigned to them in 1958 instituted the slow erosion and ultimate demise of the ‘British’ amateur ethos that had originally defined the sport. The drive for professionalism by the southern hemisphere nations, meant the RFU and other supporters of amateurism had no ground upon which to fight (Collins, 2008, p. 17). Without wholehearted support from the Imperial nations the concept of amateurism struggled to survive against the growing status and financial value of professional international sport.

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79 The decision to accept open professionalisation was formally confirmed at a IRFB meeting in Tokyo on the 28th September 1995 (Dunning and Sheard, 2005, p. 259).
Chapter Six:
Professionalisation: The Aftermath – Players’ Reflections and Experiences

1. Chapter Overview

This chapter considers the RFU’s struggle for authority and power in the initial post professionalisation years. Where appropriate, the chapter explores the development of rugby union in a global context while drawing on material from the primary interview data.

2. Introduction

The IRFB’s declaration on the 27th August 1995 to legalise professionalism was the final hurdle in the 100-year battle between the ethos, values and practices of amateurism and the increasing encroachment of professionalism within the game. Nevertheless, the declaration did not specify the parameters within which ‘open’ professionalism would work and in consequence the changes involved did not come without complications. In the southern hemisphere, the SANZAR announcement gave the national unions the opportunity to prepare the clubs, players and administrators for professionalism and the changeover was relatively smooth. New Zealand, Australia and South Africa responded immediately by signing their leading players on contracts which ensured that they had priority over clubs or regions for their services. However, the IRFB’s announcement took the RFU by surprise and consequently it led to serious problems that were not resolved for a number of years within England (Williams, 2002, p. 114). The RFU approached the IRFB emergency meeting in August 1995 with the determination to ensure that amateurism remained a fundamental component of rugby union’s identity (see Figure 17). However, the defiant stance of the RFU in favour of the amateur ethos despite the developments in the southern hemisphere did not allow the governing body to contemplate professionalism let alone prepare for its introduction.
The initial response by the RFU to the IRFB’s declaration on the 27th August 1995 was to propose the deferment of professionalism below international level in England for one further year, to make time to consider implications, plan and fully integrate professionalism into the English game in a positive manner. Most of the clubs had already agreed amateur ‘member’ terms with their players for the 1995/96 season before the IRFB’s declaration (Williams, 2008, p. 67). By the start of the 1996/1997 season, the leading players were signed up to long-term contracts with their clubs, effectively pledging loyalty to their employers rather than their country. The following comments give one player’s views on this period:

‘It was an extremely chaotic time. All of a sudden I was being offered a professional contract to play. Obviously, I was more than happy with the club and had just sorted out all the terms of playing for them around my job. When I saw the money on offer, I can tell you I didn’t need to think twice. There was no way I would ever have earned that amount of money outside of rugby or even in rugby up until that point but trust me it was totally unexpected both from our perspective as players and equally with the club’. Participant: WO1

The introduction of professionalism and contracts for players represented a new development within rugby union and transformed relationships between club and member predicated on the amateur ethos to a contracted relationship between club as ‘employer’ and player as ‘employee’. Although interviewee WO1 alludes to the change in financial remuneration available for participating he does not elaborate on the measurement of performance management within sport. However, participant EO1 clearly identifies that a distinction was made clear by the clubs and expectations were stipulated in the construction of rugby union’s first professional contracts:
‘It sounds all razzmatazz and instant but the clubs knew what they were doing. When I first saw the contract on offer, obviously I noted the money, who wouldn’t? But I also noted the contracted hours, the expected attendance at ‘Official club’ functions and something along the lines of work within the community. The clubs knew what they were doing: I challenge anyone to disagree with me’. Author EO1

The delay on the part of the RFU to introduce professionalism in rugby union in England gave the initiative to the clubs. Rather than waiting a full year for the RFU to introduce their version of professionalism the leading players signed contracts for the 1996/97 season with their clubs. The contracts on offer from the clubs were initially funded through the involvement of wealthy benefactors\(^80\). These new investors envisaged a new world order within rugby union and hoped to replicate the successful structure of the FA’s Premier League albeit with a lot less investment\(^81\). However, conflict between the RFU and the clubs over player control, coupled with the longstanding importance of the international game to rugby union’s identity soon eradicated any ideas of a Premier League replica emerging. The conflict between the new club owners and the RFU defined rugby union in England as a sport with a club structure developed around the base of the national team. On the 7\(^{th}\) of November 1996, the English Professional Rugby Union Clubs (EPRUC) demanded an annual income of £1 million per club from the RFU to sustain the professional game (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999, p. 1)\(^82\). This placed the RFU into a corner as the terms outlined by EPRUC indicated that as they had control over the players the RFU could not assume they would be able to select them for international matches. The fact that players signed contracts with clubs rather than with the RFU led to conflict over the control of the sport and ultimately this has defined the English game in the professional era.

\(^80\) Investors included Nigel Wray with Saracens, Frank Warren with Bedford, Ashley Levitt with Richmond and Sir John Hall with Newcastle.

\(^81\) By August 1991, the First Division clubs had resigned from the Football League and a year later formed the FA Premier League (Taylor, 2008, p. 337).

\(^82\) EPRUC was a body representing twenty professional clubs in the English domestic league structure.
Table 8: EPRUC founding member clubs.

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<tr>
<th>Courage League National Division One</th>
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<td>West Hartlepool</td>
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Given their recognition of the economic reality of professional sport and the need to keep the international game alive the RFU had little room for manoeuvre and had to concede the argument to EPRUC (Thomas, 1997, pp. 22-23). The RFU had an outstanding loan of £35 million which was used to redevelop Twickenham stadium, the servicing of which alone cost around £3 million per year. Furthermore, the RFU developed a reliance on additional money from television broadcasters which was increased during the 1980s with the introduction of satellite television (Syvertsen & Skogerblø, 1998, p. 227). Consequently, the RFU required a relationship with the top players and clubs as part of a package that could attract satellite television and other broadcasting networks to ensure financial security for the governing body. By not agreeing to EPRUC’s demands, the RFU risked a potential breakaway similar to the one which split the game in 1895 that would have resulted in substantial financial consequences as one current research participant comments:

‘The RFU needed us more than we needed them. Can you imagine that, a governing body with no one to govern? It’s not that the clubs were being greedy, but professionalism introduced new levels of costs to the game and the clubs merely wanted their rewards for their contribution to the national team’. Participant EO1

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83 By 1997, more than 300 million homes worldwide subscribed to either cable or satellite television (Havens, 2006, p. 27).
84 The RFU and BSKYB television signed their first contract in 1996, for £86.5 million which saw the RFU kicked out of the 5 Nations tournament. However, The 1994/95 season was the first season that Sky broadcast a selection of live Courage league matches.
Similar processes of adjustment occurred in France, with the FFR commissioning a review in 1995 of the French leagues, which suggested a restructuring based on the southern hemisphere model of ‘professional provinces’. The FFR’s proposal of the ‘professional provinces’ caused major conflict between the clubs and the FFR, which ultimately resulted in the formation of the LNR in 1998. The LNR were tasked with reforming professional rugby in France and making the game more attractive to broadcasters and they set about this by reducing the number of teams in the top league and establishing a new European club championship (discussed further in this chapter). In Wales, Scotland and Ireland the of elite-level of rugby union needed to be reviewed in order to expand their spectator base and develop the game into a media friendly product able to take advantage of any potential financial opportunity. The changes in structure introduced within Wales and Scotland to improve their prospects within an increasingly competitive global sports market eradicated some of the most historic rugby clubs and led to the development of a regionalised game\textsuperscript{85}.

3. The RFU’s Struggle for Authority and Power

The steady development of commercial opportunities, including selling rights for television coverage and generating associated sponsorship revenue allowed the IRFB to appreciate the further financial opportunities potentially available to rugby union as an ‘open’ sport. But despite the IRFB’s declaration of ‘open’ professionalism on the 27\textsuperscript{th} August 1995, the dominant view within Britain was that rugby would continue very much as before, but with elite players earning enough to play full time and a few others being paid as part-time players (Barnes, 1995; Malin, 1997; Richards, 2007). The hypocrisy of ‘shamateurism’, the RWC and the development of club competitions induced the decision by the IRFB to declare professionalism and it was the power of television that ensured momentum for change was maintained over the final years of the twentieth century (Smith, 2000, p. 152). In 1989, Rupert Murdoch launched four Sky satellite channels in Britain, one of which was dedicated to sport. Just as ITV had done over thirty-five years earlier, Sky’s focus was on acquiring exclusive access to major live sporting spectacles\textsuperscript{86}. Exclusive rights to the Cricket World Cup were obtained in 1992, and in May of the same year, BSkyB acquired exclusive rights to

\textsuperscript{85} Irish Rugby Union had always functioned on a provincial basis but needed to evaluate its rugby structure in the professional era in order to develop a relationship with commercial investors and broadcasting companies.

\textsuperscript{86} In 1990, Sky acquired BSB and subsequently emerged as British Sky Broadcasting (BSkyB).
show live coverage of the new football Premier League in a £306 million deal over four years. BSkyB’s deal with the Premier League removed live coverage of top flight football from terrestrial television and forced the willing viewer to pay a £6 subscription fee for the privilege of viewing (Barnett, 1998, pp. 85-97). The introduction of BSkyB’s broadcasting of football within England not only increased the global profile of the English clubs but also provided new funding streams to the domestic game, something which had not gone unnoticed by those in control of rugby union (Andrews, 2003, p. 238).

In November 1995, the clubs in the top Courage League and the RFU outlined their design for the new professional era. The clubs wanted to base the club game on the FA’s Premier League model which included regulated player contracts and transfer fees but with an even share of the commercial revenue from television and sponsorship deals that were already in existence with the RFU. However, the RFU’s ‘Blueprint for change’ only proposed that the top four clubs in the 1995/96 Courage League would enter a new European tournament and the RFU would restructure their management system in light of the new professional conditions (Williams, 2008, p. 67). The conflict over coordinating the implementation of professionalism in England is reflected in the following comments on this period from one player:

‘I remember it clearly. The clubs simply wanted a fairer equity of the financial opportunities that were now evident in the professional era and the RFU wanted to keep control and the money. The Heineken Cup was offered as additional funding but the clubs wanted the money from TV and it was more of a token gesture rather than anything else. It was an extremely tense time, and I’m not sure it did rugby any favours in the public eye’. Participant: EO2

Encouraged by News Corporation’s acquisition of exclusive rights to the Tri-Nations tournament and the Super 12 tournament, one of EPRUC’s first initiatives was to pursue a deal with BSkyB that would raise the profile of the professional game and generate further income to sustain professionalism. In light of the initiative demonstrated by EPRUC, the

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87 BBC’s Match of the Day programme was moved to Saturday nights and became an edited highlights show.
88 The Tri Nations was the name given to the tournament between the three international sides of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.
RFU announced a new structure for the 1996/7 season, effectively dismissing the clubs’ demands for independent negotiations with broadcasters and suggesting instead joint working parties on marketing, television, sponsorship and competitions, in which the RFU would retain the power of veto over any major policy changes (Williams, 2008, p. 67). EPRUC were so enraged by the demands of the RFU that they recommended that no players should play in any RFU affiliated competitions in the 1996/97 season and went as far as proposing to develop an alternative English national team. This situation is described by one participant, who played for England in both the amateur and professional eras:

‘At the time it felt right to agree with the clubs, but can you imagine a separate England team? I remember some of the lads toying with alternative name ideas; the Roses or Georges I think were the most popular ones. It was easy to joke about but it was a very serious time for all of us involved, we didn’t know whether we were coming or going. Some of the old guard were adamant that we should have remained amateur whereas most of us wanted to see where it would take us. It seems strange saying it now but the game was so underprepared that everything seemed to be happening on the spur of the moment or looking at other sports for solutions’. **Participant:** EO1

By the end of March 1996, the RFU and EPRUC had reached an agreement that would see the clubs involved in all television and sponsorship deals regarding club competition and more importantly gave them a deciding vote on any contract perceived to be in their interests. On the 24th May 1996, BSkyB acquired a five-year, sole rights deal to broadcast live international, club and representative games in England. The price of £87.5 million dwarfed the £27 million previously paid by the BBC for the three-year contract which was due to end in 1997 (Smith, 2000, p. 154). Unlike the deal between all representatives of SANZAR and News Corporation, the negotiations between BSkyB and the RFU did not include the other home nations. The WRU, SRU and the IRU were so enraged by their exclusion from the contract that they threatened to expel England from the Five Nations tournament (Smith, 1999, p. 149). The situation was eventually resolved with the RFU surrendering £50 million to the WRU, SRU and the IRU over the following five seasons, additionally they also agreed not to negotiate the next sequence of agreements without the involvement of the other home
nations. In the meantime, the other three home nations negotiated separate deals with the BBC and ITV/S4C, having initially rejected substantial offers from BSkyB on principle, because they were offered significantly less than England had secured (Williams, 2008, p. 67). A further debate regarding why the home nations remained on terrestrial television is to expose the game to a wider audience rather than the few that could afford pay-per-view television. This principle, although it restricts an initial increase in revenue for the governing bodies has the potential to expand the game to new markets, increase participation and ultimately develop the game outside of the traditional middle-class associated with rugby union.

Despite securing income from BSkyB, EPRUC revived their threat to boycott RFU affiliated competitions as they believed that the offer of £300,000 per season/per club by the RFU was not enough to sustain the professional game. EPRUC advised English internationals to avoid attending pre-Christmas international fixtures and squad sessions, and this was wholeheartedly supported by the players’ non-attendance at the first international training session of the first professional season in September 1996 (Llewellyn, 1996). In response, the RFU proposed an England Squad contract offer that would have in some cases seen the players earn double the sums offered in their club contracts (Leonard, 2004, pp. 143-165). However, on the 30th November 1996, as confrontation between the RFU and EPRUC reached a climax, the ‘Leicester Accord’ was signed. This agreement featured a deal worth £48 million to the clubs over five years in return for RFU control over the game in England (Smith, 2000, p. 160).

Ultimately, the Leicester Accord was an attempt by the RFU to placate leading clubs and achieve a degree of unification and an element of control over the professional game. Still, the money filtering into the international game through increased levels of sponsorship and television rights was being noticed by the new club owners who were also attempting to find alternative methods of increasing their market share and controlling their assets: the players. Continuous wrangling over negotiations in public did not enhance the image of EPRUC and consequently when they attempted to independently negotiate a financial package for the clubs in December 1996, BSkyB pledged their allegiance to the RFU (Malin, 1997, p. 29). Eventually on the 2nd February 1997, EPRUC agreed that clubs would release their players for international duty and would follow the terms of the Leicester Accord.
In the 1990s a variety of different financial institutions including Endsleigh Insurance and the Nationwide Building Society started to use sport as a means to raise their public profiles and this enabled the Football League to survive the breakaway of the Premier League in 1992. In April 1997, Allied Dunbar Financial services group replaced the Courage Brewery as league sponsors for the RFU's top two divisions in a £7.5 million deal for the following three seasons (Malin, 1997, p. 33). The RFU had specifically targeted the financial services market to develop a relationship with the ‘city’ and add further social status to the game, as one current research participant comments:

‘In the years before ‘95, the RFU were always eager to develop a relationship with the financial market. Although, they did not admit it they want to have the status as being the sport associated with high flying investors, the stock market and basically anyone developing wealth. There was a big push for this kind of association, it was even being pushed onto us as players. Although we weren’t officially being paid and the RFU frowned upon any commercial wealth development they definitely were less grumpy if it was with a company in the city or a financial provider. It was no real surprise to people who had been around the RFU for a period that Allied Dunbar became a dominant sponsor of the league’. Participant EO2

The renamed Premiership One clubs received £500,000 and Premiership Two clubs received £250,000 with Twickenham endeavouring to reassure smaller clubs that further cash would trickle downwards (Smith, 2000, p. 148). Whereas the previous deal with the Courage Brewery applied to all the clubs in the RFU structure, the deal with Allied Dunbar only covered the teams in the top two divisions. The clubs outside the top two divisions had to source their own sponsors, an objective of which was hindered by a distinct lack of media exposure.

In September 1997, Premiership One and Two clubs threatened to withdraw from the Tetley Bitter Cup as they believed that the prize money was insufficient when compared to the costs of participating in the competition. In addition, clubs were struggling to cope with the
structure of the playing season with players often absent on international duty and therefore unavailable for club matches. The difficulties are outlined in the following comments:

‘It’s true; we did spend a fair amount of time as an international squad. In the amateur days we would have the captains run on a Friday and the match on a Saturday. Now we had to attend squad training, fitness assessments and a range of corporate events. Don’t get me wrong, I certainly enjoyed the process but often I was in a position of having my heart strings pulled by (club removed). You see they were my employers and although they never wanted to block my path to playing for England they also had a right to ask me to adhere to my actual work contract. Those initial years of professionalism were a mess, nobody knew what they were doing and the clubs had to bare the financial brunt of it all. It was certainly not surprising the range of revolts that occurred as a result of the mess, Will certainly hit the nail on the head with his infamous quote’. Participant: EO1

The RFU aggravated the difficulties faced by the clubs by expanding the autumn international schedule in 1997 and promoting the county championship, for which the clubs provided the players. In response the clubs threatened to refuse permission for players to participate in the autumn internationals and increased the pressure on the RFU to review the club game structure. The issue was avoided for months by the RFU, which refused to meet the English First Division Rugby Ltd (EFDR) that had replaced EPRUC in January 1998 (Smith, 2000, pp. 149-152). The RFU threatened legal action against the clubs if they withheld any player from England selection. The International Rugby Board (IRB) intervened and on the 30th April 1998, threatened to expel England from international competition until the issue with the clubs was resolved89. The RFU reacted with the Mayfair Agreement announced on the 9th May 1998, a seven-year deal between the RFU and the clubs, the key points of which are outlined in Figure 18.

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89 The IRFB was renamed as the International Rugby Board in 1998 to create a clearer distinction between rugby union and football in the professional era.
The clubs and the RFU essentially wanted the same thing. The clubs wanted a competitive domestic league and cup competition that would produce players of sufficient quality to play on the international stage for England. However, the Mayfair Agreement simply indicated that the RFU did not have unlimited access to players, only ‘extra’ release for international players in the build-up to the 1999 RWC. In April 2000, the then Newcastle RFC Director of Rugby, Rob Andrew, presented a blueprint on the future of rugby union in England to the RFU council (Butler, 2011). The plan involved aligning the regular season’s fixtures so that domestic, European and international competitions followed one another in a logical sequence. Other elements of the plan included the formation of a play-off system, a salary cap and the removal of promotion and relegation (Butler, 2011). With the opportunity to create a monopoly within the top tier of domestic rugby, the Premiership One clubs supported Andrew’s plan however, this support was not reciprocated by clubs outside the top tier of English domestic rugby. Issues surrounding the implementation of the Andrew plan and strong reservations from the clubs outside the top tier forced the RFU to act by withholding the monthly instalments owed to the clubs unless an agreement was reached. Once again the clubs threatened to break away from the RFU.

The formation of the Premier Rugby Partnership (PRP) in March 2001 enabled the development of another peace deal between the clubs and the RFU. This time the agreement ensured that the concept of promotion and relegation would remain for at least the next three years and importantly that the Premiership clubs would not break away and form their own independent league like their footballing equivalents. The status of this agreement allowed both the clubs and the RFU the opportunity to plan for a long-term future rather than the short-term orientated approach that had defined the domestic game in the early years of professionalism. In June 2001 the Long Form Agreement (LFA) was signed between the clubs and the RFU, providing strategic direction for the following eight years and the

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90 Terms agreed in both the Leicester Accord and the Mayfair Agreement.
formation of England Rugby Ltd (ERL) to oversee the professional game (Rees, 2006). In subsequent months there were a few issues that broke the terms of the LFA, for example in January 2002, Bath were fined £5000 for not releasing Mike Catt, Iain Balshaw, Matt Perry, Danny Grewcock, Mark Regan and Mike Tindall for an England training squad (Smith, 2000, p. 148). This action was not a direct protest against the terms of the LFA, but because the club were due to play against Llanelli in the quarter final of the top European club competition. Clashes with the terms of the LFA were relatively few between the 2001/2 and the 2003/4 seasons, and perhaps more importantly for the RFU the threats of a breakaway league did not resurface.

In June 2004, the Elite Player Scheme (EPS) was devised by the ERL as a fulcrum for future relations between the RFU and the clubs. The four-year EPS agreement enabled the RFU to announce sixty elite players (in two player squads) at the start of each season who would have individual playing, training and rest programmes designed by both the national team coaches and the Directors of rugby at their respective clubs (see Figure 19)\(^91\). Furthermore, the English national side would have additional access to players before international fixtures, something that had not been stipulated in the same detail in any previous attempt to mediate between the RFU and the clubs. Alongside the respective gains for the individual players, the terms of the EPS also stipulated that each club would receive £30,000 per year per player named in the senior sides and £10,000 per year per player named in the national academy (Williams, 2008, p. 77).

\(^91\) The EPS agreement announced in January 2013 stated that the players themselves would earn £7,000 match fee, a £7,000 image-rights payment and a new £1,000 training fee.
1. The creation of 16 EPS training days for the EPS members in addition to normal training weeks prior to international fixtures
2. England to have direct access to players throughout the summer in the build up to the 2007 Rugby World Cup
3. The head coach to inform domestic clubs of the dates of the 16 additional EPS training days before the 1st of August each year
4. Each player on the EPS will not play more than thirty two matches for club or country in a calendar year.
5. There will be an ‘off-season’ of eleven weeks for each member of the EPS
6. The Directors of Rugby will have the discretion to vary the eleven week rest period if they are satisfied that the player does not require the full eleven weeks
7. A party of up to thirty seven players will be available for summer tours
8. Players not required for test matches must be released by 1900 on a Tuesday before a Friday or Saturday game.

Figure 19: Summary of key terms from the EPS agreement, June, 2004 (adapted from England Rugby Ltd agree Elite Player Squad programme through to 2007 Rugby World Cup, 2004, http://www.quins.co.uk/news/4053.php#.U2jfjvlSbK4).

The EPS agreement was the first proposal coordinated by an independent body rather than through a process of negotiation between the clubs and the RFU. Nevertheless, the EPS agreement still suffered a few infractions, one of which saw the RFU lose a legal battle against the clubs in the High Court in November 2005 after the British and Irish Lions tour to New Zealand. However, the EPS agreement allowed the clubs to focus on developing the domestic game with a potential increase in revenue for selection of their England-qualified players. In May 2006, the Chief Executive of Premier Rugby Limited (PRL) proposed the Weston Plan to the RFU council, which offered the national coach increased access to EPS squad players in return for more money (Rees, 2006). The RFU used the ideas proposed in the Western plan and merged them into a new version of the LFA. On the 15th of November 2007, the RFU and PRL agreed the ‘Heads of Agreement’ plan which signalled a new eight-year plan to govern the professional game in England, providing the Premiership clubs with £102 million funding from the RFU and increasing the EPS agreement for another four years. The then RFU Chief Executive, Francis Baron, remarked that the new agreement ‘is a truly

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92 In 2005, some clubs played their returning British and Irish Lions players within the mandatory eleven-week rest period. Consequently the RFU threatened to hold back the 15,000-per-man compensation owed to errant clubs by the Lions organizing committee. Without any grounds for negotiation the clubs took the RFU to court, which ordered the RFU to pay £2 million withheld from the clubs and to comply with the terms of the LFA (Williams, 2008, p. 77).
exciting period for English Rugby’ (Quoted in Hooper, 2007). The terms of the 2007 agreement are outlined in Figure 20.

1. Three elite player squads (EPS) will be created for Senior, Saxons and Under-20 level, each of 32 players.
2. All senior EPS players will be released 13 or 14 days before the start of the autumn internationals and Six Nations and for the duration of both international windows.
3. There will also be a minimum two weeks' preparation for the senior EPS players before each summer tour on which England will take their strongest available squad.
4. The RFU has agreed to pay PRL clubs the £102 million over the course of the agreement, plus a share of the net revenues from a fourth autumn international every other year.
5. The England team coaches and RFU National Academy coaches will have access to and regular contact with all senior EPS players to provide and deliver programme support in respect of the individual elite player management programmes.
6. A medical protocol has been agreed for the Senior EPS to ensure that each player is in the best possible physical condition and health at all times.

Figure 20: Summary of key terms from the 2007 RFU and PRL agreement (adapted from Hooper, 2007).

An examination of the first nineteen years of professionalism reveals a fractious relationship between the clubs and the RFU. The RFU’s original stance to delay the introduction of professionalism created an opportunity for the clubs to extract power and manipulate the conditions under which the professional game was to be managed. In the early years of professionalism the RFU believed that their historical position of authority would be maintained, whereas in practice the introduction of wealthy club owners provided a challenge to this assumed sense of authority; thus a pattern for the club-versus-country power struggle was set. The RFU sought to monopolise the financial opportunities that emerged in the professional era and the clubs challenged them. The clubs, who employed and developed the players, wanted their fair share and eventually a series of settlements were reached, exemplified by the Leicester Accord, the Mayfair Agreement, the LFA, the Weston Plan and the EPS agreements.

It is likely that the situations which arose and the conflicts which developed between club and country could have been avoided if the RFU had not delayed their response to the onset of professionalism. As late as the 30th January 1998, Fran Cotton (vice-chair of the RFU management board) unveiled a plan to create four or five provinces of English-only qualified players to compete in Europe and, crucially, stipulating that England players would be contracted to the RFU (Williams, 2008, p. 73). The RFU’s delay in proposing or even
considering a similar model to the SANZAR nations enabled the clubs to change the power dynamic of English rugby union, something that had been slowly occurring throughout the previous half of the century.

4. Creating the Rugby Spectacle

The acceptance of professionalism within rugby union required a change from a once strict amateur ethos to a much greater business orientation; a development which changed the relationships between the players, the teams, the administration and the fans (Owen & Weatherstone, 2002, p. 2). The declaration in August 1995 forced the administrators in the northern hemisphere to focus on refreshing the rugby product especially in light of the developments of the Tri-nations and Super 12 rugby competitions by SANZAR. Consequently, from 1995 the union game in the northern hemisphere had to move rapidly to define its brand, determine its profile, and secure its market niche and share.

League structures and competitions

The first series of reviews of the professional game were focused on league structures and importantly cross-border competitions. In professional sports leagues throughout the world, there are two commonly implemented organisational models. In sport played predominantly outside of the United States of America, leagues function within a multi-level league structure with a system of promotion and relegation between leagues, whereby the bottom placed teams in a league at the end of the season are replaced by the top placed teams in the next highest league. The system implemented mainly in the United States of America stems from the formation of the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs (NLPBC) on the 2nd February 1876 (Pope, 1997, p. 59). The NLPBC established the National League with a system of independent franchises that were each granted local monopolies. This business model was subsequently adopted by all major American sports leagues. Promotion and relegation is therefore not a feature of American sport and league membership remains unchanged from one season to the next, although team franchises may be moved from one city to another. This model subsequently allowed for the development of commercialised sport and represents the foundation of professionalised sport in America.
In 1996, the new Super 12 competition was devised using the American model of sports leagues with no promotion or relegation and where teams selected were based upon the member nation’s domestic rugby structures. In the first season of the Super 12 championship New Zealand sides developed franchise teams around the city-based unions, Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago, and the north island union Waikato (Obel, 2001, p. 255). In South Africa the first sides entered into the Super 12 competition were the provincial sides of Northern Transvaal, Natal, Transvaal and Western Province, successful sides from South Africa’s national Currie cup competition. The three Australian state sides of Queensland, Australian Capital Territory and the New South Wales were selected based on the territorial strength of rugby union in Australia. Each team played every other team once (home or away) in a round robin, with the top four qualifying for the semi-finals. Similarly the Tri Nations competition featuring the three national sides from SANZAR competed in a series where each side competed against each other twice (home and away) with the team topping the table announced as the winners.

It is important to note that the development of both the Super 12 and the Tri-nations was a joint venture between SANZAR and News Corp. News Corp’s interest was to make the product of rugby union more appealing to a worldwide television market that eventually led to a series of marketable changes to the traditional game of rugby union. The 1995/96 season of the NPC saw the introduction of a bonus point system in an attempt to increase try-scoring play in the New Zealand domestic game. According to Owen and Weatherstone (2002, p. 7) the bonus-point system was copied from the NPC and implemented in the inaugural Super 12 and Tri-Nation competitions, enabling the sides to gain points from fixtures even if they were not victorious. The points scoring allowed four league points to be awarded to the winning team and a bonus point awarded if a team scored four or more tries in a game; a bonus point was also available to a team for losing by seven points or less. The 1996/97 season of the Super 12 Championship saw sixty-three bonus points awarded and four hundred and fourteen tries scored over the regular season. The introduction of the bonus

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93 Formed in 1889 and renamed as the Currie Cup in 1892, is a league based cup competition, with a two-division structure that incorporates national provincial sides.
94 A team representing the capital was an addition from the previous Super 10 tournament and was stipulated as a requirement by the ARU for the new Super 12 competition.
95 Bledisloe Cup matches between Australia and New Zealand were subsumed within the Tri-Nations competition.
96 In 1992, the IRFB increased the points for a try to five yet the fractional difference between four and five points had little impact on increasing rugby union’s global appeal (Torres & Hager, 2005, pp 208-213).
97 A try was scored in each match of the first season of Super 12.
point system was designed to increase incentives for teams to attempt try-scoring moves rather than resorting to kicking penalty goals; the objective being to attempt to increase the attractiveness and profile of the new rugby product which the players themselves were pleased to see introduced as one current research participant comments:

‘What a great development that was! I mean points for winning, losing and scoring what else could you ask for. As a spectator now, it’s brilliant to see how liberated Super Rugby is! In every game the teams go for broke throughout the entire season, it’s only in the play-offs that the games calm down and tactics become the dominant characteristics. Whoever signed off those rules back when you just suggested needs a medal, although I’m only saying that now as a spectator rather than a player, I probably wouldn’t get a contract now it’s way too fast for me although I enjoyed it at the time!’.

Participant: NO2

Unlike the development of the Super 12 competition, the domestic game in the northern hemisphere incorporated a multi-level league structure with a system of promotion and relegation between leagues, something that each of the home unions felt was important to foster the professional game domestically. The French national championship currently known as the Top 14 traces its origins back to 1892 with Racing Club de France the inaugural winners98. In the 2005/06 season the top league structure was altered from its forty club format into two sections of eight teams with the top teams from each section entering a play-off system comparable to Super Rugby. Domestic league competition in both Wales and Ireland commenced in 1990 with the establishment of the Welsh Premier Division and the All Ireland League respectively99. In 1973, the Scottish League Championship was established developing a six-league tiered system (currently known as the RBS League Championship). In addition, the Courage League in England from 1987 developed English rugby into a tiered nationwide structure. The amateur stance of the northern hemisphere unions and their resistance to implementing any initial change to their own domestic competitions, enabled the development of a cross-border European knock-out competition to develop as a response to

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98 The match official for the first final of the first domestic league season was Pierre de Coubertin.
99 The Welsh Premier Division is now known as the Principality Premiership while the All Ireland League is currently known as the Ulster Bank All Ireland League.
professionalism. In the 1995/96 season the European Rugby Cup (ERC) was launched with the RWC partner Heineken named as the official sponsor\textsuperscript{100}. The competition incorporated twelve teams from France, Ireland, Wales, Italy and Romania competing in four leagues with the winners of each group progressing into the semi-finals (http://www.ercrugby.com)\textsuperscript{101}. This development is reflected in the words of one participant, who played for France in both the amateur and professional eras:

’It was a fantastic idea, one week I was playing against the best of the international game at the World Cup and the next I was playing against the best in the club game with all my friends, not just those who managed to get selected at the World Cup. Obviously it was a shame the English clubs weren’t there but no one other than the English really cared. It was and still is a magnificent competition, the buzz, the travel, everything about it really was amazing. Obviously it started at a time when world rugby was turning upside down but I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Heineken Cup’. Participant: FO1

The 1996/97 season saw the formation of the European Conference, an additional second tier European competition featuring teams from France, Italy, Romania, Wales, Scotland and England, again under the control of the ERC\textsuperscript{102}. Both the Heineken Cup and the European Conference did not implement the bonus-point system adopted by the Super 12 competition in the respective inaugural competitions\textsuperscript{103}. However, it can be argued that the bonus point system encouraged teams to attempt further try-scoring opportunities as is evident in scoring comparisons between the Super 12 competition and the Heineken Cup during the 1996/97 season (see Table 9).

\textsuperscript{100} European Rugby Cup Ltd was established in 1995 and is based in Dublin.
\textsuperscript{101} The IRFU secured agreement to enter provincial representative teams in the competition rather than clubs sides entered by other competing unions. Additionally, English and Scottish teams did not compete in the first Heineken Cup competition as they were making respective plans to prepare for the onset of professionalism.
\textsuperscript{102} Scottish and English sides also appeared in the Heineken Cup for the first time in the 1996/97 season. Ireland did not provide any team in this competition as their provincial sides were competing in the Heineken Cup.
\textsuperscript{103} A bonus point system was implemented into the Heineken Cup in the 2003/04 Season, into the Celtic League in the 2002/03 season and into the English Premier Division in the 2000/01 season.
Table 9: Overview of Tries Scored in the Super 12 and Heineken Cup competitions during the 1996/97 season. (Adapted from http://rugby.statbunker.com/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Super 12 Rugby (including playoff's and final)</th>
<th>Heineken Cup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total League fixtures</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Tries Scored</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawn Results</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games with no tries scored</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In September 1997, the issue of control and distribution of money surfaced. The English clubs were unhappy with the format of the Heineken Cup competition and the equal distribution of television money between all the clubs involved. Furthermore, the English clubs were adamant that a congested fixture list caused reduced gate receipts and increased risk of injuries. The clubs threatened to withdraw from the Heineken Cup for the 1997/98 season and the response from the RFU was to withhold money from the Tetley's Bitter Cup gate receipts unless the boycott of the Heineken European Cup was lifted. The impasse between the RFU and the English clubs meant English teams did not compete in either European competition in the 1998/99 season.

The complications of the club game were not only occurring in England. Both the SRU and WRU had to devise a strategy to introduce and sustain professionalism. As with the RFU, the SRU delayed the onset of professionalism for a further year to plan and integrate professionalism. Unlike the WRU and RFU, the SRU had a considerably smaller playing population than their counterparts and needed to find a way to promote and sustain professional rugby union.

> ‘Personally, I thought it was a crazy idea. Why did they have to wait to implement professionalism. Some of our best players jumped at the opportunities on offer in France and England and we never got them back. While the clubs needed the SRU surely some financial investors could have been tempted into the club scene? I know we sit here in 2010 and the majority of everything is running smoothly but

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104 The player base in Scotland in 2010 was 38,500 (SRU, 2010) compared to England’s figure of 177,900 in the same year (Gibson, 2011).
**Participant: SO2**

The creation of the Heineken Cup provided the SRU with an opportunity to source additional income from television rights although Scottish club sides did not enter until the tournament’s second year. However, the SRU used the delayed onset of professionalism and the prospect of further revenue from the Heineken Cup to contract players to the SRU. The SRU’s initial strategy for implementing professionalism into the domestic club competition facilitated the development of four new district sides, the Border Reivers based in Galashields, the Caledonia Reds based in Aberdeen and Perth, Edinburgh and Glasgow. These district sides were designed to ensure that the SRU had control over the players and also provided three tiers of player development pathways from club (who participated in the Scottish League Championship) through to district (competing in European Competition) to the national team (Bushby, 2008, p. 215).

However, despite the changes alluded to above, the Scottish district sides that competed in the Heineken Cup and the European Conference in the 1996/97 season were extremely unsuccessful. Out of the seventeen games that were played across the two competitions by the Scottish sides, there were only two victories in total. This trend continued into the third season of European competition (see Table 10) bringing to the attention of the SRU that district teams were not able to compete with the professional club sides around Europe.

Table 10: Overview of Scottish District sides’ performance in the Heineken Cup and the European Conference during the 1996/7 and 1997/98 seasons (Adapted from http://erc.com/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Side</th>
<th>1996/97 Season</th>
<th>1997/98 Season</th>
<th>Overall Winning percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Border Reivers</td>
<td>P4 W1 L2</td>
<td>P6 W0 L6</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledonia Reds</td>
<td>P4 W0 L4</td>
<td>P6 W2 L4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>P4 W0 L4</td>
<td>P6 W2 L4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>P5 W1 L4</td>
<td>P6 W3 L3</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1999, the SRU reduced the district sides to two; the Edinburgh Reivers and the Glasgow Caledonian Reds. In another business related manoeuvre the SRU and the WRU agreed to allow the two district sides to compete in the Welsh Premier Division, as the WRU were also looking to improve performances in European competition and importantly source additional
revenue for the club game\textsuperscript{105}. This development is discussed by one participant, who played for Scotland in both the amateur and professional eras:

‘It was a strange experience. My home club was (club removed) and when the first professional districts were formed it made sense to be selected to play for Caledonia. It was very strange when the SRU mixed it up and all of a sudden I was playing for an Edinburgh side, in a Welsh league that also competed in Europe. Sounds confusing doesn’t it? I understand why they did it. We were struggling in Europe, and going professional meant that new money needed to be found, I really did get it. But at the time it seemed that everyone was a bit clueless and we were the guinea pigs for whatever experiment the powers that be wanted to conduct’. Participant: SO1

Fixture congestion, low crowds, financial insecurity and lack of local rivalry soon caused the governing bodies to rethink their strategy. The WRU Chief Executive described the first few years of professionalism as ‘a painful few years for Welsh rugby as it has been forced to adapt and change in an attempt to climb out of the financial mire’ (WRU, 2003/4, p. 16). Similarly, Jim Telfer the SRU’s Director of Rugby made the comments below in respect of the Scottish game in the early years of professionalisation:

‘You can arrange the supply of the players to the districts, but attracting spectators in adequate numbers could be a lot more difficult. You need a different kind of support. There are two kinds of supporters – the aye-beans and the theatre goers. We need to attract the theatre goers. We have to get the people who don’t normally watch club rugby coming along to watch the districts. It’s going to be well packed, well managed, it will be a night out with famous names, and hopefully the standard of rugby will be high. It’s up to the players and coaches to make sure the game is entertaining, and to emulate the Super 12 in that respect. It was always said that rugby was a game for

\textsuperscript{105} The expansion of the Welsh Premier Division was entitled the Welsh-Scottish League.
players, but that will have to change’ (quoted in Bushby, 2008, p. 215).

In 2001, the WRU, SRU and the IRFU agreed to form the Celtic League. The league was to consist of fifteen teams, two district sides from Scotland, all nine Welsh Premier Division club sides and the four provincial sides from Ireland\textsuperscript{106}. When professionalism arrived in Ireland, the IRFU followed their southern hemisphere peers and centrally contracted the leading Irish players. As with the SRU, the provincial sides in Ireland gave control to the IRFU by establishing three tiers of player development pathways from club (who participated in the All Ireland League) through to provincial (competing in the Celtic league and Heineken Cup) to the national team\textsuperscript{107}. Consequently, the Celtic League enabled the IRFU to rebrand the four provincial sides as professional franchises with the All Ireland League serving for players as a stepping stone into professional rugby thereby establishing a clear player development from amateur rugby through to the professional game.

The Celtic League employed an American style of league structure, imitating the approach in the Super 12. The teams were divided into two pools, with each team playing the other sides once within their pools and culminating in the top four sides from each pool qualifying for a knockout stage\textsuperscript{108}. Rather than play each other twice in two separate league competitions the Welsh and Scottish sides only played against each other in the Welsh Premier Division, with the results being recorded in both competitions, a strange situation which one current research participant comments upon\textsuperscript{109}:

\begin{quote}
It was a strange system. To be involved in two league competitions and to play the Scottish teams just twice representing four fixtures was crazy, it completely devalued the process. They should have scrapped the Welsh-Scottish league from the start, it would have placed more of an emphasis on the Celtic League but that’s typical of the Celtic nations’ slow response to professionalism’. 
\end{quote}

\textbf{Participant: WO1}

\textsuperscript{106} Leinster, Munster, Connaught and Ulster.

\textsuperscript{107} Before the arrival of European competition, provincial rugby was experienced through the four-team Inter-provincial Championship. The Celtic League became the most suitable option for the IRFU as the four provinces on their own was too small to operate a professional league.

\textsuperscript{108} A playoff system was implemented into the Zurich Premiership in the 2002/03 season.

\textsuperscript{109} The Welsh-Scottish league was abandoned in 2002.
The inaugural winner of the Celtic League in the 2001/02 season was Leinster, defeating Munster in the final. Three of the four semi-finalists were the Irish provinces with only three of the Welsh sides progressing from the pool stage. The second season of the Celtic League saw the introduction of another Scottish team, the Border Reivers, creating a sixteen team competition in an unchanged format. Again the victorious side was an Irish province, Munster defeating Newport in the final. The poor performance of the Welsh club teams in the first two seasons of the Celtic League caused frustration amongst the WRU and even the national team manager, Graham Henry expressed concern\textsuperscript{110}. According to Richards (2007, p. 269) ‘the four provinces of Ireland was just about right for talent at sub-national level’, something the WRU wanted to emulate in the structure of Welsh Rugby Union.

Unlike the SRU and the IRFU, the WRU did not centrally contract players and as a result the priority for the player’s services remained with the clubs. At the start of the 2002/03 season the WRU proposed two plans on the future of professional rugby within Wales. The proposals ranged from implementing feeder clubs to the idea of provincializing rugby union in Wales. The clubs were outraged as they felt that the WRU was too quick to dismiss the heritage of the Welsh Premier Division sides (BBC, 2003a). In February 2003, the then Chief Executive Officer of the WRU, David Moffett, proposed a system of provincializing the structure of club rugby in Wales with the players coming under the control of the WRU (BBC, 2003b). Although the Welsh clubs were unhappy with the proposals, professionalism had placed a financial strain on the majority of the clubs competing in the Celtic League. Consequently, on the 1\textsuperscript{st} of April 2003 the clubs and the WRU agreed to the establishment of five regional sides to compete in the Celtic League with the WRU governing 50\% in each region\textsuperscript{111}. The Welsh Premier Division was to remain but structured on an amateur/semi-professional basis, copying the structure of rugby in Ireland, something the majority of elite rugby union players agreed with as one current research participant comments upon:

\begin{quote}
\textit{In my eye the Welsh Premier Division is the best outcome of professionalism. Yes the regions are trying to grow their fan base and there has been a slight increase in attendances. The Welsh}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{110} Now Sir Graham Henry, the successful head coach of the winning New Zealand side in the 2011 RWC.
\textsuperscript{111} The five regional sides were Llanelli Scarlets, Neath-Swansea Ospreys, Celtic Warriors, Cardiff Blues and the Gwent Dragons. The WRU only wanted to have four sides compete but due to the dispute with the clubs sides, agreed to fund a fifth side.
*Premier Division* gives local clubs a sense of guidance and aspiration without having to break the bank. The fans have their local sides back with local boys and the players have a clear pathway to developing as a professional rugby player.’ **Participant:**

**WC2**

In 2003/4 the format of the Celtic League changed to a straightforward league competition involving twelve teams with the five newly established Welsh regional teams replacing the club sides. However, without a main sponsor the leading source of revenue for the clubs was gate receipts and funding from the governing bodies. Consequently, by the end of the first season of Welsh regions, the five sides were reduced to four with David Moffett declaring that ‘professional rugby has been condensed to four regions and I stand by something I said 18 months ago - four regions are as many as Welsh rugby can sustain, for both player resource and financial reasons’ (WRU Annual Report, 2003-2004, p. 7). The Celtic Warriors, representing the mid-Glamorgan area with Pontypridd RFC and Bridgend RFC the majority stakeholders, could not sustain funding for professionalism. Pontypridd RFC struggled financially in attempting to finance both a professional region and a semi-professional side in the Welsh Premier Division and handed over their share in the regional side to Bridgend RFC. The Celtic Warriors moved their home fixtures from Pontypridd RFC to Bridgend RFC, which ultimately led to a drop in gate attendances and according to David Moffett a ‘confused support base’ (WRU Annual Report, 2003-2004, p. 9).

The 2004/05 season saw the Celtic League reduced to eleven sides and the introduction of the Celtic Cup (WRU Annual Report, 2003-2004, p. 25) 112. The introduction of the Celtic Cup enabled the WRU and the IRFU to implement a merit system for entrance into the Heineken Cup, which had previously been in place for both the English and French club sides 113. The WRU proposed to join the RFU club sides and compete in the Powergen Cup (formerly the John Player Cup) in an attempt to source additional money for the regional sides by increasing fixtures and ultimately increasing gate receipts. The SRU and IRFU did not condone the WRU’s attempt to affiliate with the RFU and went as far as threatening to expel them from the Celtic League. An agreement was made that the Welsh sides could compete in

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112 The Celtic Cup was a tournament for the top eight sides in the Celtic League.
113 At the start of the 2003/04 season the WRU had suggested that they would use league positions as a metric in which to decide the sides to compete in the two European competitions. However, the liquidation of the Celtic Warriors, allowed the ERC to admit all four regional sides into the 2004 Heineken Cup. Similarly the IRFU used the Celtic League standings as a measure for entrance into the respective cup competitions as previously the Irish provinces had only competed in the Heineken Cup.
the Powergen Cup in the 2005/06 season with fixtures being played only on international weekends\textsuperscript{114}.

At the start of the 2006/07 season, Magners Irish Cider paid £250,000 for sponsorship rights of the Celtic League (BBC, 2006). However, despite this increase in sponsorship revenue for the Celtic League sides, the low crowd attendances and overall the cost of supporting professionalism within Scotland, Ireland and Wales was unsustainable and at the end of the 2006/07 season the Scottish team the Borders disbanded. In 2010, the two Federation of Italian Rugby (FIR) sides Arioni and Benetton Treviso were introduced into the Celtic League\textsuperscript{115}. The then Director of Celtic Rugby Ltd., David Jordan stated that the introduction of the two Italian sides was important to sustain and develop the Magners League in existing and emerging markets.

‘This is another massive step forward for the Magners League. As well as providing more fixtures for the teams already involved this will also bring both a major cash injection into the competition and greater exposure across Europe.

Operationally it will present new challenges, as well as opportunities, but by introducing Italy into the Celtic fold it will also dramatically broaden the appeal of our product. It is anticipated that the Italian super clubs will be largely made up of Italian internationals of full, A and Under-20 levels, with a sprinkling of top-class overseas players set to provide further extra strength and spice to the tournament’ (The Guardian, 2010).

After the respective leagues’ structures were established within the home nations the focus once again shifted onto European competition. It was not until the 2004/05 season that the WRU and the IRFU considered their team’s participation in European competition as a metric of success in their own domestic competitions, whereas this system was implemented in the domestic leagues of the RFU and the FFR at the onset of professionalism. Of the twenty four teams that participated in the Heineken Cup, English and French clubs were

\textsuperscript{114} The 2005/06 Season saw the Powergen Cup renamed as the Anglo-Welsh Cup with EDF energy becoming the main sponsor. Currently the main sponsor of this cup competition is LV insurance.

\textsuperscript{115} In 2011 Airioni was disbanded and replaced by Zebra, another side controlled by the FIR.
164

only allocated six places each in the tournament whereas at least ten sides from the Celtic League were guaranteed entry into the competition. Furthermore, the revenue from participation of English clubs in the Heineken Cup is shared amongst all members of the English Premier Division rather than simply the teams that competed. Equally controversially, in the 2012/13 season the £44 million generated by the Heineken Cup was divided unevenly with 52% of the finances going to the Pro 12 clubs and 48% being shared between the RFU and the FFR (BBC, 2014). The English and the French clubs were infuriated by the qualification process and revenue distribution within the top European competitions.

Perhaps predictably, in the 2013/14 season English and French clubs proposed to break away from the ERC and form a separate European competition with a new independent management body. In addition to the previously discussed issues with regard to revenue sharing the English clubs were encouraged to develop a new competition as they had the financial backing of BT Sport which had invested £152 million for television rights to broadcast English club rugby including participation in a European tournament. However, crucially, the deal excluded the Heineken Cup (BBC, 2014). The position of the English clubs and BT Sport angered BSkyB who had agreed a four-year deal with ERC for rights to live Heineken Cup fixtures in 2012 and controversially the English clubs had now incorporated the two competing broadcasting organisations within the debate over the future of European rugby.

On the 10th April 2014, an agreement was reached to develop three new European tournaments starting in the 2014/15 season. The European Rugby Champions Cup replaced the Heineken Cup, the European Rugby Challenge Cup has replaced the Amlin Challenge Cup and a new competition has been introduced, the Qualifying Competition in an eight-year agreement between the clubs, NGBs and World Rugby. All teams qualify for the new European competitions on a merit system based on results from the domestic league competitions. The top six sides at the end of the domestic clubs season in the English and

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164 Financial Institution, RaboDirect, are the current sponsors of the Celtic League, currently known as the RaboDirect Pro 12 league. A deal was secured and started in the 2011/12 season and was said to be a ‘significant sum’ (BBC, 2011). Both Scottish and Italian sides were automatically entered into the Heineken Cup and three sides each from the Welsh and Irish regions and provinces respectively.

117 Work by Fort and Quirke (1995, p. 1265) and Noll (2007, p. 546) suggests that revenue-sharing of television is good for the competitive balance of leagues, which it could be argued was the rationale behind the RFU’s structure for revenue distribution from the Heineken Cup. Additionally, in 2010 the insurance company, AVIVA, secured a £20 million deal for the rights to sponsor the English Premier Division and the league has since become known as the Aviva Premiership (Premiership Rugby agrees £20m sponsorship deal with Aviva, 2010).

118 French clubs do not operate on a revenue sharing arrangement.

119 Clubs are required to give notice of two years should they wish to withdraw from the competition.
French leagues qualify for the European Rugby Champions Cup, while the top seven teams from the Guinness PEO12 league also qualify for the same tournament. In addition there is a play-off for the final place in the top competition involving four sides, one from France and England and two sides from the Guinness PEO12 league. The winners of the European Champions Cup and the Challenge Cup will not automatically qualify for the following year’s respective tournaments, it is a merit system based on domestic league performance. Furthermore, a new management board called the European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR) has replaced the ERC and works along the lines of UEFA in association football. Commercial decisions are made by a five-strong executive committee made up from representatives of the three leagues, and an independent Chairman. The nine stakeholders in the new competitions form a board of directors for EPCR.

The formation of the initial European competition in 1995 was constructed with a commercial partner. However, the new tournaments do not have a title sponsor but rather an array of commercial partners, similar to the commercial situation in the UEFA Champions League. This commercial arrangement allows for financial elements of the competitions to be split evenly between the three leagues with a proportion reserved for the individual teams who make the knockout stages.

Television revenue was the final hurdle to be overcome once all the governing bodies agreed on the formation of new European competitions. BT Sport and Sky Sports reached an agreement in principle concerning arrangements for new European competitions, sharing the rights equally, with both showing matches involving English clubs. The exact figure of the broadcasting deal has yet to be announced but Steve Martin, the current Chief Executive of sports agency M&C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment states ‘I would expect sponsorship to increase by 25 per cent next year and if BT Sport and Sky Sports do a new broadcast deal, it could be in a very good place, very quickly’ (quoted in Mairs, 2014). In France, the LNR negotiated a €70 million a year broadcasting deal for the Top 14 League with Canal + and a €82 million over four years broadcasting deal for the new European competitions with BeIN Sports and free-to-air France Télévisions sharing the tournament.

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120 At least one team from each of the four countries that take part will participate in the Champions Cup. If a nation’s teams are outside of the top seven a place will be awarded to the team that finished highest in the league.
121 The stakeholders are the FFR, FIR, IRFU, LNR, PRL, RFU, SRU, WRU and Regional Rugby Wales (RRW).
122 Safeguards have been put in place to ensure that the Guinness PEO12 teams do not suffer a drop in income.
The professionalisation of rugby union has had a dramatic effect on domestic league structures and cup competitions throughout the rugby community. In the southern hemisphere, the driving force was a financial relationship with a broadcasting company that resulted in the creation of franchises that competed across domestic borders. In the northern hemisphere, the professional game has functioned on either a regional, provincial or district basis in countries other than England and France. Sponsorship, media deals and financial investors have been the driving force in sustaining domestic competition alongside some specific initiatives to increase the level of entertainment for the spectator. Continued investment has been a necessity for rugby union to sustain its position in the modern sporting landscape. Other sports did not have to negotiate such economic extremes in the early years of their professional status and certainly not to such an extent that it impacted upon the design of their domestic league infrastructures. Given that rugby union has only been professional for nineteen years, the construction and development of national leagues and cross-border competitions have evolved significantly.

Consumption and Identity

The dispute of the English clubs with the ERC and the development of the Mayfair Agreement between the clubs and the RFU in 1998 did not present a positive picture of the professional game in the public eye. According to Smith (2000, pp. 149-152) corporate sponsors, noting Sky Sports' modest viewing figures for coverage of the Premiership One and the Tetley's Bitter Cup and the constant dispute between the English clubs and the RFU, began to ask if club rugby could provide a level of exposure comparable to other sports regardless of the English clubs’ return to European competition. In England, the average attendance figures in the 1997/98 Allied Dunbar Premier League season was only 6,240 and totalled 823,626 for the season (Hogan, Massey, & Massey, 2011, p. 17). These figures were considerably lower than the 8.2 million total attendance figures in the Football League’s First Division let alone the 11.2 million people who attended FA Premier League fixtures during the same season (Simmons & Forrest, 2004, p. 27).

In response to the media’s concern regarding the value of the rugby union ‘product’, clubs started to look at other ways of increasing their spectator base. In England, clubs such as Richmond and Saracens changed their home fixtures to football stadiums sharing with
Reading FC and Watford FC at the Magdejski and Vicarage Road stadiums respectively. The change in strategic direction by both Richmond and Saracens was an attempt to create a level of local association rather than be part of the number of teams in the ‘London zone’ and further illustrates that traditional amateur values of rugby union were being replaced by modern business principles. Rather than adhere to tradition, clubs appear to have been more eager to replicate the American model of sports organisations by not being averse to relocation if market conditions dictated this to be best practice.

Conversely, the Super 12 competition utilised relationship marketing as a tool to promote traditional local loyalties and expand their identities onto the global market aided by the process of franchising. Relationship marketing is the process that takes account of the service orientation of many enterprises in post-industrial economies and accommodates the logic of customer retention as opposed to ever-increasing sales (Hackley, 2009, p.80). For example in South Africa, the provincial sides were based around the larger cities of Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg that enabled an association based on location in the promotion of teams when the Super 12 competition began. Again, the franchise sides in New Zealand were based around the large cities of Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury and Dunedin. The Waikato side was developed to represent a large number of provincial unions that existed between the cities of Auckland and Wellington and in 2002 it centred itself in the city of Hamilton. The attachment of only one team to an individual city contrasts sharply with the model in the northern hemisphere where sides regularly compete amongst city communities for market share and support, resulting in a clear and distinguishable target audience for the southern hemisphere franchises.

In addition to the association of Super 12 franchise sides with large cities, the NZRFU specifically insisted that the unions needed to generate a marketing technique to illustrate specific ‘civic sentiments’ alongside commercial images and the discourses of consumer choice (Whitson, 1998, pp. 59-65). All the franchise teams had to combine the heritage of the union teams which they represented in order to promote themselves on the global market through the relationship with News Corporation. Therefore, not only were the host unions of the franchises promoted in the names of the Super 12 sides but also the colours of the playing

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123 London Wasps played home games that occurred on a Sunday at Loftus Road, home of Queens Park Rangers Football Club.
124 For example in the 2013/14 season of the Aviva Premiership there are four sides associated with the ‘London Zone’ and a further two in the second tier league, the Green King IPA Championship.
shirts for each franchise were selected using the colours of the 1st division domestic unions represented within each region (Obel, 2001, p. 230).

In the inaugural season of the Super 12 Championship, the clothing manufacturer for each of the New Zealand based franchises was Canterbury International Ltd, part of their longstanding agreement to provide kit to the national side. However, in 1997, Adidas acquired sole rights to be the clothing manufacturer for the NZRFU and its franchise unions in a five-year £20 million deal starting in 1999 (Longmore, 1997). According to Scherer and Jackson (2010, pp. 72-75) ‘the symbiotic nature of the NZRFU–Adidas relationship was explicitly framed by both parties as a ‘partnership’ as opposed to a sponsorship or some form of property ownership’. This ultimately demonstrates that Adidas viewed the opportunity to become the sole clothing manufacturer to the NZRFU (who have been arguably the most dominant rugby union country historically) as a process of developing a corporate alliance while the priority of the NZRFU was to simply ensure a lucrative level of capital was secured via any sponsorship agreement.

Despite the level of control exerted by the governing bodies in the structure of the Super 12 competition, the development of a franchise construct allowed the host unions to generate their own income from hosting home matches in the transnational competition outside the control of the NGBs (Schwarz & Hunter, 2008, p. 285). In the inaugural season of the Super 12 Championship the New Zealand based sides utilised their city-based heritage and the NZFRU’s contract with Adidas as a strategy for deriving further revenue through branding and formulating the names the Auckland Blues, Wellington Hurricanes, Canterbury Crusaders, Otago Highlanders and the Waikato Chiefs. In partnership with Adidas the NZFRU franchises were able to express local identity with nationalism that is evident within the merchandise designs of the 2015 season combining symbols of local heritage and the Adidas logo (see Figure 21).

125 In 1999, the name ‘Waikato’ was removed from the Chief franchise as original disputes over boundaries with the Auckland Blues had diluted the opportunities to develop any sustained level of fan base. The Auckland Blues region became the most northern New Zealand region and consisted of the Northland, North Harbour and Auckland unions. The Chiefs region, in the central north island, consisted of the Waikato, Bay of Plenty, King Country, Thames Valley, East Coast and Counties-Manukau unions (Obel, 2001, p. 230).
Conscious of a noticeable shift from a participation based ethos to an ‘entertainment’ based structure, club sides in the northern hemisphere started to become aware of the need to introduce marketable characteristics into the domestic game, especially in light of the increase in viewing options for different audiences. However, unlike in the southern hemisphere, the northern hemisphere model of sport does not always allow for one club side to rely solely on its location to uniquely establish its identity, purely due to the number of sporting sides that co-exist within close proximity to each other. Although their identities can be argued to signify their location, it is not the sole representation of their marketable image. In response to the marketing developments occurring in the southern hemisphere the rugby union clubs sides in England and France particularly started to use specific marketing tactics in an attempt to secure market share.

In the 1997/98 season English clubs sides started to introduce marketable names to entice a new, younger audience to the sport. For example, Northampton RFC became officially known as Northampton Saints and Leicester RFC became known as Leicester Tigers,
emulating similar ‘branding’ names used by American professional sport teams\textsuperscript{126}. Although the rugby community commonly knew these names, the clubs started to use them to develop their ‘brands’ and this in turn led to opportunities for commercial exploitation. However, not all clubs decided to follow their antipodean counterparts and established (and successful at the time) clubs such as Bath, Gloucester and Bristol persisted with the use of principally city attachment to market their respective clubs. Two clubs within what has previously been described as the ‘London Zone’, London Wasps and Harlequins were already known by these typically defined marketable characteristics. London Wasps were formed in 1867 and in keeping with fashion at the time, named themselves after the insect (\url{http://www.wasps.co.uk})\textsuperscript{127}. While Harlequins, formed in 1866 as Hampstead Football Club, changed their name in 1870 to Harlequins when the club membership became more multicultural in composition (\url{http://www.quins.co.uk}). Additionally, in 1996 Harlequins established a commercial partnership with NEC\textsuperscript{128}, renaming the club NEC Harlequins (Smith, 2000, p. 160).

In Wales, the establishment of the five regional sides for the Celtic League in 2003 provided the opportunity to create new identities to distinguish them from their representative club sides. Consequently, the five sides were named the Cardiff Blues (used to distinguish from Cardiff RFC), Neath and Swansea Ospreys (named after the bird on Swansea RFC’s club badge), Llanelli Scarlets (used to distinguish from Llanelli RFC), the Newport and Gwent Dragons and the Celtic Warriors. The regions all clearly had locality and marketable designs evident in the establishment of the names. In 1999 the SRU reduced the four district sides down to two, the Edinburgh Reivers and the Glasgow Caledonian Reds. At the start of the 2002/03 season the titles of Caledonian and Reivers were dropped to form Glasgow and Edinburgh sides respectively which also coincided with the newly formed Border Reivers. In 2005, both Glasgow and Edinburgh sides were rebranded to become Glasgow Warriors and Edinburgh Gunners in an attempt to refresh the rugby market in Scotland. However, a decline in attendance figures for Edinburgh forced the club to return its name to Edinburgh Rugby while the Border Reivers disbanded in 2007 (\url{http://www.edinburghrugby.org/}). Whilst there have been clubs that have successfully rebranded or introduced relationship marketing

\textsuperscript{126} Northampton are known as the ‘Saints’ due to the location of the Franklin’s Gardens ground in the St James’s area of the town. The name of ‘Tigers’ for Leicester RFC, derives from either the brown and yellow kit worn in 1885 or the connection to a Leicester Infantry unit that served in India (\url{http://www.leicestertigers.com}).

\textsuperscript{127} In the 2014/15 season the word ‘London’ has been removed from the club name and are to be known as Wasps in a new marketing strategy (‘Wasps drop ‘London’ from their name’, 2014).

\textsuperscript{128} NEC are a Japanese based Information Technology and Electronics company.
strategies in the professional era, not all of the strategies have been accepted by the ‘traditional’ fan base and consequently these clubs reverted back to their identities from the amateur era. The confusion evident in the name changes in reference to Edinburgh are captured by the comments made by a former Scottish Rugby Union international within this research study:

‘It’s funny you mention that, I completely forgot that Edinburgh were named the Gunners for a period of time. Certainly wasn’t catchy was it? Were they trying to compete with Arsenal? The die-hard fans never accepted the changes and they were making their voices heard by not turning up, which I thought was a strange thing. Although I must admit I struggled with the Warriors bit when I played there but guess it just became the norm. Thinking about it, when I look back at my career I can say that I played for two teams called the Warriors and one called the Saints, doubt my granddad would even have known what I was talking about’. Participant: SC2

The concept of attaching clubs or franchises to cities can be seen as a restrictive marketable and commercial strategy. The use of city heritage in the development of brands within rugby union is a contrast with modern business principles and examples from the North American model of sport suggest that this is an out-dated concept. Indeed, Leifer (1995, p. 300) argues that the process of attaching franchises to cities is not the most successful process of developing a fan base or even increasing financial revenue. Leifer implies that rugby union missed a trick when the sport professionalised. Instead of promoting local heritage, Leifer (1995, pp. 300-302 suggested that it might have been more financially viable to attach sides to multinational corporations including and not exclusively, Toyota, Nike, and IBM in order to promote the sport globally. This would have enabled the development of a potential worldwide league and according to Leifer, a larger fan base. However, while a truly international club fan base exists in other modern sports (e.g., Association Football), in the early years of professionalism, rugby union had to recognise the assets that it did have, i.e.

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129 A model which has been implemented in Japanese rugby union for example, teams such as Panasonic Wild Knights and the Mitsubishi Dynaboars. Yet in addition to multinational corporation sponsorship the club sides have a localised identity as well.
the local community, and create a product that would not only maintain this relationship but provide additional marketable strategies through which to expand on the global stage.

France and Ireland did not undertake the development of franchises or embrace the concept of American style branding. Instead clubs in France decided to develop specific localised identities rather than create a product differentiated from the sport’s historical past. During the professional years, French clubs have attempted to utilise territorial marketing techniques that have employed a number of cross-border sporting events. In April 2011, Perpignan hosted Toulon at the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona while the Biarritz rugby club have hosted games at the Anoeta stadium in San Sebastian, an expression of a Basque club identity. These marketing tactics exemplify an attempt to mobilise regional identities in order to create marketable appeal.

Similarly, the expansion of the Stade Français Rugby Club in the professional era has been enhanced through a greater emphasis on business management and marketing strategies rather than an attempt at American style branding. In 1992, Max Guazzini became president of Stade Francis, who were then competing in the third tier of French rugby union, and inspired the club to the Top 14 championship in 1998. Through a range of different marketing strategies such as half-time entertainment with the introduction of pom pom girls, pop music, the appearance of star guests including Madonna (Dine, 2008, p. 35), Guazzini was able to entice new audiences to club rugby with a strategy of relationship marketing. In a similar manner, Guazzini ensured that the club’s playing kit was marketable on both the national and global scale by uniquely attaching locality to national expressions of flamboyancy (see Figure 22).
As with clubs in the ‘London zone’ in England, there are a range of not only rugby clubs but other sports clubs around Paris, most notably the football club Paris Saint-Germain. In order to compete and develop market share, Guazzini’s tactics sought to entice a new and notably family based audience to Stade Français. The marketing tactics of the Parisian club have created larger audiences and have enabled the Stade Français club to play one-off events at the Stade de France, an 80,000-seater stadium. The following comments give one player’s view on the marketing strategies employed by Stade Français:

‘It is certainly remarkable to be part of something so grand. Max was here right at the very beginning of my time with Stade but his impact is evident all around. I know the shirts can be something of an eyesore but there are some great meanings behind them.

Ultimately, though all these different marketing tactics you just spoke about clearly worked. Match days are very much a festival thing, and
it’s great to meet the supporters before going into the ground, certainly nothing like that occurred at other clubs I’ve played for. It’s definitely a party atmosphere on match day, unless we lose. The half time acts have been amazing; I got to meet Shakira, how many people can say that?’. **Participant: AC2**

The success of the marketing strategies employed by Stade Français required the development of a relationship with the media, not too dissimilar to that of SANZAR with News Corp. However, this differs considerably from the strategies of both Perpignan and Biarritz whose territorial marketing strategies rely on culture and identity rather than a broader cultural eclecticism associated with Paris (Dine, 2008, p. 36). Thus, through examples in England, Wales, Scotland and France, it would appear that in the northern hemisphere open professionalism forced clubs to prioritise business principles ahead of locality and culture, in order to maximise financial revenue to sustain the professional game.

*The Player Market*

At the onset of professionalism, player contracts became a central focus of debate. In the amateur era the players were obviously central to the game itself, but as elements of commercialism filtered into the sport, the players themselves were often left out of the business decisions until the player contract arrived. Professionalism and the advent of a formal playing contract signified the transformation of the relationship of the player to the game. The play spirit of intrinsic pleasure to be derived from playing is displaced or overwritten by a contractual relationship to the game in which the player becomes an employee paid to provide a service, paid to perform, employed to produce skills and abilities for the organisation (Singer, 2000, p. 59). However, it could also be argued that professionalisation has a liberating effect and has provided the players with more power to dictate the future direction of the sport. Professional rugby players became a highly valued commodity almost overnight, and it can be argued that in the professional era that they are a club's greatest assets. Although they may be replaceable, there is a greater responsibility on the club administrators to retain these assets.

The nature of the amateur rugby union game in the 20th century enabled individual players to develop and perform for their local sides rather than move geographically to perform for
other clubs, as was common with established professional sports. There are obvious examples where this was not always the case, with the universities of Oxford and Cambridge rugby sides acting as a case in point. However, as Harris (2010, pp. 58-59) suggests, the amateur era created a sense of place and importance for the rugby player in local communities and heritage became a defining characteristic of amateur rugby. This is further illustrated in the following observations from a former English Rugby Union international from the amateur era:

‘School for me wasn’t a big thing although sport was very big in Chorley, Lancashire where I was born. I joined (club removed) at 17 and stayed there until I retired. Played for Lancashire, ** times for England and ** times for the Lions. I first played for Lancashire in 1972 at the age of 19 with Fran Cotton and Tony Neary and the last game I played in 1982 was for Lancashire in the final against North Midlands at Moseley. Back then the competition was full of international players. Lancashire v Yorkshire was as big a game as you could get.

**Bigger than playing for England or the Lions?**

Don’t get me wrong playing and captaining England is something words cannot describe, as is the Lions. It was just that I’m from Lancashire and that in itself gave me huge elements of pride. Representing your country means just that, but you don’t know everyone. Playing for Lancashire felt like you were playing for the small amount of people who you see or work with on a daily basis and that is so special’. **Participant: EP1**

Nonetheless, the sense of local attachment became diluted with the introduction of player contracts following the advent of professionalism. As previously stated, the clubs in England reacted to professionalism before the RFU, with wealthy benefactors purchasing clubs and large sums of money being offered to players. Rob Andrew signed a £750,000 contract over five years to play for Newcastle Gosforth, only two months after the IRFB’s August 1995 announcement (Smith, 2000, p. 156). The financial rewards provided by these benefactors were hard to ignore, regardless of any prior attachment to heritage and locality. This
reference to the conflict between financial self-interest and local/national attachment is noted further in comments by both a former Scottish and former Irish Rugby Union International:

‘I can tell you now, I’m as proud a Scotsman as there’ll ever be but, the money that I was offered to play for (club removed) in London, I just couldn’t turn it down. I informed the SRU of my decision, which they didn’t take too kindly but they never stopped me from playing for Scotland. I just had a longer commute to training and games, which more often than not I stopped off at home on the way back up. The club were great, they couldn’t provide the money on offer in England and deep down I think they were all glad to see a border boy doing well’. Participant: SO2

‘It’s a bit of tough topic to discuss in terms of my career. I moved to England in ‘94 when it was still amateur rugby. I went for work if truth be told but I had only been playing for one season before the game went professional. As you can imagine, I dropped the job and became a professional, who wouldn’t have? It was a great experience being a paid sports professional in London but I did always want to return to Ireland eventually. The club I played for before I came to England remained amateur in the professional years, so when I did eventually return to Ireland I played for (club removed) which never really gave me the same buzz. I only lasted one season in Ireland before heading back to (club removed), it just suited me better and there were no issues playing for Ireland. Plus I got paid a hell of a lot more money in England’. Participant: IO1

Financial motivations have played a significant part in player movement following the professionalisation of rugby union (Fleuriel, 1999; Thomas, 1997; Williams, 2008). However, it would be wrong to suggest that this simply occurred in the professional era as there were a large number of rugby union players who moved from country to country in the amateur years, particularly the previously mentioned examples of David Campese and John Kirwan. The practice of ‘shamateurism’ had tempted players in the amateur era to travel
worldwide in order to profit from their skills on the rugby field, something that was proactively facilitated once ‘open’ professionalism was declared.

During the initial years of professional rugby union in England a large number of foreign nationals were recruited to play for teams in the top two divisions. For example, Richmond RFC in the 1996/97 season had a multicultural playing squad with eleven players of English nationality, seven Welsh, three New Zealanders, two Irish, one Italian and Argentinian respectively\(^\text{130}\). In the amateur era, players tended to remain at one club for the majority of their careers, as the following comment suggests:

‘I played for one team my entire rugby career and that’s a fact I’m proud of. Obviously, I played in the good old amateur days but I can tell you now I wouldn’t have moved, regardless of the money on offer’.

Participant: NP2

The concept of ‘one’ club players had become entrenched in the amateur era. Professionalism enabled players to consider moving clubs or even hemispheres in search of the best opportunity available (Moore, 2008). While finance is thought to have been a driver for the migration of players and the development of a player market, it cannot be assumed as the only rationale for the transfer of players between clubs and for that matter nations as the following comment suggests:

‘I think it’s funny. People always assume I moved to (club removed) because of the money; I bet that was the line you expected me to say. But that wasn’t true! Obviously the money was certainly an improvement from that in France but I wanted to test myself in a new environment. I know it sounds a bit like a cliché, but it was true. As a national team we weren’t particularly successful and the style of French league rugby at the time did not suit my playing style. How do you say it in English? I took the ‘bull by the horns’ and made the move to (club removed). It was the best thing I ever did. The team was full of superstars, the fans were fantastic and I even met a girl who

\(^\text{130}\) In 2008 the English Qualified Player scheme was devised where clubs in the Premiership were incentivised by the RFU to produce and play English players.
was to become my wife. It made me a better player and that’s why I never left’. Participant: FO2

In the early years of professionalism clubs focused on developing brand names with international capital. This marketing strategy enabled club owners to explore opportunities to establish unique appeal over competitors (Howe, 1999, pp. 166-172). Clubs in the northern hemisphere seemingly sought to target players from the dominant playing nations in the southern hemisphere to improve their team’s performance and enhance their media profile. The southern hemisphere unions were and still are unable to provide comparable wages to those being offered by clubs in Europe and this has meant a high number of players have moved to the northern hemisphere. The establishment of a strategic recruitment policy by the northern hemisphere rugby clubs illustrates that clubs were recruiting better players in order to be more successful in playing terms and therefore in commercial terms attract more interest, television coverage and sponsorship.

Table 11: Marquee players in the Courage League National One Championship during the 1996/97 season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courage League National One</th>
<th>Marquee players and Nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saracens</td>
<td>Michael Lynagh - Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Francois Pienaar – South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Saints</td>
<td>Gregor Townsend - Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester Tigers</td>
<td>Joel Stransky – South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlequins</td>
<td>Thierry Lacroix - France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>Federico Mendez - Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale</td>
<td>John Mitchell – New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Wasps</td>
<td>Gareth Rees – Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inga Tuigamala – New Zealand / Samoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>Paul Burke - Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 11, in the 1996/97 season of the English Courage League National One Championship clubs strategically targeted players from the southern hemisphere nations
who had won World Cups in 1987, 1991 or 1995 in order to develop a worldwide profile. Although the players were coming towards the end of their careers, these new recruitment strategies provided the opportunity for clubs to target new global audiences with specific relationship marketing techniques (Hewitt, 1996).

The introduction of these ‘star’ players to both the English and French domestic leagues created a new dynamic within the world of rugby and led to the notion of a rugby ‘celebrity’. Rojek (2006, p. 684) classifies sports celebrities as ‘cosmopolitan accumulators who exchange bonds of city, region and even nation, to participate at the highest levels in their chosen sport and, of course, for the highest salaries’. However, it is bold to announce these players in the early years of professionalism as ‘star’ players or even ‘celebrities’, there have been very few truly global sports celebrities and none of these have been from the rugby union game (Harris, 2010, p. 57). While Jonah Lomu and Jonny Wilkinson have a global appeal in terms of rugby union they have very little profile or meaning outside of this sphere, unlike David Beckham and Michael Jordan from Association Football and the NBA respectively (Smart, 2005). Nonetheless, as rugby became more commercialised and the media focus increased, club owners used ‘celebrities’ or star players to promote their club’s appeal. For example, Northampton is a town famous for its shoe industry and its market square. Without a high profile professional football side, the rugby union game started to become more popular with the local population of the town. When the professional era arrived in 1995, over seventy percent of local schools had adopted the union game in their curriculum either as the preferred game or alongside Association Football (http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/). Consequently, as the game turned professional the club exploited the opportunity to develop affection for the game in the local community by luring internationally recognised players as part of a multi-layered marketing approach. The players were signed to perform on the playing field, tempted by large wages, but just as importantly they were there to provide a global appeal for the club as well as develop the club’s prestige within the local community. Table 12 presents the marquee signings made by Northampton RFC from the start of the professional era.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Representative Country</th>
<th>International Caps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996/1997</td>
<td>Gregor Townsend</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>82 + 2 for the British and Irish Lions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998/1999</td>
<td>Pat Lam</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>34 + 1 for New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999/2000</td>
<td>Federico Mendez</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000/2001</td>
<td>Allan Bateman</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>82 + 1 for the British and Irish Lions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Leslie</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/2002</td>
<td>Andrew Blowers</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>Bruce Reihana</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/2004</td>
<td>Mark Robinson</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>Corne Krige</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>Carlos Spencer</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>Soane Tonga`uiha</td>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>12 + 2 for the Pacific Islanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/2008</td>
<td>Chris Ashton</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/2009</td>
<td>Juandre Kruger</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>Shane Geraghty</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ignacio Lobbe</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/2011</td>
<td>George Pisi</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/2012</td>
<td>Samu Manoa</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/2013</td>
<td>Gerrit-Jan van Velze</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/2014</td>
<td>George North</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>42 + 3 for the British and Irish Lions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kahn Fotuali’i</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ability of players to move between clubs from different countries originates from a range of employment legislations that were passed during the first decade of professionalism. In 1995, the European Court of Justice overturned a regulation that insisted that football players were unable to leave clubs that employed them, even if their contract had expired (Simmons, 2008, p. 13). The Bosman Ruling, as it became known, created a mobile sport labour market.
in Europe and gave the players the opportunity to determine their future, once they were out of contract\textsuperscript{131}. Similarly, the Kolpak Ruling by the European Court of Justice in 2003 insisted that no resident of the European Union (EU) should be prevented from working in another part of the EU\textsuperscript{132}. In rugby terms, players from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia benefited from the Kolpak Ruling, which led to an increase in the number of southern hemisphere players plying their trade in Europe (Daniell, 2009, pp. 25-37). In recent years, clubs such as Saracens have further exploited the 2010 amendment to the Contonu agreement, which has given players of African and Polynesian heritage greater employment flexibility in the EU\textsuperscript{133}. These regulations have changed the dynamics of recruitment strategies for the clubs, creating a greater pool of players to recruit from and even more opportunities to foster relationships with ‘star’ players. For example, the six Tuilagi brothers, all born in Samoa, currently play or have previously played for domestic club sides throughout England and France\textsuperscript{134}.

In their attempts to lure ‘star’ performers, rival clubs used large sums of money and other inducements such as accommodation or paid school fees for their children to entice players. Examples such as these are reflective of the impact of commercialisation on the professional version of rugby union. The contract awarded to Rob Andrew at Newcastle Gosforth RFC in 1995 illustrates the way in which the new club owners were using high wages to attract high profile/star players in an attempt to compete not only within rugby union but also against other sports (Slot, 1995). Consequently, once lucrative contracts such as Rob Andrew’s had become common knowledge, other clubs offered inflated contracts to both domestic and international players in order to develop their club profiles both on and off the field of play, as the following comments suggests:

\textsuperscript{131} Named after a Belgian footballer called Jean-Marc Bosman, who took his club RC Liege to court, as they had originally demanded a transfer fee in regards to a potential move to FC Dunkeque even though his contract had expired.

\textsuperscript{132} Named after a Slovakian handball player who took his former club to court as they had released him from his contract due to the non-European quota implemented by the German Handball Federation (Williamson, 2007).

\textsuperscript{133} In the 2013/14 Aviva Premiership final, Saracens had eight players of African heritage in their twenty three-man squad.

\textsuperscript{134} Henry and Sanele play for Perpignan and Narbonne in France respectively. Anitelea and Alesana currently play for Newcastle RFC and Manu plays for Leicester Tigers and has also qualified to represent England through residency regulations. Freddie is currently retired from professional rugby union after previously representing established European clubs sides such as Leicester Tigers, Cardiff Blues and Castres throughout his playing career.
'It was a surreal time. I was getting offered this and that from all sorts of places, but at that time all I wanted to do was play for the Blacks! But honestly, particularly clubs in England were prepared to offer anything. I remember one offer provided more money than I ever dreamed possible, a four bed house in some lovely sounding place and boarding schools for my kids. I wasn’t even married, had no kids that I knew of and as a twenty year old I certainly wouldn’t have known what to have done with all that money. To cap it off, when I said thanks but no thanks, I had another offer with even more ridiculous stuff. It was all very flattering but I had only just got into the national team and there was no way I was going to give that up. Although looking back on it I would have been set for life, but they’re the choices you make’. Participant: NO1

Inflated contract offers developed without the level of financial security present to be able to sustain such investment, which consequently forced a number of clubs to make drastic cuts or employ new marketing tactics to identify further revenue streams to survive. Clubs were eager to invest in the team and once they had been rewarded with league or cup success worry after the event about the finance. However, not all the ground relocation or brand maximisation strategies assisted clubs in the first few seasons of professionalism and many failed to compete in the ‘open’ professional era. Players had their contracts cancelled and club grounds were sold to pay off the debts. Clubs such as Headingly and Roundhay merged to form Leeds RFC, which inevitably resulted in the selling of one of the clubs’ former grounds to finance professionalism under the new club name of Leeds Tykes (Philpotts, 2000, p. 239). Richmond RFC’s club owner invested in ‘star’ players so heavily that when he withdrew his financial support in 1999, the club were forced into administration resulting in them losing their right to play in the Premier Division and the squad was disbanded\(^{135}\). Contrastingly in South Africa, professional contracts were provided by the SARFU and were determined by the individual player’s ability. The players were in groups ranging from Category A players earning £70,000 per year to Category B players earning £50,000 per year. In addition, there was an average £30,000 contract for Super 12 and provincial matches and

\(^{135}\) When Richmond were ejected from the Premiership, the club was forced to play a sabbatical season outside of the main leagues. In the 2000/01 season the club was reinstated into the RFU leagues in the Hertfordshire and Middlesex league, Division One. This was eight divisions below their original status and they are currently in National One, still two leagues below the Premiership.
those selected for test matches received £3,000 per test. This enabled the SARFU to ensure that players prioritised achieving international recognition over loyalty to club or even province, a complete contrast to the situation occurring in the English domestic league, as one current research participant comments.

‘I know it’s talked about as a positive thing, and you should report it as so in your work. However, it really (word removed) me off that the union was controlling my life. I felt trapped by the SARFU and although the pay structure enticed us as players to stay and fight for our place in the national side, I personally was just waiting for the offers to go and that was the beauty of the early period of professionalism’. Participant: SAO1

At the end of the 1998/99 season the club owners from the fourteen clubs in the Allied Dunbar Championship agreed to introduce a salary cap. A salary cap exists to restrict the amount of money that an individual club can spend within a league. A salary cap is more common in the American model of sports with the National Basketball Association (NBA) introducing a salary cap in 1984 and the National Football League (NFL) in 1994 (Staudohar, 1996, p. 3). The move by the EFDR to introduce a salary cap in 1999 was described as ‘ensuring that money will be spent on pulling in the crowds and less on filling the player’s pockets’ (Hewitt, 1999). The salary cap restricted the money that clubs could spend on players’ wages to £1.8 million per year. This forced many clubs to evaluate their playing staff with many players either having their contracts reduced or even terminated. This also forced the clubs to be more strategic in their recruitment of ‘star’ players as inevitably the cap impacted upon the composition of the playing squad, as the following comments illustrate:

‘The salary cap is something I saw introduced. Obviously, you have your worth to the club but when the cap came players really started to see which club truly valued them. I was playing (club removed) and we had a number of big name players and those initial conversations about money were tough. Although some people thought I was sulking with the reduction in wages, I returned back home (Australia) to spend more time with my family. It was tough; players were one minute playing all over the world, then all of a sudden only a select
few were able to make any real money. Don’t get me wrong I had some amazing offers in France, but that would have been too tough on the wife and kids, plus like I said I wanted to head home’.

Participant: AO2

The financial situation that arose in the English domestic game at the beginning of the professional era has reoccurred in the French domestic game during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Clubs such as Bourgoin and Brive have suffered financially in the professional era and in 2010 cut their wage bills and playing staff. These examples emphasise the financial consequences of clubs attempting to sign key players with high financial incentives in order to achieve success. Contrastingly, clubs such as Stade Français with their financial backer were reported to have a multi-national squad with a wage bill of over £20million by the beginning of the 2009/10 season (Godwin, 2014). Ultimately this has created an oligopolistic league structure within the Top 14 as those with affluent owners have been able to entice the highest calibre players to ensure chances of further success, while other clubs have struggled financially as they have attempted to compete. As in England, the FFR introduced a salary cap to Top 14 in 2010 which was set at £7.1 million (more than the 2014/15 figures for the English domestic league). The introduction of a capping system in the Top 14 has seen an equilibrium develop between all the domestic sides rather than the dominance of a few select clubs. Both the RFU and FFR have developed incentives for clubs to develop more home grown players within the capping system, focusing on developing and nurturing their own ‘star’ players rather than simply financing a recruitment strategy.

The salary cap introduced in 1999 has been regularly reviewed by the governing bodies. According to Premiership Rugby (2013, p. 10) the level of the cap is aligned to the growth of the rugby union product. The salary cap for the 2014/15 season in the Top 14 was £8.6 million while in the Aviva Premiership was £4.76 million and includes the provision to sign one player outside capping system. This ability to sign one player outside the restrictions of the salary cap was introduced into the Aviva Premiership in the 2013/14 season and has led to ‘star’ players returning to the English domestic game, with individuals such as George North signing for Northampton. However, salary caps are reflective of market conditions and the contracts provided by BT Sport and Canal+ to the English and French leagues respectively will lead the clubs to demand higher salary caps and may well lead to more players moving to the French domestic league due to the higher salary cap. Table 13 shows the top ten earners
in world rugby during the 2013/14 season. The higher salary cap in the French domestic league has allowed for further recruitment of players from all over the world.

Table 13: The top ten earners in world rugby during the 2013/14 season (Adapted from http://www.therichest.com/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Wage per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonny Wilkinson</td>
<td>Toulon</td>
<td>€56,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Sexton</td>
<td>Racing Metro</td>
<td>€52,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Habana</td>
<td>Toulon</td>
<td>€50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Para</td>
<td>Clermont Auvergne</td>
<td>€46,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thierry Dusautoir</td>
<td>Toulouse</td>
<td>€43,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimitri Szarzewski</td>
<td>Racing Metro</td>
<td>€41,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Hayman</td>
<td>Toulon</td>
<td>€41,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakkies Botha</td>
<td>Toulon</td>
<td>€41,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie Roberts</td>
<td>Racing Metro</td>
<td>€40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Giteau</td>
<td>Toulon</td>
<td>€40,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The different levels at which the salary caps have been set has led to players being attracted to the country with the highest cap, presently France, and this in turn has affected the composition of the squads in respect of nationality in the Top 14. Unlike a number of other professional team sports where multi-national composition of teams is common practice, for example, Association Football and to some extent rugby league, in rugby union it constitutes a relatively recent development. The increase in overseas players in club sides affects the opportunities that local or home grown players have of playing regularly for their local clubs and this deprives them of constant high level competitive playing experience and in turn has implications for the quality of the pool of players available for national team selection. However, research by Elliott and Weedon (2010) provides an argument that the introduction of foreign players can in fact enhance the development potential of all players if the culture of
the environment is designed appropriately. These are important implications for the future of the international game.

The money that became available at the onset of professionalism provided an opportunity for players to go from being ‘amateur’ to having a fully financed career in rugby union. Nevertheless, creating the appropriate economic infrastructure to support professional rugby union proved challenging. Attempts by club owners to provide substantial levels of finance for a newly professionalised game eventually led to the withdrawal of these financial backers and the demise of some of the most traditional rugby clubs in England. It took the club sides of Wales, Scotland and Ireland until 2001 to formulate any form of competitive league and, more importantly, another five years to establish a commercial partner, which restricted the levels of sponsorship and commercial revenue necessary to increase the financial appeal to players for the respective leagues. In contrast, the development of Super Rugby was based around centrally contracting players to the southern hemisphere unions, which ultimately forced the unions to create a salary tiering system to keep their star players. However, even the higher salaries provided to ‘star’ players from the SANZAR unions were insufficient to compete with the salaries on offer in the commercialised domestic leagues of France and England. Player migration research has typically focused on the northern hemisphere leagues of England and France as they have in recent years become the increasingly powerful economic core of the club game of rugby union. The salary capping process was introduced to control the financial situation and player migration within the sport but inconsistencies in the levels at which caps have been set by governing bodies and a lack of influence by the IRB are key reasons why there is not only a financial distortion between the northern and the southern hemispheres but also within the entire player market as an entity.

The International Game

The agreement between News Corporation and SANZAR in 1995 created an annual tournament between the three national sides from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa while the Five Nations tournament continued as before in the amateur era. Conscious of the changes to the club game and the developments in the southern hemisphere, the Five Nations committee agreed to a proposal by the IRB to admit Italy into the tournament in 2000. The introduction of Italy to the Six Nations tournament was designed to expand the game outside the traditional rugby countries but ultimately the driving force was to maximise income for
the unions (Richards, 2007, p. 256). International matches provided the highest revenue to the unions through gate receipts and television. The funding from News Corporation in the southern hemisphere and the RFU’s independent agreement with BSkyB had provided funding for the SANZAR nations and the RFU respectively. However, the introduction of Italy was to financially benefit all the member unions through an additional fixture in the new Six Nations Championship and another competitive fixture on the traditional end of season tours.

The need for the annual end of season tours by the national teams was questioned by both the clubs and the players themselves following the move to professionalism but financial concerns and television media interest led to tours continuing. However, following the summer tours of 1998, when England lost 78-0 to Australia and 64-22 to New Zealand while Wales lost 96-13 to South Africa, the fixtures and their contribution to the global image of rugby union were once again questioned. The majority of players who played in these fixtures were new to the international scene as most of the well-known international players for England and Wales were rested following their involvement with the British and Irish Lions the previous summer. The rationale for the tours of 1998 and the continuation of summer tours is explained by Richards (2006, p. 257) in the following terms ‘Union coffers were replenished, television schedules filled’. This point is further commented upon by a respondent:

‘The guys that turned up to play us were really not prepared for international rugby. Obviously Jonny went on to become a superstar and completely destroyed what should have been an amazing night for us back in 03. But I can’t name another one of those guys from that tour that made it? Touring is touring, only down side is the actual travelling but the places and the money certainly make up for it’.

Participant: AC1

Such tours might have provided financial returns and satisfied television companies but poor results were bad for the profile and reputation of the international game. The RFU was increasingly aware that success on the international stage was vital if it was to maintain its profile in the face of an emerging domestic league. Prior to the summer tours of 1998 England’s record in the RWC had at best been mixed, England were eliminated in the quarter finals in 1987, lost the final in 1991 and were semi-finalists in 1995. When the game
officially became ‘open’ in 1995 there was no longer any reason to discriminate against players from rugby league (Harris, 2010). Consequently, the immediate aftermath of professionalism saw players return from rugby league to play rugby union with Welsh players Jonathan Davies and Scott Gibbs two of the most famous names to cross back over the divide. But the early post-professional years did not directly benefit the English national side although the club game saw players such as Henry Paul and Gary Connolly play for Bath and Harlequins respectively, albeit for a solitary season in each case. After again being eliminated at the quarter final stage in the 1999 RWC, the RFU decided to recruit players strategically from rugby league and financed the transfer of Jason Robinson from Wigan Rugby League Club to the Sale Sharks in August 2000. The acquisition of Jason Robinson provided the RFU with a principle right to his services whereas the remaining club and international players in England had primary contracts with their clubs, as one former Irish International Rugby Union player comments:

‘The best player I ever played with or against? That’s a tough one. I suppose I would have to say Brian O’Driscoll as the best player I played with, he made everything look so simple, which was definitely a bonus to him as he’s not really that quick. But without ever playing with him directly, Jason Robinson was pure class although a nightmare to play against. He could do something on the flip of a coin, probably his rugby league background. The guy was pure class and a really nice guy to boot. 2003 is always said to be Wilkinson’s world cup but without Robinson where would England have been’.

Participant: IO2

The conversion of Jason Robinson from rugby league to rugby union coincided with the most successful period in English rugby union’s history, with the player himself scoring in England’s 2003 RWC final victory over Australia. In the 2003 final Australia also had three former rugby league players in their starting line-up. As the professional era has continued, each RWC has had players who have been former rugby league players participating in the tournament. The 2011 tournament saw Sonny Bill-Williams play for New Zealand, a

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136 Wendall Sailor, Lote Tuquiri and Matt Rodgers.
137 Examples include Andy Farrell for England in 2007 and Brad Thorn for New Zealand in 2011.
player who has switched between rugby league and rugby union, playing in France, New Zealand and Japan. Prior to the 2011 RWC, Bill-Williams spent four years playing rugby league in Australia for the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs in Sydney before playing rugby union for three seasons at Toulon in France (Jackson & Scherer, 2013, p. 893). Prior to signing a contract with the New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU\textsuperscript{138}), in 2010, his agent remarked that:

‘His options are wide open. Everyone knows Sonny travels on a Samoan passport so that’s one option. He spent the first 16 years of his life in New Zealand so that’s another option . . . And by the time of the World Cup he could have qualified on residency to play for France’ (Matheson, 2009).

Additionally, the professional era has seen a dramatic increase in the number of players playing international rugby union for countries other than their nation of birth. This is not an issue solely confined to the professional era as there are numerous examples of this occurring prior to professionalism, but the professional era has created further opportunities. As the stakes have become higher and the pressure to win matches and trophies has intensified, anything to gain a competitive advantage became fair game in the contemporary world of rugby union. Professionalisation intensified the movement of players both in terms of planned recruitment and also through national eligibility occurring as an unintended result of professional migration. According to Jackson and Scherer (2013, p. 893) one hundred and twelve athletes played for countries other than their country of birth in the 2011 RWC, something that would have not been possible in the mid-twentieth century but is now commonplace in the new global rugby union landscape. As the commercial aspects of the game became more significant the results on the field of play mattered much more and so any attempt to gain an advantage was seized upon:

‘I can see why people do it; if you’re not getting selected at home why not try abroad. As a South African or even an Aussie or New Zealander, an average player can get an amazing wage abroad and it seems an easier shot at playing international rugby. That’s why you see teams with players born all over the world. Wasn’t it South Africa A vs South Africa B in the cricket last summer?’ Participant: SA01

\textsuperscript{138} In 2006 NZRFU decided to remove football from its title to be renamed New Zealand Rugby Union.
Consequently, in the early years of professionalisation, some governing bodies looked to exploit the rules on player nationality; one particular incident involved the WRU and the famously entitled matter of ‘Grannygate’. Traditionally, a player’s national eligibility has been determined solely by proof of familial lineage or a qualifying period of residence. The ‘Grannygate’ scenario in 2000 saw Brett Sinkinson and Shane Howarth, both New Zealand nationals qualify to play for Wales based on their grandparent ancestors, as it transpired neither were qualified to play for their adopted nation (Harris, 2007, p. 158). Sinkinson and Howarth were directly recruited by the then Wales Head coach, Graham Henry, to play for Wales, with allegedly false documents regarding their family lineage (Grainger, 2006, p. 49). As with England in 1998, Wales were looking to rebuild after their end of season tour 96-13 defeat to South Africa and subsequently recruited Graham Henry in August of the same year. Henry sought to exploit the limited IRB regulations regarding player mobility at the time, which stipulated that the responsibility of determining player eligibility for national selection was determined by the national unions themselves. Holmes and Storey (2011, p. 256) suggest that while the WRU was responsible for establishing the eligibility of players for international rugby, it was no wonder these regulations were exploited. Henry had attracted similar controversy while with Auckland when poaching players from other regional sides in New Zealand. According to the Wales Online website (‘10 Years on from Grannygate’, 2010) one of Graham Henry’s first acts as Wales coach was to put adverts in the New Zealand and Australian rugby press looking for Antipodeans with Welsh grandparents. Furthermore, Henry suggested to the WRU that they should bring five South African teenagers to play in Wales in order for them to qualify for Wales on residency, a suggestion which was ultimately rejected by the WRU. Yet it was not just Wales who were being questioned. England-born prop Dave Hilton was found to be ineligible for Scotland, while there were also issues about the eligibility of Pacific islanders playing for New Zealand and Australia, Zimbabweans for South Africa and North and West Africans for France, as one current South African International Rugby Union player comments:

‘I was asked to play for South Africa and that was that. The fact I was born and raised in Zimbabwe didn’t seem to make a difference until recently. I respect the decision of the SARU, but I’ve no intention of heading back to South Africa to do my citizenship anytime soon and for now (club removed) is my home’. Participant: SAC1
Following a two-day review of the ‘Grannygate’ incident the IRB made a formal regulation regarding a player’s eligibility for any particular nation (see Figure 23). The international careers of Sinkinson\textsuperscript{139}, Howarth and Hilton were abruptly ended as the IRB itself took control of matters regarding national eligibility.

\begin{center}
\textbf{REGULATION 8}
\end{center}

\textbf{REGULATION 8. ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOR NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS}

8.1 Subject to Regulation 8.2, a Player may only play for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team, the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team and the senior National Representative Sevens Team of the Union of the country in which:
(a) he was born; or
(b) one parent or grandparent was born; or
(c) he has completed thirty six consecutive months of Residence immediately preceding the time of playing.

8.2 A Player who has played for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior National Representative Sevens Team of a Union is not eligible to play for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior National Representative Sevens Team of another Union.

\begin{center}
Figure 23: 2014 IRB Eligibility Criteria (IRB.com).
\end{center}

The lure of financial benefits from the northern hemisphere domestic game has added a further strain to the significance of the international game on the global rugby landscape. With inflated wages on offer to play in the northern hemisphere, both the NZRU and ARU have enforced a requirement for players to remain in their home country in order to be selected for the national team. The RFU have acted in a similar fashion as a result of the financial opportunities and higher salary cap controls in place within the Top 14 which has now become the economic core of the domestic game in the northern hemisphere (Harris, 2010, p. 58). As a result a large number of players are choosing to either relinquish their position in the national team or give up hope of progressing to the senior national team to pursue better economic conditions abroad. The effect of players moving abroad has been an increase in the number of players qualifying through residency to play for another national team. Table 14 shows the number of players who played for countries other than those of their birth during the 2011 RWC, particularly illustrating the number of New Zealand born

\textsuperscript{139} Sinkinson qualified on residency in 2001 and played again for Wales; Hilton also qualified on residency, for Scotland, coming off the bench in the 2002 victory over South Africa.
rugby players that have sought moves abroad either for financial gain or a chance of international rugby through eligibility regulations.

Table 14: Player exports from the 2011 RWC (Adapted from Jackson & Scherer, 2013, p. 893)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Number of Players Exported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina, England</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Samoa, Samoa</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the 2015 RWC on the horizon a number of unions are starting to fear an exodus of players after the tournament. The RFU chairman, Ian Richie has stated that they will ‘have to reach deep into the purse to keep star Red Rose players in the Premiership’ (quoted in Cain, 2014). The NZRU are also concerned that their players will be specific targets after the 2015 RWC as five of their 2011 RWC winning squad were recruited directly after that event. The financial power of clubs from both the Top 14 and the emerging Japanese Top League is such that they are capable of offering more than double the salaries that the NZRU can propose. The NZRU attempted to avoid this situation occurring before the 2011 RWC by signing two of their marquee players on large salaries and promises of lucrative overseas sabbaticals. However, even with the identification of further marquee players within the New Zealand squad, the NZRU still cannot compete with the finances on offer in Europe or even Japan. In 2013, the NZRU increased player wages with the top players now able to receive an annual salary of £325,000, which is a combined Super 15 and All Blacks contract (Cain, 2014). This figure is evidently dwarfed by the figures illustrated in Table 13 which

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140 As of April 2015, fifteen players currently contracted to either the NZRU or the ARU have signed for teams in the northern hemisphere once the 2015 RWC is completed (Kitson, 2015).

141 The two players were Richie McCaw and Dan Carter. McCaw took a year out of the game in 2013 before returning for the 2014 Super Rugby season, while Carter took a sabbatical in 2009 to play a handful of games for Perpignan.
could increase further with the introduction of the new television broadcasting deal between the Top 14 and Canal + (see Table 13 on page 185).

The fear for both the ARU and NZRU is that the recruitment of their national team qualified players could have serious repercussions for their position on the international stage\textsuperscript{142}. From a business perspective, the Adidas deal with NZRU is dependent on maintenance of a brand that is associated with success at international level and any deterioration in the performance of the national team (which could happen if a significant number of star plays migrate overseas) would have a major impact on the sustainability of the brand association. Conscious of the need to entice their star players to remain within Australia and New Zealand respectively, SANZAR\textsuperscript{143} agreed to expand both the Tri-Nations and Super Rugby tournaments to include the national team of Argentina in the newly formed Rugby Championship in 2012 and add three new club sides for the Super Rugby tournament in 2017\textsuperscript{144}. The increase in tournament profile not only provides more competitive fixtures but also offers further revenue from television and sponsorship, which in turn could provide increased contract offers for players to remain within their respective unions. However, the physical demands of rugby and the opportunity to earn money in a relatively short career creates an interesting dilemma not only for the player but also for the NGBs, which is not helped by the fluctuation of the global economic market.

5. **Summary**

The changes that occurred in rugby union in the wake of professionalisation are examples of how fundamentally finance has impacted upon the structure and administration of the sport. As a professional sport rugby union had to implement marketing strategies to entice more spectators while also competing for market share with other sports, consequently aligning rugby union with the commercial forces that govern the sports market. Nevertheless, many professional clubs were quick to recognize that their relationship with television companies and advertisers meant that, not only did they have to retain their existing levels of support but that, in competition with the attractions of other sources of entertainment, they had to adapt to

\textsuperscript{142} As of 22nd of April 2015 the ARU relaxed its eligibility rules to allow certain offshore players to represent Australia at the 2015 RWC. To be eligible players need to have achieved at least sixty caps during their previous international career.

\textsuperscript{143} It is important to note that SARU does not enforce any regulation regarding selection of players to the national team.

\textsuperscript{144} One side will be from Argentina and another will a sixth franchise from South Africa.
what some perceived to be a consumer demand for a 'total entertainment package' (Dunning & Sheard, 2005, p. 269). Rugby clubs such as London Irish and Saracens have used a range of entertainment strategies such as cheerleaders and fireworks in scheduled pre-match and half time packages to increase the ‘entertainment’ for the spectators and ultimately entice new spectators to the sport.

However, as has been indicated throughout this chapter, the nineteen years of professional rugby and the attempt to increase the appeal of the sport is very much a tale of reactive governance. It was the threat of a rebel world championship in 1983 that accelerated the decision to host the inaugural RWC. The game went openly professional in 1995 because of a media battle over the two rugby codes. Often this assumed change in the power balance between a television company and sport is portrayed as a negative development and as threatening the 'essential' character of sport. However, this chapter has sought to illustrate that professionalisation has actually uncovered some of the detrimental effects of rugby union’s amateur regime and illustrated some of the strategies used to compete with other sports to ensure market share for rugby union in the modern landscape of sport.
Chapter Seven: New Horizons

1. Chapter Overview

The IRFB’s declaration on the 27th August 1995 to legalise professionalism created a new landscape for rugby union and highlighted the growing significance of the relationship between sport and the media. While originally relying solely on gate revenues to maintain financial viability, professional sport now generates income from television and a range of other media constructed commercial revenue streams (Bellamy, 1988; Bernstein & Blain, 2002). The increase in popularity that sport experienced in the latter half of the twentieth century signifies the entwined evolution of media and sport that was driven by advances in media technology and an increase in consumer purchasing power. The increase in profile and exposure of sport attracted rising levels of sponsorship, which according to Collins (2013, p. 120) was most evident in the ‘former bastion of amateurism the IOC, which had learnt in the 1980s that the quickest way to riches was to sell every conceivable space and service to corporate donors and their brands’. At the onset of the twenty first century, the economic value of sport could be measured in billions and it had developed a truly global identity.

The speed and scale of the transformation of sport and particularly rugby union throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries illustrates a change in the philosophy of sport. However, rugby union’s late acceptance of professionalism was an example of reactive governance rather than a part of any formalised strategic plan. Consequently, rugby union has constantly been adapting to the demands of the modern professionalised sporting environment and there is an argument to suggest that the professional rugby union ‘product’ is still in a state of flux. This chapter explores recent developments in rugby union including the requirements and expectations of the rugby union professional, the evolution of the match official and potential new consumer markets for rugby union.
2. Players as Assets

During the second half of the twentieth century rugby union players protested about their levels of sacrifice and lack of reward while the NGBs profited from commercial opportunities within the sport. The IRFB’s declaration on the 27th August 1995 publically transformed rugby union into a business, a commercial enterprise; the very kind of activity the defenders of amateurism had fought so hard to resist (Barnes, 1995, p. 235). The declaration formally introduced the sport into what Perkin (1989, p. 359) describes as the ‘professional society’, as the following remarks confirm:

‘Being a professional, basically means getting paid for what you love doing but under strict and specific control. You need to be motivated, committed and be the best at what you do in order to survive. Rugby is now a results driven business which means that you have to be bigger, faster, stronger than your opposite man to make sure that not only does your team win but also that you stay in the team the following week to pick up the bigger pay check’. Participant: WC2

‘The professionals are the ones who train the hardest, are the most committed and have the most talent. The amateur game is where everyone starts as a kid with the dream of moving up into the pro’s’. Participant: NC1

The embrace of the term ‘professional’ within rugby union represented the adoption of an ethos that is typified by knowledge, commitment, seriousness, intense competition and expertise (Sullivan, 2000, p. 673). This includes a specific period of training and a continuing commitment to develop and maintain ‘professional’ attributes. Professions arise from the division of labour and the power of professions stems from their ability to exclude others from the technical and legal basis of their practices, enabling prized ‘attributes’ to be translated into material and symbolic rewards (Grey, 1998, p. 570). The acceptance of professionalism into rugby union provided the NGBs and clubs with the opportunity to define the ‘characteristics’ of the professional rugby union game. As a result, the early years of professionalism saw rugby union replicate the practices of other established professional sports with increased training sessions, further fitness assessments and the formal introduction of dietary plans. The emphasis placed on the development of ‘professional
attributes’ in the rugby union game meant players had to either commit to the increased demands or leave the sport altogether, as the following comments from a former Welsh Rugby Union International player illustrate:

‘It was a complete change. Long gone were those players who were able to fit rugby around their work commitments, they either committed or they left. Obviously there were some that were nearing the end of their careers that literally walked away from the sport but the majority of people wanted to see where this journey would take us. Don’t get me wrong I was so excited at the thought of getting paid to train twice a week and a game at the end of it, especially with the wages that were on offer. However, when the dietary plans came in and the training sessions became a daily routine the bubble was soon burst and all of a sudden the reality of being a professional started to kick in’. Participant: WP1

As is evident in the responses from the participants within this study, the term ‘professional’ signifies commitment, seriousness, knowledge and expertise within rugby union. Without the players, rugby union would cease to function and consequently in the professional era players have become important assets and part of the human capital of commercially oriented sports. Consequently, the clubs and governing bodies have a responsibility to protect their assets, which means that the demands on the players need to be managed carefully (Malcolm, Sheard & White, 2000, p. 71). The top clubs and the NGBs have sought to ensure that their contracted players are in good physical shape to perform within the environment of professional rugby union. These practices have included the ‘scientization’ of training and fitness conditioning, the introduction of medical monitoring, physiotherapists, nutritionists, therapists and performance analysts. Furthermore, training sessions and match-day environments for the professional rugby player have been subjected to additional technological advances such as the Global Positioning System (GPS). GPS can evaluate a player’s training load and provides statistical analysis on the activity profiles of the players on the field of play for performance and injury preventative purposes (Cunniffe, Proctor, Baker, & Davies, 2009, p. 1195). Here is one player’s view of GPS:
'I hated that GPS thing. It used to tell me I was too slow one day too quick the next, these were things I knew. It also used to point out when I would be coasting during a game, which when it was first introduced was kind of embarrassing but it was staying and it was a case of either put up or shut up. It turned me into a more efficient player, wouldn’t say better as everyone uses it but it made me think about my contribution to the team other than simply getting one over my opposite man’. Author WC1

In addition to GPS data and video footage available to club and international sides, strict training and dietary programmes have been implemented to get the best out of their assets. In a results-driven industry the players have become very conscious of their value to the team and consequently the sport that allowed players of all shapes and sizes is developing into a game for ‘giants’ as individuals seek to be ‘bigger and better’ than their competitors (Fordyce, 2012), as one player explains:

‘In a typical week that we have a home game on the Saturday, we have Sunday off. On Monday, we come in and do a recovery session whether it is in the pool or with the physios plus medical screening, if we have been injured. In the afternoon we do match analysis from the weekend’s game which lasts for about an hour and then maybe a light run out.

Tuesday is a semi-contact session in the morning. In the afternoon, full contact rugby including team plays, lineouts and scrums, basically a lot of drills. We also do a two hour weights session and the international players will do some specific individual plan which the club allows them to focus on in the afternoon

Wednesday is a day off.

Thursday is weights in the morning and then some basic conditioning stuff in the afternoon.
Friday is usually a team run, in the morning followed by a team lunch. If you are captain you usually have some press sessions to do in the afternoon but most of us get Friday off to prepare for the game on the Saturday. Participant: SC1

The professional era has seen a dramatic increase in the physical size and weight of the rugby union athlete (Olds, 2001, p. 254). Table 15 provides a comparison of the average height and weight of the full back and wing positions in the starting team from the 3rd tests of the British and Irish Lions tours in 1993, 1997 and 2013. While the figures show an increase in average height and weight between the three tours it is the average weight of 1 stone 6lbs in difference between the 1993 and 2013 players that provides more conclusive evidence of the impact of new training and dietary plans in the professional era. The introduction of specific dietary plans, regular gym and field based training sessions has seen a clear distinction form between the ‘natural’ attributes of the amateur era elite performer and the engineered development potential of today’s professional.

Table 15: Average height and weight of the full back and wings in the starting team from the 3rd test of the British and Irish Lions tours in 1993, 1997 and 2013 (Adapted www.lionsrugby.com).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Height</th>
<th>Average Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>5ft 9”</td>
<td>13st 11lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>5ft 10”</td>
<td>14st 4lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>6ft</td>
<td>15st 3lbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The move to professionalism within rugby union has led to changes to training behaviour, attitude and conduct as the ethos of a ‘professional society’ has been embraced and, in turn, players and management have become subject to an increased level of pressure. Players and management are now appraised on a regular basis not only through official performance management processes in both training and match-day environments with their clubs or country but also through media orchestrated match reviews. If success was a defining demand of professionalism for the clubs in the immediate aftermath in 1995, then it is a specific metric of measurement for the players in today’s society as one current England Rugby Union International comments upon:
‘You’re viewed from every angle, graded in training, graded in matches and the media doesn’t hold back its thoughts. I guess that’s part and parcel of being a professional; eyes are constantly on you, you have to perform and you have to stay out of the press for the wrong reasons. A few of the boys haven’t been so lucky in recent years and they have paid some heavy prices’. **Participant: EC2**

The demand for success and the increased public scrutiny of professional sport has on occasion seen players and management perform acts of malpractice outside the laws of the game in an attempt to ‘secure’ success. For example, on April 12th, 2009 Leinster defeated Harlequins in the Heineken Cup quarter final, with the former New Zealand fly-half, Nick Evans missing a last-minute attempt at a drop-goal for Harlequins. Although this sounds a normal part of the nature of competitive sport, Nick Evans had already been replaced earlier in the game and was only back on the field due to a blood injury to Tom Williams. As it transpired the blood inside Tom Williams’s mouth was caused by a fake blood capsule, Harlequins had cheated in an attempt to gain a competitive edge (Wildman, 2010). The Harlequins head coach, Dean Richards, was handed a three-year ban from all rugby activities for admitting to devising the ‘Bloodgate’ idea and Tom Williams was banned from playing rugby for twelve months. Embarrassed by the event, an ‘Image of the Game’ task group was set up by the RFU to consider whether cheating was rife in rugby union (www.rfu.com). The task group had three target audiences; (i) the Professional players and members of the Professional Rugby Players Association, (ii) Coaches, medics, physiotherapists and administrators in professional clubs and (iii) those attached to the England teams and all participants in the community game. The report stated that ‘Bloodgate’ was a one-off incident but alarmingly only 23% of professional players contributed to the group’s findings (Austin, 2009). What is evident in the report from the ‘Image of the Game task group’ and incidents such as ‘Bloodgate’ is that the Core Values that were designed to define rugby union’s value system in formal terms are starting to be eroded\(^\text{145}\). The current situation is captured in the following comments:

\(^{145}\) The RFU Core values are Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship.
As a professional you are performing at the pinnacle of your sport and results actually matter. Players do anything in order to win, but the modern game forces people to go beyond their natural limits and try and push the boundaries further and further, simply to get that ‘important’ win. I used to love the game but now I’ve retired I barely watch it anymore, I can’t stand all the cheating’. Participant: EC1

The growth in competitiveness which led to, and which was encouraged by the introduction of ‘open’ professionalism in 1995 is reflected in the greater ‘seriousness’ of involvement of rugby union players and club officials in the sport. The introduction of professionalism into rugby union enabled the clubs and national governing bodies to recognise the ‘value’ of the players to the game. Furthermore, the increased emphasis on training, nutrition, conditioning and performance analysis illustrates rugby union’s transference from its traditional amateur ethos to one with a greater level of attitudinal professionalism. However, what is less clear is how the game of rugby union in the professional era is managed on the field of play. With increased developments in technology, formalised relationships between the players, clubs and NGBs the match official has become central to all adaptations in the rugby union game.

3. The Match Official

Throughout the history of rugby union the governing bodies have periodically sought to alter the laws of the game to create a more free-flowing, spectacular ‘product’ and one that is safer for players. The law alterations illustrate how rugby union has changed from its once ‘unpleasant’ playing image of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to one that is regulated, formally organised and designed around the spectator (Dunning & Sheard, 2005, p. 267). The facilitators of this period of change have been the match officials, who were officially introduced into rugby union in March 1885 (RFU, AGM minutes, 1885). As the professional era has developed, the ‘referee’ has become an integral part of the developmental processes and just as importantly part of the entertainment through further technological developments such as Ref Cam and the Television Match Official (discussed later in the chapter).

When the laws of the RFU were formed in 1871, the captains of the playing sides were the sole arbitrators of the game and responsible for settling any disputes on the field of play (RFU, 1871). On March 25th 1885, the RFU devised the regulations for the Guidance of Umpires and Referees (RFU, AGM minutes, 1885). The referee was to be chosen in
agreement with club secretaries and club captains and was also required to carry a stick and a whistle whilst controlling the match (both of which were provided by the RFU). While the ability to ‘send’ a player from the field of play was possible, the sight of an actual card did not appear until the 1970 Association Football World Cup (Winch, 2013). In 1976, the red card was introduced to the football league while the IRFB adopted the process for international rugby union the same year\textsuperscript{146}. The 1995/96 season, saw the introduction of a yellow card to rugby union which enabled the referee to caution a player for consistent infringements of the laws. Furthermore, in the 1997/98 season of the Allied Dunbar Championship the ‘white triangle’ trail was initiated to symbolise a ‘sin bin\textsuperscript{147}’. Here are some memories of that event recalled by one respondent:

‘I had just moved to (club removed) in August 97, when they introduced the sin bin. It was a bit alien to me, coming from a particularly raucous club scene in France to one where everything you did was scrutinised. The first time I saw that little white card I almost laughed, until I realised I had to leave the pitch. It’s a tough job being a referee, I wouldn’t do it and I’m twice the size of most of them’. Participant: FC2

On the 29\textsuperscript{th} of January 2000, the IRB formally introduced the ‘sin bin’ into rugby union. It was part of the review that followed the 1999 Rugby World Cup and was introduced as part of the experimental law variations (ELVs). Players were sent to the sin bin following the showing of a yellow card by the match referee. This measure replaced the simple caution and led to the ‘white triangle’ being dispensed with. In February 2012 the Super Rugby competition introduced a ‘white card,’ which allowed the referee to alert the citing commissioner when an incident occurs and the referee is unsure either a red or yellow card is warranted or about the identity of the offender (Benedict, 2012)\textsuperscript{148}.

\textsuperscript{146} A physical red card allowed the match referee to send a player from the field of play for a serious infringement of the regulations ((www.IRB.com)).

\textsuperscript{147} The ‘sin bin’ is a designated area on the side of the playing field in which a player who receives a yellow card must wait for ten minutes before returning to the match. The process disadvantages the team who have a man in the sin bin and an automatic red card is produced should a player receive a second yellow card.

\textsuperscript{148} A citing commissioner is an independent official appointed by the home union for domestic competitions or World Rugby for international competition, who is responsible for citing acts of foul play that have either been missed or have been asked for further review by the match day officiating team once the game has finished.
The introduction in 2001 of the television match official (TMO) has assisted the referee (Kent, 2013). The TMO was introduced to provide advice to the on-field official, for example, to confirm the awarding of a scoring move if it is supported by real time video recorded evidence of the game in play. In the 2013/14 season the IRB implemented a new TMO amendment trial which allowed the match-day referee to seek advice from the TMO to assist in not only confirming points scored but also determining foul play that has not necessarily been part of a point-scoring process (see Figure 24).

**LAW AMENDMENT TRIAL**

(b) A match organiser may appoint an official known as a Television Match Official (TMO) who uses technological devices to clarify situations relating to;

(i) When there is doubt as to whether a ball has been grounded in in-goal for a score or a touchdown.

(ii) Where there is doubt as to whether a kick at goal has been successful.

(iii) Where there is doubt as to whether players were in touch or touch in goal before grounding the ball in in-goal or the ball has been made dead.

(iv) Where match officials believe an offence or infringement may have occurred in the field of play leading to a try or preventing a try.

(v) Reviewing situations where match officials believe foul play may have occurred.

(vi) Clarifying sanctions required for acts of foul play.

(c) Any of the match officials including the TMO may recommend a review by the TMO. The reviews will take place in accordance with the TMO protocol in place at the time which will be available at www.irb.com/laws.

Figure 24: IRB 2014 Law Amendment Trial (International Rugby Board, 2014).

Alongside the use of the TMO, the referee is supported by assistant referees who communicate with each other via a four-way mobile communication network. In addition

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In 1889, the 1871 laws of the game were adjusted to allow for the optional appointment of two touch judges as instances of disputes were becoming common. Similarly to association football, the touch judge did not come onto the field of play and were only allowed to pass judgement on play that occurred on the side of the ground they were appointed (www.rfu.com).
to this, spectators at the ground can also tune in to hear the comments of the match officials through products such as ‘Ref Link’ in Europe or ‘Sports Ears’ in the southern hemisphere; not to mention the direct access television broadcasters have to the match officials’ lines of communication. Furthermore in February 2013, Fox Sports introduced ‘Ref Cam’ into Super Rugby, which enables the television viewer to follow the action from the same sight lines as the referee (Fox Sports, 2013). ‘Ref Cam’ has also been introduced into European and international rugby union since its initial introduction to Super Rugby.

The role of the referee in the professional game has moved from an arbiter of the laws to more of a conductor of the actual game itself. Often there are long periods of the game that are paused while match officials consult in order to either await a decision from the TMO or to hear the thoughts of one another without the game continuing. As one respondent observed:

‘The referees love the sound of their own voices. (Name Removed) is constantly talking to us; this has definitely increased since the TMO came in. They’re all at it in honesty. I personally think they are trying to get their moment in the sun and it is clearly working as most of them are common household names nowadays. The games are starting to slow down as the refs and the linesman consult then refer to the TMO. It’s ruining the ability of the game to flow and sooner or later fans are going to walk away’. Participant: IC1

In the 2013/14 Aviva Premiership final, the game had one score cancelled out after an initial referee decision was overturned by the TMO and in the final move of the game a try was awarded by the TMO after four minutes of deliberation (Rees, 2014). The referees are often heard providing advice to players, warning them to refrain from breaking the laws and it can be said that the advice they are providing is reducing both the prospect of individual error and the ability of the game to flow. The demands on the modern referee are an unexpected by-product of the impact of professionalisation on rugby union. The referee is scrutinised as never before, by players, coaches, spectators and by the media. The reliance on the TMO and assistant referees illustrates a level of dependency on support systems that the referees now have in place. It is this level of support that referees rely on to ensure that in a result-driven
industry the decisions are as accurate as possible, even on occasion to the detriment of the overall flow of the game.

Whilst the demands of the referee are a by-product of professionalism, the IRFB, IRB and World Rugby have devised specific development plans in order to grow the rugby union game in the professional era. However, the changing network of relationships that professional rugby union has entailed has illustrated that even the best plans are subject to change.

4. Growing the Game: Exploring New Markets

The IRB’s 2010-2020 strategic plan makes reference to an unprecedented global growth in rugby union, reporting that 3.5 million men, women and children registered to 118 NGBs are playing the game worldwide (International Rugby Board, 2010, p. 2). However, although the IRB report a growth in participation around the world, the international game is still functioning on a tiered system (designed to promote access to the RWC), which restricts the development of a truly global rugby union product. Table 16 includes the top fifty ranked playing nations using the tiered system developed by the IRB but only seven of the Tier 3 nations have ever competed at the RWC.

The inclusion of both Argentina and Italy into Tier 1 illustrates the development that success within the RWC and the nature of potential commercial opportunities can generate. Italy entered the Six Nations in 2001 has provided an increased income stream from both the additional home and away fixtures for the other competing nations. Furthermore, since the 2010/11 season of the Celtic League the domestic sides from Ireland, Scotland and Wales have also benefitted financially from having additional competitive fixtures throughout the season (Richards, 2007, p. 256). However, to state that Italian rugby’s elevation to Tier 1 was simply a result of available financial opportunities is neglecting the development that Italian rugby undertook throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. During the 1980s and 1990s high profile players such John Kirwan, David Campese and Michael Lynagh in addition to a number of British players, enticed by a variety of ‘inducements’, played club

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150 On the 19th of November 2014, the IRB changed its name to World Rugby.
151 There are 118 NGB’s in world rugby compared to 209 registered with FIFA.
152 Only Ivory Coast, Namibia, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Uruguay and Zimbabwe have qualified to an RWC tournament from the Tier 3 nations of the IRB.
rugby in Italy. Whilst the national team were not participating in regular international fixtures with teams from Tier 1, their domestic teams were being exposed to the training and expertise of these high profile Rugby Union players. Subsequently, during the 1990s the Italian national side recorded a range of victories over a number of Five Nations’ sides establishing themselves as a competitive fixture on the international rugby scene.

Table 16: IRB Tiered system based on Top 50 nations in the IRB World Rankings August 2014 (Adapted from IRB.com).

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<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
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<td>England</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>Scotland</td>
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Argentina’s progression to Tier 1 status was propelled by initial success in the first professional RWC in 1999, where they defeated Ireland to reach the quarterfinals with a squad that contained only six professional players. The 2007 RWC was once again successful for the Argentinian side, which finished 3rd with twenty-four of their playing squad having experience of playing professionally in Europe (Harris & Wise, 2011, p. 380). The development of the Rugby Championship in 2012 enabled the Argentinian national team to join the teams in the previously known Tri-Nations Championship, while an Argentinian franchise is set to join Super Rugby in 2016. Comparable to the NZRU’s strict selection policy for the national team, the Argentina Rugby Union (UAR) are insisting that for the development of professional rugby in Argentina, players wishing to play international rugby for their country must be contracted to the Buenos Aires based franchise (Harris, 2014).

The introduction of an Argentinian franchise to Super Rugby in 2016 and the UAR’s player stipulation could challenge the stability of the Argentinian national team and fundamentally

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153 Italy defeated Ireland and France in 1997 and Scotland in 1998.
question an Argentinian individual’s priority; club or country. An issue on which a current research participant recounts their experience:

‘That’s a tough one. I mean I answered it long ago but not until I achieved what I wanted to, but knowing what I know now, I would choose financial security over any international opportunities.

Would you really swap all your international caps and achievements for money?

It’s not just a case of money it’s security. Rugby is a short and brutal game so you need to look after yourself both physically and financially’. Participant: NC2

An outcome of the decision to allow ‘open’ professionalism in 1995 was an increase in players migrating between nations; predominantly players from poorer nations moving to those with greater economic resources (Horton, 2012, pp. 2388-2390). The development of an Argentinian Super Rugby franchise creates a dilemma for the UAR as most of their international squad are based within northern hemisphere clubs on financial packages that could not be replicated in the southern hemisphere (Thornley, 2014). Inevitably, the UAR will have to either select players that do commit to the new franchise, which could reduce the standing of the national team, or relinquish the player stipulation about which club they are contracted to. However, an alternative for the UAR would be to use the example of the ARU and the recent alterations to its eligibility rules. On the 22nd April 2015 the ARU relaxed its eligibility rules to allow certain offshore players to represent Australia at the 2015 RWC. To be eligible players need to have achieved at least sixty caps during their previous international career and had a contract with the ARU for at least seven years. Bill Pulver, the current ARU Chief Executive comments on the new agreement:

‘It’s a decision that recognises the changing dynamics of a global Rugby market for professional players. Combined with our other recruitment and retention strategies, we feel this decision allows the ARU to assert more influence over player movement and contracting in Australia and abroad.

Those players who satisfy the 60-game and seven-year threshold
have already invested heavily and contributed considerably to Australian rugby over a long period of time. The policy also encourages those players who have not yet reached that point to commit exclusively to Australian Rugby in the prime of their career. In this way, we believe the policy supports Super Rugby by encouraging our top players to remain in Australia for longer.

It also means we can invest more money into our younger players in the long-term, while ensuring our most experienced players leaving for overseas can still contribute to the overall success of the code in Australia on and off the field’ (Bill Pulver, ARU Chief Executive cited in The Guardian, 2015).

The opportunity for the ARU to stipulate that eligible individuals must have both sixty international caps and to have previously held an ARU contract is due to the development of Super Rugby since the introduction of professionalism in 1995. Whilst the UAR do not have nineteen years of domestic professional rugby union, they can create a system that entices players to play domestically while also enabling their experienced players to seek higher financial opportunities once they have committed to the UAR for a period of time. The situation confronting Argentina is also being faced by other NGBs throughout the entire rugby union playing world. For example, Georgia, like Argentina in its first RWC in 2003 had the majority of its squad playing in its own amateur domestic leagues, however by the time of the 2007 RWC most of its national squad was playing in the Top 14 (www.Rugbyworldcup.com). However, unlike Argentina, Georgia is not exposed to regular fixtures against Tier 1 sides outside the RWC so it relies on the exporting of players to other domestic leagues to develop a stronger player base for the national team. This model of using player export to develop the national team raises further issues such as player release and preparation time. The topic of player release has been a persistent and troublesome issue for international rugby teams since the advent of professionalism. Almost all international teams have had disputes with clubs to some extent or another over the release of their players for international rugby matches. However, Argentina and Georgia do not have the finance and

154 In 2005 the British and Irish Lions played a warm-up match against Argentina in Cardiff. Argentina was missing the majority of its top players as the Top 14 clubs were not required to release them for international duty. Furthermore, the British and Irish Lions tour to Australia in 2013 saw a number of French clubs
resources to develop domestic professional leagues and player export is a matter on which the respective NGBs have had to rely in order to develop their national sides\textsuperscript{155}. Whilst there are many criticisms of the English and French domestic leagues and their economic monopoly over the world player market, without their competitions the majority of Tier 2 and 3 countries would not have any opportunity to expose their players on a regular basis to the demands of professional rugby.

Contrastingly, the construction of both the Celtic League and Super Rugby was facilitated by their respective unions and consequently the priorities have been geared to each respective nation developing its international side. Furthermore, NGBs such as the NZRU and the RFU insist that in order to play international rugby union players must play domestic rugby within their respective countries. They also use additional financial incentives to entice players to stay, which the majority of World Rugby member nations cannot afford to provide. As Ian Ritchie, the current RFU Chief Executive comments:

‘He [the players] gets what he gets from the club, he gets what he gets from England, which is not an insignificant contribution, and then there’s the commercial stuff that he generates off the back of that [association with the national team]’ (Ian Ritchie, RFU Chief Executive cited in Mairs, 2014c).

Despite the contract offers from the NGBs there are still a large number of players enticed into playing domestic rugby union overseas, with over 250 foreign players registered in the Top 14 during the 2012/13 season (McEvoy, 2013). While it cannot be denied that NGBs are providing additional income streams for international players, they still cannot compete with the levels of financial remuneration on offer in the domestic leagues of France, England and Japan who can offer double if not three times the salaries on offer from the NGB, as one current New Zealand International player commented:

‘I mean playing for your country is the ultimate honour and something I am proud to have achieved, but today’s game is so different to the

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\textsuperscript{155} During the 2013/14 season the Top 14 clubs had on average 7.7 players registered to each club from outside the Tier 1 nations and clubs in the Aviva Premiership had on average 3.3 players contracted from outside the Tier 1 nations. During the same season the union controlled Irish Provinces saw no players contracted from outside the Tier 1 IRB groupings (http://www.rugby.Statbunker.com).
one I grew up playing that you do have to think about the future. If you could get the perfect combo of good money, security and a chance to play for your country, surely that’s the ultimate package and if I were you, something you should write about in your work. If they can’t do that then more and more players will seek the gold and the international game will become diluted, like the situation in soccer. I mean how can you turn down three times your current salary, rugby is a short career and you have to look after yourself’. Participant: NC2

The international rugby union game has typically depended on the success of the domestic leagues of France and England alongside the union constructed products of the Celtic League and Rugby Championship\textsuperscript{156}. Nonetheless, it would appear that there is a need for World Rugby to develop a strategy that enhances the international game as a separate entity rather than rely on the development of domestic rugby union and it needs to fully adhere to its own strategic plan outcomes (see Figure 25).

\textsuperscript{156}Recently the developments of the Japanese domestic league have also enabled the internationalisation of rugby union to become expanded outside its traditional hegemonic core.
IRB Strategic Plan Outcomes

The outcomes the IRB will be looking to achieve are:

- Increase RWC Profit
- Increase in competitiveness in Tier 1 Unions
- 10 Unions Capable of reaching RWC final
- RWC 2015
- Development of Tier 2 Unions
- Growth in participation
- Higher profile for Rugby

Figure 25: IRB Strategic Plan Outcomes. (http://www.IRB.com).
5. The Future of the Rugby World Cup

‘Can the world cup offer genuine opportunities to non-traditional rugby countries or will the game remain a celebration of former British colonies and their masculine prowess even if in commodified form?’ Hutchins and Phillips (1999, p. 38).

In 1987 the first RWC was hosted in New Zealand and Australia, with New Zealand defeating France in the final. Similarly, the 2011 RWC was again hosted by New Zealand with a final played between the same two inaugural finalists, providing the same result something Hutchins and Phillips alluded to in their work published in 1999. The founding eight members of the IRFB have assumed a hegemonic core, not only in respect of the governance of the global game but also on the field of play (Harris, 2013, p. 857). In the seven RWC tournaments that have been held to date, there has only been one northern hemisphere team victorious\(^\text{157}\) (England in 2003) while the member nations of SANZAR have each won the tournament twice. Furthermore, since the first professional RWC in 1999 only ten sides have competed in the quarter final stages and in 2007 Argentina became the first side from outside the founding eight members of the IRFB to have progressed to the semi-final stage of a RWC tournament. As one respondent noted:

‘The world cup is starting to become too predictable. Yes, we know New Zealand are going to be there or thereabouts, as are South Africa, England and Australia. But what we don’t get much of at the moment is surprise packages. It has been great to see teams such as Russia and Namibia at the world cup, but it’s not great watching them get hammered by the top teams. The IRB needs to give other nations a chance, I’m not sure what can be done but football seems to have done it, why can’t rugby’. Participant: AC2

The seven RWC tournaments to date have included a number of very one-sided results with Australia’s 142 – 0 victory over Namibia in 2003 eclipsing New Zealand’s 145-17 victory

\(^{157}\) Although England are to date the only northern hemisphere side to win an RWC, France have appeared and lost in the 1987, 1999 and 2011 finals.
over Japan in 1995 (‘Rugby World Cup in Numbers’, 2012). The small group of countries that have continually succeeded at the RWC are reflective of the hegemonic core of rugby union. Aside from the French teams that have competed in three RWC finals, the tournament winners have all been former British colonies, something that the IRB has noted as a matter to address and remedy in its Strategic Plan Outcomes by stating an aim of ten nations being capable of reaching the RWC in 2015. The next RWC to be hosted in 2015 (twenty years after the decision to allow open professionalism) will once again be held in England. The 2015 RWC is the fourth professional world cup and the eighth to be held in one of the core IRB countries. Although in its 2010-2020 strategic plan World Rugby have stated the intention to develop the global game, the professional era world cups in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 have been held in Wales, Australia, France and New Zealand respectively, all members of the IRB’s hegemonic core. However, while there is an implication that the World Rugby has restricted the RWC to a select group of host nations, the majority of the countries outside of the Tier 1 structure do not have the infrastructure to hold such a global event. While it could be suggested that future RWC tournaments should be held in countries outside of the core World Rugby nations, the demands of major sporting events require large stadiums with floodlights and appropriate provision for spectators and the media and the tournament itself needs to be logistically refined to one country so that matches can be scheduled to suit the needs of key international television markets (‘RWC 2015 Kick-Off times announced’, 2013). Given the limited number of countries capable of meeting the requirements of hosting the RWC it is unsurprising that the 2007, 2011 and 2015 RWC were held in France, New Zealand and England respectively.

A recommendation following the inaugural RWC was that future tournaments should be hosted in one country, but this was ignored for the 1991 and 1999 RWC tournaments. In a comparable fashion while the 2007 RWC was held in France games were also scheduled to be played in Scotland and Wales. However, the 2011 RWC in New Zealand was organised solely between the north and the south islands. This strategy proved a success as the tournament became the most financially successful event in the RWC’s history (Daily Mail, 2012). The IRB declared that the 2011 RWC attracted 1.35 million ticket purchases and more than 133,000 supporters travelled to New Zealand creating a financial surplus of £90 million.

158 The first World Cup of the openly professional era in 1999 was hosted by Wales but matches also took place in England, France, Ireland and Scotland (Harris, 2010, p. 34).

In 2009 the IRB announced the hosts for the 2015 and 2019 RWC tournaments as England and Japan respectively. As Harris (2010, p. 37) notes the ‘decisions on where to stage the 2015 and 2019 competitions took place amidst a global economic crisis and stated concerns surrounding predicted financial losses for the 2011 event’. Although the 2011 tournament was regarded as a financial success, especially in the wake of the global financial crisis, the decision by the IRB to award the 2015 RWC to England can be considered a safe option. Although the RFU has promoted a participation legacy as the core of its successful bid, they have also promised a significant financial return for the IRB. According to Harris (2010, p. 38), the RFU needed to offer this security to the IRB as 95% of the IRB’s income comes from the RWC.

The decision to host the 2019 RWC in Japan provides a positive opportunity to develop the game of rugby union by taking the sport outside its narrow hegemonic core. Japan was a co-host of the FIFA world cup in 2002, demonstrating a level of expertise in hosting a ‘mega’ event. The IRB’s decision to accept Japan’s proposal to host the 2019 RWC provides an opportunity for rugby union to capitalise on the economic dominance of the Asian market due to a growth in demand for televised sports (Guilianotti & Robertson, 2009). Japan has a strong history of rugby union with a structure in which the high school game and university system supports teams run by major corporations (Light, 2000). While the aim of this thesis is not to explore the history of Japanese rugby union, it is worth noting the significance of Japan hosting the 2019 RWC. While it took the IOC Olympic Games and the FIFA world cup seventy years before they hosted an event in Asia, the RWC will be held in Japan only thirty-two years after its inauguration.

While the introduction of the RWC to Japan in 2019 is seen as a positive step for the internationalisation of rugby union, World Rugby cannot afford to return to awarding future RWC tournaments to just its core nations if it is to compete successfully for market share with other sports for global audiences and sponsorship revenue. Countries such as the United

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159 The England 2015 bid proposed to broaden the base of the game at all levels, working with charities such as the NSPCC, Sport England and other governing bodies to develop the game both nationally and internationally. (www.rfu.com).

160 The first club formed in Japan was Kobe Steel formed in 1945 (Light, 2000, p.95).
States of America, Canada or even Italy (although they are a Tier 1 nation) should be given the opportunity to host the RWC, especially as they have the stadia and infrastructure that can support such an event. Although, the argument is not to discriminate against the core members of World Rugby, it illustrates that there is a need for World Rugby to expand and develop the rugby union game.

6. Rugby Sevens and the 2016 Olympics

On the 9th October 2009, the IOC voted to allow rugby 7s to return to the summer Olympic Games for the first time since 1924 (Gibson, 2009). Rugby had become part of the modern Olympic Games in 1900 through an interest in the sport from Pierre de Coubertin, the IOC President. However, Pierre de Coubertin’s successor for the 1928 Olympic Games, Count Baillet-Latour, did not share the same enthusiasm for rugby or even team games. According to the IRB website, at the 1925 Olympic congress ‘Baillet-Latour was elected as the second IOC President, signalling the beginning of a drive against team sports and despite the vigorous protestations of the Dutch students keen to have Rugby in the programme of the 9th Olympic Games in Amsterdam, Rugby was dropped from the Olympic programme’ (www.IRB.com). Although American Football was a demonstration sport at the 1932 Olympics and there was a Pre-Olympic rugby tournament in Berlin before the 1936 Olympics; the 2016 Olympic Games represents rugby’s first return to the world’s premier global event and an opportunity to develop the global rugby union profile (Jackson & Scherer, 2013, p. 884).

The game of rugby 7s is thought to have originated at the Melrose club in the Scottish Borders in 1883. The club was desperately seeking to raise some funds so a local butcher called Ned Haig decided to host a rugby tournament and is famed for allegedly making the following statement:

"Want of money made us rack our brains as to what was to be done to keep the club from going to the wall, and the idea struck us that a football tournament might prove attractive but as it was hopeless to think of having several games in one afternoon with 15 players on each side, the teams were reduced to seven men." ('A Brief History of Seven a Side Rugby, n.d.)
Whilst the first event in Melrose was more a celebration of sport rather than specifically rugby, the commercial success of the tournament prompted it to become an annual event, which did not go unnoticed by other clubs throughout Scotland. In 1885 Hawick 7s began while in 1921 the first 7s tournament to be held outside Scotland was played in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Table 17 shows the origins of 7s tournaments throughout the world. What is noticeable in Table 17 is that almost one hundred years after the first 7s tournament in Melrose, not all of the core unions of the IRFB have hosted a 7s tournament.

Table 17: First worldwide 7s tournaments (adapted from www.rfu.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of Tournament</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Melrose</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Old Penarthians</td>
<td>Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Madrid</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>The National 7s</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Kioma 7s</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Algida 7s</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Hong Kong 7s</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Maarist 7s</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1993 the first RWC 7s tournament was played at Murrayfield in Scotland, with England winning the inaugural tournament. Since 1993, the RWC 7s has become an established item on the IRB calendar and has been hosted in non-traditional rugby union locations around the world. However, other than Fiji, the majority of tournaments have still been dominated by the core nations of the IRB.
Table 18: RWC 7s Tournament locations and winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Edinburgh, Scotland</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Mel del Plata, Argentina</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Dubai, United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Moscow, Russia</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1999 the IRB developed the 7s World Series that consists of nine tournaments played around the world in which teams compete for points at each tournament, with winners in the Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield competitions crowned at each location. An overall champion is confirmed at the end of the season based on accumulated points over the nine events (‘About the series’, n.d.). The first 7s World Series in 1999 involved thirty-four teams, however by the 2012-13 season a promotion and relegation system was introduced to reduce the number of teams to sixteen and increase the standard of the competition. The IRB developed a method of identifying sixteen ‘core’ teams for the 7s circuit via previous success in the 7s World Series, with relegation from core team status decided by the points table at the end of the season. Furthermore the 2013/14 season introduced a new two-stage promotion and relegation process, which allowed twelve regional qualifiers to compete for one place in the IRB 7s World Series via an independent tournament. This provided the opportunity for each NGB in the IRB community to regularly compete at the highest level, something the full fifteen-a-side game has yet to achieve. Figure 26 shows the much greater range of teams that have competed in the IRB 7s World Series since 1999 in comparison to teams that have competed in the RWC since 1987.

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161 The nine locations are London (England), Glasgow (Scotland), Tokyo (Japan), Hong Kong, Las Vegas (USA), Wellington (New Zealand), Port Elizabeth (South Africa), Dubai (United Arab Emirates) and the Gold Coast (Australia).
IRB 7s World Series entries since 1999

RWC entries since 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>West Indies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>Papa New Guinea</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Arabian Gulf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Chinese Taipei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The increase in profile of the IRB 7s World Series has resulted in the development of 7s specialist players and since 2009 NGBs have been awarding professional contracts to 7s specialists. Figure 27 reveals the current contracting process of the NZRU, which clearly demonstrates the more prominent position of the 7s game in the professional era.

Prior to the development of the IRB 7s World Series the 7s tournaments were perceived as either stepping stones to the full national sides or as a pre-season exercise or social event, as is confirmed in the following comments:
‘7s is fantastic, I love nipping over to Hong Kong for a weekend. I was never good enough to play the game at that standard but then again when I was playing it was only really a social thing or something your club told you to get involved with during the off season’. Participant: WO1

‘It is an incredibly different game to the 15s. It’s continually fast, you have to be good at everything and can’t really rely on your teammates to get you out of a hole, there’s simply not enough of them. It’s a totally different game, and the boys involved don’t really get involved with us, unless it’s to show off their fitness!’ Participant: SAC2

The decision on the 9th October 2009 to readmit rugby in the form of 7s into the Olympic Games has generated increased interest in the 7s version of the sport and has coincided with HSBC signing a five-year deal worth over $100 million for naming rights to the IRB World 7s Series (‘Rugby, n.d.’). As a result of rugby’s inclusion in the Olympic Games a partnership has been created between the United States Olympic Committee and USA Rugby (‘About USA Rugby’, n.d.). The partnership has enabled fifteen players to become full-time professionals with dedicated training programmes and training provision provided jointly by USA Rugby and the United States Olympic Committee. Alongside the development of 7s, the USA have also declared a desire to bid for the 2023 RWC; a similar expression of interest has been declared by Russia. The inclusion of rugby in the Olympics has had an instant impact on the internationalisation of rugby union in both the 7s and the fifteen-a-side game.

The domestic club game also sought to establish a formal 7s series with the introduction of the JP Morgan 7s tournament in England in 2010 and the World Club Championship in 2013. However, it is not only the development of the 7s competitions in the domestic game and the introduction of 7s into the Olympic Games that has helped create opportunities to expand the global rugby union ‘product’. The recent European Champions Rugby Cup agreement has developed a new tournament outside of the Six Nations countries for clubs to gain entry to the elite European club competitions. The new competition took place in

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162 In 1998 Rugby 7s was introduced into the Commonwealth Games and in the 2014 Commonwealth games Rugby 7s was played in front of a sold out Ibrox stadium in Glasgow (www.Glasgow2014.com).
163 In 2014 the four Welsh regional sides entered the competition.
September 2014 involving club sides from Georgia, Romania, Russia, Spain, Portugal and Belgium, with the top two sides entering the new Rugby Challenge Cup (which replaced the Amilin Challenge Cup) in the 2014/15 season.

The introduction of Rugby 7s into the Olympics, the IRB 7s World Series and the decision to host the 2019 RWC in Japan are providing opportunities for Tier 2 and 3 nations to get regular exposure to elite-level competition. In addition, since the announcement of rugby’s return to the Olympics the IRB has funded the development of high-performance training centres in Samoa and Georgia (The Economist, 2011). These developments are examples of the IRB’s Strategic Plan in action. However, it must continue to develop both the 7s and 15-a-side game in order to ensure that the rugby union ‘product’ appeals and expands to new global audiences.

7. The British and Irish Lions: 2017 and Beyond

The British and Irish Lions is a rugby union team made of players from the national sides of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The side tours every four years, with destinations rotating between Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. In the professional era there have been five tours by the British and Irish Lions: two to South Africa (1997 and 2009), two to Australia (2001 and 2013), and one to New Zealand (2005). In 2017 the British and Irish Lions will again travel to New Zealand, with tour companies such as Mike Burton and Gulliver’s Sports Tours predicting a record number of British travellers will make the journey to the southern hemisphere. In 2005 the tour is estimated to have attracted over two hundred thousand visitors to New Zealand (Chadwick, Semens & Arthur, 2011, p. 5). The tour is also appealing to players as the following comments indicate:

'It is one of the biggest things I missed out on as a professional player. Growing up in France I didn’t appreciate how big it was but since coming to England, I’m envious of everyone who gets to wear the shirt. Not only are you good enough to play for your country but you get to be selected to be part of the ‘best of the best’, how amazing would that be? Sure I played for the Barbarians, but the Lions, that’s something else'. Participant: FC1
The British and Irish Lions is a limited company in which the RFU, IRU, SRU and the WRU each have a 25% stake. Unlike other aspects of the home nations’ portfolios, the British and Irish Lions do not play ‘home’ fixtures, which means that they do not collect money from TV rights for fixtures. The British and Irish Lions were part of a package that was sold to News Corp-related companies in 1995 but extended as part of a five-year deal worth $437m in 2010. The contract secures television coverage of the British and Irish Lions tour fixtures for Sky Television in New Zealand, SuperSport in South Africa, Foxtel in Australia and BSkyB in the UK. However, all income goes directly to SANZAR. The British and Irish Lions Ltd note that the cost of taking thirty-five players on a British and Irish Lion tour is around £10 million, with basic wages at £38,000 per player plus a bonus should the side be victorious (Mairs & James, 2013). However, without revenue from television broadcasters the British and Irish Lions’ continued existence in the professional era has been questioned. But despite these observations, one player illustrated the appeal of playing for the British and Irish Lions:

‘It’s not about the money, it about the prestige. You should know that you said you’ve been on the tour. The players would do anything to play for the Lions and I mean anything even not get paid to go! The heartbreak on a players face if he doesn’t get selected to tour, the heartbreak if a player gets injured on tour and more still if he doesn’t get into the test team. Devastating. The Lions are the best from the British Isles playing against the best teams in the world, the journey; the bonding and the fun are things that can’t be replaced. Although, it would’ve been nice to have that winning series paycheck, but regardless of the result it was my best rugby experience so much bigger than the world cup’. Author IC2

Without a consistent revenue stream from lucrative television deals, the British and Irish Lions rely on sponsorship deals to be able to function in the modern professional rugby union landscape. In 2009 HSBC paid £3 million to become the principal sponsor of the British

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164 In 2005 the British and Irish Lions hosted a fixture against Argentina in Cardiff’s Millennium stadium. Although the fixture was a sell-out a home fixture has not been repeated to date.

165 In the SANZAR and News Corp agreement, the host nation provides an expenses contribution to the travelling British and Irish Lions which, according (Walmsley, 2009), only equates to around twenty-five per cent of the total cost of delivering a British and Irish touring side.
and Irish Lions and £7 million to repeat the deal in 2013 (The Daily Telegraph, 2013). According to Walmsley (2009), the strength of the Lions brand persuaded HSBC to pay the full asking price, despite a declining market for sponsorship in the financial services sector in particular. As Giles Morgan, head of sport sponsorship at HSBC, stated ‘It’s an interesting demographic, but there are many things we could sponsor if that was the only reason. The Lions is unique. We wouldn’t normally take a national team sponsorship, because we are an international bank and that would be too subjective. It’s one of the most attractive sponsorship properties to be involved in’ (Quoted in Walmsley, 2009, pp. 125-145). Furthermore, the 2013 tour to Australia enabled a relationship marketing strategy to be employed between the British and Irish Lions, HSBC and the bank’s customers themselves. HSBC customers were entitled to an exclusive 30% discount on the official replica jersey alongside a ‘limited edition Lions cufflinks with Thomas Pink and free access to ‘Eve of Test’ dinners for travelling Premier customers’ (HSBC, 2013, p. 6).

In addition to the main sponsors of the British and Irish Lions there are the kit suppliers Adidas, who have provided kit for the team for each tour in the professional era. For each tour Adidas promotes a new shirt which, unlike, providing kit for an individual national team has immediate marketability across the four home countries; each with their own unique economy. For the 2013 tour to Australia, Adidas produced twenty-four variations of a British and Irish Lions shirt with the HSBC sponsor appearing on each item of clothing. The embrace of commercialism and development of a brand identity by the British and Irish Lions enabled the 2013 tour to post record profit figures despite costs approaching £10 million for the touring side.

![Figure 28: 2013 Lions Merchandise Range (www.lionsrugby.com)](image)
How the British and Irish Lions team and tours have changed since the inaugural tour of 1888 further illustrates the pervasive impact professionalism has had on rugby union. The British and Irish Lions is now effectively a commercial brand and tours are designed to generate profit both for the team and the tour host nation. For example, the 2005 tour to New Zealand attracted more than two hundred thousand visitors and the tour to Australia in 2013 produced a surplus of $35 million for the ARU (ARU, 2013). Furthermore, the presence of the British and Irish Lions tour in Australia provided rugby union with an opportunity to compete for market share against more popular sports such as Australian Rules football and rugby league within Australia. Stephen Moore, the Australian Hooker for the 2013 British and Irish Lions series, suggested that:

‘This tour alone has been fantastic for rugby in Australia. The teams they play in the southern hemisphere lift a lot for this tour: it’s a massive occasion in our rugby careers, the hype and the crowds adding to the big stage feel and giving you a big lift. Everyone is talking about rugby [union] this week in a positive way and that is fantastic to our game, something a Lions tour brings and it has been a real benefit to everyone involved in the sport here’ (Quoted in Rees, 2013).

The British and Irish Lions has developed into one of the biggest brands in world rugby with a commercial strength disproportionate to playing success. However, the series victory for the British and Irish Lions over Australia in the 2013 tour has reignited global interest in the brand after consecutive series defeats in 2001, 2005, and 2009 had caused the value of the tours to be questioned (Kitson, 2013). Nonetheless, the success of the 2013 Lions tour was undertaken against a backdrop of organisational conflicts between the domestic leagues of the northern hemisphere and The British and Irish Lions Ltd. The opening fixture on the 2013 tour against the Barbarians in Hong Kong saw a Lions side complete the fixture with a third of the original selected squad unable to commence the pre-tour training or take part in the fixture due to commitments with their domestic clubs. The current agreement between News Corp and SANZAR expires after the 2017 tour to New Zealand, and while there will be negotiations on both sides before a new deal is agreed, not least over revenue distribution, scheduling and the strength of warm-up opposition, it is evident that for the British and Irish Lions to continue to be competitive, the domestic competitions in the northern hemisphere
should consider fixture rescheduling (especially the play-offs) in the ‘Lions year’ to ensure that one of the oldest rugby union ‘products’ continues to thrive in the modern sporting calendar.
Chapter Eight: Conclusion

1. Chapter Overview

This thesis has investigated the impact of professionalisation on rugby union drawing on published material and interview responses from players who participated in rugby union in either the amateur and/or the professional eras. The work has documented the historical evolution of the sport through to its existence in the modern sporting landscape. The focus of this chapter is initially to reconsider the findings that have emanated from the thesis and then to offer relevant policy recommendations. Finally as a means of completing the research process the chapter closes with a consideration of potential areas of further research.

2. Key Findings

The IRFB’s declaration on the 27th August 1995 to legalise professionalism created a new situation for rugby union and provided a set of challenges that the sport had to overcome in order to survive in the modern sporting world. The acceptance of commercialism into rugby union as a professional sport enabled the sport to become market orientated, pursue operational strategies that maximise profit or revenue, and become responsive to the needs of customers. NGBs and the professional clubs became focused on maximising revenue, using commercial opportunities as the underlying rationale for decision-making and strategy development. Sponsorship income, television revenue and players’ salaries have risen dramatically in the nineteen years that rugby union has been a professional sport, as both the clubs and NGBs have sought to optimise opportunities to generate revenue by adopting a business approach to the management of the game.

It has been argued that professionalism, commercialism and commodification takes away the ‘essence’ of sport and encourages doping, match fixing, gambling and violence (Malcolm, Sheard & White, 2000, p. 81; Robinson, 2008, p. 167). However, rugby union, even as an amateur sport, had to embrace somewhat the virtues and vices of commercialism in order to compete for market share with its professional counterparts. Rugby union as a professional sport has evolved within the professional sports industry as a game that provides financial returns for national and local economies through event revenue, employment, tourism and sponsorship. While there is an argument that the ‘essence’ of rugby union may have changed
since the amateur era, the sport itself has come a long way in the brief period that it has existed as a professional sport, as is illustrated in the following key findings.

Key finding 1 – Rugby Union is now part of the Entertainment Business

Through various alterations of rules and competition structures in the second half of the twentieth century, rugby union has been adapted and designed around spectators, media and commercial interests. The pressure to make rugby union more ‘entertaining’ coincided with the increasing involvement of the mass media within the sport, particularly television. Widespread television coverage of rugby union from the 1970s attracted new levels of sponsorship and advertising to the game and this new relationship required alterations to the rugby union ‘product’ to increase appeal and entertainment value for new spectating audiences. Since the introduction of professionalism rugby union has regularly made further alterations to the game through the ELVs, alterations to fixture scheduling and changes to ‘kick-off’ times to develop appeal and to fit in with television schedules. The levels of direct influence that the IRFB and the IRB were once able to exercise over the game of rugby union in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century has been reduced in the professional era due to the growth of the global sports industry and the rise of spectator sport (see Figure 29).

![Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 29: Marketing Channels in Spectator Sport (Morgan, 2002, p. 42).**
Morgan’s model of spectator sport (see Figure 29) suggests that in order for the world of rugby union to compete against its other professional counterparts, the game needs to have a structure whereby each independent actor develops a relationship with other independent actors within the structure of the game. However, as the professional era has progressed the low level of reinvestment from the NGBs or even the IRB into the domestic game has seen club teams develop independent ‘business’ relationships with spectators, broadcasters and investors in order to survive in the world of professionalised sport. For example, at the onset of professionalism the club sides in England were quick to recognise their independence from television companies resulting in the development of alternative methods of marketing to retain their existing levels of support and expand into new consumer markets. Several clubs introduced a variety of spectator ‘attractions’ such as cheerleaders, pre-match and half time entertainment and others physically relocated the entire club. The intention behind these strategies was to attract new spectators. While the RFU suggested that their independent deal with BskyB on the 24th May 1996 was to benefit the entire game (£60 million to be dispersed amongst the 1,980 clubs and 3000 affiliated schools) the reality of the professional era has been that the independent actors within the game source opportunities for themselves rather than rely on any hierarchical organisational flow of money within the rugby union game.

Increasing customer expectations of quality, value for money and entertainment have forced World Rugby, NGBs and clubs to become increasingly innovative, efficient and customer focused. It is suggested that spectators require an entertaining product with an element of uncertainty and the ability to identify with success while the broadcasters and commercial investors require their investment to have maximal exposure across a range of media platforms (El-Hodiri & Quirk, 1971, pp. 1302-1304). For example, broadcasters have used their levels of power to insist on changes to package the competitions more attractively for television audiences that has included alterations to the timing of matches, the branding of the teams, the rules of play and even the structure of the competitions. Figure 30 illustrates the transfer in power that has occurred since the decision to allow professionalism into rugby union.
In light of changes outlined above, the increased trend towards spectator sport creates a higher level of expectation in respect of the occasion that rugby union provides. As has been noted throughout this thesis the domestic and international game has provided a range of platforms to develop the ‘experience’ and create ‘entertainment’ for the spectators through such initiatives as opening and half-time shows and merchandising. Rugby union’s transition from a traditional hierarchical and non-market governance to a system where parties are freer to respond to market opportunities needs to ensure that ‘entertainment’ is fundamental to the future development of the game.

**Key finding 2 – Cash and Player Flow: The Northern Hemisphere Club ‘scene’**

The acceptance of commercialism into rugby union during the amateur era prompted the players to start to question their worth in an increasingly financially driven marketplace. In the decades leading to ‘open’ professionalism players were often performing under ‘shamateur’ terms, although this was predominantly hidden from the majority of NGBs. However, once the game became ‘open’, clubs from England and France provided large financial contracts to the players rather than the NGBs. Consequently, the early years of professionalism saw a range of conflicts develop between clubs and NGBs, which were largely resolved through promises of additional money from any negotiated broadcasting deals from the unions to the clubs and an increase in domestic and cross-border competition structures. Contrastingly, the SANZAR nations, the SRU and IRU contracted the players to
their respective unions and the governing bodies had first call on the players’ services, but provided lower levels of financial remuneration.

The introduction of highly financed player contracts in the English and French leagues has categorically changed the landscape of rugby union. Players from all over the world are enticed by higher wages (see Table 13) and the chance to play in and experience a different culture.

‘I won’t lie to you and suggest it was all about the experience, as it wasn’t. I made the decision to leave South Africa to make sure that I took the best opportunity I could to get as much money in the bank as possible. Sport and especially Rugby is a tough world, one injury and that’s it. I took my chances, took the money and I don’t regret a thing’. Participant: SAO2

Furthermore, the finance on offer through player contracts in the domestic leagues of France and England has created highly competitive domestic competitions, with a global range of nationalities represented within each league. Arguably, the standard of the domestic leagues has increased (although perhaps to the detriment of the international game) and has seen further investment from sponsors and broadcasters. For example, the television deal to showcase the new European Champions Cup required both BT and BSkyB to sign a £304 million deal (Mairs, 2014b), compared with $437 million (£240 million) SANZAR signed in 2012 with News Corp for the Rugby Championship and Super Rugby (Mortimer, 2012). Furthermore, the northern hemisphere domestic competitions entice higher levels of financial sponsorship and higher match-day attendances, which consequently lead to higher gate receipts. Although Table 19 shows that the average crowd attendance in the southern hemisphere is higher than that of the northern hemisphere sides, the numbers are simply a reflection of a different sporting culture in New Zealand and South Africa where rugby union is arguably the most dominant national sport. Nonetheless, the power and financial depth of the northern hemisphere domestic leagues is revealed by the crowd attendance at the play-off finals in both the Top 14 and the Aviva Premiership.
Table 19: Average crowd attendance and Play-off final figures for the Aviva Premiership, Top 14, Super and RaboDirect Pro 12 leagues for the 2013/14 season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aviva Premiership</th>
<th>Top 14</th>
<th>Super Rugby</th>
<th>RaboDirect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>12,252</td>
<td>14,326</td>
<td>20,384</td>
<td>8,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play off Final Crowd attendance</td>
<td>8,1193</td>
<td>4,9257</td>
<td>3,8800</td>
<td>1,8246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Finding 3 – Tension – Club vs. Country**

The heightened wages now on offer in the northern hemisphere domestic game has reignited a lingering debate between the clubs and the NGBs regarding players participating in international rugby union. At present, World Rugby (Regulation 9) stipulates that constituent clubs must release selected players for international rugby. An NGB must have the right to a player’s availability for selection and appearances for a national team (www.WorldRugby.org). The NGBs are stipulated to have access to players at specific periods of time during the rugby calendar including events such as the Six Nations, The Rugby Championship and the November and June release periods for international teams to go on tour. While Regulation 9 only stipulates a minimum requirement for player availability based around the schedules of the international rugby union calendar NGBs are able to negotiate additional collective agreements with clubs in their jurisdiction. An example of this is the ‘Heads of Agreement’ reached between the RFU and Premiership Rugby Ltd that has enabled the RFU in agreement with the clubs to schedule an additional fixture into the November international period.

A fourth fixture during the November or June international periods (an increase on World Rugby’s stipulation of three) provides the host NGBs with a lucrative opportunity for further financial income thorough additional crowd attendance, media coverage and further sponsorship opportunities. However, the ‘Heads of Agreement’ only applies to clubs within the host nation and any players playing for clubs outside of this jurisdiction can consequently be recalled by their club and not allowed to participate in the ‘additional’ fixture. This has led to the RFU stipulating that players wishing to participate in international rugby union must play domestic rugby within England thereby ensuring that they have access to the players when they need them. This creates a dilemma for the professional player as the increased wages that are offered (in France especially) are tempting players to sacrifice the opportunity
of international rugby union, as one participant within the current research project suggests:

‘It’s a crazy period in rugby. It’s kind of a measure of character, do you chase the gold in your bank balance or the gold that can sit on your mantelpiece. I know players who had potential to play international rugby, most of them played throughout the age grades. However, once the money was offered they turned their backs and ran. In fact some of them have qualified for other countries now but that is besides the point. It’s an awkward predicament isn’t it? Stay and get paid less but have the chance to play for your country, and it is only a ‘chance’ or take the opportunity to make as much money as possible elsewhere.

I don’t know, I’m glad that’s no longer my decision but I guess I got the best of both worlds, international recognition and then a brief spell abroad. In years to come you’ll see a number of players play at a world cup and then ‘retire’ and take an opportunity to make as much money as possible’. Participant: WC2

Some players have sought to combine the lure of financial gain with the opportunity to play international rugby union by having specific ‘release’ clauses written into their contracts to ensure participation in any potential ‘fourth’ November international fixture, additional international training camps and summer tours. Examples of these clauses are evident in a number of contracts of high profile Welsh international players who are currently playing club rugby outside of Wales, individuals such as George North, Jamie Roberts and Luke Charteris. However, this has created further tension between the clubs and the international game. Whilst the clubs are eager to encourage participation for players on the international stage, they are fundamentally paying the bulk of the players’ salaries and can also be without a player should they succumb to injury whilst representing their country, which has resulted in a number of domestic clubs denying players these additional clauses within their contracts (Maurice, 2013). Furthermore, domestic competitions continue throughout the international calendar, which acts as an additional justification for clubs to no longer accept clauses in player contracts that are reference to agreements that exist outside World Rugby’s Regulation 9, as their key players could miss months of the domestic season. Nonetheless, the elite clubs need to be able to entice high profile players to their respective clubs in an attempt to achieve
success and further exposure to commercial opportunities to compete in the modern sporting landscape. Players now find themselves deciding whether to move for money or stay for the ‘opportunity’ of international recognition; a position that needs to be reviewed as one respondent in this research process discusses:

‘As a player I would have loved the opportunity to play abroad however for whatever reason that was never an option to me. Now in my role on the board, I can’t understand why players go and play abroad and also try to play international rugby. The rugby calendar isn’t designed for that. Obviously the money is a big thing but they can’t have both its unfair on the clubs and to some degree the Unions. The IRB need to do something about it. A global calendar, turn rugby into a franchise sport and these are just things you have brought up with me, let alone what’s being discussed in Dublin (Headquarters of World Rugby)’. Participant: EP2

It has been suggested by Mairs (2013b) that World Rugby construct a global rugby calendar that would provide the players with an opportunity to source a secure financial contract in any league and also be eligible for international rugby union. However, to fully embed this into rugby union, promotion and relegation would need to be removed from elite-level competition, allowing clubs to invest in players and facilities without the constant fear of relegation and a dramatic loss of potential income.

**Key finding 4 - Opportunities to develop the International game**

Although World Rugby states that the global game of rugby union is growing there is still a dominant and narrow hegemonic core that organises and develops the game, evidenced by only twenty-five countries ever competing within the RWC. Further confirmation is in the form of the limited voting process of World Rugby (indicated in chapter 7) and the successful nations at the major international rugby union tournaments as noted in Table 20.
Table 20: Major Rugby Union Tournament winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tournament</th>
<th>Winners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| RWC              | 1987 – New Zealand  
1991 – Australia  
1995 – South Africa 
1999 – Australia  
2003 – England    
2007 – South Africa 
2011 – New Zealand |
| RWC 7s           | 1993 – England  
1997 – Fiji       
2001 – New Zealand 
2005 – Fiji       
2009 – Wales       
2013 – New Zealand |
| IRB 7s World Series | 2000 – New Zealand  
2001 – New Zealand 
2002 – New Zealand 
2003 – New Zealand 
2004 – New Zealand 
2005 – New Zealand 
2006 – Fiji       
2007 – New Zealand 
2008 – New Zealand 
2009 – South Africa 
2010 – Samoa       
2011 – New Zealand 
2012 – New Zealand 
2013 – New Zealand 
2014 – New Zealand |

However, the development of rugby 7s has returned rugby union to the world’s ‘mega’ sporting event, the Olympic Games and promoted 7s to a larger market than the fifteen-a-side version. While the two versions have remained different enough to meet the specific needs of their respective audiences, the development of Rugby 7s illustrates that rugby union has evolved and taken a changing public with it. The lure of the Olympics is a driving force for the development of global sport as evidenced by the development of 7s rugby in the USA as a result of the declaration of rugby’s return to the Olympic games in 2016. Sport is an
economically significant, highly popular, globally networked cultural form and is able to mobilize sentiments of people in all countries in an unrivalled manner (Carlin, 2003; Smart, 2007, p. 114). While this is an immediate priority of World Rugby, 7s should remain within the platform of rugby union rather than develop as a separate entity. Rugby union needs to ensure that while the rugby 7s game is clearly designed for ‘entertainment’, it should not be to the detriment of the fifteen a-side game. Instead World Rugby should look to use the Rio Olympic Games in 2016 as a platform to promote the entire rugby game and not just the 7s version, a point which one respondent felt was vital to the future of rugby union:

‘It’s great that rugby is now in the Olympics, I am amazingly jealous. I would swap most of my achievements from my time in rugby to have a crack at an Olympic medal, these players have to realise what a privilege it will be to have that opportunity. That also goes for the people in charge of rugby. They need to make sure that players aspire to achieve all the goals that are available in rugby union and not simply specialise in one discipline ahead of another. It needs to be treated as part of the rugby family and all these specialists in the world that work on branding, marketing etc need to sell it to the world as a part of one big rugby package. That’s the only way rugby can use the Olympics to grow the sport.’

Participant: EO2

Nonetheless, there are more positive developments in the fifteen-a-side game, specifically the introduction of an Argentinian franchise to Super rugby in 2016, Japan hosting the 2019 RWC and the development of European cup competitions. Furthermore, while the domestic game in Europe has created the opportunity for teams from outside the Six Nations’ countries to compete, the World Rugby has not done the same at the international level. Consequently, other than Italy and Argentina entering the Six Nations and The Rugby Championship respectively, in substantial respects the rugby world still remains localised to the countries that have facilitated and controlled its development since the nineteenth century.

3. Recommendations and suggested actions deriving from the research

Although there have been significant developments within rugby union since it announced ‘open’ professionalism, there are still opportunities that World Rugby can build upon in order to expand the global reach of rugby union. The following illustrates six key recommendations
that have emanated from the research conducted throughout this thesis and Table 21 notes the suggested action points based upon these recommendations.

1. The introduction of Italy and Argentina to the Six Nations and Rugby Championship tournaments in 2000 and 2012 respectively was a positive development for international rugby. However, failure to expand the tournament from these established Tier 1 nations could be detrimental to the rugby union game. Recent developments in the club game in the northern hemisphere are providing opportunities for countries such as Georgia and Romania to expose their players to regular competitive environments. However, in order to develop the game further in this respect World Rugby should develop a qualification process to enable the national sides from these countries to enter a new-revamped ‘seven’ nations tournament. Although there are analysts (Beattie, 2011; Kitson 2015) who suggest that adding weaker teams to an established tournament can weaken overall competitiveness, the introduction of Italy to the Six Nations tournament has enabled the Italian domestic clubs sides to enter the RaboDirect Pro 12 and to produce a competitive national team on the international stage.

2. The introduction of Argentina to the Rugby Championship has enhanced the profile of rugby union in South America. However, due to the timing of the tournament and the fact that the majority of the Argentinian players are based in European clubs that are not obliged to release their players for the Rugby Championship, Argentina has yet to field a full strength side in the competition. One way of resolving this problem associated with scheduling conflicts would be to create an integrated calendar. As recently as November 2013, there has been discussion regarding the construction of an integrated global season. The International Rugby Players' Association (IRPA) are proposing to make changes for the 2016 season that would make it possible for all test-playing nations to pick their best players. The IRPA want to move the June test window back to the end of July, allowing the Southern Hemisphere-based players to finish the Super Rugby club season, while those in Europe would start their domestic campaigns later, possibly October. However, the IRPA said existing windows for RWC, Six Nations, the Rugby Championship and November tests would not change (Kelly, 2013). Currently, European countries tour the southern hemisphere in June with return matches held in November and December. The timing means international
teams always tour at the end of their respective seasons. Damian Hopely, the IRPA chairman is quoted as stating ‘We're in a unique position. For the first time since rugby went professional, the major Northern and Southern Hemisphere competition and commercial structures are on the table at the same time’ (Kelly, 2013). However, creating a global calendar for rugby union would still leave the sport competing with Test Cricket and the Tennis Grand Slams and on a four-year cycle the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup for a share of the global sports market\textsuperscript{166}.

3. The development of the rugby union game in South America creates an opportunity to expand the game further. Although the Rugby Championship belongs to SANZAR, World Rugby could suggest that the Japanese national team enter the tournament in the years building up to the 2019 RWC. From a global perspective, the Rugby Championship has the capability of developing the rugby union game in Australasia, Africa, South America and potentially Asia, something no other annual global international team event can compete with. SANZAR has already announced that a further franchise will be added to Super Rugby in 2016 based in Japan (see figure 31), however this development also needs to be reflected in the international game.

\textsuperscript{166} The RWC was originally scheduled not to conflict with these events, however a global rugby union calendar could create competition and rivalry for market share in the years in which these events function.
Figure 31: The 2016/17 structure of The Rugby Championship (www.sanzarrugby.com/).
4. Any development of rugby union in the southern hemisphere should ideally include the Pacific nations of Tonga, Fiji and Samoa. World Rugby should look to promote the game of rugby union in the Asian market; however it should not be to the detriment of the teams from the Pacific Islands. The Pacific Island countries have a unique history within the sport of rugby union and World Rugby’s member unions should be encouraged to develop the game further within these islands. A fifth of the players at the 2011 RWC were either born or descended from the Pacific Islands, and there were more players of Pacific Island descent in the 2013 British and Irish Lions touring squad than there were of Scottish players. Moreover, there are an estimated 184 professional players of either Samoan, Fijian or Tongan descent playing in European leagues (Schofield, 2014). These figures represent a significant contribution to the rugby union ‘product’, yet Samoa, Tonga and Fiji play the majority of their international fixtures outside of the Pacific Islands. Other than expenses it is the host nations that receive the majority of funding from hosting an international fixture, which deprives the Pacific Islands nations of a much needed source of revenue. World Rugby should look to encourage countries, especially those in Tier 1, to schedule international fixtures within the Pacific Islands. Other than Scotland playing Samoa in Apia in 2012, Italy touring Fiji and Samoa in June 2014 and New Zealand’s first ever test match in the Pacific Islands in 2015 (www.bbc.co.uk), no other Tier 1 nation has yet to establish an international fixture in the Pacific islands.

5. The use of multiple locations within the annual HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series can be suggested as a future strategic platform for the entire rugby union game. For example, the touring locations for the British and Irish Lions have been rotated between Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa since the very first tour in 1888. With the renewal of the SANZAR contract in 2017, World Rugby has the opportunity to express the need to expand into new markets such as Asia, Argentina, and USA (utilised in the IRB 7s World Series) to develop further the global game of rugby union. Although the British and Irish Lions are a team made up from four Tier 1 nations, the concept of touring into new markets (providing there is existing infrastructure) would provide new levels of economic development through tourism.

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167 In 1927 and 1936, the British and Irish Lions toured Argentina with the 1927 tour providing the British and Irish Lions their highest victory margin, a 27-0 victory over Argentina. In 2013 the British and Irish Lions played their first tour fixture against the Barbarians RFC in Hong Kong as part of a marketing strategy coordinated between the IRB and the British and Irish Lions LTD.
sponsorship and media activities. The 2017 tour has been confirmed for New Zealand, but future British and Irish Lions tours might expand into new markets in coordination with World Rugby’s development strategy, perhaps starting with a 2021 tour to Argentina. To generate new levels of interest and performance at the RWC, more countries should become exposed to regular international competition which in turn can have a positive effect on the development of the domestic game and ultimately allow rugby union to compete for market share with other established professional sports.

6. The concept of promotion and relegation has been a topic of conversation between academics and rugby union’s controlling bodies since the IRFB’s acceptance of professionalism in 1995. Super Rugby did not introduce a promotion/relegation system in the cross-boarder competition, which was also replicated in the developments of the Celtic League. However, whilst there have been some conflicts of interest between the club sides and the national teams within these competitions, these instances have been few in comparison to the situation within England where promotion/relegation is a central component of domestic competition. While the immediate priority of the domestic English clubs is to develop a competitive domestic team, the competition itself needs to evolve to ensure that ‘entertainment’ is a central focus and provide a platform that enables the clubs and RFU to foster a stronger business relationship to ensure the sustainability of the rugby union game within England. Cleary (2015) proposes that the removal of relegation/promotion could encourage more attacking, fear-free play, as seen in the southern hemisphere’s ring-fenced Super Rugby. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the removal of the fear of relegation from the top domestic league in England would enable clubs to invest in facilities, develop further home-grown talent and create a coordinated domestic calendar between domestic and international fixtures (Mairs, 2015).

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168 In 2012, the SARU replaced the Lions with the Southern Kings due to the side’s poor performance in Super Rugby. In 2013, the Lions defeated the Southern Kings in a two-leg playoff to return to Super Rugby in 2014. However, the SARU in 2014 stated that the relegation/promotion play-off would be removed and would no longer be a process of obtaining entry/relegation into the Super Rugby Competition (Verdier, 2012).
Table 21: Recommendations and Actions from the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand and create a new-revamped ‘Seven’ Nations tournament</td>
<td>Whilst the developments of the new European Champions Cup and the Rugby Challenge Cup has provided opportunities for club sides from outside of the Six Nations’ countries to gain entry to the elite European club competitions, there has been no action in regards to initiating access to the current Six Nations tournament for countries such as Georgia, Romania, Russia, Spain and Portugal who have all previously qualified for an RWC since the inaugural tournament in 1987.</td>
<td>World Rugby could insist that the Six Nations Organising committee use the winner from European Nations Cup as a new entrant to the current ‘Six Nations’ tournament’ to form a ‘Seven’ Nations tournament. Currently, the European Nations Cup operates on a two-year cycle, which would mean that a new fixture would only occur every other year under this process. However, in order for this proposal to have any effect on any further development of rugby union throughout Europe, the structure of the European Nations Cup would need to be altered to ensure that the tournament can be completed on an annual basis. The team that finished bottom of any new ‘Seven’ Nations tournament would be required to enter the European Nations Cup in order to attempt to qualify for Europe’s Premier International Rugby tournament in the following year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
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| Create an ‘integrated’ calendar                                      | Player release has been an issue between clubs and countries since the introduction of ‘open’ professionalism in 1995. Club sides in Europe have often found that their players have conflicts between their club commitments and the opportunities for international rugby. As recently as June 2013, the opening fixture on the British and Irish Lions tour was affected due to player commitments in the domestic finals with England and France respectively. This was also a situation that affected the England touring squad to New Zealand in June 2014, where players from both Northampton Saints and Saracens were unavailable to be selected for the first test match due to their club commitments in the Aviva Premiership Final. Furthermore, there have been instances of player withdrawal from domestic competitions due to looming international tournaments in the southern hemisphere. | World Rugby to remove any lingering barriers to a global rugby calendar with the following recommendations:  
- Northern hemisphere nations should be encouraged to tour the summer hemisphere in July  
- The domestic seasons in Europe to start either late September or early October  
- Keep existing windows for RWC, Six Nations, the Rugby Championship and November tests  
- Remove top-flight domestic fixtures from the international period, to ensure that the domestic clubs have the option to select full strength sides during their respective competitions |
| Allow Japan to join the Rugby Championship                            | Currently, a Japanese franchise is set to join Super Rugby in 2016, which is a good opportunity to develop rugby union in Asia. However, a large number of foreign nationals currently play rugby in Japan’s Top League with some players earning in excess of $835,000 New Zealand dollars in a league competition that has a shorter season and is less physically demanding (Stoney, 2013). Whilst, the inclusion of a Japanese team into Super Rugby is a positive step, it is unclear the effect it will have on the development of Japanese rugby with such a high number of foreign nationals playing in the top domestic sides. | World Rugby could make the following recommendations in the build up to the RWC in Japan in 2019:  
- Allow the Japanese national team to enter the Rugby Championship in 2017 and/or  
- Restrict the number of foreign nationals that can be selected for the Japanese Franchise in Super Rugby |
<p>| World Rugby to encourage the Tier 1 nations to play international fixtures in the Pacific Isles | Samoa, Tonga and Fiji currently play the majority of fixtures outside of the Pacific Islands. The issue with this situation is that the host nations receive the majority of funding, which deprives the Pacific Island nations of a source of income. | World Rugby to stipulate that at least one fixture should be arranged in the Pacific Islands between the remaining Tier 1 nations during the international touring period. Countries would rotate on an annual basis to ensure that the Pacific Island countries receive increased levels of income and exposure with an additional competitive fixture. |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>The British and Irish Lions should be encouraged to tour further countries</strong></th>
<th>Currently, the British and Irish Lions tour Australia, New Zealand and South Africa individually on a four-year cycle. While this is a legacy of the historical evolution of the British and Irish Lions, expanding to new touring locations could be used as a tool to develop the global game of rugby union.</th>
<th></th>
<th>World Rugby and the British and Irish Ltd to consider the following:</th>
<th>• Increase the touring locations for the British and Irish Lions and/or&lt;br&gt;• Ensure that the tour includes a fixture that is not in the host nation, which occurred in 2005 and 2013 respectively.&lt;br&gt;• Ensure that the tour aligns with necessary the global rugby calendar and is not affected by clashes with domestic competitions.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion and Relegation should be removed from the top domestic competition in England</strong></td>
<td>The development of the Celtic League and Super Rugby have illustrated that domestic and international rugby union can coexist to benefit each other. What is noticeable between the two leagues is that Promotion/Relegation is not a central feature and consequently the sides are able to develop further domestic talent with the security of being able to invest in facilities without the threat of bankruptcy were relegation to occur. The range of disputes between the RFU and the clubs that have plagued English rugby union throughout the nineteen years as a professional sport illustrates that the situation is yet to be resolved. Each year in the English Premiership one club faces the fear of relegation that consequently forces clubs to focus on ‘winning’, often recruiting players from around the world at the expense of developing domestic talent. With the removal of relegation and an expansion in the top English league, there is potential to develop an integrated calendar, which avoids conflict between the clubs and the RFU in addition to further resources being utilised in the development of domestic talent.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The RFU and Premier Rugby Ltd to consider the following action points:</td>
<td>• Increase the top League in England to initially fourteen teams and remove relegation.&lt;br&gt;• Review promotion for teams in the Championship, based on financial stability, infrastructure and supporter base.&lt;br&gt;• Ensure that domestic competition fixtures do not compete with international fixtures for both players and market share.</td>
</tr>
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4. Future Study

Alongside the specific recommendations and potential outcomes of the research that this thesis has identified, there are also further areas of potential research that warrant consideration. These areas of potential future investigation are detailed below:

Table 22: Future research strategies

| The Amateur Game’s Survival | • The survival of the amateur club in the semi-professional setting  
|                           | • The ‘potential’ removal of promotion/relegation from the top domestic league and its impact on the lower leagues  
|                           | • The impact of foreign nationals on home grown talent  
|                           | • The role of the RPA; a critical analysis  
| The Match official         | • An Evaluation of Core Values – instances of abuse to match officials  
|                           | • Recruitment, training and development of Match officials  
|                           | • Cross cultural analysis of referee performance in the top rugby union leagues  
| The Olympic Aftermath      | • An evaluation of post-Olympic participation strategies  
|                           | • Developing the American rugby market  
| The British and Irish Lions| • An evaluation of the travelling spectator  
|                           | • An analysis of further touring locations  

In recent years rugby union has become subject to a range of academic study as alluded to in Chapter One. However, while there are evident developments in the sport of rugby union and academic study, it is the researcher’s intention to build on the research contained within this thesis to create a more holistic review of rugby union’s future on the landscape of modern sport. The researcher intends to start with a crucial analysis of the development of the match official before moving onto the other topics mentioned in Table 22.

5. Research Reflection

This thesis has combined the researcher’s active interest in the sport of rugby union and career as an academic. It was this interest and engagement with the sport itself that has enabled a full exploration of the sport in an academic environment. Consequently, it could be argued that an active interest in the sport could have introduced elements of bias into the data collection and analysis process. However, it is the use of IPA that enabled the researcher to engage with double hermeneutics by trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their own experience within elite level rugby union. It is this process combined with the use of critical friendships, that allowed the researcher to access the participant’s experience through the participant’s own account of it rather than be a personal reflection from the researcher’s perspective.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure objectivity through a thorough data collection and research strategy, there are some limitations to the current research study. Firstly, the decision to use only two participants from each nation within each era studied created the potential for any one of these individuals becoming an ‘outlier’ and not at all representative of players from that nation in any particular period. Fortunately, this was not represented in the data within the research project however it is noted for any subsequent research that the author may conduct. Furthermore, whilst the transcription process is not necessarily a limitation it certainly was a long process in order to adhere to the rigour of an IPA study due to the large sample size used. Consequently, while IPA is applicable for large sample sizes it is noted that the suggestions of Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) to use IPA for small sample sizes is more appropriate for research projects that are longitudinal in nature.
6. Concluding Comments

The focus of this research has been to analyse the impact of professionalisation on rugby union from the players’ perspective. The thesis has documented the popular appeal of ‘amateur’ rugby union that developed throughout the twentieth century, becoming a worldwide sport and developing international sporting bodies, competitions and international tournaments. As a consequence of remaining nominally amateur throughout the majority of the twentieth century rugby union had to establish strategies to compete with its professional counterparts, subsequently becoming closely articulated with the media, in particular television, commerce and the world of corporate sponsorship (Smart, 2007). By the final decade of the twentieth century, amateurism in rugby union had become economically outdated, as had the remaining obstacles to professionalising the game.

Since the IRFB’s declaration on the 27th of August 1995 to allow professionalism, rugby union has become a serious and financially rewarding business and an established part of the extensive entertainment industry. A consequence of which has been continual conflict and tension between the game’s key stakeholders and resolutions to these conflicts have consistently been resolved around commercial opportunities to develop market share against already established professionalised sports. This thesis has provided analysis of the current situation in respect of professional rugby union and in identifying and analysing the associated difficulties that World Rugby, the NGBs and the professional clubs face in their attempts to attain consistency in implementing and controlling professionalism provides a detailed analysis to support the continued development of rugby union.
Appendices
Appendix 1

ETHICAL APPROVAL – BSREC 10/079

Protocol Title: The impact of professionalism on elite level rugby union
Date Submitted: 15 November 2010

Thank you for submitting your protocol for ethical review. As all elements of the protocol adhere to the Schedule of Approved Procedures the protocol has been reviewed by the undersigned in accordance with current procedures\(^1\) on behalf of the BioSciences Research Ethics Committee.

The Committee is happy to approve your application under Approval Code BSREC 10/079.

There are a few minor comments that could be addressed on the draft protocol (enclosed), which we have discussed, and have decided are of little consequence. However, you may wish to change these, as they will likely end up in one of your thesis chapters. If you do so, please could you forward a new copy for the ethics file?

For future submissions, it would be appreciated if the introduction could be considerably shorter, if this is possible whilst still conveying the background information required by whoever conducts the ethical review. However, in this case, although too long, it was of interest to read anyway!

As discussed, I’m going to ask Professor Smart whether it is appropriate for me to seek reviews from a sociologist for such submission in future. Whilst, we can advise on ethics, much of the value of the review comes from a scientific evaluation of the proposal also. If a proposal isn’t the most appropriate protocol that can be undertaken (within the many constraints) then perhaps it is unethical! Obviously, our committee does not have the necessary expertise to provide such review. I’ll let you (and your fellow PhD candidate colleagues) know about the outcome of such discussions with Professor Smart.

Good luck with the study.

Dr. Jim House
Co-chair of the BioSciences Research Ethics Committee

\(^1\) The Schedule of Approved Procedures (Annex C to Procedures for Ethical Review), Biosciences Research Ethics Committee, University of Portsmouth, December 2009.)
## Appendix 2

**FORM UPR16**

Research Ethics Review Checklist

> Please complete and return the form to Research Section, Quality Management Division, Academic Registry, University House, with your thesis, prior to examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information</th>
<th>Student ID: 218956</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate Name:</strong></td>
<td>Michael Rayner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department:</strong></td>
<td>DSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Supervisor:</strong></td>
<td>Professor Barry Smart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start Date:</strong></td>
<td>09/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study Mode and Route:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>MPhil</td>
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<td>Full-time</td>
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<td>Prof Doc (PD)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title of Thesis:</strong></td>
<td>The Impact of Professionalisation on Elite level Rugby Football Union: A Players’ Perspective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study.

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

**UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:**

(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: [http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/](http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?</th>
<th>YES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?</strong></td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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**Candidate Statement:**

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

**Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):**

BSREC 10/079

**Signed:**

(Student)

Date: 03/06/2015

If you have not submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered ‘No’ to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain why this is so:

**Signed:**

(Student)

Date:
Appendix 3

Interviews – Pre 1995

Profile

*Utilise this information to build up a demographic profile of the England’s elite players and compare the difference with those in the post professional era*

Age/ Place of Birth/School – was this a factor for your initial participation in rugby? Did you get a choice of which code you were taught?

What was your highest representative honour?

Career – Playing/Professional (after playing rugby)

Current role

1. What skills, training or formal preparation did you require for your role?
2. How did you equip yourself to carry out this role?
3. Discuss the concept of being professional in a sport they once played as an amateur.

Amateurism

Context of playing pre 1995

What was it like to play as an amateur? *Look to evaluate Commitment, support and standards.*

Please describe the selection/training process that you went through to get to the elite level? Who was in charge of the selection process? How did it work?

Were there any expenses mechanisms or did you pay for everything?

1. If So, Who paid for your travel/accommodation to club matches

How was training organised? How often? What were the requirements of your club? What level of commitment was required from you as a player? Additional training, time off work, compulsory attendance at training, club events etc.

How did this differ on the international stage? How did this affect playing for your club? Who was your priority, club or country?

How much competitive rugby did you play? What were the main formats of competition? Who was this for? – Distinguish between club and country.

Consequences of Playing

*Look to evaluate what was the price/reward of playing amateur rugby union*
Describe to me the general process of match day for your club/country? What were the expectations of you?
Intrinsically and Extrinsically.

2. Who were the biggest fixtures in your season, why? Without structured leagues how were you aware of the stature of the club/country that you played for? If this even existed?

3. Did this cause a change in lifestyle/mindset? Can this be related to the international scene?

4. How did long tours affect your profession? Were you compensated?

5. Was rugby a priority in life? Or did work come first? How was this balanced?

Did you/your club have any rugby traditions? Initiations/rivalries / probe the thought processes of rugby league – paid for playing/ fear of being banned from rugby union/ thoughts of those players that did transfer.

1. Did you ever have offers or consider playing rugby league? - Why did/didn’t you? What were the fundamental reasons?

2. Did you ever move clubs? If so why? If it was for any other reason than rugby what was the driving force behind this decision?

3. Did you ever consider playing abroad for financial gain? Was this ever an option? How would this be posed to you? How would/did this affect your standing with your original club/ country?

What are your core values of Rugby union? Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship. Prompt if they are unsure. Discuss how/if/why each one the values was evident when they were playing? Do they believe the same is evident in today’s game? Why?

Financial Questions

Were there any benefits (financial or other) from playing for your country? If so how were these delivered/structured so that they remained within the laws of the game? How openly were these ‘benefits’ discussed?

Did you know of anyone who could not commit to being an amateur due to work commitments or for other reasons? What were their reasons for leaving?

Were you sponsored? If so how did this work? Was it allowed by the club/RFU or was it separate?

Administration of the Game

From your experience, how would you describe the role of the RFU? Were there any impositions/restrictions imposed on you as a player by the RFU/IRB? How was playing for your country managed/processed? What was the role of your club in regards to national selection?

There is a theory of respect for the role of a referee within rugby union; in your opinion/experiences of your time PLAYING do you perceive this to be true?

In terms of performance assessment, how was this conducted, by whom? What would be a consequence of this? What were the major (if any) differences between club and country on this topic?
**Professional Era**

Did rugby becoming professional have any effect/impact on you? How did it affect you? (Emphasis on current role)

In what respect do you perceive the approach (training, club structure, performance) to rugby in the professional era has changed since you played? What experiences can you draw upon to clarify this? Financial, commercial aspects, training, player profile, media involvement, competition.

Do you think there have been any changes in the relationship between the club, country and the player?

What are your thoughts on the ‘video referee’? [Link back to original description of referee during their paying era.]

What are your thoughts on the use of technology in rugby union? Are there any aspects of technology you would be interested to have removed/introduced? [Link back to core values of the game.]

Are there any other issues other than technology? For example views on/respect for officials. Relationship to club(s)/loyalty. Affinity with supporters/fans – are these of interest to you?
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