

**Unions, Leagues and Franchises:
The Social Organisation of Rugby Union
in New Zealand**

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ABSTRACT

The amateur game of rugby union is analysed by focussing upon the struggles for control between national and local unions and players. Using historical material and interviews with administrators, current players in the New Zealand national team, the All Blacks, and Canterbury, a local provincial union, I show how the game of rugby union consolidated as the national game. I follow these actors through the shift to a global professional game sponsored by television networks and show how the local advantages in the New Zealand game come to be reconfigured in this context.

In the first half of the thesis I argue that a contested and continuous process of indigenisation secured both the national popularity of the amateur game, against the threat of the rival code of professional rugby league, and maintained all-important competitive ties between the national team and Britain. Protection against threats from the rival code was secured by the centralised New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU) creating two national teams, the All Blacks (1905), composed of both 'white' and Maori players, and the New Zealand Maori team (1910) composed only of indigenous Maori players. Further, the establishment of a national challenge competition, the Ranfurly Shield (1902), and the formation of a national league, the National Provincial Championship (1976), secured local and national publics for the amateur game. Both developments may be seen as ways in which an amateur game draws upon elements of professional competition.

In the second half of the thesis I show how the NZRFU mobilises against a threat of players exiting to a professional, transnational media-sponsored league. In conjunction with its own television sponsors, the NZRFU introduces professionalism through the transnational, professional Super 12 competition (1996) featuring franchised teams together with teams from Australia and South Africa. This competition, like the Rugby World Cup (1987), successfully cultivates new transnational publics and provides players with further opportunities for international mobility.

To protect the new game against the increased bargaining power of players the NZRFU introduces regulations to restrict both players' movement between local provincial teams and All Black selection for those contracted to its franchises in the new transnational competition. These controls enhance the NZRFU's authority over provincial unions and players but in the context of a global professional game organised to secure competitive balance between teams, the success of New Zealand rugby is no longer guaranteed. The new professional era is revealed as one of threats as much as opportunities for the national game.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	-	All Black
AFL	-	Australian Football League
ARL	-	Australian Rugby League
ARU	-	Australian Rugby Union
BCG	-	Boston Consulting Group
CANZ	-	Canada, Argentina, New Zealand
FA	-	Football Association
IOC	-	International Olympic Committee
IRB	-	International Rugby Board
IRD	-	Inland Revenue Department
NFL	-	National Football League
NHL	-	National Hockey League
NPC	-	National Provincial Championship
NRL	-	National Rugby League
NRU	-	Northern Rugby Union (QRU, 1892)
NSWRU	-	New South Wales Rugby Union
NU	-	Northern Union
NZBC	-	New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation
NZFA	-	New Zealand Football Association
NZPRL	-	New Zealand Provincial Rugby League
NZRFU	-	The New Zealand Rugby Football Union
NZRPA	-	New Zealand Rugby Players' Association
RFU	-	Rugby Football Union
RS	-	Ranfurly Shield
RUPA	-	Rugby Union Players' Association
RWC	-	Rugby World Cup
QRU	-	Queensland Rugby Union
SARB	-	South African Rugby Board
SANZAR	-	South Africa, New Zealand, Australia Rugby
SPC	-	South Pacific Championship
SRFU	-	Southern Rugby Football Union (NSWRU, 1892)
TVNZ	-	Television New Zealand
VFA	-	Victorian Football Association
VFL	-	Victorian Football League
WFU	-	Welsh Football Union (Welsh Rugby Union)
WRC	-	World Rugby Corporation
YRU	-	Yorkshire Rugby Union

PREFACE

There are many ways to present methodological accounts of a research process. One is to justify the selection of methods as appropriate for the study's 'objective'. Another is to present a reflexive account of how the data gathering and analysis developed as an ongoing process of redefining the research 'problem'. This account is an attempt at the latter. I draw on the idea that the reflexive 'return' on the research process requires a scrutinising of the 'very act of constructing the object' of the study (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). According to Bourdieu, this requires an awareness of the kinds of biases that may 'blur the sociological gaze'. These biases include the social origins and habitus of the researcher, the location of the analysts in the academic field and intellectual bias (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 39). Bourdieu's version of this awareness does not include an account of the researcher. By contrast, feminist writers (e.g. Stacey, 1988; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Bloom, 1998) and some male writers (e.g. Whyte, 1943; Newby, 1977; Pahl, 1995) interpret the reflexive return as an invitation to reveal both their bias and themselves as the tool of research. I have adopted the latter, gendered 'confessional mode' (van Maanen, (1988) cited in Fine, 1993: 273) in this reflection on how I gathered and interpreted data. I begin with an explanation of my gendered and foreign 'otherness' as a resource in the research process. This leads into an account of how I started the research process with interviews with players and administrators about the 'present' context of the game. Answers to my questions highlighted unstated similarities between the past and the present and provoked new

questions that required a broadening of the scale of the study through an historical comparative inquiry.

Two events, which took place in different, 'exclusive' and gendered 'worlds' towards the end of the study, revealed how such biases Bourdieu wrote about constructed my sociological gaze in this research process. In October 2000 I appeared as a 'rugby expert' in a television documentary debating the impact of professionalism on New Zealand rugby (TVNZ, 2000b). The programme was extremely significant in the light of my study because it presented and debated the crisis of the *national* male game. All Black losses and the departure of All Blacks and emerging All Black players to northern hemisphere clubs were highlighted as significant threats to the position of the national game. The programme highlighted increasing uncertainties concerning the organisation of the national game.

The opportunity to appear on the programme arose because the assistant producer of the programme had been informed of my study by staff at the Canterbury provincial union. He rang me and asked about my research and my background. He was clearly testing me with respect to my candidacy as a 'rugby expert'. He wanted to know what I had 'found out'. But he was also equally interested in my background. I 'passed the test'. In the three weeks following the phone-call I puzzled over how he had made his decision to include me in the programme. Was it my gender and foreign 'otherness' or was it my status as a researcher/expert? I knew, of course, that I was an interesting interviewee for his programme precisely because I was 'a Danish woman studying rugby', but I still had to deliver 'the goods on camera' in order to be included in the final, edited version of the programme.

My feeling of unease and concern with being 'taken seriously' as a person 'knowing about rugby' rather than a curiosity as a female 'other' furthered my reluctance to explain or defend why I was studying rugby without focusing on gender. My second concern was a well-known concern with 'passing' as an academic (Goffman, 1989: 127; Fine, 1993: 289). In this situation my anxiety increased because the interview would be presented on national television and I had no control over how my image and

words would be framed and used. This interview was not about rugby as gendered performance and neither had my interviews with rugby players and administrators been focused on gender. But, like my interviews with rugby players and administrators, the dynamics of this interview, where I was the interviewee, were highly gendered (Song and Parker, 1995; Padfield and Procter, 1996). The film crew, which consisted of a camera ‘man’, a production assistant and an interviewer, were all male. My suspicion that the gender + foreign ‘card’ was more important than my rugby knowledge was further raised in the preparation talk before the actual filming of the interview when the interviewer informed me that I was the only woman being interviewed about this male field of rugby for the programme. As he, ironically, put it: ‘You are the token woman’. When the programme aired I was relieved to find that I was presented as a sociologist, not a student, and very relieved not to be presented as a ‘Danish woman’. I had both fulfilled token gender requirements as a woman talking about rugby and ‘escaped’ talking about gender.

The second event is drawn not from my position in the field of rugby, but rather from my position within an academic field. This took place in September 2000 when I gave a talk at the Christchurch Society for Research on Women (SROW). I had agreed to talk to women about women as consumers of rugby in the 1990s. (The scope of this talk is outside of this study although it did draw on my general findings.) Part of the talk included attention to women’s letters to the editor of the *NZ Rugby World* magazine, which criticised the use of skimpily clad female models in the magazine. I used a magazine advertisement, which featured one of these models, and included a highly ironic ‘disclaimer’ which read: “No feminists were hurt in the making of this advertisement”. I argued that ‘poking fun’ at feminists’ critique of near-naked women in sports magazines and of feminists’ critique of rugby was a way to connect with female readers aware of such critiques but who also enjoyed rugby and read rugby magazines as I did. In this way the advertisement both constructed female readers as ‘consumers’ and depoliticised feminist criticisms of rugby. My talk went down like a lead balloon. I was introduced as an academic researcher who had studied rugby, which gave few clues to what my talk was about. However, the only comment I received was from the female chair of the session who dismissively said: “All I have to

say about rugby is that in rugby you don't kick the ball, you kick the man". In this 'world' there was an expectation that a woman researching rugby would present a critical account, if not a rejection, of rugby. Leaving the session I felt frustrated and misunderstood.

Like the interview for the programme on the male world of rugby, this session also involved an exclusive, gendered 'world' in which particular 'gendered' narratives predominated. However, unlike the television programme, which raised questions and highlighted uncertainties about the national male game, in this 'world' there were no uncertainties as to the state of rugby. In this world rugby continued to be viewed as a male bastion. On reflection my responses to the two events highlighted my reluctance to place gender at the centre of my study. In the television interview situation, I was anxious to pass as an 'expert' on a 'male' television programme. In the SROW session, I was anxious to have my post-feminist account of rugby taken seriously. However, in both situations my gender and the dominant gender narratives of the contexts and of rugby shaped these interactions.

In hindsight my 'gender ambivalence' is both ironic and paradoxical. On the one hand, the fact that I have been able to study rugby 'as a woman' is, in part, a result of a broader criticism of the game as a bastion of hegemonic masculinity and as an exclusive male domain by female sociologists and feminists (cf. Dann, 1982; Thompson, 1988; Star, 1992; 1993). Greg McGee, an ex-All Black player, has also highlighted this in *Foreskin's Lament* (1981), his highly acclaimed play about rugby. Such critical accounts about the construction of a particular masculinity in rugby have become so important that for a man to study rugby without paying attention to this would be hazardous and an invitation to a good deal of criticism. The historical analyses of rugby presented in *A Man's Country?* (Phillips, 1987), *Making Men* (Nauright and Chandler, 1996) and *Making the Rugby World* (Chandler and Nauright, 1999) are good examples of this recent attention by male academics to the construction of masculinity in analyses of rugby. Sheard and Dunning (1973) and Young (1988) have also paid attention to the gendered construction of rugby.

I encountered examples of the hazards of neglecting gender for ‘renowned’ male sport sociologists when I attended the 2000 Pre-Olympic Congress in Brisbane. Sociologist Joe Maguire presented a talk based on his book *Global Sport* (1999) but, unlike the book, his talk was focused on implications of the globalisation of sports for women. During the question session a female academic in the audience asked why he had not included a gender analysis in his book. He explained that the neglect of gender in his book, which he was now attempting to make up for, reflected a general gender bias among male academics in the sociology of sport. While Maguire was called upon to explain the absence of gender in his book, I have chosen to account for why gender was not central to my analysis.

Critical to my argument is the space provided by critiques of gendered sport. These critiques provided me with a space to open out questions as to why I enjoyed watching rugby. In doing research on rugby, like Pahl (1995: 196), I was thinking about my own life as much as that of players and administrators. My research question therefore ‘meshed intimately’ with my professional and social interest as Ely (1991: 30) has argued. In my case, my academic interest in sport merged with my pleasures in watching rugby and my sympathies for players’ position (Fine, 1993: 271). I was critical of the public debate regarding the introduction of professionalism, which referred to players in terms of their ‘greed’ and their endorsement of the commercial ‘high-jacking’ of the national game (cf. Macdonald, 1995). To me this neglected the exploitation of players in the amateur period (Rowe, 1995: 106). However, I later developed greater sympathies for the project of administrators.

While my academic ‘bias’ inspired me to undertake this study my habitus as a woman from a middle-class background, which valued academic more than sporting achievement, did not equip me with cultural or symbolic capital from which to draw on in the research process. In addition, not being born in New Zealand, I was an ‘outsider’ to the codes of British amateur sports and I did not know the game at the level of bodily hexus (Bourdieu, 1992: 172). As an ‘outsider’ I was therefore ‘twice removed’. I watched males play rugby, but also watched New Zealand men and women watch New Zealand males play rugby. However, since I began the study I

have met many (mostly younger) women who, as players, administrators, coaches, referees and enthusiastic spectators, have a great love for and knowledge of the game. I have also watched both male and female rugby games and drunk in rugby clubrooms after touch rugby games where both young and old, males and females, mingled. These meetings highlighted to me that rugby's worlds have become less exclusive.

Like Becker (1998: 152) when he began his study of medical students, I knew next to nothing about the organisation of rugby. However, more worrying for me as a PhD student, like Newby (1977: 108) I had no theoretical problem. Presenting my 'story' to interviewees for why I was there (Goffman, 1989: 126) involved my disclosing this unfamiliarity with the game. Not surprisingly, therefore, the interviewees were always curious as to why I was interested in rugby. I sometimes tried to reverse my 'otherness' by highlighting 'Where I came from no-one plays rugby', and adding 'I'm curious as to why this sport is so popular here'. Most of them also expected to know more about the game than I did and were comfortable with my 'story' that I did not know much, but I was interested in 'all the changes that were taking place at the moment'. I explained that I was interested in understanding how the organisation of the game 'worked'. I wanted to know about the 'work' of players and administrators and what, if anything, had changed with the introduction of professionalism. I said that it appeared to be a puzzle that a sport so strongly against professionalism could so swiftly embrace it with apparent success. How was this possible? The fact that I initially knew little about the organisation of the game made for some difficulties. I did not understand all the explanations I was given for the changes, nor did I understand the details on contractual aspects. Afterwards I searched for answers in newspapers, magazines and talked to friends and colleagues. Later on one interviewee made the comment 'you do know your stuff', mid-way through the interview with a mixture of surprise and acknowledgement. Another asked me if I was interested in a job with his rugby organisation. Of course I felt flattered - thinking I was finally able to 'pass' as a rugby knowing person.

Finding interviewees did not present as big a problem as I had anticipated. This was not because I used a systematic method. I approached the NZRFU and the Canterbury

provincial unions asking to speak to staff who could explain the workings of their organisations. Additionally, I proceeded on the advice of people I interviewed. Interviewees often said, 'You should talk to so and so. He will be able to explain that'. Or, 'I have only been here for so long. You'd be better off talking to someone who has been here longer'. 'Dressed up', as Pahl (1995: 198) argues, this selection process is referred to as the snowball technique. He prefers to call his technique 'chums of chums'. The technique is consistent with the way in which the male world of rugby works.

On a few occasions I did not succeed in getting an interview with a player, but most agreed. Because of my focus on relations between different groups 'within' and between the NZRFU and the Canterbury provincial union, I spoke to people with contrasting or conflicting interests. This carried its own set of problems. In terms of 'getting in' (Goffman, 1989: 129), I didn't exactly 'violate' Goffman's advice that "there's no way in which, if you are dealing with a lower group, you can start from a higher group" because I was interested in both 'lower' and 'higher' groups. However, I generally approached people in 'higher' positions of power, that is CEO's and senior professional staff, before I approached those in 'lower' positions including newer professional staff and players. One explanation for pursuing this strategy, which had the potential to make access to others difficult, was that I didn't have any contacts in the sport and initially felt the 'need' to have my research accepted by the 'highest' authority in the organisation.

On reflection, I probably didn't need that approval although it also helped me gain access to others within the organisation, but mostly in the 'same' position of power. However, it also resulted in some tension in some interviews. Some interviewees asked who I had spoken to before. There is an advantage and a danger in revealing too much in such situations as Beynon (1988) has shown. I gained approval from some because of previous interviews but I also encountered a wariness from others. One interviewee said 'If you turn that thing off [referring to the tape-recorder] I will tell you what I think about him'. Most significantly for the study was the 'accidental' contact I made with two key people, who provided me with access to more All Black

players. In 1996 I got to know a Canterbury player who was taking a graduate course in sport in my department. From then on the player ‘dropped in’ on a regular basis and we spoke about issues of professionalism, contracts and his ‘career’. Needless to say, I benefited greatly from these informal talks especially because the player went on to become an All Black and was selected to the New Zealand Maori team. He also agreed to present a talk on rugby in my undergraduate class to the delight of the students and to my benefit as I went up a few notches in their estimation. The second contact was through a fellow PhD student who happened to be a very good friend of the All Black fitness trainer. Both he and the rugby player acted as ‘gate-keepers’ to both players and senior administrators including the All Black captain and coach.

In total, I carried out 32 interviews including five with female players, which do not feature in this thesis but I hope to include in a future study. Approximately half of these interviews were conducted with Canterbury players, coaches, administrators and sponsors and half with NZRFU administrators, players and coach. These largely ‘unstructured’ interviews were carried out between 1994 and 1998. I had some prepared questions but mostly just ‘themes’ from which I developed questions during the interviews. Like Pahl (1995: 199), I think that it is probably more correct to call the interviews ‘re-structured’. As he explains, “the purpose for which the data was used was reformulated during and after they were collected”. I approached the interviewees with a phone call followed by a ‘formal’ letter explaining who I was and why they were important for my study. In some cases, where I gained access through one of the ‘gate-keepers’, the time and place for the interviews was arranged between the interviewee and the gate-keeper. Approximately half of the interviews were conducted in the interviewees’ homes. Most of the others took place in the interviewees’ offices. One took place in a public library, another in a café. One interview with an All Black player took place, less appropriately, in the boardroom of the Canterbury provincial union. He was, not surprisingly, somewhat reluctant to talk about his relationship with the provincial union, but he spoke more freely about the NZRFU.

The interview with the All Black captain was arguably the most ‘difficult’ in terms of my ability to focus on the context of the interview. It took place in the office of an advertising agency in Auckland. Present in the room was an artist in the process of capturing the image of the All Black captain. There was also an advertising agent, who was getting the player’s signatures on a pile of limited edition posters featuring past and the present All Black captain. This meant that he had to sit fairly still while trying to sign the posters and answer my questions. On more than a few occasions we were also both interrupted by the others joining in the conversation.

The content of my interviews differed between those conducted with people with ‘more power’ and those with ‘less power’. Not unlike Pahl’s (1996: 200) experience of interviewing ‘successful people’, I was given a kind of ‘party-piece’ story by some of the most ‘powerful’ of my interviewees who were used to being interviewed by the media. Others were anxious to justify to me why their take on events was right and others wrong. Others, again, had little knowledge about relational changes in the sport. For that reason some interviews feature more in the study than others. Those who had been in the ‘business’ longer provided very useful and detailed accounts of past events as well as reflections on current changes. I also interviewed three professional staff and one player twice with a gap two years between the interviews and this was a useful exercise in obtaining the interviewees’ reflections on changes.

One of the more interesting and difficult aspects of the interviews was the changing nature of the ‘topic’. At the time of conducting the interviews, most of the organisational forms and relations between players and administrators were ‘in flux’. On the issue of players’ association I got contradictory information from players and administrators. I have tried to interpret this information within the context of the changing power relations between players and the NZRFU. My interview questions were centred around the themes of competitions, media sponsorship, professional contracts, player eligibility, transfer regulation, competition from rugby league and the WRC. I also asked the more obvious question which encouraged the interviewees to introduce themselves and their background in rugby or administration, their aspirations, concerns and future predictions for the game. I asked simple questions

such as ‘What does your job entail?’, ‘Who tells you what to do?’, ‘How often do you train, play games, travel?’, ‘What is the best and the worst about your job?’

Despite Becker’s (1998: 58) recommendation to ask ‘how’ and not ‘why’ questions, I found that asking administrators why some things had been changed or remained the same was useful. Those interviewees who got defensive by a ‘why’ question were also provoked to talk about the issue with passion. More importantly, I often found that my anticipation of their response was wrong. Some respondents answered ‘why’ questions with ‘I don’t know, it makes no sense to me’, or ‘probably because that is how it has been for a while’. Some of my questions were really also ‘why’ questions in disguise. For example, I often asked ‘what do you think of the suggestion that...?’, which is really another way of asking ‘why do you think that...?’

I soon discovered, on the basis of answers to my questions about what made the sport ‘professional’, that my focus on professionalism did not capture the stories that I was told. The ‘issue’ or problem for both players and administrators was not with the game’s change from amateur to professional. The NZRFU had not only successfully ‘saved’ the game from the ‘clutches’ of a rival global, professional rugby organisation but also, in orchestrating the transition to professionalism, retained a significant degree of control over current developments. Additionally, the All Black team was initially doing very well following the introduction of professionalism and New Zealand Super 12 teams were winning every season of the Super 12 competition. Thus, despite my initial focus on, and the considerable media attention to, the ‘dramatic’ introduction of professionalism on the status of players, what was more interesting was the problem of explaining how *the national game* had changed in order to remain *the national game*. More significantly, that this problem was not new.

In the first interviews I conducted in 1994 I had asked administrators how they managed to keep rugby ‘amateur’. One administrator told me about how they ‘reinstated’ players who had played rugby league. This happened a lot, I was told. Others explained the set-up of the ‘amateur’ player retention companies. In later interviews I got information on ‘professional’ aspects of the organisation of rugby and

the interviewees' work. What was apparent was that I was being informed about significant similarities across the so-called amateur and professional periods I was studying. Professionalism was not the end of my case, as Abbott (1992: 66) argues about case studies. 'Professionalism', as a historical period, was part of my case's 'endless middles'. I discovered that what I did not know from the interviews was how the amateur game had been organised in the past.

The sociological 'problem' that emerged from paying attention to the interviewees' answers was, then, not the impact of professionalism but rather 'how had rugby been established as the national game and how had it retained this status?' To answer this question required an expansion in the scale and depth of my investigation. To paraphrase Bourdieu's (1995: 117) recommendation for an historically grounded sports sociology, I needed to consider the historical and social conditions that make possible the constitution of a system of institutions and agents which produce rugby as New Zealand's national game. This encouraged me to undertake a comparative historical investigation as a means to establish whether the New Zealand 'case' of rugby union was exceptional or general. While the introduction of professionalism had highlighted changing relations between players and the NZRFU, and between the NZRFU and provincial unions through the establishment of Super 12 teams, I needed to understand what kinds of relations between players, provincial unions and the NZRFU characterised the amateur period.

Consequently, several years into my research, I changed my focus on professionalism. This was after I had presented conference papers on the introduction of professionalism to both the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport conference in 1995 and to the Aotearoa/New Zealand Sociological Association's annual conference in 1996 and submitted a chapter on it for a book on sport, recreation and tourism in New Zealand and Australia (Obel, 1998). I adopted the historical comparative mode as a means to discover how my case was both specific and representative of a larger phenomenon (Wievorka, 1992: 170). In this new historical undertaking professionalism was viewed as a process of reconfiguring relations between the NZRFU and players.

I began re-reading historical accounts of the introduction of the game for clues as to what had ensured the game's status as national and amateur. This was after all anomalous, as my English-born supervisor insisted because, in England, the amateur game carried such conservative and middle-class connotations that it was unable to operate as a vehicle for popular passions. This story of the English game as exclusive is also well rehearsed in New Zealand. It is a critical element of the myth that New Zealanders hold as important about themselves. Just about every citizen from the age of seven (or from the time of their first experience of a game between the All Black team and an English or British team) can articulate the classic contrasting explanation for the exceptional success of the All Blacks – the national team's success and popularity rested on the game's inclusiveness (Zavos, 1998). In the local explanation, the popular New Zealand form is different from and better than the English class form. The evidence is the All Blacks' success.

'Inclusiveness' undoubtedly explains part of the popularity of the game in New Zealand but, as I reflected more on this explanation and the sense of moral perfection that accompanied it, I came to realise that I had taken up this popular explanation as my topic of historical inquiry. My sociological problem had been refined as explaining what New Zealanders took for granted about the game of rugby. As an outsider this seemed to be entirely appropriate. Rugby was a game between nations and New Zealanders used it to define themselves. I realised that how this 'taken-for-granted' had been produced was inextricably linked to how the game was organised locally, but I had no way of explaining this phenomenon.

I found an answer to this internal organisational question in an analysis of North American professional sports. While focusing on the issue of professionalism, I had come across Eric Leifer's (1995) comparative historical and economic sociological account of major league sports in North America. Leifer questioned rather than took for granted the popularity of the professional leagues. He asked how this popularity was secured. The significance of his book, as Johnson (1996) and Stern (1997) have pointed out, lies in the kinds of questions this focus raised. Leifer (1995) focused on

how the interaction between the organised professional sports leagues and the public supporters was shaped by the tension between centralised control sought by league managers and team owners' desire for autonomy. What he discovered were two prototype organisational forms or league strategies, most fully adopted in baseball and football. Success in baseball occurred before, and in football after, the introduction of air travel and television. Their popularity rested on the social organisation of the two sports' league competitions, through teams' attachment to cities and through leagues' attachment to television.

With this focus on leagues and the tension between league managers and team owners in mind, I re-read Dunning and Sheard's (1979) account of the establishment of the two rugby codes and the historical accounts of these codes in *Making Men* (Nauright and Chandler, 1996). I searched for the explanation as to why neither the amateur nor the professional codes had succeeded in becoming the national game in England. I decided that two issues were critical in developing an explanation: the tension over league competitions between clubs and the national union, which resulted in the split and the establishment of the professional rugby league code, and the continuous autonomy of the rugby union clubs relative to the national union. These organisational features, rather than class exclusiveness, contrasted with the game's organisational form in New Zealand, as explained by Gallaher and Stead (1906), and in Wales by Smith and Williams (1981). In both countries the amateur game began to occupy the position as the national game by the turn of the 20th century and the national unions secured a significant degree of control. In Wales, this control was secured through subordinating clubs and, in New Zealand, through subordinating provincial unions. The New Zealand case was argued for in Gallaher and Stead's (1906) remarkable account. In this 'rugby manual' they outlined the centralised New Zealand system of producing successful All Black teams. In this argument club competitions were not resisted, as in England, but carefully and systematically nurtured in order to produce a national team.

This 'discovery' of two seemingly contrasting organisational features of the game – involving relations between local clubs and the RFU in England and provincial unions

and the NZRFU in New Zealand - was then put to work. In sociological terms the relational/organisational difference raised the issue of the organisational strategies pursued by the NZRFU to strengthen the All Black team. How had it ensured the subordination of provincial unions? In order to answer this question, I shifted my research focus from the national All Black team to the Canterbury provincial union. Researching these relationships I focused on the organisation of inter-provincial competitions and examined histories of the Ranfurly Shield and the NPC competitions. This included looking through minutes and annual financial reports for information about what the economic historian Vamplew (1988: 14) calls, the 'vital factors of production and consumption' of professional sports; land, labour, capital, entrepreneurs and technology. I searched historical accounts for information on ownership and control of venues and on the gate-takings and spectator attendances at shield and NPC matches. I went through the Canterbury provincial union's annual financial statements from 1899 to 1998 as well as minutes from meetings in 1976 and 1995. My lack of knowledge of accounting, coupled with changing accountancy procedures, made this a much more difficult and time-consuming exercise than I had anticipated. I went through the union's financial statements twice because I thought I had made a mistake in my initial recording! I entered information on gate-takings and sponsorship income over this period in spreadsheets and combined it with information on attendance at Ranfurly Shield, NPC and Super 12 matches. With this information I created the tables that appear in chapters four and seven.

My historical inquiry into the question of the game's 'inclusiveness' came to focus on the New Zealand Maori team by accident (Becker, 1994). My gate-keeper All Black player had been selected to the New Zealand Maori team to tour Europe in 1998 and I was curious as to how he had been selected. Interestingly, he explained his selection in terms of a phone-call he had received from the coach asking if he was available for the tour. In Appadurai's (1995) account of cricket I had discovered the significance of the constitution of an 'Indian' national team for the indigenisation of a British sport in a colonial context. I began to ponder how it was that two national rugby teams had been established in New Zealand. This was one of those contradictions and incompatibilities that Newby (1977: 128) refers to as significant for driving a

sociological inquiry. I looked through historical records of tours and matches involving the Maori team and began to see a pattern of promotion as well as marginalisation of Maori players through contact with the Pacific Islands. I interpreted the New Zealand Maori team's establishment as part of the NZRFU's strategies to retain Maori players and to strengthen the All Black team against the rival rugby league code. In tracing the activities of the New Zealand Maori team across the 20th century, Pacific Island rugby emerged as an unexpected and significant dimension to the study. Following this argument through, I became aware of the significance of Pacific Island players in New Zealand Super 12 teams in the professional era. It also increased my attention to the presence of Pacific Island players in All Black teams.

On the basis of re-working the research question into a question of how the game had retained its status as the national game, I re-interpreted the introduction of professionalism as an unintended consequence of the rivalry between the two rugby codes, a rivalry that had been amplified by television broadcasting. I went through television programme schedules (*Listener & Television Guide*) to record the broadcasting of rugby union and rugby league matches and interpreted the expansion of rugby union and rugby league competitions in the 1980s as efforts by both sports to retain and cultivate new television publics (Leifer, 1995). This also meant that I could interpret the data on the NZRFU's income from 1976 to 1998 (Figure 5.1), which highlighted a changing pattern of income from gate-takings to media-generated sponsorship, as a context in which the NZRFU played an active role in involving global media sponsors in the game.

This process of doing sociological research on rugby players and administrators had, as Newby (1977: 127) suggests, "a natural history" which affected the outcome of the research itself. My research process was full of uncertainties - uncertainties as a woman and a 'foreigner' researching the male game of rugby in arguably its most successful setting, and uncertainties about the research question. These uncertainties were all significant for shaping the final product. As painful as they were to experience, they brought a new kind of awareness of the gendered dynamics of ethnographic fieldwork and of my position in the academic field of research on rugby.

I had to make certain ‘discoveries’ and insights in order to develop my interpretation and, if it was not for fortuitous and serendipitous events, I might not have taken an historical turn nor incorporated, for example, the ethnic dimension in the study. The interpretation that has resulted from this long process of research both takes the ‘taken-for-granted’ accounts and explanations of the status of rugby as the national New Zealand game seriously, but also includes the more difficult and contentious issues of ‘professionalism’ and ethnicity as crucial elements in sustaining the national game.

INTRODUCTION

If projects can be said to begin then the starting point for this project was my first visit to New Zealand in 1987. On that occasion I watched a live television broadcast of the national 'All Black' team in the opening match of the inaugural Rugby World Cup. In this match a young rising star-player, John Kirwan, scored a brilliant 'solo-try' for New Zealand. Receiving the ball close to his own try-line he ran the entire length of the field, swerving around practically the entire opposition team of Italian players, and completed his move by sliding across the try-line, forcing the ball down for a try. The captain of the team, David Kirk, later wrote about this particular try, with an insider's appreciation of a sporting move that defied the 'logic' of the game as it was played then and, in doing so, helped promote the game to a new international television audience:

Early in the second half, after the All Blacks had decided to lift their game above the pedestrian, Kirwan received a Fox pass out in front of his posts. The right-winger was nigh on 100 metres from the Italian goal line and all traditional tenets demanded he should punt conservatively to the safety of the sideline. Or pass to a cohort who might do the same thing - and a damn sight better. Kirwan ran. In the history of All Black rugby there has probably never been a better solo try...Kirwan had indicated his intentions by taking on a couple of admittedly half-hearted Italian defenders. Suddenly he was clear. The Italians, alerted to the danger, assembled a swathe of tacklers. Sundry All Blacks attempted to stay with the rangy winger, in the event that an Italian might connect, but essentially, on the frieze of Eden Park, it

was a matter of a lone black-garbed player, his flaxen hair flying, taking on the best part of the blue-jerseyed pawns of Italy (Hutchins and Kirk, 1999: 25).

The brilliance of sports is captured in such individual flair. Like many of the television viewers, approximately 300 million (Hutchins and Phillips, 1999), I had never seen a game of rugby played before but, more significantly for the choices I later made regarding this research project, I was an ‘outsider’ who had come to live in New Zealand. I was born in Denmark, Northern Europe, a country outside of the British influence of elite sports like rugby. As a seven-year old girl I had begun playing that other British football code, the game of soccer. This game had become the Danish national game. How then had rugby become the national game in New Zealand?

Part of the answer lies in tries like Kirwan’s, and the memory of it still lives with me. But as a sociologist what puzzled me was that, despite the television success of the World Cup, sociologists, historians and feminists in New Zealand were uncertain as to the state of the game. In the late 1980s they had suggested that rugby and nation were no longer synonymous (Perry, 1989: 124). Highlighting the national upheavals surrounding the 1981 tour of New Zealand by the South African national rugby union ‘Springbok’ team, they argued that rugby union faced a growing crisis. As Fougere (1989: 120) put it: “the place of rugby in New Zealand society has changed. Increasingly it is just another ‘sport’”. This was echoed by Perry (1989) and by feminists including Dann (1982) and Thompson (1988: 210), the latter arguing that the tour provided the space to reject aspects of women’s lived subordination. The cultural significance of these accounts was located in their claims to be documenting the end of the unity of rugby and nation/ rugby and masculinity. However, by the early 1990s, the mood had changed. Nauright (1996b: 223), an historian, argued that “rugby has regained (if it ever lost) much of its old male-defined cultural centrality, even if in a more nostalgic sense than ever before” and Star (1992: 124), a feminist academic, was arguing that “rugby is tops again”.

In contrast to these dichotomous claims predicting both the end of and the continued dominance of rugby, as an ‘outsider’ I was struck by the rivalry between the amateur rugby union and the professional rugby league codes in the early 1990s. It made

newspaper headlines that rugby union players like Kirwan switched to the professional code (Mannion, 1995; South, 1995). More significantly, however, the announcement, in 1995, of the introduction of new professional transnational rugby union competitions involving teams from New Zealand, Australia and South Africa led me to search for explanations of a new professional ‘game’ organised as a ‘business’ with ‘contracts’ and ‘franchising’ as its core. Rather than looking for a confirmation of either the claim to the end of rugby’s centrality or an explanation for its continued ‘male-defined cultural centrality’, I became interested in investigating what had changed and what had remained the same in the organisation of the game.

In Leifer’s (1995) investigation of the major professional leagues in North America I found an analysis, based on organisational and economic sociology, that examined the organisational structures required to produce loyal publics supporting the professional sports leagues. There are many ways to use his analysis. One would be to focus on the question of the effect of home advantage on game outcomes. Another to engage with his argument that the future ‘prototype’ league requires the de-coupling of teams from cities and nations. However, I have chosen to draw on his argument that economic and organisational strategies for developing sports leagues are generated out of tensions between centralised solutions controlled by professional administrators and drives for local autonomy by teams and owners (Stern, 1997). Leifer’s argument highlights the strategic contingencies associated with the mechanisms for how professional administrators have managed tensions between league interest, competitive outcomes, and the sports enthusiasts, termed publics. In so doing, he questions rather than takes for granted how markets for sports competitions come to be organised and transformed (Wilson, 1996).

Similarly, in Appadurai’s (1995) study of cricket in India, I found an argument regarding the way national support and identification with a British sport is generated in a colonial context. Appadurai’s (1995) cultural analysis highlights that external imperial networks helped facilitate the adoption of cricket. The transformation of these external networks through processes of indigenisation and the establishment of a national Indian cricket team helped foster a sense of national identification with

cricket. While Appadurai's (1995) analysis is focused on India, a different colonial context than the 'white' dominated settler society of New Zealand, I have chosen to use his analysis rather than accounts of settler societies because of the emphasis on relations between England and India.

Working with Leifer, an economic sociologist, and Appadurai, a cultural anthropologist, I began to tease out sociological arguments concerning the organisation of the game of rugby union. Wilson's (1994) different economic sociology of sports in the U.S.A. provided me with another form of analysis focusing on player labour relations in amateur and professional sports, and a further argument regarding the subordination of players to national or local administrative organisations. Eligibility regulations in both amateur and professional sports structure these relations. National amateur organisations restrict access to amateur sports through requirements linked to players' status while professional sport leagues limit the movement of players through contracting and reserve systems.

I have drawn on different aspects of these twin economic sociologies of professional administrators and players and cultural anthropologists' concern with national identity and combined them with a comparative historical examination of rugby (Nauright and Chandler, 1996; Chandler and Nauright, 1999). The result is an eclectic, historical sociology which also combines ethnographic fieldwork and interviewing. I argue that centralised, rather than local autonomous, organisational strategies have shaped the organisation of the male sport of rugby union throughout its 130-year history in New Zealand. These organisational forms emerged out of transnational networks of relations involving players, administrators, spectators, viewers and sponsors at local and national 'levels'. I identify three kinds of tensions that have continued to shape these relations and the organisational forms and outcomes in both the amateur and the professional eras. These tensions emerged out of the consolidation of a national administration, the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU), established in 1892 to control the game as amateur, to strengthen the national All Black team and to promote the popular support for the game through the establishment of inter-provincial competitions.

The NZRFU's desire to strengthen the national All Black team required that it foster international rugby relations. In the amateur period its efforts to be included in the imperial rugby network required enforcement of the amateur regulations as dictated by the English Rugby Football Union (RFU). These regulations required the subordination of provincial unions and restrictions on the inter-provincial competitions. The promotion of the game as popular and amateur required that the NZRFU introduce 'market solutions' in the form of regular competitions (Gallaher and Stead, 1906). Continuous tensions have arisen out of the centralised control by the NZRFU over inter-provincial competitions and organisational efforts to tie bigger and smaller provincial teams together in national competitions (Leifer, 1995). Throughout this study, the Canterbury provincial union provides the example of a large city-based provincial union which, together with a few other large city-based provincial unions, emerged to dominate inter-provincial competitions. This domination exacerbated both financial and competitive differences between provincial unions.

As South African rugby emerged as a significant international test match opposition solutions to ethnic tensions, requiring the marginalisation of Maori players, encouraged the promotion of the national Maori rugby union team, established in 1910. In turn, this second national team helped duplicate a dual national and ethnic institutionalisation of the game at the international level. The establishment of international and transnational competitions in the 1980s involved a realignment of the 'colonial relations' and the inclusion of 'minor' rugby nations from outside of the British sphere of influence. In 1995, these international relations were again reworked by the southern hemisphere national rugby unions provoking the introduction of professionalism.

Inter-linked with the organisational efforts to strengthen the All Black team has been the continuing tension over player incentives and forms of regulation (Wilson, 1994) between administrators and players at local and national levels. Despite the focus on the introduction of professionalism in 1995 as creating new 'labour' tensions (Maguire and Tuck, 1998: 122), these tensions are not new. They have been a feature of

relations within the sport since its institutionalisation. Tensions over the exclusion and punishment of players intensified around international sporting contact at the turn of the 20th century and resulted in the establishment of the professional rugby league code in the southern hemisphere. The rivalry between the amateur and professional rugby codes, and the growing significance of television sponsorship, increased tensions between administrators and players towards the end of the 20th century. All Black players' new media-generated opportunities to promote their player profiles forced the NZRFU to introduce centralised strategies to generate 'amateur payments' in the early 1990s. In 1995, players allying with pay-TV sponsors provoked the introduction of a media-sponsored transnational competition and centralised professional player contracts.

The study is organised into six chapters. Each chapter inter-weaves a sociological analysis with a historical narrative. Together they span the period from the late 19th century till the year 2000. A continuing theme running through these chapters is the NZRFU's organisational efforts to promote the game as national and popular and to strengthen the All Black team. These organisational efforts take the form of a continuous process of reworking centralised regulation. Professional 'market solutions' of the current period are simply the most recent example of this ordering process.

The first three chapters, are concerned with the centralised institutionalisation of the game, the promotion of the New Zealand Maori team, and inter-provincial competitions in the amateur period to 1995. Drawing on secondary sources and historical data, they examine challenges to the NZRFU's promotion of the game as the national amateur sport and to the goal of strengthening the All Black team from the rival professional code of rugby league, from continued contact with South Africa and from competing leisure activities. These challenges required a combination of 'market solutions' and centralised 'fixes', which, in turn, threatened to expose the New Zealand game as 'professional'. The latter three chapters, which incorporate interviews with players, administrators, coaches and sponsors, are concerned with the introduction of media-sponsored transnational professional competitions and span the period from the

late 1970s to 2000. In this period challenges to the game continue. Solutions to these challenges, including transnational media sponsored competition, are revealed as having provoked a realignment of international relations and an increasing, global player migration. Similarly, rivalry between the two rugby codes has become more, not less, significant.

2

ADMINISTERING THE COLONIAL ENTERPRISE: CLUBS V NATIONAL UNIONS

2.0 Introduction:

The introduction of the game of rugby to New Zealand was part of a broader cultural transmission of the ‘Victorian elite values’ of sportsmanship, self-effacement and team spirit that took place as British migrants brought ‘Victorian’ games to regions of the Empire in the last quarter of the 19th century. Conventional narrative suggests that it was British public school pupils and in particular teachers from England and Scotland who introduced the game in the 1860s and 1870s (Swan, 1948). The ex-public school networks stretching back to England and Scotland helped facilitate the institutionalisation of the game which became controlled, from 1892, by the national amateur rugby union organisation, the NZRFU. The consolidation of the NZRFU was to confirm New Zealand as a rugby nation.

Like the Welsh, New Zealand’s national administration with centralised authority became established as a means of protecting the game as the national amateur game. However, the formation of a national union to control the national New Zealand team was not an expression of nationalist sentiments on the part of the New Zealand

administrators. As Appadurai (1995: 33) has argued about the early organisation of national cricket teams in India, another context of British colonial arrangements, these teams were not “a spin-off of the ‘imagined community’ of nationalist politicians”. Instead, nationally organised teams should be understood as an “internal demand of the colonial enterprise”. Administering these teams “required cognate national and protonational enterprises in the colonies” (Appadurai, 1995: 33). The 1900s account by two New Zealand representative ‘All Black’ players, Gallaher and Stead (1906), depicts the New Zealand ‘colonial enterprise’ as a model of organisational efficiency through which amateurism was protected and player incentives institutionalised through graded competitions. This ‘enterprise’ was not ‘built from below’ (Fougere, 1989) but strictly administered through the hierarchical national administration. It was controlled by the NZRFU, which significantly identified itself as a “subsidiary authority” acknowledging “the supremacy of the mother Union” (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 232).

Contrasting organisational arrangements of the ‘colonial enterprise’ of rugby teams and competitions developed in different regions. The centralised *national* authority, which emerged in New Zealand and Wales, contrasted sharply with developments in England and Australia. In the latter countries, regional divisions characterised the development and institutionalisation of amateur and professional rugby codes. In England, the two regional rugby codes became characterised by strong clubs. On the Australian East Coast, where ‘region’ and ‘colony’ (later state) overlapped, regions became divided according to the codes of either rugby or Victorian rules. While arguing that a continuous process of transnational cultural transmission influenced the institutionalisation of the game of rugby, this chapter elaborates on the significance of the organisational differences by drawing on accounts about the establishment of rugby within the national settings of New Zealand, Wales, Australia and England until 1905.

I examine the ways in which transnational networks facilitated the spread of games across regions in the 19th and early 20th centuries and how, as they became embedded in different regions, the games changed in unpredictable ways (Nauright and Chandler, 1999: xiii). For example, local and transnational networks directly influenced how rules for playing the game became codified and translated into the establishment of the social

practices for playing rugby. So too did the timing of the introduction of the game, institutional practices regarding public and private school education, the co-existence of competing football codes, competing value-systems, forms of class and ethnic inclusion and exclusion and transnational sporting relations.

In different regions organisational efforts and values varied between those where the importance of spreading the game nationally was asserted and those where the 'business' of clubs was dominant. In New Zealand and Wales, where national rugby union administrators favoured the amateur principle as a means of popularising the game nationally and to protect imperial relations, hierarchical structures characterised the organisation of rugby. This organisation ensured the national administrators a dominant role. By contrast, in the English case, clubs had a controlling influence on the way the game was organised in both the northern professional rugby league and the southern amateur rugby union regions.

The emergence of different organisational forms and disputes over rules and games between actors involved in the same game not only shaped the continuous regional and national processes of the games' 'indigenisation', but also inform debates on rugby codes today. In New Zealand and Wales, national rugby union administrators promoted rugby as a *national* sport and focused their efforts on preserving international contact. However, they did this within a context of allegations of professionalism by the English, Scottish and Irish national rugby unions and increasing demand for regular domestic competitions by their federated clubs and unions. To negotiate these demands and allegations they formed national bodies with centralised authority to protect their game as amateur. Paradoxically, this development secured ongoing contact with Britain but also affirmed the English RFU's dominance in the international game.

2.1 *Games and Rules: the formation of the Football Association and the Rugby Football Union*

What we know today as the games of rugby union and soccer followed from the institutionalisation of national administrative organisations establishing rules controlling

their own football codes¹. The games emerged in England out of conflict and rivalry between English public schools in the early to mid-19th century (Dunning and Sheard, 1979) over the control by the organisations over players and competitions leading to the establishment of new games with their own rules. In turn this led to new conflicts over the control of players and competitions. This problem of hierarchical control and regulation remains central to all sports (Leifer, 1995).

The recording of rules to control the games played at public schools was the first move towards the establishment of, and distinction between, codes. Rules for playing football at Rugby school were recorded in 1845 and four years later students at Eton school recorded their rules for playing their version of football, which contrasted markedly with Rugby's rules. The contrasting rules at these two schools emerged within a context of changes to public and private educational establishments and status rivalry between schools. These changes coincided with struggles for self-rule and self-determination among pupils with increasingly diverse backgrounds at public schools (Honey, 1977). Conflict within the public schools extended to status competition between the schools. The latter was reflected in the importance placed on the standing of the schools measured in academic prizes and examination results as well as on the playing fields (Hobsbawm, 1983: 294).

The standardisation and specialisation of rugby rules, which developed at Rugby School during the 1830s and 1840s, was to make it distinctive in a number of ways. The school introduced goal posts with a cross-bar (H-shaped) over which the ball was kicked for a goal, line-outs, scrummages, touch-downs, and a gradual but increasing emphasis on carrying the ball forward. It also introduced uniforms, matches of equal, limited numbers of players, and 'ends' chosen on the basis of the toss of a coin as well as a change of ends after a goal was scored (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 90). In 1845

¹ I use the term football to describe the games played prior to the organisation of rugby, soccer, rugby league and Victorian Rules. I am conscious of the fact that 'soccer' is not generally used to describe 'association football' in the UK. This is generally the case in New Zealand, however, and, in general, outside of the UK because it enables distinctions to be made between the various codes and because the American version of football adds to the confusion over the names of games played with a 'football'. Apart from initially using 'football', I later use the term as shorthand for two or more of the codified football games mentioned above.

Rugby's rules were written in *The Laws of Football as Played at Rugby School* (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 91). Four years later, Eton's football rules were written.

According to the Eton rules, the ball could not be caught, carried, thrown or struck by the hand and a goal could be scored only underneath the cross-bar between the goal posts (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 99). As an 'established' public school, Eton was an important rival to Rugby as both schools played football games. A feature of the rivalry included a denigration of the opposing school's football code. This included the identification by Etonians of 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 and Sheard, 1979: 94). In reply, Rugbeians viewed the abolition of 'hacking' at Eton as an 'emasculat[i]on' of football.

These rivalries were carried through to universities where students from the most elite public schools strove to have their school rules adopted as the preferred rules. Outside of educational establishments ex-pupils established football clubs which played according to the rules developed in their schools and universities. The clubs formed by ex-public schoolboys re-enacted 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 (Weber, 1970; Holt, 1981; Chandler, 1999; Terret, 1999; Bonini, 1999, Light, 1999). In so doing, they assisted their old schools' social standing and confirmed the old boys as belonging to a distinct and exclusive 'class' (Bourdieu, 1984; 1995). However, while ex-pupils formed the first clubs in the 1850s, the expansion of clubs both within and outside of England would increasingly involve the formation of community-focused institutions. With this expansion, rules and values became increasingly contested.

At the universities of Oxford and Cambridge a modification of 'football' rules took place as ex-public school students from an increasing number of public schools began to play 'football'. At Cambridge, the early dominance of ex-public schoolboys from the most established and elite schools, including Eton and Harrow, ensured that the 'kicking' rules referred to as soccer became adopted as the rules at university matches. The majority of

the newly formed football clubs established by ex-public school pupils and university graduates also adopted these rules. Contact between these clubs, supported by improvements in transportation and communication and the increasingly desirable accomplishments and values linked with football, encouraged clubs to strive for national rather than merely local reputations (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 107). In order to achieve this national status, clubs met to unify rules for playing the game and the prestige of Cambridge University convinced the predominantly London-based football clubs to adopt the 14 Cambridge rules as the English Football Association's (FA) rules in 1863.

As a result of the unification of rules, clubs playing the soccer rules grew throughout the 1860s and, in 1871, the FA introduced the national FA Cup between clubs and staged the first soccer international between an English and a Scottish team the following year (Mason, 1980: 16). By contrast, the variety of rules between rugby clubs restricted inter-club contact and only two clubs, Richmond and Ravenscourt Park, played inter-club matches by 1872 (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 113). However, encouraged by the establishment of the first rugby international between an English and a Scottish team in 1871, the same year as the first soccer international, twenty-one predominantly London-based clubs, formed the RFU in 1872. The RFU member-clubs, mostly ex-Rugbeians, agreed upon 59 rules for playing rugby, including the abolition of hacking. This was an attempt to overcome the increasing critique of violence in the game of rugby and the variety of rules prohibiting the spread of the game.

2.2 *Rules and Games: National and Regional Settlements*

The desire of the predominantly London-based rugby clubs that founded these national organisations was for matches to be player-orientated, emphasising the intrinsic reward of playing for fun and pleasure. However, for both soccer and rugby clubs, particularly in the North of England where ex-public school pupils did not exclusively form clubs, competitive local rivalries quickly became the basis of organised competitions. This institutionalisation of these competitive local rivalries encouraged the establishment of cup and league competitions. The success of these competitions expanded the basis of

support for both rugby and soccer clubs in the North of England in the second half of the 19th century. The by-product of this success was rising conflict and disputes over rules and values associated with the games between northern, regional and London-based national organisations.

The possibility for games to attract spectators in the North of England was facilitated by the growth in factory and industrial work. Despite industrial and regional variation in the introduction of holidays for workers, the expansion in factory work in the North of England was followed by increased leisure time for factory workers enabling them to pay for the pleasures of attending games (Vamplew, 1988; Biggart, 1994: 676)². Cups and leagues provided financial prosperity for northern clubs enabling them to retain and attract players with payments and contributed ultimately to the English RFU losing control as *senior* northern rugby clubs split to form the Northern Union (NU) in 1895.

The development of rugby cups and leagues in the North of England from the late 1870s, which was to provoke the split in 1895, followed the establishment of soccer cups and leagues. In Yorkshire the early influence of local businessmen encouraged the establishment of the Yorkshire rugby Challenge Cup in 1877. Other northern counties followed in the early 1880s: Northumberland (1880), Durham (1880), Cumberland (1882) (Williams, 1989: 312; Vamplew, 1988: 64). Lancashire was slower to establish a county rugby cup and the early success of Lancashire soccer clubs in the FA Cup meant that rugby administrators in Lancashire faced significant competition for players and spectators from soccer. In addition, leading northern soccer clubs agreed to form a national Football League in 1888 of 12 teams involved in home-and-away matches. By World War One this league had expanded to 40 teams from a greater geographical area divided into two divisions (Vamplew, 1988: 62; Lewis, 1997: 24). Coinciding with the establishment of the Football League in 1888, northern rugby counties convinced the

² From 1830, Saint Monday became an unofficial time for working class recreation and between 1840 and 1860 it was almost universally observed in England. The introduction of the Ten-Hour Act in 1847 and the Saturday half-holiday gave factory workers more free time in which to enjoy leisure activities. However, Lewis (1997) notes that steel workers in the North East of Wales did not get the Saturday half-holiday until the late 1880s. Additionally, white-collar workers including clerks and shopkeepers did not enjoy these reduced working hours. The development of the railways made it possible for workers to travel to the seaside (Urry, 1990) while it also meant that spectators could attend their team's away-matches (Vamplew, 1988).

English RFU to introduce a national county rugby championship. Yorkshire won this cup seven out of the first eight seasons while Lancashire won it in 1891. Northern rugby clubs were also the first to take the lead from soccer and establish league competitions. In 1892 Yorkshire introduced the first league competition in rugby which, by 1894-5, had four divisions compared with Lancashire's three divisions. This brought the total number of clubs in the two counties to 81 clubs in the 1890s (Vamplew, 1988: 64; Latham, 1996: 74).

The dominance of the northern gate-taking rugby clubs was also reflected in the selection of the English national team. The first national rugby team to play against Scotland in 1871 included six northern players from Manchester and Liverpool clubs, all of whom were ex-public school pupils. By 1888 the national rugby side which played against the New Zealand Native team (see below) contained ten northern players from newer, less socially exclusive clubs based, with the exception of Bradford, in small towns: Broughton Rangers, Dewsbury, Heckmondwike, Bradford, Featherstone, Free Wanderers, Morley, Batley, Halifax and Hartlepool Rovers (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 147-148). In addition, eighteen players affiliated to northern clubs were included in the unofficial Australasia rugby tour by a British team in 1888, organised by two professional cricketers, Shaw and Shrewsbury (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 151-152).

The success of northern rugby and soccer clubs was to lead to disputes over player payments, league competitions and the control over the selection of national teams. In soccer, professionalism was introduced in 1885, three years before the establishment of the Football League. By contrast, regional league competitions were established in rugby before disputes over professionalism escalated in the 1890s. These disputes produced different outcomes in the two codes. The move to have professionalism accepted in soccer came from urban, commercially successful northern and midland's soccer clubs which also had a direct representation on the FA's national council (Mason, 1980). This move highlighted a growing rift largely between the FA, which was intent on preserving the game of soccer as amateur and encouraging participation for intrinsic reward, and the northern clubs' concern with promoting a spectator-based game. In 1884 the northern clubs' threat to withdraw from the FA forced it to legalise

professionalism. This took effect in 1885 through the FA's introduction of rules, which distinguished between amateur and professional players and restricted players' movement either through requiring them to have an appropriate amateur status or through the enforcement of professional contracts.

The settlement of the dispute between professional soccer clubs and the FA in 1885, which preserved soccer as one game controlled by the FA, differed from the way the dispute over player payments and control over the game of rugby was to be resolved. As in the case of soccer, the dispute in rugby was provoked by the success of the northern rugby club competitions and spectator crowds of five and six thousand at rugby cup and league matches were not uncommon by the mid-1880s in Yorkshire and Lancashire. In 1886 the Wigan Charity Cup final attracted fifteen thousand spectators (Latham, 1996 72). By the 1890s crowds had further increased:

For example, a crowd of 22,000 watched Bradford play Halifax in the Yorkshire Cup in 1893, and 410 pounds was taken at the gate. On 2 January 1895, a crowd of 10,000 was reported at the match between Bradford and Leeds and one of 4,000 at that between St Helens recreation and St Helens. On 23 January 1895, a crowd of 8-10,000 was reported at the Yorkshire Senior Competition match between Liversedge and Manningham (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 149).

Southern rugby matches did not attract the same interest:

...only 'upwards of a thousand' attended the match between Blackheath and London Scottish reported in *The Times* on 6 November 1886, while on 11 January 1895, no more than 1,500 are reported as having turned out to watch Kent play Midland Countries (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 149).

The growing success of rugby in the north paralleled the earlier developments in soccer and encouraged senior rugby clubs to entice players with payments to help their clubs win and to secure continued spectator support.

In 1886, the year after professionalism was accepted in soccer, the English RFU reacted to the commercial success of the game in the north by forbidding anyone from profiting financially from the game (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 150). As had been the case in soccer in 1882, amateur rules were tightened in an effort to discourage professionalism and the pursuit of profit through competitions. By the early 1890s, as rugby clubs in the North continued to experience economic growth through the expansion of leagues, Yorkshire's leagues, superimposed onto the existing knockout system, included a senior,

a second and a third competition without a promotion-relegation regulation (Dunning and Sheard, 1976: 39-40). This exclusive structure of the senior and most lucrative league in Yorkshire proved to be the most significant point of contention by the mid-1890s.

In 1893, Yorkshire county representatives sought a compromise between the senior rugby clubs in Yorkshire, which sought to retain the 'closed' leagues and to pay players broken-time payment, and the other clubs in Yorkshire which resisted the senior clubs' exclusive dominance of the leagues. They approached the RFU with a proposal that included three issues: that RFU meetings should be held alternate years in London and at a northern venue, that broken-time payment be legalised, and that county unions be granted permission to set up leagues (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 167). This proposal did not propose professionalism. The senior rugby clubs sought to separate the issue of 'professionalism' from the issue of league competitions as a means of protecting their leagues because they were popular and profitable and helped the northern rugby clubs retain spectator interest against the soccer competitions within their regions. At the same time, they did not encourage professionalism because that would provoke the RFU to exclude them from national county competition.

The Yorkshire representatives' efforts to legalise broken-time payment and their control over leagues were turned down at the RFU meeting in 1893. As a result, the YRU was required to implement a promotion-relegation system into its existing leagues. This central rule supported the junior clubs' struggle against the senior clubs and it was implemented in 1893 under protest from the clubs from the senior competition. In 1895, however, only weeks before the RFU proposed to introduce strict anti-professionalism regulations, 22 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 of rugby clubs. This new Union introduced changes to the rules of the game in 1896. The new rules abolished lineouts and kicking to touch. While the founding clubs of the Northern Union had agreed to broken-time payments of six shillings a day in 1895, rather than professional payments, by 1898 professional contracts were introduced in conjunction with tighter

rules regarding the movement of players between clubs. In 1906, the number of players on the field was reduced to thirteen and the game became known as rugby league and distinct from rugby union (Greenhalgh, 1992).

In 1896 and 1897, clubs affiliated to the NU increased from 48 to 80 while rugby union clubs declined in Lancashire and Yorkshire. However, the success of the NU began to wane from around the turn of the century. Some clubs, including Manningham, winners of the NU's 1896 championship, voted to go over to soccer in 1903 (Mason, 1980: 46). The Leeds Parish Church club withdrew from the NU in 1901 signalling the end of the church's involvement in NU at a national level (Collins, 1998: 184-5). This decline was in part caused by soccer's success and by the lack of revenue redistribution ensuring weaker clubs' survival (Leifer, 1995). Collins (1998: 180-181) suggests that the decline of rugby league clubs was caused by the success of soccer competitions which attracted large spectator support because soccer was "a truly national game". By contrast, Latham (1996) suggests that the failure was organisational. The demise of clubs was caused by the lack of a centralised authority that could ensure the survival of, not just the senior league competition, but also the junior clubs. He notes that the costs of travelling and the unwillingness of the new Union to provide financial assistance meant that it could not expand. Latham (1996: 80) concludes,

Though broken-time was an issue behind the Northern Union's foundation, it was far from the only one. At the heart of the problem was the senior clubs' battle to establish themselves against the intransigent attitude of the Rugby Union and to set up and control their own league and cup competitions and to safeguard their fixtures. From the start there was no intention to pay anything but broken-time, set at a maximum of six shillings a day.... Crucially there was no strategy for expansion for the smaller clubs left with no real alternative but to join the Northern Union. But the majority was unable to pay broken-time or afford the onset of professionalism. Failing to swim in the big pond many failed to survive and rugby league never returned to those areas.

The result of the split in the game was to confirm the English RFU's control over the rules for playing rugby union. Following the split, the English RFU's efforts to control the cultural transmission involved asserting a dominant role on the International Rugby Board (IRB). To foster and protect the game's values of amateurism and gentlemanly participation in friendly games, 'fitting' representative teams of "proselytisers" (Mangan, 1988) were selected and national teams and international contests became central to the

project of spreading the RFU's values. However, the transfer of games to other regions would produce a greater flux within and across these regions and on-going challenge to the southern English rules and values.

2.3 *International disputes over rules and Welsh centralised authority*

By the turn of the century soccer was, arguably, established as the 'national' game in England enjoying the greatest support following the rising popularity of the national FA Cup and the expansion of the national football league. Rugby league was confined to the northern regions of England while rugby union was confined to the South and West of England. The two regional rugby codes focused on two different goals: the success of cup and league competitions in the case of rugby league and preserving amateurism in the case of rugby union. The latter was assisted by a number of grammar and public schools exchanging soccer for rugby union in the 1920s and 1930s (Mason, 1989: 148-49). This secured rugby union as an exclusive sport.

The idea of promoting rugby as a national game in England was sacrificed by the efforts to protect these amateur goals. In Scotland and Ireland, the transmission and indigenisation of games took place within a context of existing indigenous games and conflict arising over the political and ideological domination by England (Bairner, 1994; Cronin, 1999). In both Scotland and Ireland, where national rugby organisations were established in 1873 and 1875, rugby union became embedded as a minor, exclusive sport as in the South and West of England (Williams, 1989). As in England, soccer came to occupy the position as the national game above the indigenous game of shinty in Scotland. Gaelic Football, which identified with the Irish independence movement, gained popularity alongside soccer in the Irish Republic. In Northern Ireland, the adoption of rugby, soccer and Gaelic football in communities and educational institutions divided along the lines of English and Gaelic affiliations. Only in Wales did rugby become institutionalised as popular and national.

The Welsh administrators' belief in rugby union as a national game emerged out of a context in which the Welsh nation was "born" (Appadurai, 1995). Yet, as in the case of

the national organisation of cricket in India, 'nationalist' movements and demands for independence from England did not spark the national organisation of rugby union in Wales. Rather, the institutionalisation of centralised control over rugby union in the form of the Welsh Football Union (WFU) was established as a means to control the selection of national teams and to foster relations with the English national team. However, developing competitive national Welsh rugby union teams required the promotion of local and national competitions which generated increasing spectator interest and gate-takings. Allegations of professionalism would follow this popularisation.

Rugby was introduced in Wales in the 1870s, and coincided with the introduction of political and administrative institutions, including separate legislation and an education system which helped foster the view of Wales as a distinct entity (Smith and Williams, 1980: 15). In this context, rugby union flourished relative to professional soccer and rugby league. The introduction of rugby to Wales followed the path of that in England where administrators with English public school and university backgrounds controlled the establishment of the first clubs (Smith and Williams, 1981: 11). The first club established in Llanelli in 1875 was founded by ex-Rugbeians but locally educated men established other clubs including Neath (1871), Newport (1874) and the South Wales Football Club (1875). The South Wales Challenge Cup was established in 1877 and in 1881 eleven clubs established the WFU. The establishment of a national rugby organisation followed, and was arguably provoked by, the first 'privately' arranged rugby match between England and Wales in 1881, in which the Welsh team suffered a decisive defeat (Smith and Williams, 1981: 40). The formation of the WFU signalled an increasing emphasis on the establishment of competitive Welsh national teams and national administrators' efforts to protect international contact, particularly with England.

Although the game quickly gained broad popularity, clubs became concentrated in the towns and valleys of industrial South Wales. In the last three decades of the 19th century an increasing number of factory and mining workers dominated the composition of the Welsh population and this was reflected in the membership of rugby clubs. Between

1871 and 1911, the population grew by nearly one million with 256,000, or one in every three men, working in the mines (Williams, 1989: 314). By the turn of the 20th century, these workers had established seventy rugby clubs. The close proximity to the rugby union strongholds in the west of England, such as Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Devon, led to leading schools in Wales adopting rugby as opposed to soccer as the schools' sport (Smith and Williams, 1981: 31). Soccer did eventually gain a foothold in Wales, but, it was more than a decade after rugby's establishment. Soccer clubs, founded from the 1880s in Wales, were established in the less populated Northeast which enabled contact with English soccer strongholds in Merseyside, Liverpool and Birmingham.

In contrast to the difficulty of soccer and later rugby league to prosper, rugby union prospered in Wales by following the trend in the North of England of establishing a rugby union Challenge Cup and league competitions during the 1880s and 1890s (Williams, 1989: 315). As in the North of England, the establishment of cups and leagues was encouraged by the community, neighbourhood and work-place rivalries which rugby union matches fostered. The popularity of these matches provided substantial gate-takings and this prosperity, coupled with the high wages of workers in the coal and steel industries, encouraged clubs to regard payment of 'expenses' to players as legitimate. Not surprisingly, Welsh clubs were widely accused of professionalism by the three other Home Unions and the WFU was forced to investigate several clubs and players in order to maintain international contact. However, few players and clubs were suspended and the Welsh national administrators asserted the view that financial 'generosity' towards players was regarded as different from professionalism, as the example of the testimonial to Arthur J. Gould in 1897 indicated.

At the turn of the 20th century Arthur Gould was widely regarded as one of the game's greatest players and certainly the most famous Welsh rugby player. By 1897 his talents had earned him more 'caps' and he had scored more tries and kicked more goals than any other player in the game. In 1897, supporters wanted to show their appreciation of Gould's achievements by giving him the deeds to his house. The money to cover the mortgage on his house came from donations, some from as far away as the USA,

Australia and Africa. The WFU supported the testimonial by donating £50, but came under attack from the English RFU which regarded “the giving of a house as tantamount to the giving of a monetary testimonial” (Williams, 1985: 252).

The Gould dispute was complicated by the early conflicts associated with the formation of the International Rugby Football Board (IRB) in 1887 by the Scottish, Irish and Welsh national rugby unions. The English representation sought to retain a dominant position on the international board, a position rugby administrators argued England deserved as not only the founder of the sport, but also the country with the greatest number of affiliated clubs. At the founding meeting in 1887 the English RFU refused to agree to the proposed by-laws and did not enter the IRB until 1890 when the conflict had been resolved to its satisfaction. The conflict over the by-laws focused on the proposal for equal representation by member nations, that matches be played under the rules of the IRB and that “the International Board shall have absolute and exclusive jurisdiction over all disputes arising in international matches played under their rules” (Smith and Williams, 1980: 50). The English RFU refused to accept these by-laws although the IRB modified the proposal in 1888 by introducing a secondary clause to By-law 5 which gave the board “no power to interfere with the game as played within the limits of the different Unions” (Smith and Williams, 1980: 50).

The English RFU returned to the board, however, only after arbitration had resolved that “international matches should be played under one code of laws and that the International Board should consist of six representatives from the R.F.U. and two from each of the other countries” (Smith and Williams, 1980: 50). This position gave the English RFU a controlling influence on the board and, more significantly, control over international games. It held this position until 1948 when its votes were reduced from six to two and the New Zealand, Australian and South African national rugby unions were admitted to the board (Smith and Williams, 1980: 51). In addition, arbitration’s recommendation included the English RFU’s position on the value of a try as one point. The ‘original’ IRB, without England as a member, had introduced a points system in 1889 that included “four points for a goal from a try, three points for a dropped goal and a goal from a mark, and two points for a try” (Dobbs, 1973: 84). In contrast to this

system, the English RFU had introduced its own set of ‘point values’, which significantly included the rewarding of a penalty goal with two points. Despite the IRB’s position on a try being worth two points and no points for a penalty goal, it accepted the English RFU’s position recommended by arbitration and reduced the value of a try to one point and introduced the penalty goal in 1890. However, in international matches played in 1892 and 1893 a try was given two points and, in 1894, a try increased in value to three points (Smith and Williams, 1980: 474).

In 1897, the IRB denounced Gould’s testimonial as an act of professionalism forcing the WFU to withdraw from the board temporarily. In the 1896-7 season the English RFU banned clubs from playing against Newport, Gould’s club. However, in 1897 English clubs lobbied the RFU to drop the ban because the Welsh matches attracted large gates. The English RFU backed down and decided to regard Gould’s case as exceptional, but only after the WFU agreed to investigate its affairs. This required the WFU to assert greater centralised authority over the playing of the game including discontinuing the popular Challenge Cup in 1897 (Howe, 1999: 167). Further, they banned “any Welsh player who had joined the Northern Union but also any who played alongside them in any other match” (Smith and Williams, 1980: 111-112). English clubs in the Southwest resumed matches with the southern Welsh clubs and the English and Irish national teams resumed matches against the Welsh national team. However, the Scottish Rugby Union refused to play international matches against Wales in 1897 and 1898 although Wales rejoined the IRB in 1898 (Williams, 1985: 253; Williams, 1989: 317; Collins, 1998: 165).

Despite the resistance against being dictated to by the IRB, the Welsh national administrators did not consider a split from the rugby union game and joining with the Northern Union as an option. According to Williams (1985: 266), the embeddedness of the game in Wales reflected Welsh administrators’ “aspirations and ambitions within the British political system and Empire”. This meant that the WFU did not view a split from the International Rugby Board and an affiliation with the *regional* NU as an avenue for it

to pursue these *international* aspirations. “A WRU³ that cut itself off from the international rugby fraternity by countenancing professionalism could not play the required role, since Wales would thereby be reduced to a region playing the regional representatives of the north of England” (Williams, 1985: 266). Williams continues:

Given the specific character and needs of South Wales at the beginning of this century, what was required was not a game that proletarianized itself through professionalism, but one which could embrace the spectrum of the whole community. The game had embedded itself sufficiently deeply in the popular culture and the national consciousness alike by now for there to be give-and-take on both sides. Working men were never excluded, and they deferred to the discipline and the obligations imposed by the game and its formalities. Equally, the game’s administrators were quite prepared to tolerate the over-generous payment of expenses to working-class players. What they could not consent to was the professionalizing and therefore proletarianizing of the game which would mean it forfeiting its middle-class support, and replacing a classless with a class-specific image. With few exceptions, rugby in Scotland, Ireland and, in its different ways, in the north and south of England, was socially exclusive. In Wales, where it was cast in a symbolic unifying role, it was socially *inclusive*... (emphasis in original).

Despite the Welsh rugby administrators’ concern to remain part of the English dominated international networks, its concern to establish rugby union as the national game meant it adopted a more flexible interpretation of the amateur regulations. Within three decades of organised rugby union in Wales, the game had become linked with expressions of national identity, unity and pride. The broad popularity fostered by the Welsh national administrators’ central control over the game and their refusal of professionalism would be mirrored in New Zealand where the establishment of the NZRFU would retain centralised control over the game as a means of fostering international contact and punishing professionalism. The Welsh and English national administrators’ response to the crisis regarding ‘professionalism’ highlights these actors’ places in both national and international networks. By the 1890s, international networks were expanding following the growing popularity of the game in the ‘colonies’. This development encouraged the four Home Unions to send proselytisers to these regions entrusted with the job of promoting the amateur values of the rugby union game. The first organisation of rugby clubs outside of Britain and Ireland emerged in Australia and the development of strong club competitions on the Australian East Coast was to have a decided influence on the development of rugby in New Zealand.

³ The Welsh Football Union changed name to the Welsh Rugby Union after World War One (Smith and Williams, 1981: 204).

2.4 *Cultural transmission and local variation in Australia*

In contrast to New Zealand and Wales, on the Australian continent regional variation marked the spread of football games and cricket, rather than rugby, came to be the national ‘passion’. ‘Football’ games, resembling the kicking and handling games played in English public schools, were played in the Australian colonies in the 1850s. This places the introduction of football games to Australia ahead of their introduction to New Zealand and South Africa and simultaneous with the introduction of the game to Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Popular club competitions embracing a variety of football codes emerged on the East Coast and in South Australia. As in the northern hemisphere, private school education was crucial in the development and diffusion of these competitions. In New South Wales and Queensland, rugby quickly came to dominate while in Victoria and South Australia, Victorian Rules football was successful and rugby remained a minor sport.

As in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, ex-pupils taught by teachers from Britain at Sydney’s exclusive early private schools were first to play rugby in Australia. The first clubs were established in Sydney: University of Sydney (1863), Sydney Football Club (1865) and Wallaroo (1870) (Phillips, 1994). By contrast, the early and less socially exclusive football clubs in Victoria, including Melbourne Football Club (1858) and in the next few years South Yarra, St Kilda, Emerald Hill, Richmond, Collingwood, Carlton, Royal Park, etc., were not established by ex-pupils or British old boys of public schools (Sandercock and Turner, 1981). Effective competition to the popularity of each code in both regions was minimal.

Sydney’s first rugby competition sparked the formation of the Southern Rugby Football Union (SRFU) in 1874. This union was established to provide for consistent game rules and competition regulations through the adoption of the English RFU rules and as protection against the problem of emerging challenges to rugby from advocates of soccer and the Victorian game (Phillips, 1996). Ex-pupils from private schools and Sydney University established the clubs participating in this competition and old boys spread the game outside of Sydney when they returned to their rural properties after completing

their education. The game subsequently became established in the districts that later formed the Australian Capital Territory. From five clubs in 1874, rugby clubs in Sydney increased to 79 by the turn of the century. In 1897, the Metropolitan Rugby Union was formed to organise matches in Sydney. These developments were matched in Queensland after the invitation to a New South Wales team of an all expenses paid tour by the SRFU in 1882. Subsequently, clubs in Brisbane increased from two in 1882 to 72 in 1891 (Horton, 1992; 1994).

The support of the middle classes for rugby and the success of the Queensland team in Sydney in 1882 encouraged the spread of rugby in both regions. Local clubs and elite supporters enabled representative teams to be sent to Sydney and these inter-colonial relations ensured its subsequent broad popularity. The adoption of rugby in state schools in 1888 and increasing inter-state and international matches, beginning in 1882, entrenched this popularity (Phillips, 1994: 195-6). The adoption of rugby in state schools, which encouraged the involvement of players from outside the economic and social elites, coincided with the first international rugby matches against the unofficial British team in 1888 and the New Zealand Native team in 1889. Additionally, between 1888 and 1899 when the first official Great Britain team toured the Australian East Coast, four New Zealand teams toured Australia. These international and colonial visits helped popularise rugby and increased the income for the two regional rugby administrations, New South Wales Rugby Union (SRFU renamed to NSWRU in 1892) and the Queensland Rugby Union (QRU) in 1892. By 1890, rugby matches on the East Coast began to match the mass attendance at football matches in the 1880s in Victoria.

In the 1870s in Victoria, football clubs began playing according to the rules devised by the Melbourne Football club in 1866 (Sandercock and Turner, 1981: 23-27). These rules were local innovations based on an amalgam of English public school precedents but with unique variations including no off-side rule and players not running with the ball, as in rugby, but having to pass it by kicking (and later punting) it. No dribbling, as in both rugby and soccer, was allowed and the goal consisted of uprights, but no cross-bar, through which the ball had to be kicked to score a goal. The establishment of the Victorian Football Association (VFA) in 1877, formed by five Melbourne clubs to

arbitrate over disputes over rules and to oversee the organisation of club competitions, also had the aim of organising inter-colonial matches within Australia. The latter aim met with resistance from the SRFU.

The VFA's aim of spreading the game nationally faced difficulties because of internal competition to the game in Victoria. In the 1890s a Victorian Rugby Union was formed and there were fears that the 'Australian' game would lose out (Sandercock and Turner, 1981: 46). As a means to revitalise spectator interest, eight senior Melbourne clubs met to form the Victorian Football League (VFL) in 1896. The move to form an exclusive league of the strongest clubs was also a protest against the VFA's attempt to enforce amateur regulations and to control all financial matters involving clubs. As noted by Sandercock and Turner (1981: 51-52):

The VFA secretary Marshall had earlier in the season proposed that the Association should handle all club finances, taking all gate money, paying all running expenses, and dividing what was left among Melbourne's charities. Marshall's proposal was supported by those who were struggling to keep football an amateur gentlemanly game.

In 1886 the VFA had introduced a rule that disqualified players who received payment either directly or indirectly for playing. In a repeat of the disputes over professionalism in rugby in England, the rules and efforts adopted by the central Melbourne administration to control the game as amateur met with resistance from senior clubs.

In response to the VFA's attempt at enforcing a system of centralised control including amateur regulations, the VFL legalised professionalism. In contrast to the introduction of professionalism in rugby by the Northern Union after the split and the lack of regulations to ensure the clubs' survival, the VFL recognised that player 'poaching' by clubs could exacerbate the financial vulnerability of clubs. The introduction of professionalism by the VFL thus involved regulations limiting the movement of players through a system of residential qualification, club districts and salary caps. This ensured relatively low player contracts but, importantly, the establishment of feeder-club structures ensuring the long-term prosperity of the football league. The success of the new league encouraged the spread of the game in South and West Australia. Further success encouraged the view of Victorian rules as the 'national' Australian game which by 1895 "had outstripped all other sports in the affection of four of the six Australian

colonies” (Sandercock and Turner, 1981: 45). However, only in the 1980s did the VFA make concerted efforts to spread the game nationally.

Despite rugby’s increasing popularity on the East Coast and international contact, rugby continued to be ruled by regional/colonial administrations⁴. Within these regions there was considerable rivalry over the right to control rugby and resentment generated by this rivalry contributed to the rise in professional rugby in the 1900s (Horton, 1992: 124). As in England, disputes over administrative authority and player resentment of amateur rules encouraged splits in the game and eventually the establishment of rugby league as the most dominant code on the Australian East Coast. The split in the game, which led to rugby union’s marginal position in Australia, was ironically facilitated by contact between New Zealand and Australia. It was provoked by the increasing income controlled by the NSWRU from international matches and resentment over the management and control of this wealth by high-profile players (see chapter three).

2.5 *Amateur inclusiveness and the success of rugby networks in New Zealand*

The embedding of rugby in New Zealand differed from the Australian case in a number of ways. The early regional organisation of competing football codes in Australia had, by the turn of the century, led to the formation of one football code centred in Melbourne, which owed its popularity to a strong *club* competition. 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. In New Zealand (as in Wales) international rugby contact and lack of strong competition from other football codes encouraged the national spread of rugby facilitated, from 1892, by a national administration with a high degree of centralised authority.

The introduction of rugby in New Zealand followed the pattern for the spread of the game globally. English public school educated settlers introduced the game in private schools, established new rugby clubs and introduced rugby to ‘football’ playing clubs in

the 1870s. In this case football was a mix of Victorian rules and soccer. As in Australia, rugby was introduced into a setting in which cricket was the ‘national’ game and remained so “at least until the mid-1890s” (Ryan, 1998: 93). Cricket’s popularity was reflected in the attendance of 15,000 spectators at the All England team’s match in Christchurch in 1877. In the 1870s, rugby also competed against the games of Victorian rules and soccer and an amalgamation of these games (Swan, 1948; Phillips, 1987: 88). However, by the turn of the century, in common with South Africa, rugby union superseded cricket and has remained dominant (Ryan, 1998).

Phillips (1987: 91) argues that both Victorian rules and soccer were popular until the turn of the century, but historians “still do not have a convincing explanation for why rugby rather than Association or Victorian rules eventually became the dominant form of football”. He points to organisational factors, the significance of the rapid spread of rugby geographically - by the mid-1890s “there were over 50,000 players and over 300 teams affiliated to the Rugby Union” (Phillips, 1987: 88) - as well as socially across ethnic groups and classes - investigations into the social composition of clubs in several provincial areas suggested players “represented an almost exact cross-section of the male population”. He also argues that rugby may have appealed to “values already deeply rooted among the male community” (Phillips, 1987: 90, 92)⁵.

As Phillips (1987) and Swan (1948) note, the spread of rugby was achieved by the early influence among New Zealand settlers of ex-public school students who had attended the newer less prestigious public schools in England where rugby, as opposed to soccer, was played. Contact between clubs within and across regions led to the organisation of games according to rugby rules as well as to the organisation of tours by representative sides

⁴ The Australian Rugby Union (ARU), made up of the state unions, QRU and NSW RU, was not formed until 1949, when the NZRFU, the South African Rugby Union and the ARFU became members of the IRB.

⁵ The latter explanation is inspired by the analysis presented in *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players*. Phillips (1987: 92) suggests, following Dunning and Sheard’s argument, that “rugby’s ‘great roughness may have made it more appealing to groups among whom traditional concepts of masculinity continued to prevail. If that is correct, it helps to explain why rugby became firmly rooted in [British] mining towns and other areas where the occupational base encouraged the retention of standards of masculinity in which physical toughness, strength and courage were emphasised’”. Phillips (1987: 93) concludes, “the game grew naturally out of the emerging male culture”.

(Phillips, 1987: 89). As in Australia, clubs organised first in cities, and the game spread to rural areas after pupils from secondary schools returned to their rural settlements and began playing (Phillips, 1987: 89). Minimal club subscriptions for rugby, compared to cricket and tennis clubs, meant that rugby was more accessible to the working-class community than the other codes (Crawford, 1995: 10-11). Additionally, unlike cricket, tennis and soccer, rugby could be played everywhere. 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: 3).

The organisational factors involved in spreading the game can be located in the historical record. Most accounts date the first rugby union game under 'modern' rules to 1870 (Swan, 1948: 1; Phillips, 1987; Stewart, 1997: 39-40). This rugby game was played in Nelson between the Nelson Club (also referred to as "Town") and Nelson College. The game was organised by Charles Monro, son of the Speaker of the New Zealand House of Parliament, who introduced the rules of the game from his English public school to the Nelson club. The Nelson Club had been established in 1868 and played according to a version of Victorian and soccer rules until members were encouraged to switch to rugby in order to be able to play against representatives from other regions in New Zealand (Swan, 1948: 1). A similar pattern occurred in other urban centres of the country.

English public school educated settlers, including George Sale, Professor of Classics at the University of Otago and an ex-Rugby pupil, introduced the game in Otago. Sale's father had been a teacher at Rugby and Sale attended the school in 1845 at the time 'The Laws of Football as played at Rugby School' were drawn up (Vincent, 1997: 91; Richardson, 1995; Phillips, 1987: 89). The Dunedin club, originally established in 1872 as the North Dunedin club, had played according to Victorian rules and soccer, but was convinced to switch to rugby at a meeting in 1875. The decision coincided with the first inter-provincial tour by a combined Auckland team (Swan, 1948: 37). Rugby had been played in the Auckland district only two years prior to this tour with clubs established in Auckland city and Thames in 1870 playing according to a mixture of the Victorian Rules and soccer (Swan, 1948: 11). However, club members there were encouraged to switch

to the rugby rules at a meeting in 1873 attended by two members of the first Wellington club. The *New Zealand Herald* described the change of rules by the Auckland Football Club thus:

‘This afternoon the Auckland Football Club intends to resume operations for the season by a scratch match – ‘Natives of New Zealand against Outsiders’. The club has lately adopted a new code of playing rules of the Wellington Club. The rules previously played under were introduced by the officers of the Rosario, when the first football match was played in Auckland, but being totally different from those of any Club in existence, have been discarded for the rules now approved of’ (cited in Swan, 1948: 12).

In Canterbury the first football club, the Christchurch Club founded in 1863, also played according to a mixture of Victorian rules and soccer to which were added clauses to suit local conditions: “features of which were that a goal could be kicked from a drop-kick over the bar” (as in the present rules for goal-kicking in the ‘Sevens’ game, see chapter three), “and that a goal could be scored if the ball was kicked through the goal from any other kick providing that the ball touches the ground between the posts” (as in Victorian rules except for the presence of the cross-bar) (Swan, 1948: 43). The club changed to the rugby rules in a match against South Canterbury in 1875. After the match the Club reverted to the old rules and did not change back to the rugby rules until the arrival of the touring representative Auckland side later that year. The South Canterbury club, established in 1875 before the match against the Christchurch club, had adopted the rugby rules. They had been encouraged by Hamersley, a former English rugby representative:

The prime mover in the advent of Rugby in South Canterbury was A.St.G. Hamersley, a recent arrival from England, where he had reached the highest honours the game offers players. As a member of the Marlborough Nomads Club, Mr Hamersley played for England in the first four International matches against Scotland (1871-72-73-74), and was the English captain of 1873 (Swan, 1948: 41).

By 1875, rugby, according to the rules of the English RFU, had been played in New Zealand for five years with clubs established in several districts: two clubs in Nelson, six clubs in Auckland, three in Taranaki and one each in Wellington, Wanganui, and Thames. The game settlers brought thus spread nationally as a socially inclusive game through the mechanism of competition, in this case inter-provincial matches. The first inter-provincial tour in 1875 by the Auckland team provided the catalyst for regular inter-provincial matches and the spread of the game nationally. The team played five matches against provincial sides throughout the country. These matches were at

Wellington “within six hours of arrival; at Dunedin four days later, within one day of rest between travelling and playing; at Christchurch and Nelson, reaching these places on the morning of the match; and at New Plymouth, where they went almost from the steamer onto the field” (Swan, 1948: 34). These inter-provincial matches encouraged clubs to play the rugby game rather than a mix of the two rival codes.

Between 1870 and the 1890s the popularity and spread of rugby in New Zealand grew with the establishment of 700 local clubs and 18 provincial unions. The first provincial unions were established in 1879 in Canterbury and Wellington. Additionally, regular inter-school fixtures began in the late 1890s as rugby became compulsory in secondary schools (Phillips, 1987; Richardson, 1995). This organisational success of rugby made it extremely difficult to establish rival codes. Victorian rules was associated with the gold mining rush in the second half of the 19th century but the game was confined to gold mining districts and declined following the end of mining.

In contrast to the lack of an organisational form for the Victorian rules game, soccer’s national administration, the New Zealand Football Association (NZFA) was established in 1891 but could not rival rugby’s success. Hilton (1991: 18) claimed that the inability of soccer to rival rugby in the late 19th century can be explained as a result of “the better education of those who arrived to settle in the colony” and “the advent of the professional game [which] seemingly put soccer beyond the pale”. In this view, the association game was “the opiate of the masses, the unwashed, the cloth cap and muffler brigade” (Hilton, 1991: 18), suitable perhaps for the industrial working classes of England’s cities but not as a game to be played in the colonies. The emphasis here is on the social distinction between the two codes of rugby and soccer, despite the fact that soccer was not professionalised in New Zealand before 1970 and the explanation rests, like that of Phillips, on the public school educated settler.

The difficulties faced by soccer administrators attempting to spread the game were in part a consequence of rugby’s early ascendancy. The first inter-provincial soccer match was not played until 1890, fifteen years after the first inter-provincial rugby match. By 1890, rugby had established clubs and provincial unions throughout the country and had,

together with cricket and athletics administrators developed private venues for playing these sports where spectators could be charged to attend matches and events. When the NZFA gained permission in 1892 to use Lancaster Park, the Canterbury rugby ground for a soccer tournament, it netted just over £19, resulting in a loss for the tournament, while the Canterbury Rugby Union received just over £21 as its share of the gate-takings and rental of the park (Hilton, 1991: 15). A year later the Canterbury Football Association's financial difficulties increased and it could not field a single team.

In addition to being excluded from the biggest venues, a lack of colonial connections through organised international matches with British teams made soccer less capable of fostering prestigious colonial ties. As the popular game in Britain, soccer was not part of the imperial touring elite's 'arsenal' of games. New Zealand teams did not receive a visit by a British team, England Amateurs, until 1937. This team played three international matches in New Zealand (Hilton, 1991: 146). The first visit by a 'national' soccer team took place in 1904 when a team from New South Wales played nine matches in both the North and the South Islands and a New Zealand team toured New South Wales in 1905 playing eleven matches. However, no international soccer matches were held again in New Zealand until 1922 when an Australian team visited and the New Zealand team won its first international soccer match (Hilton, 1991: 19-20). By contrast, several international rugby matches had been held in New Zealand attended by large crowds in the same period and the first official New Zealand team, the 'All Blacks', to tour the northern hemisphere in 1905 won all but one of its matches in Britain, Ireland, France and North America. Visits by overseas rugby teams in this period included NSW in 1894 and 1901, Queensland in 1896, a 'British' team in 1888, a Great Britain team in 1904 and Australia in 1905. These teams played a total of 75 matches including five tests against the national team (Palenski et al., 1998).

2.6 *The establishment of a centralised rugby union authority*

The establishment of the NZRFU, as was the case in Wales, centralised authority for the control of the game as a means of protecting it as the national game. The game was to remain amateur but, at the same time, it would be popular. The national structure

introduced by the new administration deliberately sought to subordinate rugby clubs to the control of provincial unions which, in turn, were directly represented through national meetings. 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: 32). This centralised organisation is explained in the chapter, fittingly titled ‘organisation and efficiency’ in the book co-authored by the 1905 All Black captain and vice-captain, Gallaher⁶ and Stead (1906). In this chapter they explain the organisational ‘system’ of rugby in New Zealand and point out how the New Zealand centralised rugby structure was designed to protect the game against professionalism. This required the subordination of local district-based clubs to provincial unions which, in turn, were governed by the national union. The ‘efficient’ relations between these three levels of organisation are explained in this description:

There is no unnecessary piece of governmental machinery, and the whole fits together with splendid exactness. The New Zealand Rugby Union being the chief authority, it has immediately below it the various provincial Unions, each province having its own union in the same way as with English counties, but a province is a very much bigger and more unwieldy thing than the English county, Auckland, for instance, being more than four hundred miles from one end to the other. In each province there are several country Unions, subservient directly to the provincial Union, and through it to the head body. After the provincial and country Unions come the clubs (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 37).

This development contrasted with the English RFU’s inability to contain club matches as exclusively ‘friendly’ and the English clubs’ autonomous establishment, described by Gallaher and Stead (1906: 38-39) as ‘promiscuous’. They point out that the establishment of provincial unions, affiliated to the national union, with authority to control not only the location of local clubs, but also their management, was the critical means of ensuring both protection against professionalism and the viability of clubs and competitions:

...in Auckland, which we are particularly considering, there are several clubs called by the names of the respective districts of the town from which they draw their players. Clubs are not organised promiscuously in New Zealand as they are in Britain, or at all events they are not so organised in the large towns, and in the country districts there is not the opportunity of establishing them. The Union decides what clubs there shall be, and supervises their management. In doing so it particularly desires to ensure the thoroughness and effectiveness of the working of each club, the equality of all of them so far as conditions and opportunities are concerned, the maintenance of strict amateurism throughout, the prevention of one club being completely overshadowed by another by reason of superior financial resources, or by any social

⁶ Gallaher retired from playing after the tour and served as the sole Auckland selector between 1906 and 1916 and as New Zealand selector between 1907 and 1914 (Palenski et al., 1998: 72).

or other non-financial inducement that it might offer to players to belong to it, and too easily facilitates for changing clubs (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 38-39).

While the English RFU asserted a high degree of authority in international matters, it remained beholden to the local clubs that had supported it against the northern clubs and counties. After the split, English clubs retained representation on the RFU and continued to be represented directly in 'national' discussions of rugby matters. By contrast, in New Zealand clubs became represented on provincial unions' committees that, in turn, elected representatives to the national union's meetings. Provincial representatives were given a vote at national meetings comparable with the number of clubs affiliated within each union. The problem that had plagued other rugby splits, the emergence of powerful senior clubs, was therefore blocked. Clubs were always contained within a framework of provincial unions organised on a national basis.

By 1890, approximately 700 clubs and eighteen provincial unions had been formed in New Zealand and four provincial unions had actually affiliated to the English RFU. Unions were constituted by designing and controlling a plan for the establishment of clubs and by encouraging existing clubs within the provincial areas to affiliate to the unions. Swan (1948: 109) notes that before the establishment of the NZRFU provincial unions had succeeded in gaining authority over only approximately half the existing clubs and the majority of the 700 clubs remained independent, "specialising in 'friendly' games". However, he suggests that "order overcame chaos, and in the following years, especially after the formation of the National Union, those clubs which did not join a Union ceased to exist, their players being absorbed in Clubs with affiliation" (Swan, 1948: 109). Gallaher and Stead (1906: 39) explain that the centralised control gained by the provincial unions ensured that local clubs became established within defined districts to which players affiliated. This system of centralised control over clubs and player residential qualifications thus mirrored the control exercised by the Victorian Football League of its professional clubs and players:

Just as the authority settles on what clubs there shall be, so with the help of a qualification rule it decides who shall play for those clubs. It divides the city into sections, and it apportions one club to each section. The limits of each section are very carefully defined. The Union has its own map of the city, with all the streets marked upon it, and the precise limits of each section are marked by lines, and further defined in the rules by words. Thus the dividing line may, and very often does, go down the middle of a street, so that one side of that street is in one section and the

other side is in another. In Auckland there are seven of these district sections, going by the names of Ponsonby, Newton, City, Grafton, Suburbs, and the North Shore, and the club in each section is called by the same name. A player resident in the city is obliged to play for the club in whose section he resides; and thus it frequently happens that while a player who lives on one side of a street is eligible to play for one club, a man residing directly opposite to him on the other side has to play for another, and that a man on changing his residence has to change his club also, but only then. The residential qualification is strict, and effectually prevents clubs from poaching on the players from their rivals (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 39).

As described in this account of the management of clubs in Auckland by the provincial union - whose system, Gallaher and Stead (1906: 50) argue “exists for the most part with only slight variations in many other centres in the colony” - provincial unions gained an extraordinary degree of control over clubs within their areas. In this case, the unions’ control of the income from club matches mirrored the proposal by the Victorian Football Association for centralised revenue gathering which was rejected by the larger clubs which went on to form the Victorian Football League. Gate-revenue from rugby club cup matches was retained by the provincial union and, together with club affiliation fees to the union, became the unions’ stable income boosted by income from matches between provincial teams and visiting national teams⁷. Gallaher and Stead (1906) explained that the centrally owned and controlled city venue hosting all clubs’ matches, and the prohibition against private ownership of club grounds, protected the club competition against the domination of a few wealthy clubs which could ruin the appeal of the competition and encourage professionalism:

Generally speaking, the New Zealand clubs have neither full nor empty purses; but, arranging their affairs on the true principles of commonwealth, each has according to its needs, the Union, represented by all, making the distribution, as it received the income of the game. The cardinal feature of this system is the circumstance that the clubs in a city like Auckland have no grounds of their own, and are not permitted to have them. By this arrangement we strike at the root of many evils from which even amateur football suffers elsewhere. We have one large public ground, belonging to the Union, in the centre of the city, and on this ground all the matches and the practice games are played, each club being free to make use of it as its circumstances necessitates, and as suits the convenience of others, the Union making all arrangements in such matters...Spectators are charged sixpence for admission to the ground, with extra for stand accommodation, and the whole of the proceeds from the gate are taken, not by the clubs playing on the day, but by the Union who keeps them (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 44).

The Auckland union distributed £25 annually to clubs to help with the cost of their training facilities which, together with players’ “nominal subscriptions” and the

⁷ It was not until the 1950s that income including gate-takings and season tickets from inter-provincial matches for the Canterbury provincial union consistently became a greater source of

contribution of a guinea a year by clubs 'vice-presidents' "elected for their personal and active interest in the game", constituted the clubs' total income (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 48-49). This regulation gave clubs the right to be sponsored by local 'patrons'. However, the restriction on their financial contribution again meant that clubs were prevented from generating income beyond their expenses that could be used to induce players to change clubs.

The proposal for a centralisation of control by the national union, with delegated powers to the provincial unions, was first mooted in the late 1880s and arose out of disputes over how to control and select a national team for international rugby matches and tours. The problem was one of establishing centralised national control over rival entrepreneurial moves to spread the game. The New South Wales team's visit to New Zealand in 1882 prompted a combined New Zealand team, including representative players from the Otago, Canterbury, Wellington and Auckland unions, to tour New South Wales in 1884. In 1888 two 'unofficial' tours established the first rugby contact between the 'colonial' margins and the 'home' of rugby. These tours, believed by the English RFU to promote professionalism, encouraged the English RFU to 'tighten' the amateur regulations and its control over the selection of national teams. However, it was to be the New Zealand 1888 'Native' team's tour of Britain that provoked the provincial unions to form the NZRFU as a means of protecting the amateur game in the colony (Swan, 1948: 114, Ryan, 1993).

Ryan (1993: 118-119) notes that the success of the private Native team's tour in 1888 encouraged others to propose more tours and that it was this 'national' issue that pushed provincial unions to demand that future tours come under their control:

In April 1889, when private interests in Wellington announced plans for a fully representative New Zealand team to tour Britain, condemnation was swift. The Otago Union said that constant touring would lead to professionalism, and any future tour must be under the authority of the New Zealand unions. Nelson and Auckland issued similar statements, and Canterbury, while happy with the idea of a tour, also insisted that it must be under union control.

In 1892 the provincial unions agreed that all matters relating to rugby should be controlled by the NZRFU. The national administration would foster the game as an

income for the union than club matches (Canterbury provincial union Annual Financial Statements,

amateur national game by promoting international contact. Only those who conformed to the regulations of the national union would be allowed to participate in the inter-club and inter-provincial competitions in New Zealand and be part of teams representing and “carrying the New Zealand game abroad” (Ryan, 1993: 119).

The formation of a New Zealand national union in 1892 was not isolated from those disputes emerging in England and which eventually led to the split in the game in 1895. However, while the split in England resulted in the formation of the new ‘rugby league’ game, the establishment of the NZRFU was to form a single hierarchy initially dominated by the North Island provincial unions but it was not without its detractors. Indeed, three of the then fourteen existing provincial unions initially declined to federate to a national union and records from the union delegates’ discussion on the proposal for a national union in 1891 highlighted divisions over several issues: the need for a central union to arbitrate over disputes about the laws of the game and the relinquishment of self-government of provincial unions; whether or not a central body would encourage the development of a new game and therefore a split from the RFU; the right of a central union to call itself ‘New Zealand’ if it did not include all provincial unions in the colony; and to what extent the proposal should encourage an inter-provincial programme that could enable players to “save up their leave with a view to travelling, and unions [to] arrange their fixtures and their finances with a view to suiting the Representative programme” (cited in Swan, 1948: 118-22).

Although divisions did not form groups either for or against a national union, those provincial representatives in favour of a national body clearly saw it as a way of promoting unity in regulation of the game in New Zealand. This, they hoped, would encourage ‘better’ games between provinces and control over the selection and sending of New Zealand teams. At the first national meeting in 1891, the Hawke’s Bay representative Hoben suggested a formula for regular inter-provincial matches: “his suggestion being that each Union meet each other Union twice in four years, playing one year on its home ground, travelling half the colony the next, playing on its own ground on the third and completing its tour on the fourth year” (Swan, 1948: 112).

Significantly, those opposing a national union regarded the delegation of authority as potentially undermining the authority of the English RFU in defining how the game should be played and who could play it. They suggested that a regular match programme would encourage professionalism (Richardson, 1995). Only three of the six existing South Island provincial unions elected to join the national body in 1892 and, at least one of those unions opposing the idea of a national union, the Canterbury provincial union (the first provincial union to be established in 1879), had aspirations to form a national union under its authority.

At the NZRFU's first meeting in 1893, the confederated provincial unions viewed the opposing unions' criticism of the NZRFU as an attempt to 'injure' its reputation in England. In response to the criticism by the unions in opposition to the NZRFU, the member unions sought to affirm their adherence to the rules and amateur principles of the English RFU by confirming the NZRFU's position as a neutral and just arbitrator of disputes over the laws of the game and its stand against 'professionalism' and 'betting and lavish expenditure on entertainment of teams' (Swan, 1948: 126). The new national union's confirmation of its ties with the English RFU and its commitment to the amateur regulations did not, however, stop member unions defending their independence from the RFU by highlighting their equal ability to interpret the laws of the game as well as "any one in England" (Swan, 1948: 126).

This continued commitment to imperial bonds expressed by the provincial representatives thus reflected *not* the promotion of a nationalist movement and a break from the rules and the English authority over the game, but a desire to be included within the imperial touring network (Appadurai, 1995). Gallaher and Stead's (1906: 270) impressions of the 1905 All Black tour of Britain revealed this process of identification:

Our impression of Britain is of the dear motherland, loved so much by those who saw her for the first time during this tour as by those who as babies nestled upon her bosom; of the deeply venerated parent of the game that we glory in - perhaps of a parent in the prime of life, who is inclined to take things a little too easily; of great players, who have no warmer admirers than the "All Blacks," wearers of the silver fern...

The formation of a national administration with the authority to control the sending and receiving of national teams was the critical means of this 'colonial enterprise' identified

by the national representatives as securing their inclusion as “subsidiary authorities in the colonies, who acknowledge - and are glad to acknowledge - the supremacy of the mother Union” (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 232). However, as in England, the formation of the NZRFU caused a split in the game largely between northern and southern unions.

The alliance between the provincial unions formed in 1892 and their efforts to exclude the opposing provincial unions from inter-provincial and international matches were successful. It was to take only two years before the three opposing provincial unions had entered the NZRFU’s ‘fold’. The NZRFU was not to face a rival rugby union organisation on its ‘soil’ for a century. The unions in opposition to the NZRFU did not, however, escape punishment. In 1893 NZRFU members did not arrange any matches involving the Canterbury, Otago or Southland unions’ representative teams. Additionally, they did not select any of these unions’ representative players in the first official tour by a New Zealand team to the two Australian (state) Unions. The South Canterbury union’s annual match against the Canterbury union was an exception to the exclusion of the three unions from inter-provincial matches because of the South Canterbury Union’s geographical location between the Canterbury and Otago unions (Bowden and Nixon, 1988).

Despite resenting the NZRFU-members’ ‘lockout’ - the Canterbury provincial union officials and players had good reason to resent this ‘lockout’ as the Canterbury team had toured the North Island in the 1892 season and played four matches against North Island unions, with the match against Auckland attracting 8,000 spectators (Saunders, 1979: 15) - the Canterbury union joined the NZRFU in 1894. The explanation for why the Canterbury provincial union joined the NZRFU, provided by Swan (1948), the NZRFU’s historian, emphasises disputes over a proposal to join the NZRFU between ‘committeemen’ and club delegates in both Canterbury and Otago. In Swan’s account of meetings in the Otago and Canterbury provinces in 1893, senior club delegates, including many active players, favoured a proposal to join the NZRFU while ‘committeemen’ were against it. These intra-provincial divisions had characterised debates within the two unions in 1892 and 1893. More significantly, conventional narrative suggests that the exclusion of representative players from selection to the first

official New Zealand team to tour Australia in 1983 encouraged senior club delegates to lobby the Canterbury union to join the NZRFU (Swan, 1948: 128-130; Chester and McMillan, 1981: 269-70). By 1895, the three opposing South Island unions had joined the NZRFU.

Despite Gallaher and Stead's (1906) claim to the efficiency and fairness of the New Zealand 'system', the issue of selection to the All Black team would continue to create conflict. National selection increased in importance for players around the turn of the century, partly because the tour allowance was the only provision whereby players received some sort of income from their playing and touring efforts without breaching the amateur regulations and because of the emergence of an alternative, the New Zealand rugby league team. National representative rugby union players voiced their concern at the same time as the popularity of tours and test matches in New Zealand facilitated increasing income for the NZRFU. The financial success of the first northern hemisphere 1905 All Black tour of the British Isles, France and North America contributed £12,000 to the NZRFU (Haynes, 1996) while the tour also helped the financial welfare of clubs and national unions in Europe (Nauright, 1991). The Prime Minister in New Zealand, Richard Seddon, used the success of the team as an opportunity to boost his popularity by providing £2,000 to the team to tour North America on its way home from Europe (Phillips, 1987). In contrast to this generosity towards the code, the NZRFU had provided the touring players with only 3 shillings a day in tour allowance and this amount was not revealed to the opposition unions for fear of repercussions (Haynes, 1996: 17). While players and some provincial unions attempted to change the NZRFU's stand on tour allowances, the success of the All Black tour and the NZRFU's 'meagre' tour allowances would again inspire a privately organised team, including a number of 1905 All Blacks, to tour England in 1907-8. This tour would be the catalyst for the establishment of rugby league in New Zealand and Australia.

2.7 *Summary*

Maintaining rugby union relations with England required the adoption of organisational forms that could produce national amateur teams. In the different regions where transnational rugby networks had introduced and promoted the game, the enterprise of organising and administering it differed greatly. Indeed, in the regions where 'football' codes in general became embedded, the organisation of these codes came to be characterised by the adoption of institutional practices based on either hierarchically organised, predominantly amateur structures or decentralised, predominantly club-oriented structures. Those who gained control over the organisation of national, amateur rugby union teams, to play against English teams most importantly, required that local and national competitions be subordinated in order to ensure continued contact with England. This issue of national control and subordination of local and regional organisations provoked a split in the game of rugby in those regions where successful club competitions had popularised the game.

In England, a decade apart, disputes in soccer and rugby over player payments emerged in the North where the introduction of local club competitions had proved commercially successful. However, the solution to the disputes in the two sports differed. The FA retained the official control over both the professional Football League alongside amateur soccer. In rugby, the English RFU provoked the split in the game by banning the commercial practices that had helped popularise the game in the North forcing the northern clubs to form the separate professional rugby league code under the NU. The networks that facilitated these developments in England spread rugby, as had been the case with cricket half a century before, throughout the Empire to Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and to the Antipodes, to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Rugby, in both its amateur and professional forms, became embedded unevenly within these regions.

In the case of Scotland and Ireland, the popularity of 'English' games differed, reflecting particular cultural and political struggles relating to the establishment of separate national identities. In Scotland and Ireland, rugby became embedded as a minor, exclusive amateur game promoted in gentlemanly, 'friendlies'. In the case of Australia, in both regions where either rugby or the 'indigenous' Australian game became

institutionalised, club competitions were the basis of their popularity and spread participation in the games beyond the local elites. Similarly, in both regions strong club competitions encouraged the formation of professional leagues. In Victoria and South Australia, the Victorian Football Association accepted professionalism in order to retain its authority over the sport. By contrast, on the Australian East Coast the administrative bodies promoting rugby denied professionalism and provoked a split in the game in 1907. This split mirrored what had occurred in England a decade earlier.

In New Zealand, the amateur game of rugby union gained ascendancy over the other 'football' codes. Administrators were successful in promoting the idea of rugby union as a national game constructed through regular inter-provincial matches. In this context, as was the case in Wales, rugby union administrators promoted the code as a national, commercially successful amateur game. In New Zealand and Wales, national administrators denied allegations of professional rugby which, if proven, would have excluded their teams from international contact, importantly with England. Adoption of professionalism would have isolated them, as had been the case for clubs in the North of England following the professionalisation of the game and the establishment of the NU.

In New Zealand and Wales, where rugby became institutionalised as the national game, the game's popularity was characterised as inclusive. By contrast, the success of rugby in England depended upon ensuring its exclusivity by restricting who could play the game. In the English rugby regions, administrations adopted forms of player restriction either through requiring players to have an appropriate amateur status or through the enforcement of professional contracts. Those English RFU clubs dominated by public-school old boys, which had forced the issue regarding player compensation and competition structures, were concerned that the game 'should be played for the game's sake' and, in turn, sought to 'reframe' the 'old' game. Within this framework, international rugby matches gained in significance and became reaffirmed as the pinnacle of rugby 'friendlies'. 'Friendly' tests aimed to help establish contact between nations within the British Empire and to facilitate the "cultural transmission" of what now had been re-framed as the 'amateur', gentleman game (Appadurai, 1995). But these

‘friendlies’ encouraged the development of strong national teams in the regions of Wales and the southern hemisphere.

The promotion of rugby as a national game in New Zealand was ensured through constituting an infrastructure of rugby competitions involving overlapping networks of administrators, entrepreneurs and players of all social backgrounds ruled by a central administration. In this ‘colonial’ region the question of concern for the national administrators was how to construct a national team to play against the visiting British teams while convincing the English RFU that their national team was not ‘professional’ but a ‘fitting opponent’. The job of ‘convincing’ the English RFU was undertaken by New Zealand administrators who exercised authority to punish professionalism. Their ‘brief’, and the success of the amateur game in New Zealand, was precariously wedged between ‘toeing the amateur line’, as dictated by the Home Unions, and encouraging the spread of the game in New Zealand through the ‘professional’ measure of building local and national competitions (see chapter four). Their project was, as Appadurai (1995) has argued, a national enterprise in the colonies but, at the same time, it was vulnerable to dictate from the centre. It was out of their precarious colonial relations that rugby in New Zealand was established as the national game and the All Blacks as their national team to which the organisation of this game was subordinated (Gallaher and Stead, 1906).

3

RULES OF INDIGENISATION: THE NATIONAL NEW ZEALAND MAORI TEAM

3.0 *Introduction: Race and class in the 'colonial ecumene'*

One of the most celebrated and visible 'Maori' contributions to rugby in New Zealand is the 'Haka' - a generic term for Maori dance - performed before a rugby match. The symbolic nature of the Haka, the performance of which has become part of the All Black brand under professionalism, indicates the significance of Maori for New Zealand rugby. Ryan (1993) notes that the first rugby Haka was performed by the 1888-89 Native team in Britain and the 1905 All Black team adopted the particular version of the Ka Mate Haka on its northern hemisphere tour. A different Haka was composed by Maori players for the 1924-25 tour of the British Isles and France (MacLean, 1999; Nauright and Chandler, 1999). The Ka Mate Haka was composed by a Maori chief Te Rauparaha supposedly around 1820 when he was fleeing his enemies from another Maori tribe, the Ngati Tuwharetoa, and the words to the Ka Mate Haka do not have a direct relation to rugby⁸.

⁸ Most versions of the Ka Mate Haka include this loose translation: "I die, I die, I live, I live, I die, I die, I live, I live. This is the hairy man who fetched the sun and caused it to shine again. One upward step. Another upward step again into the sun that shines" (<http://www.haka.co.nz/haka.html>). Significantly, women do not commonly perform Hakas.

Despite the much celebrated performance by All Black teams of the Ka Mate Haka, it was only with the establishment of the Rugby World Cup in 1987 (see chapter five) that All Black teams began performing the Ka Mate Haka in New Zealand as Palenski (2001) notes in a comment on the debate about the increasing use of the Haka before All Black matches. Palenski (2001) argued that before the 1980s, predominantly ‘white’ All Black teams “performed it infrequently, they appeared self-conscious and players made sidelong glances at teammates to see if their actions, such as they were, were co-ordinated. The leap at the end gave validity to the American basketball notion that white men can’t jump”. Since the 1980s when the All Black captain, Wayne Shelford, a Maori, “took the haka to new levels of passion and professionalism” (Palenski, 2001), while the Ka Mate Haka has been performed by other rugby teams including schools teams from the early part of the century (Macdonald, 1996: 13). Pacific Island rugby union teams have also introduced their ‘haka’, adding to the use of indigenous performances before rugby matches. Because All Black teams now perform the Ka Mate Haka frequently as a result of the increase in international matches and the media and sponsorship promotion of this ‘All Black’ Haka, former and current All Black players have expressed concern that the haka will lose its “mana” - a Maori term for spiritual power (Walker, 1989: 37).

Despite the identification of the All Black Haka as a celebrated sign of the indigenisation of rugby in New Zealand, in this chapter I argue that other ‘Maori’ contributions to the game have been more important in securing its success and strength. I consider what Appadurai (1995) refers to as the process of indigenisation of sport. I highlight the emergence of a dual, national *and* ethnic form of institutionalisation of rugby union in New Zealand. In the previous chapter, I argued that the embeddedness of rugby in New Zealand paralleled the way cricket became adopted as a popular sport in India. In both cases, elite English social networks acted as the catalyst (Appadurai, 1995). Rugby became institutionalised through a centralised administration aimed at protecting the game against professionalism and

However, a New Zealand women’s rugby team performed the Ka Mate Haka in Europe in their 1991 Women’s Rugby World Cup matches (conversation with female rugby player, August 1997).

encouraging players' performance as a means of building strong local and national teams and competitions (Gallaher and Stead, 1906). However, despite the blueprint for 'organisational success' in this New Zealand 'system', it was vulnerable to the exodus of players to the professional rugby league game.

In this chapter I consider the institutionalisation of the rugby game through national and ethnic networks, emphasising the early Maori players' contribution to the rationalisation of the game. Their contribution quickly became identified, both domestically and abroad, as critical to the creation of an indigenous New Zealand style of playing. This discussion draws on similarities and differences with the ethnic institutionalisation and indigenisation of sports in the contexts of South Africa, India and the West Indies (Nauright, 1997; Black and Nauright, 1998; Appadurai, 1995; James, 1963; Beckles and Stoddart, 1995). Drawing on these comparisons, I explain the ethnic and national institutionalisation of the game in New Zealand by highlighting the rival claims of transnational competition between the amateur rugby union and the professional rugby league codes. While the ethnic and national form of institutionalisation of rugby union in New Zealand was 'internal' to New Zealand, I argue that the establishment of the New Zealand Maori team helped duplicate a dual national and ethnic form at the global level.

The overlap of race and class in the "Victorian colonial ecumene" provoked a range of consequences for the way that sport was organised and played (Beckenridge, 1988, cited in Appadurai, 1995). For example, as in the West Indies, cricket in India was an informally segregated sport played initially only by the colonists (James, 1963; Beckles and Stoddart, 1995). Popular support for the game was established through princely patronage and the communal organisation of teams. As Indian players developed their skills in India or in England, where sons of the Indian social elite were sent to gain an English education, they were selected to play in Indian teams touring England and in Indian sides playing against visiting English teams. In this process, which constituted the early "global ecumene" of the game, "Indian and English social hierarchies [of class and ethnicity] were interlinked and cross-hatched to produce, by the 1930s, a cadre of nonelite Indians who felt themselves to be genuine cricketers and

genuine 'Indian' as well" (Appadurai, 1995: 27-30). The game of cricket in India came to be organised along the lines of community identity, thus separating Indians and colonialists and separating Indians according to religious beliefs and social status. It was not until the 1930s that the particular Indian communal organisation became increasingly "otiose" coinciding with a growing demand for a national cricket team that could represent an "Indian" nation (Appadurai, 1995: 31-33). Similarly, in the West Indies, criticism of the omission of 'black' cricketers as captains of West Indies cricket sides was a key component of the symbolic struggle for national independence in the 1950s (James, 1963).

The fate of cricket in South Africa was shared with that of rugby. Racial segregation was enforced as an organising principle for both sports in South Africa. Nauright (1997) notes that while South African sports were segregated along racial lines from the turn of the 20th century, and formally legitimated in apartheid policies from 1948, this segregation interlinked with the emergence of cultural and ethnic communities. As a result of these institutional and communal relations, the institutionalisation of sports in South Africa resulted in "multiple sporting systems and organizations that were shaped by either support for the status quo or opposition to segregationist structures in sport and society" (Nauright, 1997: 74). Thus, ethnic and national forms of organising sports emerged in South Africa. The white South African cricket and rugby organisations' elite international networks helped these codes gain in popularity within the powerful, minority section of the South African community, which could identify with the English and Afrikaner-speaking players. This international contact established these amateur national teams as both national and ethnic.

In New Zealand, race and class also "conspired in complex ways" to produce a particular institutionalisation of the rugby union game along national and ethnic lines. Criticism of the exclusion of Maori players to the All Black teams touring South Africa was expressed as early as the 1920s (Ryan, 2000a), but intensified from the 1950s and 60s (Thompson, 1975). However, in contrast to the systematic exclusion of 'coloureds' and 'blacks' in South African 'national' teams, Maori players were not

only included in settler-dominated local and national representative rugby teams from the late 19th century, they also captained them.

This process of inclusion of the indigenous population has lent support to the claim by historians that these early teams reflected the ethnic and social mix of the population (Phillips, 1987; Sinclair, 1986). This argument is supplemented by the recognition that Maori players were excluded from All Black teams touring South Africa. All Black-Springbok rugby tests began in 1921 and New Zealand rugby teams' continued contact with South Africa during the period of apartheid policies fuelled significant domestic and international upheaval. Significantly, the most violent civic upheavals in New Zealand took place in 1981, eleven years after the first non-ethnic All Black team had toured South Africa and accounts of rugby union concerning racial and ethnic controversy in New Zealand have tended to focus on this exclusion (Thompson, 1975; Pearson, 1979; Fougere, 1981a; Fougere, 1981b; Dann, 1982; Fougere, 1989; Thompson, 1988; Nauright, 1993). However, international sporting relations with South Africa do not explain the NZRFU's endorsement of the establishment of a national Maori team by the early 20th century. This endorsement has been given minimal attention in the New Zealand literature on the development of rugby. The few notable exceptions, which are referred to in this chapter, include McCarthy and Howitt's *Haka: The Maori All Blacks* (1983) and Carman's *Maori Rugby 1884-1979* (1980). These accounts highlight the contribution of Maori players to rugby union in New Zealand, but they ignore the fact that the dual, national and ethnic organisations were controlled and promoted by the NZRFU as a means of encouraging and retaining Maori participation in the rugby union game. An explanation for the establishment of the New Zealand Maori team, in a context which arguably promoted ethnic inclusion or assimilation rather than segregation (MacLean, 1999), lies in the way that race and class conspired in the peculiar split between rugby union and rugby league that has characterised the history of the game of rugby. This split, which has been played out in different times and in different places as threats to the survival of each code, has particular significance for the way in which Maori players were incorporated into rugby union.

By the turn of the 20th century, rugby union had established itself as the most popular, male game in New Zealand. However, this position was never secure because, paradoxically, the popularity of the rugby union game was embedded through transnational rivalries, in particular, rivalries with the 'Home Countries'. These rivalries required players to tour and it was these players who, ironically, challenged the sport from 'within'. Dissatisfied with the NZRFU's meagre tour allowances, these players challenged the national union's reluctance to share the financial success created by the All Black team's performances abroad and in New Zealand. In doing so, they helped promote the rival code, rugby league, in the southern hemisphere.

In this chapter the role of this player challenge in the establishment of the New Zealand Maori team is retraced and it is suggested that this separate team was critical in securing the rugby union code's ascendancy relative to the emerging rugby league code. I suggest that from the mid-20th century, and coinciding with the exclusion of Maori players from All Black teams touring South Africa, the New Zealand Maori rugby union team facilitated the spread of the rugby union game globally, significantly to the Pacific Islands. In doing so, it both promoted and marginalised the Pacific Island nations in the global game, facilitating duplication of the dual, national and ethnic institutionalisation of the game in New Zealand at the global level. The chapter also discusses the significance of the national, hierarchical organisation of rugby league in New Zealand and the reluctance on the part of the national rugby league administrators to endorse 'professionalism', in contrast to the emerging professional clubs structure on the Australian East Coast.

3.1 *Professional Rugby in the Southern Hemisphere*

The organisation of a tour of the Northern Union rugby (league) clubs in England by New Zealand rugby union players in 1907-08, named the 'All Golds' in press reports (Haynes, 1996), encouraged the establishment of the highly popular club-based rugby league competitions in Australia. Despite the fact that all but one of the All Golds team were New Zealand rugby players, it did not facilitate the establishment of the rugby league code in a position to compete with the popular rugby union in New

Zealand. However, transnational contact stretching back to the North of England ensured that the game increased in popularity on the Australian East Coast, in the North of England and in New Zealand.

The explanation provided in this chapter for the establishment of rugby league as a 'minor' sport in New Zealand highlights the role of the press in covering overseas tours, the lack of an established organisation to promote the new rugby league game, the national institutionalisation of rugby league which did not endorse professionalism, the NZRFU's reprisals against players switching to rugby league, and the establishment of a New Zealand Maori rugby union team. While none of these factors separately undermined the ability of the new rugby league code to gain a strong foothold in New Zealand, arguably in combination they helped secure the rugby union code's ascendancy over the rugby league code.

The All Golds tour had been planned by a New Zealander in 1906, a rugby player by the name of Albert H. Baskerville (sometimes spelled Baskiville), who had established contact with the Northern Union clubs in England. The team consisted of 28 members, including four 1905 All Black players, four former All Black players, and eleven other New Zealand players with provincial representative honours as well as one Australian national representative rugby player, H.H. Messenger. Significantly, the transnational composition of the team assisted in the establishment of a rugby league network between New Zealand and Australia.

While the proposal for the tour had gained support from leading rugby players in New Zealand, in Australia player dissatisfaction and an entrepreneurial interest in improving the game for spectator consumption fuelled the interest in the All Golds tour. As in New Zealand, rugby players in New South Wales had begun expressing their dissatisfaction with the financial management decisions of their controlling organisation, the New South Wales Rugby Union. These decisions included the union withdrawing its medical assistance to injured players and referring this responsibility to the clubs. Similarly, the commercial success of the rugby union game, following its growing popularity among a broad section of the population on the Australian East

Coast, enabled the NSW Rugby Union to purchase Epping Racecourse in 1907 for £15,000, but it also provoked entrepreneurial interest in the game (Phillips, 1996: 197). Local businessmen in Sydney, including sports store owner and Australian cricketer, Victor Trumper, formed a rival organisation, the New South Wales Rugby League, in 1907, and adopted the rules of the English Northern Union.

The new league approached the disgruntled rugby union players with a proposal to produce a better rugby 'product', the proceeds of which they would share with the players and invited the All Golds to play in Australia (Phillips, 1996: 197). The three 'tests' played in Australia between the All Golds and an Australian 'All Blue' included a number of prominent Australian rugby union players, including H.H. Messenger who went on to participate in the tour of England. The Australian players were subsequently banned from rugby union by the NSW rugby union, but the 'seed' of rugby league had been 'planted'.

On the tour of northern England and Wales the All Golds played 49 matches winning 29, drawing three and losing 17 matches. On the team's return via Australia progress in establishing the new code had been facilitated by whole rugby union clubs "changing over complete with administrators and club structure" (Smith, 1998: 123). This meant that the 'converted' clubs in Sydney and Brisbane were in a position to begin their first season of competition upon the All Golds' return in 1908. Additionally, the All Golds' success encouraged the organisation of a second northern hemisphere tour. This second international rugby league tour in 1908, this time by an Australian rugby league team, the 'Kangaroos', coincided with a tour of Britain by the Australian rugby union team, the 'Wallabies', consisting of players with "bona fide amateur status" (Ryan, 2000b: 42). The Wallabies' tour was successful both financially and on the playing fields, although they did encounter criticism of rough play. The team won 25 of their 31 matches including the Olympic Gold medal, beating England in the final at Twickenham⁹. By contrast, the Kangaroos lost over

⁹ The Wallaby team's participation in the 1908 Olympic Games was a rarity. The rugby union code was included in the Olympic Games between 1900 and 1924.

half of their 45 games, averaging only 6,000 spectators, and incurring a total loss of £418 for the tour (Collins, 1998: 223)¹⁰.

The Australian rugby league game's fortunes were reversed in 1909-10 following the staging of a series of matches between the Kangaroos and a team including 14 players from the 1908-09 Wallabies team. They were paid between £50 and £200 by an independent syndicate under the direction of hotelier James Joynton Smith to participate in these matches and were subsequently banned from the amateur game (Ryan, 2000b: 49). Additionally, visits by New Zealand and British teams helped foster and popularise rugby league. Coinciding with the growing popularity of the professional game which continued to stage well-attended matches during World War One (Phillips, 1996), the New South Wales rugby union suffered financial losses and was forced to sell the Epping Racecourse ground. By 1920, influenced by the Labour party's success in New South Wales and its close ties to the New South Wales Rugby League, rugby league became adopted in state schools in New South Wales, replacing rugby union, and this significantly encouraged the spread of the game (Phillips, 1994).

In contrast to the success in establishing rugby league on the Australian East Coast, the game faced significant organisational obstacles in New Zealand. Despite the All Golds' successful tour in 1907-08, the team was not received as heroes in New Zealand. Haynes' (1996) explanation for the lack of recognition by the New Zealand public emphasises the lack of media coverage to promote and inform the New Zealand public about the team's performances while on tour. Similarly, Davidson (1947: 12) suggests that "the tour was unsung by the New Zealand Press" and that the pre-tour coverage had been negative with false suggestions of "last-minute withdraws" by some players. Significantly, because the All Golds tour organiser, Baskerville, died in Australia during the team's trip home, no match reports were printed in the New Zealand papers.

¹⁰ English spectator interest in both international union and league matches was high in the early 1900s apart from the Kangaroos' matches. An estimated 300,000 spectators attended the All Golds' 34 games in 1907-08 (Collins, 1998: 221), while 503,000 attended the 33 1905 All Black matches (excluding the matches in North America (Nauright, 1991: 253). According to Collins (1998: 221; 230 n80) the 1905 All Black team realised £14,571 playing two matches more than the All Golds whose matches had totalled £12,625 in gate receipts providing £5,641 in profit to the team.

However, a benefit game for Baskerville's mother attended by 6,000 spectators, was played according to the new rules and the press coverage was considerably more positive. According to Coffey (1987: 10), it "testified to the advantages of the modernised game": "Four fewer players on the field [two less in each team], the lack of untidy play at line-outs, scrums that were lighter and briefer".

Despite the initial spectator and media interest in the new game, after the benefit match the All Golds New Zealand players dispersed, some returning to England to join those who had stayed on after having taken up contracts with English Clubs:

In addition to the five players who had stayed on in England at the end of the tour, several of the other players, once they got back to New Zealand, and had time to reassess their affairs, very quickly returned to take up professional contracts offered to them either during the tour, or shortly after. Edgar Wrigley signed with Runcorn for a fee of 400 pounds, together with a guarantee of employment in his plumbing trade. Harold Rowe went back to England and played with considerable distinction for Leeds. "Massa" Johnston accepted a handsome offer from Wigan, and joining Lance Todd there, he played for Wigan until 1910 before being transferred to Warrington and eventually settling in Australia. Others to go back included "Jum" Turtill to St. Helens, only later to be killed in World War 1, Bill Trevvarthen and Arthur Kelly (Haynes, 1996: 156).

Moorhouse (1995: 82) notes that these New Zealand players helped promote and popularise the game in the North of England. Among the migrated players, Lance Todd, in particular, became regarded as an exceptionally gifted player. On his death in a car accident in 1942 a memorial trophy was donated to the English rugby league organisation thereafter to be awarded to the man of the match in the first division Challenge Cup final (Moorhouse, 1995: 205). This migration of New Zealand players helped foster links between the two countries.

However, no clubs were established in New Zealand while the All Golds were away and on their return, minus the players who had remained in or soon returned to England, club competitions were slow to develop. Additionally, the game's organisers faced resistance from the NZRFU. As in Australia, players who had participated in the All Golds tour were expelled from playing rugby union for life. The NZRFU also banned other rugby union players from playing with the 'professionals' and it lobbied park boards to ban 'professional' rugby teams from assembling and practising on the parks where provincial rugby unions staged their rugby union matches (Coffey, 1987;

Haynes, 1996). Additionally, provincial unions established close links with secondary and primary schools, which excluded rugby league from the schools' physical education curriculum. While most provincial unions followed the NZRFU's stipulation, the Otago and Canterbury union NZRFU delegates proposed having regulations altered in favour of more compensation of players and introducing changes to game rules on the lines of the faster and more exciting NU game (Vincent, 1997; Smith, 1998; Coffey, 1987; Haynes, 1996). However, these proposals were defeated at NZRFU meetings in 1907.

In the absence of entrepreneurial interest, these organisational constraints meant that the establishment of local and national competitions progressed slowly with most progress being made in the North Island. While teams had been formed in Invercargill (the southern most city in the South Island) and in the West Coast mining district (Moorhouse, 1989), the rugby league code was slower to establish in the largest South Island city, Christchurch, because most of the 'Cantabrians' among the All Golds players had remained in England and Canterbury Rugby League was not founded before 1912 (Coffey, 1987: 15). This differential development of the game was described in an interview in 1912 with the president of the newly established national rugby league organisation, the New Zealand Provincial Rugby Football League (NZPRL) in which he emphasised the development in the North Island:

The game had started in Auckland with only two teams in 1909. In 1910 there were three senior sides and in 1911 a total of 13 teams, five senior, four second grade and four third grade involving 250 players. This year he said, the league had more than doubled in its hold in Auckland. In addition, continued McLean, there were five affiliated districts, Thames, Rotorua, Goldfields, Lower Waikato, and Upper Waikato. Four grades were now being contested between 500 players in 29 teams in Auckland city, bolstered by another 400 country participants. Hawke's Bay had four senior and eight junior clubs; Wanganui three senior and two junior clubs; there was a Taranaki club; and four had been recently introduced into Wellington (cited in Coffey, 1987: 19).

While the establishment of rugby league in New Zealand suffered from several organisational constraints, the provincial rugby league administrators' refusal to endorse professionalism may also have hindered the expansion of the game (Haynes, 1996: 160). This adoption of amateur regulations contrasted with the organisation of rugby league in Australia where businessmen had financed the staging of matches involving players paid to perform. The NZPRL established in 1910 and affiliated to

the NU, with the exception that the NZPRL “did not want to deal with the by-laws relating to professionalism” (Coffey, 1987: 23). However, it did include regulations providing national representative players with compensation for loss of income when touring which was in excess of the tour allowances All Black players received. The president of NZPRL confirmed that while the national organisation refused “professionalism” in the game, it agreed to pay players for loss of wages: “The Rugby League took the position that it was only right to compensate players on tour for loss of wages, at a rate of up to 10 shillings per day. They received nothing within their own districts. Under the rules all tourists were compensated equally” (cited in Coffey, 1987: 19).

The contrast between the NZRFU policy on *tour allowances* at three shillings a day compared to the NZPRL’s ten shillings a day for *loss of wages* was therefore not vast. However, while the NZPRL agreed to pay players a daily amount which was the equivalent of a player’s income, the NZRFU’s allowance was meant to provide players only with support to cover expenses on tour (see chapter six). Players were encouraged to join the rugby league code because the organisation supported the principle of player welfare, which it regarded as different from professionalism, and because the NZPRL supported innovations to the game to make it more entertaining. However, while better player payment and rule innovation may have encouraged players to switch to rugby league, dissatisfaction with being left out of the All Black team, as the NZRFU’s rugby historian, Swan (1948: 153) writes, was also a factor:

The new game gained a footing in some centres, but, however, little was lost to Rugby, despite that several who “turned over” were former New Zealand representatives. Throughout the trying period the Management Committee by expulsion kept the game free to amateurism. At various times since attempts have been made to induce prominent players to leave the Mother Code; in some cases a few have “gone over”, notably from those disappointed after a selection for a tour has been announced, whilst in the majority of cases in recent years the players have been past their representative best.

3.2 *The exclusion of Maori and the Maori ‘solution’*

Despite the failure of the rugby league codes to secure a position in New Zealand, a national Maori rugby league team toured Australia successfully in 1909. The success of this tour followed a failed tour in 1908. Significantly, the 1908 rugby league team

was a 'private' Maori team (Moorhouse, 1995; Davidson, 1947; Smith, 1998). Despite the touring party running into financial difficulties, it encouraged the sending of the first official New Zealand representative Maori rugby league team in 1909. The 1909 team enjoyed significant success on the field. One test attracted 40,000 spectators (Davidson, 1947: 59), and another 23,000 (Moorhouse, 1995: 83). These matches raised spectator interest in the rugby league game in Australia and, in 1910, a match between an Australian rugby league team and a visiting British Northern Union team was attended by 39,000 (Phillips, 1996: 199).

According to McCarthy and Howitt (1983), the 1909 Maori Rugby League team was potentially a more severe blow for the NZRFU than the threat presented by the All Blacks tour and the defection by players to rugby league. They suggest that a significant number of prominent Maori players would have switched to rugby league and helped establish this code as *the* national sport in New Zealand if the suggestion by Parata, a Maori rugby union administrator, to send a Maori 'All Black' team to Australia in 1910 had not been accepted by NZRFU administrators. Writing on the success of the 1905-06 All Black team's they noted:

...the success of Gallaher's team in the British Isles in 1905-06 was to cause the New Zealand Rugby Union much worry in the next few years, and the chances were, and are, that had it not been for a Maori, Wiremu Teihoka Parata, commonly and lovingly known as Ned Parata, the game of rugby could possibly have given way to league as our national game (McCarthy and Howitt, 1983: 75-77).

According to McCarthy and Howitt (1983), the exodus of Maori players in the early 1900s was provoked by the omission of Maori players from the All Black team. They argue that from 1903 to 1913 only three Maori were included in All Black teams and that "the years from 1896 when Gage captained New Zealand, to 1910 when the first official Maori team was selected, were lean years in rugby for Maori" (1983: 72). It was in this context that Parata voiced his concern with the number of Maori who "frustrated at their being passed over in rugby circles, almost flocked to the alternative – league" (McCarthy and Howitt, 1983: 75). The establishment of the New Zealand Maori rugby union team in 1910 coincided with an expansion in the international contact between rugby league teams in New Zealand, Australia and Britain.

While the establishment of a national Maori rugby league team did encourage some Maori players to switch to league, the institutionalisation of the rugby league game in New Zealand did not progress through the establishment of league competitions with professional clubs, as was the case in Australia and England. The financial incentive for New Zealand players to switch to rugby league *in* New Zealand was therefore less apparent. Additionally, the more contentious suggestion that superior Maori players were overlooked for All Black selection in favour of lesser ‘white’ players can be supported in historical accounts. Ryan’s (1993) account of the 1888-89 ‘Native’ Team’s tour of Britain testifies to the early involvement by Maori in the game. The first New Zealand team to tour England organised in 1888 was intended to be a Maori team to attract interest in England and thereby make the tour financially profitable. Ryan (1997: 70) argues that the team could not be selected exclusively among Maori or “half-caste” players, and four ‘white’, ‘native’ born players were included in the team to boost its strength, thus the team’s name, the Native team. Despite this claim to the “limited numerical strength and standard of Maori rugby during the 1880s” (Ryan, 1997: 70), the touring Maori players gained significant experience and skills and continued to play rugby on their return.

The 1888-89 ‘Native’ team’s success encouraged the selection of four of the team’s Maori players for the first official New Zealand team to tour Australia in 1893. These players included Thomas Rangiwahia Ellison as captain, David Gage, and W.T. Wynyard, all prominent members of the 1888-89 Native team. However, the following year no Maori players were included in the New Zealand team playing against Australia. In 1896 Gage captained the New Zealand team, which also included Wynyard, playing against Queensland but no Maori players were selected in the 1897 team that toured Australia (Carman, 1980: 2-3). In 1903, two Maori players, Albert Arapeta (“Opai”) Asher and John William Stead, were selected to the New Zealand team touring Australia and Stead went on to captain the 1904 New Zealand team that won the test against the visiting British team. This visiting British team also played against an unofficial Maori rugby union team, an occurrence that highlights the desire of Maori players to participate in international matches.

Despite “Billie” Stead’s success as captain in 1904 and as captain of the South Island team in 1905, David Gallaher was chosen by the NZRFU selectors as captain while Stead was selected as vice-captain of the first ‘All Black’ team which toured the British Isles, France and North America in 1905. It is notable that the description of Gallaher’s rugby abilities refers to his organisational skills rather than his playing abilities. Palenski et al. (1998: 72) cites a member of the 1905-06 All Black team’s description of Gallaher as “a man of sterling worth...girded by great self-determination and self-control...As a skipper he was something of a disciplinarian”. By contrast, Stead was described by a rugby writer as being “fast...quick to see an opening, his defence was par excellence” (cited in Carman, 1980: 136). In total, Stead scored 12 tries in 42 All Black matches including three in the fourth test on the 1905 All Black tour, and captained the All Black team against Ireland when Gallaher was injured. Carman (1980: 136) cites Stone’s references to Stead as being “sadly missed” in the match the All Black team lost against the Welsh side. In 1907 Stead was not included in the All Black team that toured Australia while 13 of the ‘original’ 1905-06 All Black players, including one Maori player, Cunningham, were selected for the team. However, in 1908, when the Anglo-Welsh team toured New Zealand and Australia, Stead was again appointed captain in two of the three tests, which the All Black team won (Carman, 1980: 2-3).

This ‘passing over’ of the more experienced Stead as captain of the 1905-06 All Black team for Gallaher, a player who had not captained a New Zealand side before the tour, has meant that the epic 1905 tour is remembered as ‘Gallaher’s’ team. Gallaher died in France in World War One and a ‘Gallaher’ trophy was donated to New Zealand-French tests. (In 2000, the All Black team visited Gallaher’s gravesite in the south of France on a tour of France and TVNZ’s evening news programme covered the visit with interviews of players.) It was not until 1949 that a Maori, Jimmy Smith, again captained a non-ethnic New Zealand team. However, this New Zealand team was, in effect, a ‘second-string’ team because it toured Australia while the All Black team toured South Africa where Maori players were not admitted.

In 1908 one of the most high-profile Maori players, Opai Asher, switched to rugby league. About his playing abilities Carman (1980, 135-136) noted:

Albert Arapeta Asher (Auckland) was a member of the 1903 team that toured Australia and playing in all ten matches (all won by 276 points to 13), Asher registering 17 tries. R.A. Stone writes "Albert Asher, the one and only 'Opai', the greatest scoring man the writer has ever seen. When 'Opai' was 11 years old he played for Tauranga against Rotorua. He also played against Auckland when 12 ½ years old, surely a record for a representative game. Asher played many brilliant games for Auckland (he appeared 21 times between 1898 and 1907, scoring 12 tries). "Opai" on attack was a dangerous man to handle - with his speed, his own particular fend, bump, half-lifting of his body which "Opai" performed when he crashed into an opponent. Australia in 1903 saw "Opai" at the height of his career. Thrilled were the crowds by the Maoriland wonder who, when picked up and bumped, appeared to bounce, and was the next moment making for the goal line with a running action all his own. He was called "the Rubber Man". A serious knee injury received as a firebrigade's man prevented him being considered for the 1905 All Black tour. In 1902 he scored a try for North Island. Asher turned over to league in 1908. He died at Auckland on January 8, 1965.

Asher participated in the second New Zealand Maori rugby league tour to Australia in 1909 (Davidson, 1947: 59) and in the New Zealand rugby league team's first test against a visiting British team in 1910 (Smith, 1998: 122).

While Asher switched to rugby league, it is also possible that the establishment of the New Zealand Maori team encouraged other prominent Maori players, including Stead and "Alex" Ariki Marehua Takarangi who, according to Carman (1980: 137) was "a truly outstanding footballer who could well have represented New Zealand in his earlier years", to remain with the rugby union game. Following the NZRFU's establishment of a Maori rugby union team, they were able to play for it. Takarangi captained the first New Zealand Maori rugby union team that toured Australia in 1910 which also included Stead. This 1910 New Zealand Maori rugby union team toured Australia at the same time as the 1910 All Black team, which thereby enabled a large number of Maori players to gain international recognition either through selection to the All Black team, the most prestigious national team, or to the ethnic national team, the New Zealand Maori team.

This development of a dual national and ethnic game both paralleled and contrasted with the indigenisation of rugby in South Africa which progressed along the lines of racial segregation. There, 'white' Afrikaners and English speaking South Africans controlled the 'national' organisation of rugby union through the South African Rugby

Board (SARB), which was founded in 1889 and from which Africans and ‘coloureds’ were excluded. In turn, Africans and ‘coloureds’ organised a separate rugby union organisation (Nauright, 1997: chapter 3). Thus, while the NZRFU did not ban Maori from participating in competitions and teams under its jurisdiction, and the establishment of the New Zealand Maori rugby union team was arguably provoked by the rival claims of rugby league, the rugby union game was both secured and strengthened by this national ethnic team.

3.3 *The Maori contribution to the indigenisation of rugby*

While there is support for the suggestion that Maori players were omitted from early All Black teams, it is also possible that those Maori players selected to All Black teams were selected to play in what has been referred to in more recent research on team sports as ‘marginal’ playing positions. The identification of players from a minority ethnic group as selected and dominating ‘marginal’ playing positions, requiring less strategic and decision-making skills and regarded by coaches as having a low impact on the outcome of games, has been described as ‘positional segregation’ (Curtis and Loy, 1978). In a recent study on rugby union players’ ethnicity and playing position in New Zealand, Melnick and Thompson (1996) argued that Maori rugby union players dominated the back position which coaches described as depending on speed and quickness rather than strategic decision-making. (Positional segregation has also been identified in English rugby union (Maguire, 1988a; Maguire 1991) and in Australian rugby league (Hallihan, 1991)).

The predominance of Maori players selected for All Black teams around the turn of the 20th century in the playing positions of ‘back’ suggests that Maori players may have been placed in these ‘marginal’ playing positions as opposed to the more ‘central’ ‘forward’ playing positions occupied by ‘Pakeha’ (white) players. Accounts of Maori players, which highlight the skills and abilities of players such as Stead, Opai Asher, Takarangi and George Nepia, - the latter described by Carman (1980: 140) “as the greatest fullback I have ever seen. His position play, his fearless fielding of the ball, his fierce and solid tackling and his forceful running made him a wonderful defensive

back, and in those days there was very little cover defence” - suggest that Maori players were selected in the positions of ‘backs’ rather than the ‘forwards’. The notable exception in the early period of the 20th century to this ‘stacking’ of Maori players in ‘back’ positions was Ellison, described by Zavos (1998: 167) as a ‘magnificent forward’. Despite the ‘marginality’ of the back position as defined by coaches in Melnick and Thompson’s (1996) study, when backs received the ball, which tended to be monopolised by forwards, they had a greater opportunity for running with it. Significantly, this meant that a high number of Maori ‘backs’ had a greater opportunity for ‘bedazzling’ spectators with their ‘audacious’, ‘elusive’ and ‘free’ playing style. This may have helped foster a view by both Pakeha and Maori of Maori players as ‘naturally’ better suited to ‘back’ positions (MacLean, 1999).

While the selection of players to particular playing positions tended to be stratified along ethnic lines, Carman (1980: xii) suggests that the early selection of Maori players to the New Zealand Maori team favoured certain iwi (tribes): “Only those who could understand the tribal demarcations of those days, and Parata’s preference for men of the Bay of Plenty and Hawke’s Bay, could appreciate what the long-delayed arrival of the Ngapuhi meant to Maori rugby”. Parata’s preference for Maori from particular iwi further highlights that selection and exclusion of Maori players was complicated along the lines of both ethnic and iwi affiliations.

While Maori appear to dominate the ‘back’ positions, and thereby gain a greater opportunity to ‘run with the ball’, most accounts of Maori rugby players make less out of the fact that Maori players were among those who developed the ‘scientific’ and rationalised New Zealand style. Two publications from around the turn of the 20th century, describing the development of a particular ‘New Zealand’ style of rugby, testify to the involvement by Maori players in the indigenisation of the game. These publications were a significant contribution to the process involving the media, which Appadurai (1995: 33-38) also notes in relation to cricket in India, which facilitated the indigenisation of rugby in New Zealand. Apart from providing the first insight into the lives of famous rugby players and teams as well as providing diagrams, illustrations

and instructions on how to play the game, the books were significant because they highlighted Maori players' involvement in the tactical and strategic 'system-making'.

The Art of Rugby Football (1902) by Thomas Rangiwahia Ellison, a prominent Maori player who played in the Native Team in 1888-89 and for the first official New Zealand team in 1893, is a coaching manual and provides accounts of the innovations in play and strategy he created. Ellison's development of a New Zealand rugby playing 'system' dominated All Black play and coaching and playing strategies. It also helped foster a sense of a New Zealand style of play which became interpreted as 'open' and as distinct from what New Zealand rugby writer Zavos (1998: 118-125, 166-172) calls the English/British "public school orthodoxy" involving "scrummaging, dribbling and kicking into touch". The invention of the 'wing-forward' position by Ellison, which encouraged this 'open' play, caused controversy when New Zealand teams played against other members of the 'imperial network'. Swan (1948) refers to the controversy:

The year [1892] is also notable for the introduction of the wing-forward. This radical change, which did so much to assist future New Zealand sides, and, incidentally, to heap abuse upon the players chosen in the position, entirely altered the playing aspect in New Zealand Rugby. A new game evolved, and although the wing-forward is now of the past, wing-forwards – players from the side of the pack in lieu of "roving" forwards (or extra half-backs) – have taken the place. The Wing-forward was the creation of Thomas R. Ellison, of Wellington, captain of the New Zealand side of 1893, who describes how it came about in his book, *The Art of Rugby Football*, as follows: -

"In 1892, the three halves system, which had been adopted by the Ponake Football Club, was superseded by the wing game, which was devised by me as the result of personal experiences behind the scrum, as half-back for the club, during the previous season, where I found it impossible for the smartest of referees to detect and to amply penalise off-side interferences of opponents bent on spoiling my passes – impossible of detection because he could not have his eyes on both sides of the scrum at once; and impossible of amply penalising, when detected, as it often paid a side better to play off-side and incur the penalty of a free kick, than permit an almost certain try to be scored against them; and where I also found that the then present state of affairs meant the frustration of about three of five attempts at passing out, and those three attempts almost invariably the best scoring opportunities. My object therefore, in introducing the system of wing forwards was mainly to enable the half-back to get his passes out, free from undue interference. The remedy soon occurred to me, viz., pulling a man out of the scrum, and bring up one of the halves, and playing them on the edge of the scrum as shields for the half-back; but the preparation of the men was far more difficult than I had dreamed (Swan, 1948: 123-124).

The reactions to the wing-forward invention were recorded by the New Zealand journalist, Barr (1908), covering the 1908 tour of New Zealand by the British team as a

news correspondent for New Zealand, Australian and British newspapers. In this publication the impressions of the New Zealand style of play were recounted by Harding, the captain of the British team, who criticised the New Zealand invention of the ‘wing-forward’ as spoiling the game:

We have also repeatedly had our attack nipped in the bud by the wing-forward getting on our scrum half before he received the ball, and have been astonished by the latitude allowed this player in almost every game. Prior to the All Blacks’ visit to England, in 1905, he was quite unknown to us, but from the time of making his acquaintance we have always considered – and still continue to do so – that he is responsible for spoiling much open play after possession has been fairly gained by his opposing forwards, and when defending he is breaking the rule governing obstruction on the field by deliberately preventing the opposing half getting round the scrummage (Harding cited in Barr, 1908: 137).

These New Zealand developments and innovations to playing the game had first been felt in the northern hemisphere in 1905 where Gallaher and Stead put into practice Ellison’s wing-forward innovation and organised the team’s play in a manner that was regarded in England as copying the “industrial principle of specialization” (Nauright, 1991). These changes to the English game were recorded by Gallaher and Stead in *The Complete Rugby Footballer* (1906), the second significant book published in that decade, authored by Stead, the prominent Maori player and former All Black captain. This book included instructions and playing diagrams together with a history of the game and its organisation in New Zealand and an account of the successful 1905 tour of Britain. The co-authorship of the book suggests that the two captains enjoyed a fruitful playing relationship including the sharing of tactical and strategic decision-making (1906: preface). Stead also covered rugby matches as a columnist for the national *NZ Truth* tabloid newspaper for a number of years (Palenski et al., 1998: 175).

These and other early publications by All Black players¹¹, providing interpretations and accounts of “New Zealand” inventions in the style and tactics of playing rugby, interestingly suggest that the indigenous style of rugby, in which Maori players were prominent ‘innovators’, involved the submerging of the individual for the benefit of the team. Former All Black selector J.J. Stewart (1997: 50) commented on this systematically organised team play and the specialisation of playing positions:

¹¹ All Black Eric Arthur Percy Cockroft published *The Modern Method in New Zealand Football* in 1924; All Blacks Charles Joshua Oliver and Eric Tindill co-authored *The Tour of the Third All Blacks* in 1936.

The 1905 All Blacks changed the face of the game and set its direction for many years. English rugby was suffering the consequences of the 'Great Schism' with so many of its top players now playing within the Northern Rugby Union, and the All Blacks won most of their games by wide margins. But even when this lower standard of rugby in England is taken into consideration, Gallaher's was remarkable in its innovative and progressive patterns and represents a significant step forward in the game. The specialisation of forwards at scrum was a factor in the team's success, although this specialisation was not applied to the lineout. The other factor was the rhythm, combination, togetherness and team organisation in the back line. Prior to 1905 the emphasis had been upon individual skill and ability. Players received the ball and ran with it, using their flair and elusiveness to defeat opponents. In Gallaher's team the emphasis was placed upon team work and combination. The skill of the individual became a component of the total presentation.

The rationalisation of the game introduced by the 1905-06 All Black team, together with Ellison's 'wing-forward' innovation which worked to provide the back-line of players with the ball and to score a high number of tries, thus created a New Zealand 'unorthodox' style of playing that produced winning teams. The wing-forward position meant that the New Zealand forwards were reduced to seven players, as opposed to the usual eight, at scrummage time and encouraged the development of the uniquely 2-3-2 New Zealand scrummaging formation (Nauright, 1991: 248; Nauright, 1996a: 131) which was retained until the 1930s when "its Aristotelian logic", according to Zavos (1998: 123), proved to be its undoing. Rugby writer T.P. McLean (1989: 4) comments:

Sheer Kiwi cussedness caused New Zealand to retain the formation even for the early stages of the inaugural tour of South Africa in 1928. Here, the All Blacks were so overwhelmed by the Springboks' forward power that they desperately brought in their rover, usually Ronald Stewart, to pack as loose-head prop before the ball had been put into the scrummage. The Ellison invention subsequently was killed stone-dead after the manager of the 1930 British Lions team touring New Zealand James Baxter, had publicly denounced the wing-forward as a cheat. Two years later the New Zealand Rugby Union formally adopted the three-fronted, eight-man scrummage formation.

McLean (1989) argues that the abandonment of the Ellison invention was a result of a heavy All Black defeat and pressure by the first visiting British team in 22 years. The New Zealand 2-3-2 scrummaging formation contrasted with the 3-2-3 'conventional' formation, itself a Welsh innovation developed in the 1880s and generally adopted in the 1890s (Williams, 1989: 316). It also contrasted with the South African indigenous 3-4-1 scrummaging formation used by the 1906 'white' South African team that toured Britain and which, like the New Zealand 'system', was proved highly successful

against British teams. In contrast to the Ellison and the conventional scrum formations, the South African 3-4-1 formation exists today (Nauright, 1997: 42).

British responses to the success of the early All Black teams suggested the New Zealand style was a form of cheating (Barr, 1908; Phillips, 1987; Nauright, 1991; Nauright, 1996a). In addition, the success of the early All Black teams was explained as having a good deal to do with the New Zealand climate and environment as opposed to 'natural flair' or rationalised play (Nauright, 1996a: 131; Phillips, 1987). This explanation, thus, emphasised that ex-Brits living in New Zealand had benefited from New Zealand climatic conditions while the inferior British teams suffered from the consequence of industrialisation, urbanisation and a sedentary lifestyle. Additionally, it was suggested that the English players were "hampered by the laden shackles of tradition, form, precedent, whose minds have been formed on the pattern of other men's minds instead of being allowed to mould themselves" (cited in Nauright, 1991: 247). Additionally Ryan (1997) and Palenski (2001) suggest that the effect of the All Black Haka as an 'exotic' draw-card for the 'Native' team in 1888-89 encouraged British organisers to request that Australian and South African national teams perform similar 'indigenous' displays before their matches. Palenski (2001) notes this about the request for a 'Wallaby' performance:

Australians could be reminded that the success of the haka on the Original All Blacks' tour in 1905-06 led to great embarrassment of the Wallabies. The British were so impressed with the haka they insisted on something similar from the Australians on their tour, in 1908-09. The Wallabies were required to hop around while chanting words that went something like this: 'Gau-gau x wirr, win-nang, alang nur, mui-an-yal-ling, bu-rang-a-langlang, Ya!

This process of indigenisation of a New Zealand style of play, involving both Pakeha and Maori players, in which a systematic playing style and specialised playing positions formed the core and the incorporation of 'Maori performance' the 'spectacle' (Ryan, 1993), developed alongside the dual, national and ethnic institutionalisation of the game. This dual, national and ethnic structure provided increasing 'international' playing opportunities for Maori players but, following the growing criticism of the exclusion of Maori players from All Black teams touring South Africa, the NZRFU chose to expand the New Zealand Maori team's touring programme.

3.4 *All Black teams touring South Africa and the institutionalisation of an ethnic rugby structure*

The importance of the New Zealand Maori rugby union team, as an avenue for Maori recognition in the 1920s, coincided with an increasing number of rugby league internationals and rugby union contact with South Africa. New Zealand Maori rugby union teams toured Australia in 1910, 1913, 1922, 1923 and in 1926-27. The latter visit to Australia coincided with the first northern hemisphere tour by a New Zealand Maori rugby union team including matches in Ceylon, France, England and Wales. After 1927, the New Zealand Maori team did not tour again for eight years until 1935, when a team again toured Australia (Palenski et al., 1998). Coinciding with these tours, the New Zealand rugby league team (the 'Kiwis') played against the English rugby league team (the 'Bulldogs') on four occasions. The 'Kiwis' visited England in 1926, coinciding with the New Zealand Maori rugby union team's tour, and English national rugby league teams visited New Zealand in 1920, 1924 and 1928. In addition to these tours, a combined New Zealand-Australia rugby league team toured England in 1911-12 and in 1921, while 'Kiwi' teams toured Australia in 1919, 1925 and 1930 (Davidson, 1947: 92-93, 94).

These international rugby league contacts between New Zealand, Australia and Britain coincided with the dearth in visits by British rugby union teams. In this context, the visits to New Zealand by South African 'Springbok' teams in 1921 and 1937 and the All Black team's tour of South Africa in 1928 were significant events. The lapse in visits by 'British' teams to New Zealand after the two visits in 1904 and 1908 meant that tours to New Zealand by 'Springboks' teams and All Black tours to South Africa began to occupy this important yet controversial space in the New Zealand international rugby programme from the 1920s¹². However, Springbok teams only

¹²In 1919, an invitation was accepted from the South African Rugby Board for the New Zealand Army team to make a tour on the way home. Because of the colour bar in South Africa, Ranji Wilson, born a West Indian Indian and an outstanding member of the King's Cup team and a pre-war All Black, was excluded from the touring team. On its return the Army team, including Ranji Wilson, played against provincial teams in New Zealand (Palenski et al., 1998: 266-67; Ryan, 2000a: 61).

visited New Zealand twice and, similarly, only two All Black teams toured South Africa in the first half of the century. (Until the mid-1990s both national teams had toured each other's country only six times.)

Despite only touring New Zealand twice in the period before World War Two, the visits by Springbok teams were significant in part because of the success of the Springbok team against All Black teams¹³. Thus, added to the relatively few 'British' teams touring New Zealand, the Springbok visits in 1921 and 1937 and the All Black tours in 1928 and 1949 attracted immense public interest. The All Black-Springbok test staged at Lancaster Park in 1937 set a new record of 45,000, a third of the city's population in 1937 (New Zealand Yearbook, 1937). When the 'third' Springbok team visited New Zealand in 1956 an estimated 686,760 spectators (out of a total population of 2.2 million) attended the 23 matches (Richards, 1999: 44; Roger, 1991; Phillips, 1987: 82-85).

The 1920s and 30s All Black-Springbok tests were significant rugby events. The SARB's invitation to All Black teams less "coloured" players was not challenged by the NZRFU which excluded Maori players from touring teams. This regenerated the critique expressed at the beginning of the century over the exclusion of Maori players from All Black selection and contributed to debate and the suggestion by Tai Mitchell of Te Arawa that Maori should be spared the possibility of unpleasant incidents and not selected to the 1937 All Black team (Ryan, 2000a: 68). Prior to 1970 the South African Rugby Board did not extend invitations to All Black teams including Maori players. No Maori player was included in the All Black team that played against the visiting 1921 Springbok team. Nor were any Maori players included in the 1928 tour of South Africa, which meant that George Nepia, the star Maori player of the undefeated 1924-25 All Black team that toured Britain, France and North America, did

¹³ The tests series in 1921 (in New Zealand) and in 1928 (in South Africa) were both drawn but the All Black team lost the series in 1937 two to one (in New Zealand) and in 1949 four to nil (in South Africa). By contrast, the All Black team lost only one match on the 1905 tour of the England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and won all matches on the 1924 tour. The record for tests against Australian sides in the first half of the 20th century likewise favours All Black teams with 23 All Black victories to nine Australian and two drawn tests.

not participate in the tour. Not until 1970 did an All Black team touring South Africa include Maori players¹⁴.

Coinciding with the exclusion of Maori players from All Black teams playing against Springbok teams, the competitive structure of the 'Maori game' became formalised. From 1910 Maori teams played annually against provincial teams in New Zealand (until World War One) and toured Australia on four occasions until 1924¹⁵. In 1922 the NZRFU established a Maori Advisory Board with Parata as chairman, although it was not until 1924 that the New Zealand Maori team was given official recognition by the NZRFU (Swan, 1948: 192)¹⁶. In 1923 Mrs M.A. Perry of Hawke's Bay donated a "Maori Rosebowl" for the annual matches between representative North and South Island Maori teams, thereby providing added recognition of these Maori teams which paralleled the New Zealand North Island and South Island teams. From 1928, the winner of the Tom French Cup, a trophy presented by King Edward VIII for competition between Maori teams, also received the Rosebowl (Palenski et al., 1998: 256; Ryan, 2000a: 64). Additionally, from 1921 to 1936, all but two of the eight international touring teams to New Zealand included a match against the New Zealand Maori team (Ryan, 2000a: 64). This institutionalisation of an ethnic rugby structure in New Zealand in the 1920s thus coincided with the exclusion of Maori players from All Black teams touring South Africa and the increasing activity of the New Zealand Maori team.

Despite this domestic recognition of Maori rugby players and teams and the number of international games played by the New Zealand Maori teams in the 1920s, in the following decade there were fewer tours to Australia and no tours to the northern

¹⁴ This coincided with the cancellation of an All Black tour in 1967 following growing public protest against continued contact with the SARB (Thompson, 1975). In 1973 a planned Springbok tour of New Zealand was cancelled by the Labour government coinciding with New Zealand hosting the 1974 Commonwealth Games and the fear of international boycott of the event. However, in 1976 following the All Black tour of South Africa, over twenty African and Caribbean countries boycotted the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal.

¹⁵ After the 1924 tour of Australia, New Zealand Maori teams toured Australia less frequently coinciding with the increase in tours to the Pacific Island nations. New Zealand Maori teams toured Australia four times after World War One, in 1935, 1949, 1958 and 1979.

hemisphere. The 1926-27 New Zealand Maori northern hemisphere tour was therefore exceptional as the second northern hemisphere tour did not take place until 1982. On the 1926-27 tour, the team played against teams in Ceylon, England and Wales, but only played against a national representative team in France. On only one of the following three northern hemisphere tours - in 1982, 1988 and 1998 - when they played against Spain did the New Zealand Maori team play against a national representative team¹⁷. The only exception to this lack of 'international' recognition of New Zealand Maori teams were the matches against New South Wales and Australia in the period between 1922 and 1958 which were regarded by the New South Wales and later the ARU (formed in 1949) as 'tests'. One possible explanation for this difference in recognition is that the New Zealand Maori team arguably facilitated matches of high spectator interest in New South Wales and Queensland during the period in the 1920s when the game faced a decline and no British teams were visiting the southern hemisphere.

Within New Zealand, South African and British teams were the only touring teams to consistently play against New Zealand Maori teams. Springbok teams played against New Zealand Maori teams on all but the 1937 visit to New Zealand, including the visits in 1921, 1956, 1965 and 1981, and New Zealand Maori teams played against the visiting British Isles teams in 1950, 1959, 1966, 1971, 1977 and 1993. By contrast, the four 'Home Unions', which began touring New Zealand individually from the 1960s,¹⁸ did not play against any New Zealand Maori teams. Nor did the increasing number of other national teams, which toured New Zealand from the 1960s, the exceptions being France in 1961 and Argentina in 1997.

¹⁶ "The [1924] Maori team was the first to tour under the Union's jurisdiction. Previously Maori sides touring Australia had travelled under the care of a Committee of Maori people, but with the permission of the Union" (Swan, 1948: 192).

¹⁷ In 1994, the first New Zealand Maori team toured South Africa playing three games against provincial teams and one against a local team.

¹⁸ Since the 1960s the four home unions began touring New Zealand separately. However, few tours have been undertaken by each of the four countries: Wales two tours (1969 and 1988), Ireland three tours (1976, 1992 and 1997), Scotland four tours (1975, 1981, 1990 and 1996), and England four tours (1963, 1973, 1985, 1992, 1999).

3.5 *The New Zealand Maori team and the constitution of 'ethnic' Pacific teams*

Ryan (2000a: 78-79) argues that it was the NZRFU's endorsement of the 'colour-bar' from the 1920s that became noted by contemporary observers as "driving Maori players away". This contrasted with the *inclusion* of six Maori players in the 1939 'Kiwis' rugby league team to tour Britain. This figure of six Maori players was higher than the number of Maori players in any touring All Black teams prior to World War Two, "three being the maximum", and Ryan (2000a: 78-79) suggests that the 'colour-bar' was "partly held responsible for Maori breaking with rugby union". This criticism of the NZRFU and the suggested exodus of Maori players from rugby union coincided with the NZRFU's decision to extend the New Zealand Maori team's touring programme from the late 1930s.

More significantly, this touring programme involved the Pacific Island nations. Beginning in 1938 with a tour of Fiji and a return invitation to the Fijian rugby union in 1939, it was the Maori team that encouraged the inclusion of Pacific rugby nations in the international game. It does not appear to be accidental that the tour to Fiji was arranged in close proximity to the South African tour of New Zealand in 1937. The contact between Fiji and the New Zealand Maori team was re-established after World War Two and New Zealand Maori teams played against Fijian teams in 1948, four times in the 1950s (coinciding with the establishment of the Rugby League World Cup of nations in 1958), once in 1964 and twice in the 1970s¹⁹. Invitations were extended to Tongan and Western Samoan national teams in 1969 and 1976 respectively to play against the New Zealand Maori team, while New Zealand Maori teams toured Tonga and Western Samoa in 1960, 1973, 1979, 1992 (including the Cook Islands) and 1996, and Western Samoa in 1997²⁰. Interestingly, the New Zealand Maori team did not tour

¹⁹ Fijian national teams toured New Zealand playing against provincial teams and the New Zealand Maori team in 1939 (8 matches), 1951 (15 matches), 1954 (one match), 1957 (15 matches), 1974 (13 matches), 1980 (12 matches), 1991 (3 matches) and 1994 (6 matches). New Zealand Maori teams toured Fiji in 1938, 1948, 1954, 1964, 1973, 1979, 1992, and 1996.

²⁰ A Pacific three ways Championship between Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa began in 1924 and has since been played on an ad hoc basis.

Western Samoa until the 1970s despite the Apia rugby union gaining honorary affiliation to the NZRFU in 1927 (Swan, 1948: 215).

These tours and invitations to Pacific national teams provided recognition and visibility for Maori players at the time when they faced exclusion from All Black teams' international matches against South African teams. However, in supporting Pacific Island rugby, they also effectively constituted and subjugated the Pacific Island national teams as "Polynesian" or ethnic rather than as national teams as, at the same time, the All Black team began playing tests against new 'entrants' to the rugby 'world'. In 1960, on a South African tour, the All Black team played a test against Rhodesia, and following this, national teams from France, Japan, Romania, Argentina and Italy began touring New Zealand. Only the French national team played against the All Black team. A touring All Black team played tests in both Argentina and Uruguay in 1976 and in 1981 an All Black team toured Romania playing one test. From the 1990s other rugby nations on the 'margin' including the Soviet Union, Canada and the Cook Islands toured New Zealand albeit only the Canadian national team played a test against the All Black team.

While some of the new rugby nations gained test status, by playing against the All Black team, tours to New Zealand by Pacific Island teams did not gain *national* recognition by the NZRFU but were limited to playing against New Zealand Maori teams. It was not until 1980, on the fifth Fijian tour of New Zealand, that a Fijian national team played a test against an All Black team²¹. The first All Black-Manu²² Samoa test was not staged until 1993. Despite the inclusion of Tonga in the inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987 (see chapter five) and the increasing diversity of national teams playing against All Black teams, the first Tonga-All Black test took place during the pool matches in the 1999 Rugby World Cup.

²¹ The NZRFU began to reciprocate the visits by Fijian teams beginning with an All Black match against a Fijian XV team on each of the 1968 and 1974 Australian tours. However, these matches were not tests, arguably because the All Black team's opponent was not an official Fijian national team.

²² In 1991 the Samoan national rugby union team adopted the name "Manu", which loosely translated means "emerge" and "good fortune" (Milner, 1993: 129-130)

The ‘ethnicitisation’ of Pacific Island rugby was supported by the IRB’s membership policy which, until 1987, included only the eight ‘big’ unions i.e. the ‘four home unions’, France (re-admitted to the board in 1947), New Zealand, Australia and South Africa (gained membership in 1949). In 1987 Japan, Argentina, Italy, Canada, the United States and Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) had gained associate membership, but the three Pacific Island unions remained non-members. The Australian Rugby Union was the only exception to the IRB members’ opposition to playing tests against the Pacific Islands. By 1997 Australian national teams had played 15 tests against Fijian national teams as well as three tests against Western Samoa and two against Tonga. However, as recently as October 2000, the Manu Samoan rugby union chief executive, Philipp Muller, highlighted, in the wake of the difficulties of bringing Samoan players together in a national team to tour Wales and Scotland, that New Zealand, Australia and South Africa still did not tour the Pacific country to encourage and promote the game there. He contrasted this marginalisation with the fact that *full* Scottish and Welsh teams had toured Samoa “with Welsh ties back to 1986” (Logan, 2000, emphasis added). This marginalisation of Pacific Island rugby union, especially by the NZRFU, provoked criticism and a demand for more tests and visits by the ‘significant’ rugby nations after attempts at establishing an international Pacific rugby series in 1996 failed to include the three Pacific nations (see chapter six).

3.6 *Rugby Sevens*

This duplication at the global level of the New Zealand dual national and ethnic institutionalisation of rugby, which both marginalised and promoted Pacific Island rugby, contrasted with the dominance of Pacific Island national rugby teams in international seven-a-side rugby union tournaments. Seven-a-side competitions were established in the early part of the 20th century and involved club sides. The establishment of ‘Sevens’ tournaments in the 1970s also included clubs from the IRB member countries. However, they participated in these tournaments alongside *national* Pacific Island teams and other ‘marginal’ rugby playing nations such as Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and the U.S.A. The growing popularity of these tournaments, including the Hong Kong Sevens tournament and their domination

by Pacific Island national teams, particularly Fijian teams, encouraged from the 1980s the major rugby union nations to participate with *national* teams (Palenski et al., 1998: 288). In 1998, the Sevens game was introduced in the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games which the New Zealand team won and, in 2000, a media-sponsored international Sevens world circuit tournament was established under the control of the IRB as well as a four-yearly Sevens World Cup.

The success of the Sevens game does not (yet?) rival the success and popularity of the 15-a-side game, as has been the case with the one-day cricket game over test cricket, but it does provide evidence for a claim that after the Hong Kong Sevens, all rugby is really “Trobriand”. This claim was made by Appadurai (1995: 42-43) regarding developments in cricket. Writing about the ‘Australasian’ cricket Cup hosted in the small Persian Gulf emirate of Sharjah, he comments that “after Sharjah, all cricket is Trobriand cricket”. His description of the ‘Sharjah’ Cup could be a description of the Hong Kong Sevens tournament with the exception that the Hong Kong audience is not dominated by semiproletarian migrant workers as in the Persian Gulf and the stadium is not built by Islamic oil money:

The Sharjah Cup is a long way from the playing fields of Eton. The patronage of oil money, the semiproletarian audience of Indian and Pakistani migrant workers in the Persian Gulf, filmstars from the subcontinent sitting on the sports fields created by Islamic oil wealth, an enormous television audience in the subcontinent, prize money and ad revenue in abundance, blood-thirsty cricket: here finally, is the last blow to Victorian upper-class cricket codes, and here is a different global ecumene. After Sharjah, all cricket is Trobriand cricket...because of the successful hijacking of a ritual from its original English practical hegemony and its Victorian moral integument (Appadurai, 1995: 43).

Rugby Sevens, and in particular its dominance by Pacific Island players, is also a long way from the playing fields of Eton. However, despite the Sevens game’s promotion of Pacific Island rugby and the greater inclusion of the Pacific nations in the international game, professionalism has fostered a new marginalisation of the Pacific Island nations in the main 15-a-side game (see chapter six).

Similarly, the New Zealand Maori team has not gained increased *international* recognition. Additionally, the criticism by Maori players selected to the New Zealand Maori team on the tours to Fiji in 1999 of their daily allowance of \$50 by the NZRFU

testifies to the team's continued ambiguous status. The selected players were quoted as saying that the \$50 allowance was an *amateur allowance* and contrasted sharply with the *professional* \$1500 match payments to the New Zealand A-team players (Schumacher, 1999). This lack of professional recognition of the New Zealand Maori rugby union team contrasts with the international recognition of the national Maori rugby league team. A New Zealand Maori rugby league team, Aotearoa, was included among the 16 participating nations for the first time in the 2000 rugby league World Cup of Nations (Husband, 2000). This contrast, between the formal *national* recognition of the Maori rugby league team relative to the New Zealand Maori rugby union team, highlights how the recognition and promotion of ethnic diversity in the game provides both problems and opportunities for the constitution of inter-*national* competitions as meaningful spectacles for international *and* global audiences.

3.7 Summary

From the time rugby became organised in New Zealand prominent Maori players including Thomas Rangiwahia Ellison and John William Stead contributed to the constitution of an indigenous, rationalised, 'New Zealand' style of playing rugby. Within a decade of the publication of manuals and accounts of how to play according to the 'New Zealand' system by these players, a New Zealand Maori rugby union team had been established. The establishment of the New Zealand Maori team by the NZRFU coincided with the significant threat posed by rugby league. In providing a separate structure for 'Maori rugby', the NZRFU effectively institutionalised a dual, national and ethnic system which paralleled the racial and ethnic segregation of sport in South Africa.

The fear that especially Maori players would convert to the 'professional' game was sparked by the organisation of two Maori rugby league tours to Australia in 1908 and 1909. The establishment of the New Zealand Maori team in 1910 and New Zealand Maori teams' increasing tours and matches against visiting national teams in the 1920s including, paradoxically, the 1921 Springbok team, may be seen as an attempt to popularise the rugby union game to Maori players through the staging of internationals

against British and Australian teams. The peak period of activity for the New Zealand Maori team was arguably in the 1920s when the team played 82 matches including 40 matches on the northern hemisphere tour in 1926-27. By contrast, in the 1980s the New Zealand Maori team only participated in 37 matches including 23 on the two northern hemisphere tours. While this decline coincided with a greater inclusion of Maori players in the All Black team in the last few decades, this has not seen the New Zealand Maori team becoming extinct. Significantly, the institutionalisation of an 'ethnic' form had less to do with a desire to provide the Maori with a sporting opportunity during a time when they experienced heightened discrimination than it was about the survival of the game. Rather, the NZRFU copied the idea of a *national* New Zealand Maori team from the rugby league code at a time when Maori players were provided with greater opportunities for national recognition in the rival code.

In the post-World War Two period contact with the Pacific Island national rugby union teams almost exclusively involved the New Zealand Maori team. This effectively constituted the Pacific Island rugby union teams as both 'ethnic' and national teams. Only the Australian rugby union played regular tests against the Fijian national team and, until the establishment of the Rugby World Cup in 1987, the major rugby union nations marginalised Pacific Island rugby. The New Zealand Maori team played a significant role in this process as it was constituted within a national setting that had a dual national and ethnic form, both of which were locked into an international form defined against Pacific Island rugby. As a consequence, Pacific and Maori rugby boosted the international game in a context in which the rival code, rugby league, presented itself as a constant threat to the rugby union game.

The New Zealand Maori team survived because it was required to play a key role in the continuous 'war' against rugby league. In this process, and further complicated by the significance awarded contact with the South African rugby union from the 1920s, the importance of the New Zealand Maori team paradoxically increased rather than came under threat. The inclusion of Pacific Island rugby union in the New Zealand Maori team's touring programme provided new opportunities for international contact for the team at a time when contact between the New Zealand and South African rugby

unions, and the NZRFU's non-Maori selection policy, was criticised as racist. Paradoxically, while Maori players were excluded from All Black selection on South African tours in 1928, 1949 and 1960, Springbok and British Isles teams were among the very few national teams which played against the New Zealand Maori team when touring New Zealand. In this context, the New Zealand Maori team's significance expanded from drawing players away from rugby league to also spreading the game to, and establishing it in, the Pacific Islands. In turn, the significant role of the Pacific Islands nations in promoting the global appeal of the Sevens game has provided them with a point of leverage. Their domination of the 'new' game potentially reverses the former constitution of the global game against the Pacific Island, to a point where Pacific Island rugby plays a significant role in promoting the game to global audiences.

4

CULTIVATING PUBLICS FOR AMATEUR TEAMS: INTER-PROVINCIAL COMPETITIONS

4.0 *Introduction*

Historians attribute the rise in popularity of rugby union in New Zealand to the success of the ‘Original’ All Black team’s tour of the British Isles, France and North America in 1905 (Richardson, 1983; Sinclair, 1986; Phillips, 1987; Nauright, 1991). Similarly, sociologists emphasise the significance of the All Black team for a sense of social integration and national identity (Fougere, 1989; Perry, 1989). In particular, Fougere (1989: 111) has argued that rugby “symbolised a pattern of social relationships that, in New Zealand eyes, made New Zealand both distinctive and admirable. As such, it provided an important basis for the construction of a sense of national unity and individual identity”.

In this chapter I am concerned with how the link between popularity and national identity was cultivated and maintained. The focus, however, is not on the All Blacks but rather on local, provincial unions and their teams. I show that crowds of tens of thousands regularly attend amateur rugby union matches in New Zealand. From the

late 1880s inter-provincial matches attracted crowds, equal to the size of professional 1st division soccer matches in England (Vamplew, 1988: 63), eager to watch the most skilled local players perform against other regions' best players. Despite the claim that "Welsh rugby was watched by larger numbers of spectators than anywhere outside of the North of England" (Williams, 1989: 315), it did not take long before provincial teams in New Zealand could match "the lustrous Swansea side of the early 1900s [which] regularly drew crowds of 20,000 home and away" (Williams, 1989: 316). In fact, the New Zealand challenge competition, the Ranfurly Shield introduced in 1902, would gain a reputation as 'the goose that lays the Golden Egg' and 'the greatest money spinner ever in the Rugby world' (Carman, 1960: 225, 238).

Fougere's (1989: 113) explanation for the popularity of the amateur game in New Zealand suggests rugby was "premised on high levels of participation". The attachment to the All Black team was built on patterns of relationships between teams and games "generating higher levels of loyalty and identification": "At the peak of this structure, giving final definition to its meaning and purpose, are the games between the All Blacks and other national teams - of which the Springboks have been the most important" (Fougere, 1989: 116). Additionally, he argues that rugby is not "a sport that brings together a few teams of highly skilled players with a mass of passive spectators. As generation of schoolboys have learned, sometimes by compulsion, rugby may involve spectatorship but, more importantly, it demands participation" (Fougere, (1989: 113).

Fougere (1989) takes for granted that rugby was an amateur game and he assumes that the game was built from below, not dictated from a central administration, contradicting the account of the organisation of rugby clubs and competitions by Gallaher and Stead (1906). Other than the reference to schoolboy participation, he has no explanation as to how inter-provincial amateur competitions attracted interest from local spectators. I will argue that focusing attention on the All Black team misses the point that it was the establishment of domestic, amateur rugby union competitions that

served to cultivate and secure ‘enduring or regular publics’ (Leifer, 1995)²³. In particular, I will use Leifer’s (1995) observations concerning the organisation of ‘leagues’ and the attachment of teams to cities, together with aspects of Gallaher and Stead’s (1906) account, to argue that the popularity of amateur inter-provincial rugby union competitions in New Zealand rested on the adoption of aspects central to the organisation of professional competitions.

Leifer’s (1995) organisational analysis of the four professional major league sports in North America shows that success in cultivating enduring local publics for professional teams in the period before World War One rested on the organisation of leagues and the attachment of teams to cities. The four major leagues in North America could not rely on national teams to generate spectator interest in their sports. Nor could team owners rely on local publics’ identification and attachment to players and teams because of the constant movement of players and the instability of teams. Owners faced additional obstacles in pursuing regular crowds including the uncertainty of game fixtures and the confusion over conflicting claims to championship titles, especially by touring teams (Leifer, 1995: 53-54). Leifer’s central insight is that in order for owners to achieve financial viability they had to give up their local autonomy, change their view of winning as being the most effective way of ensuring financial prosperity, and agree to affiliate into a centrally organised league. He therefore shifts attention for the explanation of the game and the generation of identification to the organisers of leagues and the support for teams. The focus becomes not the game in general but relations between teams.

According to Leifer (1995), the central organisation of a limited number of teams into leagues involved in closed circuit home-and-away pennant races was the first step towards solving some of the owners’ collective problems. The control over players’ movement and the allocation of teams to large cities was the second. The latter

²³ Leifer (1995: chapter one) distinguishes between enduring publics and infrequent crowds of the North American major leagues. He argues that the large number of people who daily pay attention to major league sports either by attending or viewing games on television or by reading the sports pages in the daily newspaper, listening to sports radio or buying major league products constitute a sports public by the regularity with which they are reactivated. He distinguishes these publics from the crowds or gatherings of earlier times who attended to major league sports on an infrequent basis.

ensured a relative competitive balance between teams in a league, gradually convincing owners that this balance was more important for financial viability than their desire to create winning teams. These mechanisms enabled the attachment and cultivation of

regular local support for city-based teams, ensuring individual team's survival and the overall viability and prosperity of the leagues. For Leifer (1995), the significance of these developments is that they represented a significant shift in organising professional sports from a focus on 'gathering crowds for matches to creating publics' (Leifer, 1995: 59).

It is this argument that I wish to use to explain what the historians and sociologists take for granted. Despite differences in the institutionalisation of professional and amateur sports, which relate to the ownership of teams and the contracting of players, I will argue that Leifer's (1995) analysis provides a way of explaining the success of the New Zealand amateur rugby union competitions. More significantly, the adoption of some of the organisational features of professional competitions, meant that rugby union organisers would not only face some of the problems and opportunities affecting professional sports, but that they would also become embroiled in both domestic and international struggles over professionalism. The NZRFU's solutions to these struggles was to deny professionalism while at the same time ceding power to provincial unions to pursue competitions that utilised the same means as professional competitions to generate income and spectator support. In doing so the NZRFU controlled the suspicion from the Home Unions that it was pursuing professional competitions.

4.1 *Amateur 'friendlies' and local cups and leagues*

Disputes over definitions over what it meant to be an amateur athlete and how amateur competitions should be organised occupied national rugby union administrators for more than a century. Until the 1970s, most New Zealand amateur, inter-provincial rugby union matches were played as 'friendlies' or as a challenge a provincial team issued to another team. These matches were not subject to the kind of rationalisation

and calculation that characterised professional competitions organised to attract admission paying spectators and in which teams were stratified into divisions or leagues, match victories were accumulated as points and teams' standing throughout the season measured. However, those organisers keen to popularise amateur rugby union matches in England, Wales and New Zealand did introduce cup and league competitions.

From the time of its establishment in 1871, the English RFU was opposed to the introduction of cups as a means of popularising the game. The cups and leagues introduced in the North of England proved to be the dividing issue ultimately leading to the split in the game and in the establishment of professional rugby (league). While formalised competitions were discouraged after the split, in practice rugby union administrators in the South of England devoted their energy to preventing players from benefiting financially from the game (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 245). Clubs were not sanctioned for charging admission fees and informal local and regional fixtures emerged between first-class, gate-taking clubs including, for example, the regional Somerset Cup in the South-West of England, which attracted large crowds in the early decades of the 20th century (Williams, 1989: 320-321).

As in the North of England and Wales, the New Zealand game became organised to encompass and encourage both player and spectator involvement from the late 19th century. In both New Zealand and Wales a kind of 'democratic' or popular amateurism (not unlike that promoted within American colleges (Wilson, 1994: 71)) was encouraged as a way of popularising the game (Smith and Williams, 1980: 171). While administrators in New Zealand did not allow payment to players, they did hire coaches, charge money at the gate, provide tour allowances to All Black players and encourage players to train and improve their skills. According to Vincent (1997: 94-95), this desire to develop strong provincial teams in New Zealand was first encouraged in the context of the unofficial visiting British team in 1888:

This attitude manifested itself clearly for the first time in New Zealand during the extensive unofficial tour of Australasia by a very strong British rugby team in 1888. Public opinion in Auckland loudly demanded the preparation of the strongest possible local team to defeat 'the most formidable fifteen' that had ever visited the province. The Auckland Union succumbed to the clamour, and the intensive training to which the local side was subjected stood them in

good stead. The Britons suffered the heaviest defeat of their tour at the hands of the Aucklanders.

In contrast to the southern English clubs, only some of which charged spectators for admission to club matches, all provincial unions in New Zealand began to charge spectators for admission to matches against visiting (inter)national teams, provincial teams and to club matches before the turn of the century (Gallaher and Stead, 1906). Additionally, Gallaher and Stead (1906: 40-41) explain that each club had several teams which participated in graded cup and league competitions:

Each club runs three fifteens, and the same arrangement in every respect are made for the seconds and thirds as for the firsts. The Union offers three Cups for competition by the district clubs on what in Britain is known as the League system, one Cup being allotted to each grade of players in the various clubs...the competition in each case is strictly limited to players of the proper class.

This grading of players into 1st, 2nd and 3rd graded club competitions restricted players to play for only the competition-grade to which he was 'classed'. The provincial union committee decided any promotion of players and a player could not play in the grade from which he was promoted (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 42). This ensured that the lower grades were as competitive and "scarcely inferior in point of interest to those of the grade above". While the residential regulations encouraged balanced competitions and thus "spectatorism" (Leifer, 1995), clubs were prohibited from owning their venues and the provincial unions seized the gate-takings, thus "keeping pure amateurism" (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 47).

This promotion of spectatorism through cups and leagues raised the Home Unions' suspicion of "veiled professionalism" in the colony (Vincent, 1998) and placed the national administration in New Zealand in a precarious position between the Home Unions and its own provincial unions. The problem that the NZRFU faced was that its dedication to the All Black team required a form of decentralisation which promoted highly competitive and graded domestic competitions capable of ensuring that the NZRFU got "all football worth out of the youth of the nation [which] is necessary if it aspires to hold its own, or a little more, in competition with its contemporaries" (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 36).

The establishment of a central federation, the NZRFU, required the decentralisation of authority to provincial unions, however, only in order to actively “nurse” each player so that “through various agencies the influence of the parent chief authority filters through to the individual player” (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 36). The federation controlled both inter-provincial and international matters involving rugby in New Zealand. Disputes over the establishment of provincial unions in non-affiliated geographical areas, and sub-unions within areas already under the jurisdiction of a provincial union, were solved at NZRFU Management Committee meetings and the NZRFU took over from the provincial unions the role of communication with the English RFU. By the end of the 1890s, this national organisational ‘infrastructure’ of rugby was focused on promoting visits by other national teams and preserving local and inter-provincial rugby matches as gate-taking events.

Provincial unions and their provincial representative teams, once established and affiliated to the NZRFU, never moved and were assured of a monopoly within their territory. Their provincial teams consisted of the best players selected from the local club competitions, thereby cultivating a strong sense of local ‘ownership’ and loyalty to provincial teams. Amateur regulations discouraged player mobility through the use of residential qualifications (Gallaher and Stead, 1906). However, despite the fact that *inter-provincial* matches were ‘friendlies’ and not formalised to the same extent as the local, graded club competitions, consistent with the NZRFU and some club delegates’ desire to resist competition structures involving the ‘grading of union against union in merit tables or leagues’ (Richardson, 1995: 5), they did generate large spectator interest.

From the late 1870s the number of inter-provincial ‘friendlies’ increased. At the beginning of the 20th century a total of around 50 inter-provincial ‘friendlies’ were played and between the two world wars up to 100 matches were organised annually. The two war periods saw a sharp reduction in the number of matches (Swan, 1948). Most early matches were staged between provincial teams within close proximity because teams were constrained by travel distances and transportation means. In order to stage these matches a provincial team undertook a ‘tour’. Provided the provincial

union had the finances to cover travel expenses, provincial teams would tour the country once in every four years, according to Gallaher and Stead (1906: 51). In the period when teams travelled by boat and train, tours across the two Islands lasted up to a month. Some of these inter-provincial matches between neighbouring unions later led to the introduction of regional competitions²⁴. An uneven pattern of matches and involvement of provincial teams emerged as a result of these arrangements by provincial unions at the NZRFU annual meetings, as noted by a former provincial union representative to the NZRFU:

The blend of matches resulting from this form of bargaining was very uneven. As an example, North Auckland would only on rare occasions accept any away games south of Taupo²⁵. At the other end of New Zealand, Southland would tour the North Island every four years, including matches against Auckland and occasionally North Auckland, with trips to the lower North Island in the intervening years. Regular home and away matches each year were a feature of the system and engendered rivalry that would normally attract good crowds. Auckland, for instance, would traditionally play against Wellington, Waikato and North Auckland twice each year, whilst the other unions would have similar arrangements plus regular home and away matches on alternating years with other nearby unions (Barry Smith cited in Garland, 1997: 2).

The number of matches played by each of the 28 provincial teams, established by the middle of the 20th century, increased to approximately 10 matches annually ranging, in 1950, from as many as 17 matches played by the Wellington team to as few as four played by the Mid-Canterbury provincial team (Swan, 1958). While the number of ‘friendlies’ grew, they eventually became incorporated into *national*, inter-provincial competitions, the Ranfurly Shield and the National Provincial Championship (NPC), established three-quarters of a century apart.

4.2 *The Ranfurly Shield*

²⁴ For example, the Seddon Shield (1906) is contested between provincial teams from Marlborough, West Coast, Buller and Nelson Bays. Until 1996, when it was changed into an annual tournament, it was contested as a challenge shield. The Hanan Shield (1946) includes the Mid-Canterbury, South Canterbury and North Otago provincial unions and is contested in one yearly match between the holder and one of the two participating unions. The Coronation Shield (1956), including the Northland, Auckland, Counties-Manuka, Thames Valley, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, King County and North Harbour provincial unions and is competed for on a challenge basis whenever the holder meets another participating union either at home or away. The Bruce Steel Cup (1965) between the Wairarapa-Bush, Manawatu, Horowhenua and Wanganui provincial unions is competed for when the holder and any of the other participating unions first meet in a season (Palenski et al., 1998:237; Akers and Miller, 2000: 233-234).

²⁵ Taupo is situated in the middle of the North Island by Lake Taupo.

In 1902 the NZRFU agreed to introduce the Ranfurly Shield, a national challenge competition to be contested by the representative teams of its affiliated provincial unions. The amateur rules of the challenge competition required that the shield be contested in challenge matches - “the New Zealand Union seeing to it that they [the shield holders] are not over done by challenges” (Gallaher and Stead, 1906: 51). This meant that the competition involved only half a dozen provincial teams in the few matches staged each year²⁶. Despite these restrictions, the amateur competition would prove to be highly successful with local spectators. Crowds of 20,000 spectators for Ranfurly Shield matches were not unusual from the 1920s. This competition became the most significant revenue-generating means for provincial unions enabling a few, the Auckland, Wellington and Canterbury unions, to claim a powerful position vis-à-vis the NZRFU. These unions also produced the most All Black players²⁷. But, more significantly, the success of Ranfurly Shield matches was critical for the continued popularity of rugby union in the first half of the 20th century when few All Black matches took place. However, this popularity may have contributed to the Home Unions’ suspicion of ‘professionalism’ in New Zealand and influenced the NZRFU to restrict the number of the annual challenge matches.

Between 1902 and 1976 the Ranfurly Shield was the only *national* inter-provincial competition. The Ranfurly Shield trophy, made in England and donated to the NZRFU by the Earl of Ranfurly (15th Governor of New Zealand, 1897 – 1904), was originally intended to be a cup but when the trophy arrived in New Zealand it was discovered to be a shield. Additionally, the design on the shield had to be modified because it featured a round ball and a goal without long posts (Swan, 1948; Carman, 1960; Palenski et al., 1998)²⁸. The introduction of the shield represented a departure from

²⁶ A total of 547 Ranfurly Shield matches have been played over 86 seasons in the period between 1904 and 1999, the first and second World Wars interrupting play (the 1999 season included). From the 1980s, and after the introduction of the National Provincial Championship in 1976 (see below), competition regulation stipulated that the shield holder must accept no less than seven challenges a season (Palenski et al., 1998: 230-236).

²⁷ Between 1893 and 1999, the four major provincial unions Auckland, Canterbury, Wellington and Otago provided 59 per cent of All Black players. The four unions provided 100 players or more each while 13 provincial unions provided less than ten All Black players each.

²⁸ This anecdotal information suggests that trophies were unusual in rugby union in England as opposed to in soccer. With the break-away of the Northern Union in 1895, the English RFU began opposing trophies which it regarded as encouraging the aspect of winning identified as inherent to

inter-provincial ‘friendlies’ for which no trophy was at stake. Richardson (1995) argues that the choice of this type of competition suggests English RFU influence over the NZRFU. The shield was to be contested neither as a pennant or knock-out competition and it did not include centrally-scheduled seasonal fixtures. It was to be contested on an annual basis as a challenge trophy in ‘one-off’ challenge matches staged on the holder’s²⁹ ground between the holder and a challenging union. It would shift between provincial unions following a loss thus limiting the possibility for constructing regular, season-long local publics. However, this competition structure did encourage provincial unions to ‘gather crowds for matches’ (Leifer, 1995: 59) involving the shield.

Over the century only 14 provincial unions won a challenge and thereby had an opportunity to defend the shield in front of home crowds³⁰. ‘Challenging’ unions were required to put their challenge before the end of August each year, the acceptance of which depended upon both the holder and the NZRFU Management Committee. Most Ranfurly Shield matches were to be played during the months of July, August and September (Carman, 1960) while inter-provincial ‘friendlies’ took place between May and September (Swan, 1948). By 1926 the holder union was not required to accept any challenges before the first Saturday in July and no match could be played after the last day of September (Palenski et al., 1998: 230; Carman, 1960: 252).

The shield was awarded to the Auckland provincial union in the 1902 season because of its success in this and the previous seasons. However, because the Auckland union toured the country in 1903 and the rules required that the shield be contested only on the holder’s ground, the first Ranfurly Shield match was not played until 1904. Rules regarding gate-takings affected the number of challenges a holder would receive. Until 1919 these gate-taking rules did not encourage unions to ‘challenge’. In contrast to ‘friendly’ inter-provincial matches, the gate-takings of which were shared between the

professional sports (Dunning and Sheard, 1979). Not until the 1960s and 1970s did the English RFU endorse national competitions (see section 4.4).

²⁹ The term “shield holder” refers to the team that holds the shield at the end of each match (Carman, 1960:13).

two competing unions, the rules for contesting the Ranfurly Shield guaranteed all gate-takings to the holder union, less the challenging union's expenses (Carman, 1960: 251; Palenski et al., 1998: 231). The prospect of having only travel expenses reimbursed and no share of the gate-takings therefore did not encourage unions to visit a shield holder, affecting both potential challenging unions as well as the holder³¹. Few shield matches were therefore staged in the period up till World War One.

Figure 4.1 Map of provincial rugby unions' geographical areas



³⁰ The number of unions in the NZRFU. Since 1907 the number of unions has remained 21.

³¹ In 1907 it was noted in the *New Zealand Herald* "[T]hat the Taranaki union had purposely decided not to challenge, even if they had prospects of winning, as under the present conditions attaching to the shield, a small union could not afford to be in possession of it. So long as the present conditions obtain Taranaki would be unlikely to ever be challengers" (cited in Carman, 1960: 24-5). Similarly, in 1908, when the South Canterbury union toured the North Island playing six matches, the match against Auckland was not a challenge match despite Auckland holding the shield, because the South-Canterbury union would rather share the gate of an 'ordinary' match with Auckland, than challenge for the shield and receive no gate income (Carman, 1960: 26-27).

century as a result of
been affiliated to the

This affected provincial unions differently. Between 1904 and 1913 the shield was held by the Auckland provincial team, with the exception of 1904 and 1905, when the Wellington provincial team successfully defended it in four games. During this time the shield proved popular with the local spectators in both provinces. Nine thousand spectators attended the first Ranfurly Shield match at Alexandra Park in Auckland, which was a record for inter-provincial matches in 1904 and, two years later, 15,000 spectators watched Wellington challenge Auckland (Carman, 1960: 13, 21). The Taranaki provincial team won the shield in 1914 but lost it to Wellington in the last match of that year. In this period before the first world war the Canterbury provincial team challenged for the Ranfurly Shield only seven times while, for example, Auckland participated in 27 matches, Taranaki in 13 and Hawke's Bay in three.

The shield was not contested during World War One but, following the war, rule changes allowed it to be taken 'on tour'. This rule change was proposed by the Wellington provincial union to allow any match played by the holders of the shield to be a challenge match (Carman, 1960: 46). While the new rules did not provide a financial incentive to challenging unions, because they had to give the shield holder the gate-takings, the incentive was the opportunity to take the shield off the holder on their home ground in front of large parochial crowds. By 1919, following this rule change, the shield moved beyond the Auckland, Wellington and Taranaki unions. Eleven Ranfurly Shield matches were staged in 1920 representing the highest number of shield matches ever to be played in one season. In the 1920s, its holders Wellington, Southland and Hawke's Bay took the shield on tour. Touring with the shield in the 1920s, combined with the four years between 1922 and 1927 when the Hawke's Bay union successfully defended the shield in 24 consecutive matches, encouraged huge local interest in the shield (McMenamin, 1986: 13).

Despite the popularity of the competition, rule changes were introduced limiting the opportunities for provincial unions to exploit the success of the competition. Nine

years after teams began touring with the shield, rules effectively stopping this practice were instituted. Touring with the shield was to cease for seventy years. Rule changes introduced in 1926 required a shield holder to have defended the shield successfully for two consecutive seasons in order to be allowed to take the shield on tour (Carman, 1960: 252; Palenski et al., 1998: 230)³². The 1926 ‘two-year’ rule was followed by another rule that stipulated that the NZRFU would take 5 per cent on the balance after expenses were paid, “to form a nucleus of a fund for assistance of such unions requiring it” (Carman, 1960: 252; Palenski et al., 1998: 231).

The NZRFU withdrew the 5 per cent surcharge in 1931 (Carman, 1960: 252). This suggests a reluctance to interfere in the competition but also an awareness of the problem of the financial imbalance that the shield created. Similarly, the ban on touring with the shield, except for teams that had dominated it for two years, produced a performance inequality whereby stronger teams monopolised the shield and weaker provincial teams had fewer opportunities to promote the competition to local spectators. However, the possibility of a team holding the shield for years on end, which might dampen the overall enthusiasm for the competition, was also regarded as detrimental, thus the ‘two-year’ rule.

In the period between 1902 and 1999, when only fourteen unions successfully defended the shield, the Auckland and Canterbury unions dominated the shield and only the Wellington union came close to achieving the shield success of these two large city-based unions. The Auckland provincial team participated in 187 shield matches while the Canterbury provincial team participated in 131 matches and the Wellington provincial union in 87 matches³³. In the same ninety-year period, the East

³² This effectively stopped the practice of taking the shield on tour, something the Hawke’s Bay provincial union had done several times during its four-year ‘dynasty’. Touring with the shield was not taken up again until 1988 when the Auckland provincial union, having successfully defended the shield during the previous two years and also claimed the 1st division National Provincial Championship title in 1987 and 1988, resumed touring with the shield. While other provincial unions had held the shield for more than two years and did not tour with the shield before the 1980s, by the late 1980s the Auckland provincial team had emerged to dominate all inter-provincial rugby matches resulting in a drop in spectator attendance. This situation encouraged the provincial union administrators to promote the shield to the smaller unions.

³³ The Hawke’s Bay union defended the shield more times than the Wellington union. However the Hawke’s Bay union’s shield defenses were confined to two periods, one in the 1920s and one in the

Coast provincial union (established in 1921 with a home ground spectator capacity of 1300) participated in only five Ranfurly Shield matches. Until the establishment of the NPC (see below) challenging teams won only 17 per cent of Ranfurly Shield matches. After 1976, it became twice as difficult to take the shield from the holder.

4.3 *The Canterbury provincial union and the Ranfurly Shield*

As noted, one of the few provincial unions which enjoyed the benefits of holding the shield several times was the Canterbury union. The Canterbury RFU's gate-takings for Ranfurly Shield matches relative to 'ordinary' inter-provincial matches or 'friendlies' in the period between the 1920s and the 1970s highlight the shield's ability to generate income. However, in the same period, income from staging matches between the provincial team and visiting national teams also gradually increased in significance. The Canterbury provincial union's home venue, Lancaster Park, along with three other provincial unions' home venues located in the largest city centres in New Zealand, were also used to stage All Black tests. These four provincial unions received a small gate-share from these tests but, more importantly, their venues were significantly upgraded with the help of loans from the NZRFU and provincial rugby and cricket organisations (Obel, forthcoming). By 1965, Lancaster Park's capacity was 58,500 (Palenski et al., 1998) and crowds of this size increased the Canterbury provincial union's income significantly when it defended the Ranfurly Shield³⁴.

When comparing gate-takings during the periods when the Canterbury team successfully defended the shield with the periods when no shield matches were staged at Lancaster Park, it is clear that spectator interest in the Ranfurly Shield matches greatly exceeded those other inter-provincial 'friendlies' in which gate-takings were split between the two competing teams. In the period up until the introduction of the

1960s. While the Hawke's Bay union enjoyed two long shield eras, the Wellington union enjoyed nine (shorter) shield eras, while the Auckland union enjoyed ten and the Canterbury union eight. Apart from the Auckland and the Canterbury unions, the Hawke's Bay union is the only union to have successfully defended the shield in over 20 challenge matches in a row.

³⁴ In 1997, the ground capacity of the provincial unions varied greatly. The majority of the smaller provincial unions' home venues could host no more than 10,000 spectators with some 'medium sized' venues capable of hosting 18,000 spectators. By contrast, seven unions' venues including the four test-hosting venues, could host around 40,000 spectators (Palenski et al., 1998: 302-320).

NPC, the Canterbury team held the shield five times, during the 1930s, 1950s and the early 1970s. The team first became shield holders in 1927 and staged two defence matches the following year, losing the shield in the second match. The 18,000 spectators who attended, a record for a midweek match, helped boost the union's income to a record of £1,859 (Carman, 1960: 93) (see table 4.1). In 1929, a season without shield matches, the Canterbury provincial union's gate-takings dropped to £722. The shield was won back in 1931 and one challenge was defended that year.

During 1932-34, fifteen shield challenges were staged at Lancaster Park. While the income for 1932, during which six shield matches were staged, totalled only £1,683, this may in part be because the provincial union gave 11,000 free passes to unemployed workers (Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statements, 1932). In 1935 the Canterbury team won the shield back and staged five shield matches at Lancaster Park apart from three 'friendly' inter-provincial matches. The gate-revenue for 1935 was a record £2,862 for the provincial union. Carman (1960: 116) claims, this shield period from 1931 to 1933 earned the Canterbury provincial union a net gate-taking of £5,661 with the match against Southland generating £1,030 and the West Coast match £793 (the Canterbury Provincial Union's Annual Financial Statements for

Table 4.1 Gate-takings and spectator attendance for Ranfurly Shield matches at Lancaster Park 1926-1935

Year	Ranfurly Shield	Inter-provincial 'friendlies'	Total gate-takings inter-provincial matches	Spectator attendance at Ranfurly Shield matches
1926			£526	3,200 (ground record)
1927			£674	
1928			£1,859 (record)	10,000 - 20,000
1929			£722	
1930			£666	
1931			£986	
1932			£1,683	10,000 (ground match)
1933			£2,513	10,000 - 25,000
1934			£897	10,000
1935			£2,862 (record)	500 - 17,000

(Swan, 1948; Palenski et al., 1998; Carman, 1960; Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statements 1926-35).

* Hawke's Bay toured with the shield in 1926 and won the match against Canterbury.

1931-33 show the gate-takings for these fifteen matches to be £5,182). The total attendance for the fifteen matches was estimated to 202,000, or an average of 13,500 spectators per match.

In this early period, income generated by Ranfurly Shield matches exceeded that for matches against visiting international teams. In 1921, during the first visit by the Springbok team, the Canterbury provincial union received only £55 from the match between the Springbok and the Canterbury teams despite the match generating over £3,000. The NZRFU accrued this income after expenses had been covered. However, after a second match against a visiting Springbok team in 1937 the Canterbury provincial union received £648, or just over 10 per cent of the gate-takings after expenses (Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statements, 1921-1937).

The Canterbury team did not win the shield again until 1950 but lost it in the first match attended by 19,000 spectators. The Canterbury union's gate-share of over £1,000 for the Canterbury team's match against the visiting British team in 1950, which compared with the income of £1,758 from inter-provincial matches in 1950, highlighted the growing financial significance of matches against visiting national teams. Three years later, in 1953, the Canterbury team won the shield and began a three-year period of successfully defending the trophy. This period is also significant in the gate-taking records for the union. The Canterbury team defended the shield in one match in 1953 attended by 28,000 spectators adding to the union's gate-taking record for that year of £3,792. The team went on to win the next twenty-two matches. Between 1954 and 1956, when twenty-three shield matches were held at Lancaster Park, the Canterbury provincial union's annual income increased to over £14,000 per year (see table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Gate-takings and spectator attendance for Ranfurly Shield matches at Lancaster Park 1950-1957

Year	Ranfurly Shield	Inter-provincial 'friendlies'	Gate-takings inter-provincial matches	Spectator attendance at Ranfurly Shield matches
1950			1,758	10,000
1951			2,478	
1952			2,422	
1953			3,792 (record)	10,000
1954			4,431	10,000 - 35,000
1955			4,247	10,000 - 35,000
1956			3,276	10,000 - 20,000
1957			1,297	

(Palenski et al., 1998; Carman, 1960; Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statements 1950-57; Swan, 1958).

However, provincial unions faced a decline in spectator interest when they lost the shield. Income for the Canterbury union for inter-provincial matches in the years following the 1950s 'shield era' until 1966 dropped to a low of £539 in 1965 (similar to the union's income for 1930). In contrast to the increasing spectator involvement in Ranfurly Shield matches and that of, for example, Welsh club matches³⁵, leading English clubs could average only 4,000-5,000 spectators during the same decade (Williams, 1989: 331-32). Even two decades later in the 1975-76 English rugby union season, after the introduction of a national knock-out cup (see below), Leicester, the leading gate-taking club in the Midlands, did not exceed £14,000. In the West of England, Gloucester's total of 31,000 spectators for the season was the highest for all the 40 surveyed English gate-taking clubs (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 246-47).

While gate-takings for Canterbury union's inter-provincial matches declined in the 1960s, income from matches against visiting national teams increased. In 1959 the Canterbury provincial union received approximately £2,700 from the match against a visiting British team. A match against the Springboks in 1965 earned the union over £3,500 while the visit by the British Lions team in 1966 added over £4,000 to the

³⁵ Williams (1989: 332) noted that a 1958 match between Cardiff and Llanelli was attended by 58,000 spectators.

union's balance (Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statements, 1959-66). This income from 'internationals' was significant because it came during the time when the Canterbury provincial union did not hold the shield to attract local spectators.

Table 4.3 Gate-takings and spectator attendance for Ranfurly Shield matches at Lancaster Park 1967-1974

Year	Ranfurly Shield	Gate-takings inter-provincial matches	Spectator attendance at Ranfurly Shield matches
1967		\$1,920 ³⁶	
1968		\$1,912	
1969		\$1,258	
1970		\$5,997	10,000 (1st match)
1971		\$3,123	
1972		\$1,472	10,000, 33,000
1973		\$6,489	10,000
1974		\$1,150	

(Palenski et al., 1998; Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statements 1967-74; Knight, 1986b).

After a period of low income from inter-provincial matches (1967-69), gate-takings for the next Canterbury shield 'eras' (1970-71 and 1972-73) again increased the Canterbury union's income to the levels experienced in the 1950s shield period (see table 4.3). However, after the last shield defence in 1973, it was not until the 1980s that income for inter-provincial matches rose above the 1970 income of almost \$26,000. Even the introduction of the NPC (see below) in 1976 did not appear to affect gate-takings positively. The loss of the Ranfurly Shield in 1973 meant a drop in gate-takings from inter-provincial matches for the rest of the 1970s. Despite the introduction of the NPC in 1976, income from inter-provincial matches did not rise significantly until 1982 following the successful Ranfurly Shield challenge against the holder, Wellington.

For the Canterbury provincial union, the Ranfurly Shield was not only a mechanism for generating revenue but also a resource that allowed it, together with the Auckland

³⁶ The New Zealand currency changed to dollars in 1967 and \$2 was equal to £1.

and Wellington unions, to establish a power base vis-à-vis the NZRFU. Not only did provincial players from these three unions dominate the All Blacks, their dominance was exerted in the 'informal organisation' of the annual inter-provincial match schedule for 'friendlies' where the stronger unions held the "whiphand" in claiming the best dates and matches (Barry Smith, cited in Garland, 1997: 2). However, the uneven distribution of victories and financial benefits which the shield competition fostered, meant that even these unions could not rely on the competition as regular income to support their operations. This encouraged the Canterbury provincial union to explicitly cultivate mediated local publics through local media promotion. This shift towards an alternative source of revenue was to become central to the union's strategy.

This move towards 'professionalism' through the 'manufacture' of a local identity formalised the links between the teams and the local newspapers and radio station. During the Canterbury team's 1980s shield era, the team's supporters' club began a partnership with a local radio station, 3ZB, headed by breakfast show announcer, Barry Corbett. This partnership introduced a number of activities and new products in and around shield matches to encourage local public's support. For example, when the Canterbury team challenged for the shield in Wellington in 1982, the 3ZB radio station along with Air New Zealand and the local supporters' club, organised a supporters' tour to the game. At the challenge game the 3ZB cheer girls entertained crowds for the first time together with a new 3ZB-sponsored 'Larry the Lamb' mascot. On Saturday mornings, before the following shield defence matches, the supporters' club held shield processions through the city centre and later through suburban malls. In the week leading up to a match the radio station provided pre-match interviews and discussions and gave away 18 tickets to radio callers. Similarly, the local newspaper began featuring a two-page match preview supplement and local interest in the team and the coach increased with the extra media attention. The supporters' club sold 20,000 copies of the 'Grizz-mask', caricaturing the new coach and former captain of the provincial team, Alex Wyllie, while the radio station's shield song, 'Give them a Boot Robbie', referring to the kicking skills of the team's fullback and designated goal

kicker, Robbie Deans³⁷, gained huge local popularity. The supporters' club and the 3ZB radio station also produced a supporters' pack which included a red and black eye-patch, an ironic response to the criticism by other parochial supporters of the Canterbury supporters for being 'one-eyed' (McMenamin, 1986: 147-53). "Shield fever" (Henderson, 1950) coined as the term for this type of parochial support generated for the Canterbury team by the community during defence matches in the 1950s, was used again in the 1980s media promotions.

4.4 *The introduction of an inter-provincial 'league' – the National Provincial Championship*

Despite the major provincial unions' dominance of the shield, they would promote the idea of a national league competition. The larger provincial unions were concerned with the lack of public interest in matches other than when "country unions played against the stronger city unions", Ranfurly Shield matches and those against visiting touring teams (Garland, 1997: 2-3). They saw the need for media sponsorship and live broadcasting and the promotion of inter-provincial matches between teams, divided into divisions of teams of comparable strength, as a way to cultivate local publics who were increasingly provided with new leisure products such as televised sports. The establishment of the National Provincial Championship (NPC) in 1976 represented their first attempt at cultivating local publics for season-long competitions (Leifer, 1995). It introduced the first 'league' competition which graded provincial teams into divisions and introduced round-robin matches.

The NPC's merit tables were the first mechanism whereby provincial unions and their publics could measure the standing of their teams throughout the round-robin competition. The NPC included a promotion-relegation regulation but no gate-sharing arrangements. As in the Ranfurly Shield competition, teams would retain the income from staging their home matches in the round-robin competition and the major

³⁷ Robbie Deans was an All Black player in the 1980s and went on to coach the Canterbury team between 1996-2000 and the Canterbury Crusaders Super 12 team from 2000. He is related to the Deans who claimed to have scored a try in the All Black test against the Wales in 1905. Had Deans'

provincial unions would again come to dominate the NPC 1st division. However, they would not cultivate large publics for their home matches until the introduction of play-offs in 1992. This restructuring of the NPC also facilitated, for the first time, the cultivation of a national television public for rugby. A league structure, as Leifer (1995) has argued, promotes evenly balanced matches to create enduring, season-long publics making inter-provincial matches more meaningful as spectacles. The two, and later, three national divisions increased the competitive balance in divisional matches, a feature which was to make them attractive as television products. Recognising this new by-product of league organisation and facing an increasing threat from televised sport, the NZRFU would gradually increase its control over the new league in order to construct national television publics.

Two events in the late 1960s and early 1970s had encouraged provincial union representatives from Auckland to present a proposal for an inter-provincial league which eventually convinced the NZRFU of the merit of a national 'league' competition: the cancellation of a South African tour of New Zealand in 1973 and, significantly, moves made by the Home Unions to introduce knock-out cups and merit tables. The Auckland provincial union delegate, Barry Smith, who presented the first proposal for a national championship competition, noted that money from attendance at the matches against nine national teams visiting New Zealand between 1960 and 1971 had enabled unions to achieve financial security (cited in Garland, 1997: 3). However, Smith also noted that the cancellation of the South African tour to New Zealand in 1973 "had brought sharply into focus" the financial vulnerability of provincial unions (Garland, 1997: 4).

In England the live televising of rugby league matches in the 1960s had provoked a debate about competitions in rugby union (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 229). A national club knock-out competition was introduced in England and in Wales³⁸ in 1971 and a national league in Scotland in 1973 (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 263-66; Howe,

try been awarded, the match would have been drawn and the All Black team could have won the match by making the conversion, making the 'Original' 1905-06 All Black tour undefeated.

1999: 167; Williams, 1989: 333). In 1975, a 'Major Clubs Subcommittee' was formed in England and in 1976 regional merit tables for major clubs were introduced³⁹, effectively distinguishing between major and minor clubs and introducing 'leagues' although no points or 'league' titles were awarded (Dunning and Sheard, 1979: 292). The introduction of merit tables for the major clubs was a more significant yielding by the English RFU to the major clubs reliant on gate-takings than the introduction of the national challenge cup. Merit tables were recognised as a rationalisation of competitions because, like leagues, they reward the competitive teams and exclude weaker teams from the table, thereby increasing the balance between participating teams and, in principle, generating more appealing matches.

Dunning and Sheard (1979: 233) suggest that the introduction of the challenge cup and merit tables indicated a shift from a 'player-centred' towards a more 'spectator-oriented' form of amateurism. The move was strongly criticised by the English RFU Committee because it was seen to reflect a centrally regulated and bureaucratised form of organising competitions which paralleled professional competitions (Dunning and Sheard (1979: 263-64). However, an all-inclusive national league structure for clubs was not proposed in England until 1987 (Williams, 1989). This made the introduction of the all-inclusive, national 'league' championship in New Zealand in 1976 all the more controversial. Indeed, the first proposal presented to the NZRFU in 1974 was turned down by a "satisfaction with the current system" response from 17 of the 26 unions who recommended "no change" (Garland, 1997: 5). However, by 1975 the 'mood', encouraged by media interest, changed. Public debate, players' support for change and the introduction of merit tables in English rugby facilitated this move.

The establishment of a national league encouraged a shift from gathering crowds for individual matches to creating enduring publics (Leifer, 1995). Later this was to be the basis for constructing mediated national publics. While the introduction of a league

³⁸ The South Wales Challenge Cup was introduced in 1878 and lasted for nearly 20 years until disputes between the WFU and the English RFU over the issue of professionalism led to the WFU cancelling the Cup (Howe, 1999: 179 note 13).

³⁹ Unofficial league structures, which have been in place in Welsh rugby union since the 1920s, led to the establishment of a national merit table involving the all the larger clubs. However, the Welsh

competition represented a collective strategy to increase income for all teams involved, as opposed to the individual team strategy of creating winning teams to ensure financial prosperity, the new competition did not result in a significant increase in provincial unions' gate-takings. The establishment of the national league was followed by the problem of how to manage performance inequality of teams that created 'run-away' pennants, threatening to make matches 'meaningless' and the competition a financial burden on provincial unions.

Gradually the NZRFU would become forced to take more control over the competition and to introduce measures to make it more viable as a 'consumer product'. The major provincial unions were the only unions to benefit financially from the introduction of the NPC, significantly from sponsorship income rather than from increased gate-takings. But it would take a decade before this sponsorship income began to exceed income from gate-takings. As a result, travel costs facing provincial unions became a financial burden which the NZRFU sought to remedy by providing travel grants facilitated by income from a national sponsorship of the new competition.

Radio New Zealand entered a sponsorship agreement with the NZRFU for the NPC worth \$85,000 in 1976, increasing to \$100,000 in 1977⁴⁰. In so doing, Radio New Zealand sought to formalise and expand its relationship with rugby. Established in the 1930s, this relationship was now threatened by television broadcasting. While this sponsorship significantly increased the NZRFU's income in 1976, a year when the All Black team toured South Africa and the NZRFU's income from fixtures was unusually low⁴¹, the radio sponsorship was a significant financial and promotional boost (NZRFU Annual Financial Statement 1976-77). However, by 1978, as a result of the

clubs did not participate in the same number of matches, nor did they necessarily play against all the clubs on the 'table' (Howe, 1999: 179 note 12).

⁴⁰ In England, the national knock-out competition winner was awarded a cup, and in 1975 the competition received sponsorship of £100,000 renaming it to 'The John Player Cup' (Dunning and Sheard, 1979:231). At the same time the John Player Company sponsored rugby league with £22,800, the difference reflecting, according to Dunning and Sheard (1979:313, note33) the difference in crowd-pulling power of the two games.

⁴¹ The NZRFU's income from fixtures amounting to only \$2,000 in 1976. However, it grew to over \$600,000 the following year when the British 'Lions' toured New Zealand.

low spectator attendance at NPC matches, the NPC sponsorship, by then taken over by Lion Breweries, was halved and it did not reach \$100,000 again before 1984.

Despite this sponsorship of the competition, travel costs continued to be a burden on the smaller unions. These costs were exacerbated after the changes to the competition structure in 1986 when all three NPC divisions became national. This development coincided with more television coverage of the competition and a new sponsor, the insurance company National Mutual, which took over the sponsorship of the competition for a fee of \$125,000 per year. Not until 1992, when a surcharge on the gate-takings for Ranfurly Shield and international matches had been introduced to subsidise teams' travel costs, did the travel grants begin to cover provincial unions' expenses⁴². This coincided with the introduction of a 60 per cent surcharge on gate-takings for NPC play-off matches. However, it was not until 1994 when the national airline, Air New Zealand, began sponsoring the competition, that teams' travel costs were covered in full (Butcher, 1996).

4.5 *Increasing sponsorship and television involvement in a restructured league*

At the commencement of the NPC in 1976 the NZRFU's Management Committee took control over the competition by allocating the existing 26 provincial teams to one of the two divisions on the basis of their past five years' match performance. The four metropolitan unions - Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago - were joined in Division One by North Auckland, Counties, Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay, Manuwatu, Marlborough and Southland (Garland, 1997: 8). Only the 1st division was truly national while the two 2nd divisions staged regional competitions involving teams in the North and South Islands. The 1st division encompassed eleven teams, four of which were guaranteed to South Island unions, and the two 2nd divisions consisted of respectively nine North Island teams and six South Island teams (Garland, 1997: 8, 62). Matches were played as one round-robin competition with each team playing between five and ten matches, half of which were played at home, totalling 106

matches with one extra promotion-relegation match (55 matches in div. 1, 36 in div. 2 North, and 15 in div. 2 South). The promotion-relegation rule dictated that the last North Island team in the 1st division would automatically be replaced by the 'division 2 North' winner while the 'division 2 South' winner would play a promotion-relegation match with the bottom placed 1st division South Island team at the end of the season.

Figure 4.2 Provincial rugby unions divisional distribution according to NPC divisions 2000, colour codes; purple - 1st division; blue - 2nd division; green - 3rd division (www.nzrugby.com/playerteam/npc)



With the introduction of the NPC, the new inter-provincial matches, initially held between May and October, were doubled-up with the Ranfurly Shield matches. This

⁴² A \$1 surcharge per spectator was charged on Ranfurly Shield matches and all other matches involving visiting teams. In 1993, \$275,810 in surcharge was transferred to the NPC Mutual Championship Surcharge Fund (NZRFU Annual Financial Statement, 1993: 27).

meant that if the shield holder during the season was scheduled to play a home game, as part of the NPC programme, against a provincial union from which it had accepted a challenge, the match would double as a championship match and a challenge match. This arrangement raised concerns that the Ranfurly Shield would lose its status as the most prized trophy⁴³. However, until the introduction of rule changes making the NPC scheduling more stream-lined and the championship outcome more unpredictable, the NPC did not begin to rival the popularity of the Ranfurly Shield competition. Despite the introduction of additional rules to ensure that provincial unions below the first division could challenge for the shield after the introduction of the NPC, the shield remained held by first division unions⁴⁴. Until 1992 and the introduction of play-offs, the national sponsorship income was thus vital for the viability of the competition.

Writing in the NZRFU's *Centennial Programme* Knight (1992: 47-48) argued that:

With a new streamlined format in place for the 1992 season the question is whether the championship will now take over from the shield as the main focal point of interest. Until now, perhaps because of the many flaws in its format and the tradition of the shield, it most certainly hasn't. Indeed, but for the fact the championship has enjoyed generous sponsorship, most notably in recent years from National Mutual, it may well have not proven viable.

While the NZRFU retained control over the competition and issued rules to regulate it and the Ranfurly Shield, the provincial unions arranged matches at "intensely fought out" annual NZRFU meetings known as the "Woolsale" (Smith cited Garland, 1997: 2)⁴⁵. As a result, the first NPC season spanned from May until mid-October in an effort to accommodate the provinces' seasonal obligations. "Taranaki had to work around calving, and Southland lambing - and they could still maintain their strong

⁴³ Despite this concern, the stronger provincial unions had voiced criticism when a shield holder did not accept a challenge from a 'strong' union. They were therefore less concerned that the introduction of a national 'league' would undermine the Ranfurly Shield, which had tended to be retained by a holder throughout the season as a result of the holder accepting challenges predominantly from the 'weaker' unions. Thus, there was some concern among the stronger provincial unions that the shield was beginning to lose its economic effect (Knight, 1992b).

⁴⁴ Rules were introduced to ensure that minor provincial unions would be provided with an opportunity to challenge for the shield. "If the holders are in division one of the NPC, they shall accept challenges totalling not less than two from unions in division two and three, provided not fewer than two challenges have been lodged by unions in division two and three. If the holders are in division two of the NPC, they shall accept not less than two challenges from unions in division one and two challenges from unions in division three, provided in each case challenges have been lodged by not fewer than two unions" (Palenski et al., 1998: 231).

⁴⁵ Garland (1997: 7) continues: "To establish a second-tier rugby competition - between club and international level - they suggested that the emphasis should be on a union's competition and not an NZRFU competition. Individual provinces would still be responsible for arranging their own fixture lists to suit seasonal obligations".

traditional ties with neighbouring provinces”. This adaptation to the local economies meant that “synchronised Saturday to Saturday NPC matches were virtually impossible from the outset” (Garland, 1997: 7).

This form of delegated administration paralleled that introduced with the Ranfurly Shield in 1902. The shield had been centrally established but it operated as a mechanism for decentralising revenue generation. The difference between the shield and the new inter-provincial league, however, was that the NZRFU agreed to underwrite at least some of the provincial unions’ financial costs associated with the additional travel commitments involved in the NPC. While decentralised planning of matches created a very uneven distribution of matches across the season, it was not changed until 1992 when the NZRFU was to be forced to compete with Australian rugby league for television viewers (see section 4.6).

A consequence of the ‘decentralised’ match arrangement was that the championship could be won before the end of the season, resulting in low spectator attendance at end of season matches. For example, in 1977 the Canterbury team won all its NPC matches and its lead towards the end of the season gave the team an advantage on points ahead of its nearest rivals. Reflecting on the 1977 season, Garland (1997: 26) noted: “The big disappointment of the 1977 title race was the scheduling of the draw, which meant that most matches in September were inconsequential after Canterbury’s unstoppable title charge”. When the Canterbury team effectively won the title one round before the end of the season in a match against Taranaki, the match was held before a home crowd of only 4,000 spectators. Corresponding with the low spectator attendance for the early NPC games, gate-takings for inter-provincial matches for the Canterbury union for 1977 were \$7,819, representing a significant drop from the early 1970s when gate-takings during the shield era between 1970-73 ranged between \$11,000 and \$25,000.

It was the low spectator appeal of the new competition that encouraged provincial unions to seek sponsorship income. During the 1970s and early 1980s sponsorship from local businesses became a vital source of income for the Canterbury provincial

union and, by 1985, sponsorship income would emerge as the single biggest source of income. However, while sponsorship of the Canterbury provincial union began in 1975, it was not until 1984, following the success of the Canterbury team's Ranfurly Shield matches, that a significant sponsorship relationship with a local bank was established. This sponsorship was reported to be worth \$1 million over a ten-year period (McMenamin, 1986: 135). Other early sponsorship relationships involved the Apple & Pear Marketing Board's 'Fresh Up' brand in 1979 as well as adidas and Marac Finance. In the annual statement from the Canterbury provincial union's president in 1976 the involvement of sponsors was mentioned for the first time and credited as significant to the financial welfare of the union during a year when an All Black team touring South Africa contributed to the low appeal of the competition to local publics.

Sponsorship seems to be becoming an important part of rugby, and without the support of our sponsors, 1976 would have been disastrous financially. A considerable loss this season would have been in line with past seasons when the All Blacks have been out of the country. To the Canterbury Savings Bank and Marac Finance in particular, we are indeed indebted (Canterbury RFU Annual Statement AGM, 1976).

Between 1976 and 1992 changes to the structure of the competition, to encourage a more stream-lined match schedule and more unpredictable championship outcome, were gradually followed by increased national television broadcasting. However, despite the public desire for live television broadcasting of rugby union matches, the NZRFU and provincial unions were very reluctant to move towards television broadcasting. Television broadcasting was viewed as a threat by both racing and rugby authorities who depended on paying spectators for their survival⁴⁶. By contrast, because the English RFU was traditionally less concerned with protecting gate-revenue, it had agreed to BBC broadcasting of test matches from Twickenham in 1927-28 and received a television broadcasting fee from 1937-38.

The success of live transmission of overseas rugby union matches did, however, encourage the NZRFU to allow more television broadcasting of rugby matches. The

⁴⁶ In contrast to television broadcasting which baseball, rugby and racing authorities viewed as a threat because it enabled publics to watch for free, they had all first reluctantly and later more keenly begun see radio broadcasting as "enticing more fans to come to the games" (Leifer, 1995: 161; Boyd-Bell, 1985: 136-38).

NZRFU had refused broadcasting of the fourth test against the touring British Lions team in 1971, but live television broadcasts of rugby matches began the following year. The satellite broadcasting of an All Black test from Wales with an estimated 200,000 New Zealand viewers was followed by the first live broadcast of a rugby match staged in New Zealand between the visiting Australian team and the Hawke's Bay provincial team (Day, 1999; Boyd-Bell, 1985: 136-38). However, regular *live* broadcasting of inter-provincial matches was a long way off. While inter-provincial rugby union matches gained more regular television broadcasting in the 1980s, most coverage was delayed and preceded by a "no-pre-announcement" agreement which meant that print media's television programmes appeared with gaps in programme listings in an attempt not to disclose which match would be broadcast (Boyd-Bell, 1985: 138).

The increase in delayed and satellite broadcasting of rugby union matches coincided with a restriction on NPC matches played before mid-May in 1979. The promotion-relegation rule changed in 1980 with the two 2nd division winners playing for a chance to meet the last placed 1st division team. With this change the composition of the divisions no longer ensured a specific number of South Island teams in the 1st division⁴⁷. Television New Zealand (TVNZ)⁴⁸ began a one-hour highlight package of matches in 1983 but it was not until 1988, coinciding with the changes to broadcasting legislation, that the national broadcaster guaranteed greater coverage of the domestic competition⁴⁹. This would enable the provincial unions to increase their sponsorship income, while the NZRFU's revenue was boosted by its retention of the broadcasting fee for all coverage of domestic matches as well as for overseas transmission of All

⁴⁷ Between 1976 and 1980 promotion-relegation system had insured that the number of teams in the two second divisions had remained the same but from 1981 the number of team in the 'division 2 South' increased while the 'division 2 North' decreased.

⁴⁸ Television broadcasting began in New Zealand in 1960 under the control of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC) established as a government controlled broadcaster. NZBC had a monopoly on television broadcasting until 1989 when the private partly foreign-owned broadcaster, TV3, began operating. In 1980, NZBC separated its services into Television New Zealand (TVNZ) in charge of the two national television stations and Radio New Zealand in charge of radio broadcasting. From its establishment, the NZBC operated on a public-commercial basis relying increasingly on income from advertising in place of the broadcasting fee. In 2000, the broadcasting fee was abolished.

⁴⁹ In 1988, following the adoption of the State Owned Enterprises Act (1986), TVNZ was required to run as a profit-making business.

Black matches. This enabled the NZRFU to make money from the NPC. By contrast, it was not until the mid-1980s that a large provincial union such as Canterbury spectacularly increased its gate-takings and sponsorship income. In this case, the increase in sponsorship income was a result of defending the Ranfurly Shield for three consecutive years.

Table 4.4 Gate-takings and sponsorship income for the Canterbury Provincial Union 1976-1986

Year	Ranfurly Shield matches	NPC matches	Inter-provincial gate-takings	Sponsorship income
1976			\$5,008	\$3,450
1977		(1 st div. Victory)	\$7,819	\$4,170
1978			\$1,144	\$1,750
1979			\$5,520	\$5,000
1980			\$4,228	\$9,100
1981			\$9,390	\$3,600
1982	(2 = NPC)		\$107,369	\$5,630
1983	(5 = NPC)	(1 st div. Victory)	\$60,961	\$6,630
1984	(5 = NPC)		\$60,890	\$93,015*
1985	(3 = NPC)		\$104,852	\$73,584
1986			\$101,713	\$256,892

*The Canterbury Provincial Union's Annual Financial Statements began including interest with sponsorship income in its accounts from 1984. The interest earned in 1983 amounted to \$43,767.

In 1983 the Canterbury team won the 1st division NPC, but it also held the shield between 1982-5. Forty-five thousand spectators attended the first defence of the Ranfurly Shield against Wellington and 42,000 attended Canterbury's next shield match against Auckland in 1982, both of which doubled as NPC 1st division matches (see table 4.4). Between 1982 and 1985 twenty-six shield matches were staged at Lancaster Park, promoted by the local 3ZB radio station and attended by a total of approximately 500,000 spectators. This was an average of nearly 20,000 per match, with 52,000 spectators attending Canterbury's last Ranfurly Shield defence in 1985 against the Auckland team (McMenamin, 1986: 169-235).

Sponsorship income did not increase significantly until the team won the shield in 1982. However, it was not until 1984 when Canterbury Savings Bank began its long-term sponsorship relationship, that sponsorship income grew significantly, although an exact figure can only be estimated as the annual financial statements included interest and sponsorship in the same income category. (Interest and sponsorship income in 1983 amounted to approximately \$60,000 in total. In 1984 this combined category grew by some \$30,000 to \$93,000.) When the shield was lost in 1985 the union's gate-takings dropped while sponsorship income (and interest) continued to rise.

It was not until 1985-86 that changes to the NPC would increase the uncertainty of the championship outcomes. The NPC became 'national' and changes to the points scoring made teams benefit from close matches. These changes introduced an 'ordered performance inequality' (Leifer, 1995: 94), ensuring that more teams remained contenders for the championship facilitating a season-long local interest in the competition. Structural changes were introduced in 1985 which rearranged the two 2nd divisions into a 2nd and a 3rd division, the latter split into a North and a South 3rd division (Garland, 1997: 130)⁵⁰. With this change promotion-relegation became automatic between the 1st and the 2nd divisions while the winners of the two 3rd divisions played a match to decide which team would advance to the 2nd division (Garland, 1997: 142). By 1986, the 3rd division became 'truly' national with the winner gaining automatic promotion to the 2nd division, thus ending promotion-relegation matches. The points system which had previously awarded two points for a win and one point for a draw was changed to include four points for a win, two for a draw and one point for a loss within six points or less of the winning score (Garland, 1997: 147). From 1992 a try increased in value from four points to five consistent with international rule changes (Garland, 1997: 213, 225).

Coinciding with these changes, the first *live* inter-provincial match was broadcast on public television in 1986. This coverage of a domestic Ranfurly Shield match between Auckland and Canterbury, sponsored by an agreement between the NZRFU and Toyota (Garland, 1997: 151), highlighted the ability of television to generate sponsorship income. From 1976 to the early 1990s the NZRFU was to increase its broadcasting fee from \$63,000 to approximately \$1 million, coinciding with the public broadcaster's increasing coverage of rugby and the need to attract more advertising income. In addition, the NZRFU's sponsorship and marketing income grew from \$350,000 in 1986 to over \$2 million by the early 1990s (NZRFU, Annual Financial Statements, 1976-1992). This control over broadcasting rights to all rugby union matches involving New Zealand teams was to be the critical means for securing the NZRFU's continued control over the sport by 1995. By then the NZRFU, in

⁵⁰ The top four teams in the 1984 2nd divisions North and South made up the new 2nd division while the remaining eight teams were split into a 3rd division North and South.

combination with the Australian and South African rugby union administrations, could sell the television rights to a global media organisation and, in so doing, resist the establishment of a rival, professional rugby union competition (see chapter five). However, it was not until 1992, after the introduction of play-offs in the form of semi-finals and finals, that TVNZ guaranteed live coverage of the league.

4.6 *Centralised control, performance inequality and increasing threat from televised rugby league*

The introduction of play-offs at the completion of the three divisions' round-robin matches as well as the central organisation of the draw were attempts to attract, for the first time, a *national* television public for live play-off matches. These competition changes significantly came at a time when the NZRFU was forced to compete for viewers with rugby league. From 1989 the Australian Rugby League Winfield Cup competition began to be broadcast live on a weekly basis to New Zealand viewers. This generated viewer interest in New Zealand and increased the income for the Australian rugby league clubs, which began offering several high-profile New Zealand rugby union players high salaries to switch to play rugby league for their clubs (Boston Consulting Group, 1994; Hyde, 1995b; Becht, 1994; FitzSimons, 1996; Garland, 1997).

The strong showing of Australian rugby league in terms of television ratings and player poaching gave the NZRFU every incentive to enhance all aspects of rugby union in this country. Improved television coverage was to be supplied by TVNZ who guaranteed all semi-finals and finals would be telecast live during October. Several provincial unions changed playing strips - with help of some new sponsorship - to enhance their on-field image and revitalise their public appeal (Garland, 1997: 225-226).

By 1994 the NPC competition was played on consecutive weekends from August to October thus preventing the "ludicrous situation where some teams had played six of their championship matches and others none" (Knight, 1992a: 47). The introduction of a centralised competition schedule and play-offs ensured that championship titles could not be decided before the end of the season, something that had detracted from the appeal of the NPC for both spectators and broadcasters. Following these changes, television coverage increased. By the mid-1990s the broadcasting of NPC matches had expanded to include one weekly 1st division match, broadcast on Television One's

Grandstand sports programme. Despite the introduction of play-offs, which literally meant that four of the teams in the 1st division stayed in championship contention until the semi-finals week, the 1st division continued to be dominated by the major provincial teams, Auckland, Canterbury and Wellington. In the first 16 years of the NPC these three provincial unions accounted for 75 per cent of the 1st division championship titles.

By the 1990s, the Auckland provincial union dominated the NPC 1st division and the Ranfurly Shield. Not unlike the dominance of the New York Yankees baseball team, which in the early 1960s was blamed for declining attendance at baseball games (Leifer, 1995: 162), the Auckland provincial team's domination of all inter-provincial competitions during a six year period raised some concern that the game would lose its appeal. From the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, the Auckland provincial team defended the Ranfurly Shield on 61 (consecutive) occasions and won the NPC 1st division championship six times. This dominance exacerbated the performance inequality in Ranfurly Shield matches. While challenging teams had only been successful in winning 17 per cent of matches before the introduction of the NPC, between 1976 and 1999 only 9 per cent of challenge matches resulted in a loss to the holder. Prior to the Auckland team's hold on the NPC 1st division title seven provincial unions won the top championship title. Only one team, apart from Auckland, won the NPC 1st division between 1992 and 1996.

Falling spectator numbers convinced the Auckland provincial union that there were limits to how long publics were willing to watch the team win so regularly, and it began the practice of touring with the Ranfurly Shield to generate new interest in otherwise 'predictable' matches. Interest in these Ranfurly Shield matches was further helped by the fact that the Auckland team included a large number of All Black players who had been part of the 1987 inaugural World Cup championship team. This competitive domination provoked criticism and concern over the exclusion of minor provincial unions from entering the NPC 1st division. This criticism of the NPC was also highlighted in the NZRFU's *Centennial Programme* in which Knight (1992a: 40)

noted that the NPC's three divisions had exacerbated the competitive and financial differences between provincial unions:

In the 16 seasons in which it has been in place, the national championship, even with an unsatisfactory format, has undoubtedly accentuated gaps in provincial sides. Major unions have introduced a greater degree of professionalism into their organisation and planning and it has now become virtually impossible for a third division union, say, to get even remotely close to the metropolitans in the first division.

The financial inequality between provincial unions, itself perpetuated by the Ranfurly Shield competition, was thus exacerbated in the restructured NPC. Despite the low spectator appeal of NPC matches, especially before the introduction of play-offs in 1992 (in 1995 the average NPC 1st division match attendance was 12,600⁵¹), the increasing television coverage of 1st division matches enabled the larger provincial unions to generate more sponsorship income. This affected provincial unions differently. Between 1986 and 1993, when no Ranfurly Shield matches were staged at Lancaster Park, gate-takings for the Canterbury provincial team's inter-provincial matches dropped to below \$100,000 although income from sale of season tickets began to rise. The union's total gate-takings did not exceed \$300,000 before 1994, despite \$135,463 in the union's gate-share from staging four World Cup matches in 1987. However, this drop in gate-takings and spectator interest was offset by a rise in sponsorship income.

From 1986 the union's sponsorship (and interest) income grew to become larger than total gate-takings (see table 4.5). In 1993 sponsorship income (including interest) totalled \$535,000 while gate-takings totalled only \$103,000 (including internationals). The ability to generate more sponsorship income grew in part as a result of the Canterbury provincial team's participation in the early amateur transnational rugby competitions involving Australian, South African and Pacific Island teams (see next chapter). However, from 1992-3 to 1995 the union's total gate-takings (including internationals) increased nearly 15 times to \$1.4 million coinciding with the Canterbury team defending ten Ranfurly Shield matches during 1994-5 (see table 4.5).

⁵¹ The 2nd division averaged only 1,900 spectators per match while 3rd division matches attracted 680 spectators (Minutes of the Provincial Advisory Group, Jan. 1999).

Table 4.5 Gate-takings and sponsorship income for the Canterbury Provincial Union 1987-1995

Year	Manly Shield matches	PC matches	Inter-provincial gate-takings	Sponsorship income
1987			\$8,508	\$103,578*
1988			\$10,735	\$176,468
1989			\$7,169	\$178,224
1990			\$5,515	\$163,263
1991			\$10,498	\$156,372
1992			\$12,564	\$152,436
1993			\$5,944	\$134,946
1994	(2 = NPC)		\$163,744	\$160,675#
1995	(4 = NPC)		\$1,176,254	\$173,855

* Interest added to sponsorship income figures. # Sponsorship income only.
(Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statements, 1987-95)

While the Auckland provincial team monopolised the NPC 1st division title from 1993 to 1996, it did not regain the 1st division title until 1999. The ‘collapse’ of the Auckland ‘dynasty’ coincided with the introduction of the professional transnational Super 12 competition (see chapter five) and with the emergence of a greater balance between the major provincial unions in the NPC 1st division. While the Auckland team held the title for four consecutive years (1993-96), the shield became shared between the four major unions after the second year of ‘professional’ rugby: Canterbury (1997), Otago (1998), Auckland (1999) and Wellington (2000)⁵². However, in contrast to the levelling of the competitive strength between the top 1st division provincial unions, the 2nd and 3rd division unions would continue to experience increasing financial difficulties.

4.7 *Summary: A model for popular ‘amateur’ competitions*

The spectator success of New Zealand rugby union competitions challenges the perception of amateur sports as organised to encourage participation not spectator involvement, and to generate intrinsic, rather than financial, reward. By focusing on provincial *teams*, as opposed to the game of rugby in general or the All Black team in

⁵² During the NPC’s 25 seasons (until 2000), the four test hosting provincial unions won the 1st division championship 21 times between them: Auckland 12 times, Wellington four times, Canterbury three times and Otago twice.

particular, and the relationship between these I have provided an explanation for the seemingly anomalous spectator popularity of amateur rugby union competitions in New Zealand. Using Leifer's (1995) observations regarding how professional sports organise to generate enduring spectator interest, I have argued that the spectator success of domestic amateur competitions resulted from the adoption of aspects of the way in which professional sports are organised. These were already a feature of the local clubs competition in the beginning of the 20th century (Gallaher and Stead, 1906). However, the introduction of the Ranfurly Shield differed from the organisation of club competitions. The early ban on clubs owning their own venues meant that club competitions were staged on the provincial union's venue and the gate-takings seized by the union. By contrast, the introduction of the Ranfurly Shield and the attachment of provincial teams to the largest urban cities in the country enabled unions to stage shield matches on their venues, mobilising large, urban populations into local supporters of provincial teams. As a result, a few provincial unions were able to generate large income.

The further introduction of inter-provincial amateur competitions in New Zealand involved a gradual shift in the control and management of competitions from the provincial unions to the NZRFU. This situation paralleled the establishment of professional team sports in North America, increasingly organised as leagues through centralised authority. However, the centralised control over inter-provincial amateur competitions developed much more slowly than in professional sports. While the professional leagues in North America increasingly adopted revenue-sharing arrangements and restricted the competitive bidding for players, thus increasing the competitive and financial balance between teams and league viability, provincial unions retained the gate-takings from their home matches and arranged the inter-provincial match schedules. These entitlements created significant competitive and financial inequality between provincial teams.

In different ways, the Ranfurly Shield and the NPC competitions produced high degrees of performance inequality. No provincial team could be assured of a Ranfurly Shield match and the majority of provincial unions never won a shield match while a

small group dominated the competition. The Ranfurly Shield's regulations ensured that the holder had a home-advantage, a situation that meant that once a strong team had retained possession of the shield it tended to stay with that provincial union for long periods. This provided significant local spectator interest and gate-takings for holder unions.

While the shield competition became a resource for the major provincial unions, the uncertainty associated with it encouraged the major unions to look for other means to generate income. The introduction of the NPC, which required the involvement of all provincial unions in season-long competitions, was the first major shift away from inter-provincial competitions, which only gathered crowds, towards a league aimed at creating regular publics. The introduction of the NPC was encouraged by the larger provincial unions who feared a loss in gate-takings would affect their continued success. However, not until the introduction of play-offs and a centrally organised match schedule in 1992 did the NPC attract the same level of spectator interest as that generated by Ranfurly Shield matches.

In the first 19 years of the NPC competition, the three major provincial unions, Auckland, Canterbury and Wellington, which had dominated the Ranfurly Shield, also dominated the 1st division championship. The introduction of the NPC also coincided with the increasing performance inequality in shield matches, exacerbated by the dominance of the shield by the Auckland team, making it twice as difficult to take the shield off a holder. As a result of this performance inequality, which translated into escalating financial inequalities, the NZRFU was forced to subsidise provincial unions through grants and thus ensure the minor provincial unions' continued participation in the NPC. These 'flaws' in the NPC's format came to be regarded as an obstacle for the cultivation of national television publics which the NZRFU sought to solve by introducing play-off matches in the three divisions and allowing regular television coverage. This represented a significant shift in the organisation of the amateur competition to attract national television publics. However, it was not until the threat from televised rugby league that the NZRFU was forced to transform the NPC to facilitate this cultivation of national publics.

While the NPC was encouraged by the major provincial unions as a means of attracting more gate-takings, it did not have that effect until the introduction of play-offs. Rather, sponsorship income grew in the 1980s and 1990s to become the single most significant source of income for the major provincial unions. Additionally, the introduction of televised play-offs increased these unions' opportunities for generating more sponsorship income. In such ways was 'amateur' rugby set up to make the formal announcement that it was to go professional.

5

EXPANDED MARKETS: PROFESSIONALISM, LEAGUES AND TRANSNATIONAL TELEVISION PUBLICS

5.0 Introduction

Professionalism in rugby union was established in conjunction with a media sponsored transnational league that could attract international publics. This solution had been pursued by national rugby union administrators in New Zealand from the late 1970s through to the mid-1990s. Drawing on Leifer's (1995) analysis of the role of television sponsorship in the transformation of the major leagues in North America, I argue that television sponsorship for rugby union escalated the existing rivalry between it and rugby league. Leifer's (1995) central argument is that the attachment of the major sports leagues in North America to television both cultivated and transformed the publics that support their products. Significantly, Leifer (1995: 20) argues that the introduction of national television broadcasting provided the means to extend the publics for competitions from local, 'partisan fans' to national 'enthusiasts'. More significantly, this cultivation of national television publics that would follow both entire leagues and their home team required organisational changes to the major leagues.

Leifer (1995: chapter 5) identifies the National Football League (NFL) as the ‘modern prototype’ major league. It cultivated national television publics through introducing revenue-sharing, inter-team and player regulations and by restricting broadcasting to a limited number of weekly football games on national television networks. The league provided for the equal distribution of the broadcasting revenue, competitive balance between teams and ensured that owners had the upper hand in negotiations with players. Similarly, television promotion of the league rather than individual teams to national viewers significantly contributed to securing the financial viability of the teams in smaller cities, a fundamental problem of the major leagues in the pre-television period. The success of the league in encouraging national publics to ‘search’ for winners, in turn, encouraged league organisers to adopt the principle that “competitive balance increases as a property essential in sustaining the involvement of national publics” (Leifer, 1995: 135).

While the problem of securing stable publics for rugby union and rugby league since the beginning of the 20th century has been the same as that described in Leifer’s (1995) analysis, a significant difference in the two cases is the transnational context in which the two rugby codes operate. This transnational context differs from the pre-television context of major league sports in North America in which “the product market for a particular sport was comprised only of the sport, played in designated geographical areas, in which existing franchises were already located. Markets were local, specific to place” (Wilson, 1994: 146). Unlike the North American major leagues, where the dominance of the professional leagues over amateur organisations within the same sports was confirmed between the 1900s and the 1950s (Leifer, 1995: chapter 1), the amateur rugby game had prospered, despite constant threats posed by the professional code, due to its international success.

Similarly, while the establishment of national television networks provoked amalgamations between rival professional leagues in the same sport in the North American context, in the case of rugby, television broadcasting exacerbated the rivalry between the two codes in the southern hemisphere. The rivalry between the amateur

and professional rugby codes provoked national rugby union administrators in the southern hemisphere to lobby the IRB to introduce a World Cup and to formalise their own trans-Tasman competitions in the 1980s. The new international competition required a realignment of the asymmetrical relations among rugby nations through an expansion of nations granted IRB membership. These realignments were provoked by the problem of the obvious imbalance between the participating national teams in the inaugural World Cup tournaments in 1987. The consequences for rugby union were the same as that observed by Appadurai (1995) in the game of cricket. Appadurai (1995: 42) notes that the introduction of new televised international competitions changed the “orderly community of former colonies held together by a common adherence to a Victorian and colonial code... [into] an instrument for mobilizing national sentiment in the service of transnational spectacles and commoditization”.

Having successfully attached the Rugby World Cup to national and international broadcasters, deregulation of broadcasting was to facilitate increasing competition between national terrestrial and international satellite broadcasters for the broadcasting rights to both the popular rugby codes. Rivalry between the southern hemisphere television magnates Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch exacerbated the rivalry between rugby union and rugby league and drove further transnational changes in rugby union. This media provoked rivalry, now involving the introduction of pay-TV broadcasting, not only exacerbated the rivalry between the two codes but also encouraged the establishment of rival *transnational* organisations in both sports.

The introduction of professionalism in rugby union was an unintended consequence of these developments. How professionalism came to be secured in rugby union, arguably one of the last sports to hold on to its amateur status, is thus explained in this chapter. Television broadcasting in both the rugby codes provided an opportunity for the national administrators to increase their control against the increased power of clubs and players. At the end of this period of less than two decades, administrators in the three major southern hemisphere national rugby unions in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, had retained control over the sport by introducing new transnational

professional competitions. This development, which required a regional breakaway in the southern hemisphere, forced the IRB to revoke the amateur regulations in the code.

5.1 *Television, renewed rugby rivalries and the introduction of the Rugby World Cup*

The attachment of rugby union competitions to New Zealand television networks emerged within a national setting with a public broadcasting monopoly. The introduction of satellite broadcasting into this setting was the catalyst for persuading the NZRFU to attach rugby union test matches and domestic competitions to television. In this context, television rights fees were predictably low and only the popular spectator sports, including rugby union, cricket, rugby league and netball, were targeted by the public broadcaster (Boyd-Bell, 1985; South, 1993; Romanos, 1995; Day, 1999). However, threats to both the NZRFU and the Australian rugby union's control of the amateur game through attempts to establish media sponsored professional rugby union competitions provoked them to propose the establishment of their own media sponsored Rugby World Cup⁵³.

Successive attempts were made to introduce a new global game. In the late 1970s, a private New Zealand proposal for an international professional rugby union circuit attracted the 25 top New Zealand players as well as players in the UK (Haden, 1983; Bickerstaff, 1998). According to journalists' accounts, it failed in part because the South African rugby union did not lend it the promised support for fear of reprisals by the IRB. In the early 1980s, encouraged by the television success of One-day cricket, an Australian, David Lord, proposed an international professional rugby circuit to leading rugby union players. De Jong (1986: 39) notes that almost all the 1983 All Black players signed for involvement in the David Lord proposal, forcing the national administrators to compensate players more 'generously':

Tom Johnson, a leading Union Councillor has admitted that Lord's actions have opened up the minds of the administrators to the need for more generous player expenses, for acceleration

⁵³ Wyatt (1996: 25, 29) suggests that plans for a world cup tournament had been discussed at IRB meetings before 1982, and that the French representatives had presented a similar idea to the IRB after gaining full membership in 1979.

toward a World Cup, and a more liberal attitude regarding players receiving royalties for books they write about their careers.

However, like the previous proposal it failed, this time because of a lack of teams to constitute a viable international circuit (Haden, 1983; Hyde, 1995b; Bickerstaff, 1998; Wyatt, 1995: 26). These attempts to establish a global professional game convinced a majority of the sixteen IRB delegates from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand to endorse the proposal for a World Cup hosted by the New Zealand and Australian national unions. These IRB members' fears that a media-sponsored tournament would provoke their loss of control over the game (Wyatt, 1995) were replaced by the fear that private organisers would 'high-jack' the international game.

The introduction of a World Cup tournament in 1987 was the first IRB attempt at introducing a media sponsored international competition. As hosts the New Zealand and Australian national rugby union administrators hoped to generate new interest in the game and greater income with which to compensate their players. Broadcasting of the tournament did generate large international audiences but it also exposed the grossly unequal strength between the participating teams. While the purpose of a sports tournament is to select and separate winners from losers through successive elimination rounds, as Rosenbaum (1990: 291)⁵⁴ argues, complaints from 'minor' rugby nations related to the tournament's qualification and seeding regulations. They argued that these were structured to benefit the eight IRB members against the 'invited' nations. Their criticism forced the IRB to introduce changes to the tournament to ensure that seeded teams had qualified through their performance rather than their IRB membership. This required the inclusion of 'minor' rugby nations as associate IRB members. However, it would take eight years (or three World Cup tournaments) before the qualification rules favouring the 'original' eight IRB members were changed.

⁵⁴ Rosenbaum (1990: 291) notes about the selection process of sports tournaments that, "Tournaments differ from other sorts of competition. For instance in a 'round-robin' model, one's cumulative win-loss record indicates one's standing, and all competitions are equal. Baseball during the main season is an example. In contrast, a single win in a tournament carries additional symbolic meaning. It creates a 'signal' of ability above all losers at that stage – including those never faced in

The first three Rugby World Cup tournaments involved sixteen teams allocated into four pools of four teams participating in a round-robin competition with the top two placed teams in each pool advancing to the quarterfinals which, along with the semi-finals, were played on an elimination basis. In total 32 matches were played including a third place play-off between the semi-final losers (Palenski et al., 1998: 228). Apart from selecting a winner at a single time, the World Cup tournament would also provide a 'symbolic' standing of all national teams, thus ranking rugby nations against one another. As James Rosenbaum (1990) argues about tournaments in general, teams would be ranked but simultaneously united in a new 'inclusive' international form of the game. The tournament 'effect' would thus both expose differences in strength and playing style and encourage weaker teams to adopt the playing style of the winning teams.

Prior to the introduction of the World Cup the IRB members (except South Africa) gauged their ability and 'world standing' on their win and loss record on tours or as participants in the two regional international competitions, the Bledisloe Cup and the (unofficial) Five Nations Championship⁵⁵. The win-loss records had produced a hierarchy among the eight IRB members favouring New Zealand at the top followed by South Africa, while Australia, France, Wales and England constituted a 'second tier' with Scotland and Ireland the least successful nations⁵⁶. However, at the

direct competition. This signal confers legitimacy on the promotion of those winners to much higher positions and on the strategy of making large additional investments in them".

⁵⁵ It was not until 1993 that the tournament was officially recognised with a trophy and a points system for matches, creating a greater degree of uncertainty of the tournament outcome.

⁵⁶ Between 1903 and 1986 105 test matches had been played between New Zealand and Australia (including 15 matches involving New South Wales teams in the 1920s) of which Australian teams won only 26 matches (four tests were drawn). Australian sides won only three out of 21 test series while on tour of New Zealand and the All Black team held the Bledisloe Cup between 1949 and 1979. In the northern hemisphere the unofficial (until 1993) Five Nations championship has been dominated by Wales with 31 championships, followed by England with 28 wins, while France (excluded from the competition between 1931 and 1947) won 19 championships. Scotland and Ireland won 20 and 18 unofficial championships respectively, however, the majority of these were won prior to the 1950s. Of the 12 northern hemisphere tours by All Black teams between 1905 and 1986, only one test series against England and Scotland in 1983 was lost. By contrast, of the eight British teams touring New Zealand in the same period, only the 1971 British Isles team won a test series against the All Black team. Australian teams won only two test series out of ten, while South African teams lost only two of seven test series on tours of the British Isles. In addition, South African teams only lost one test against a visiting British team in 1974 (and the first two test series in 1891 and 1896), while Australian teams lost four test series at home against British teams including

commencement of the inaugural World Cup tournament in 1987, it was widely expected that, with South Africa withdrawing from the event, only New Zealand, Australia and France were capable of winning. Scotland was regarded as the “dark horse”, according to Wyatt (1995: 46) because of its recent form in the Five Nations Championship in which it shared the title with France in 1986.

The seven IRB member nations (less South Africa) awarded themselves automatic inclusion in the inaugural tournament and an IRB subcommittee selected the nine teams needed to make up the sixteen places in the tournament (Wyatt, 1995: 32). These nine teams, spanning all continents to attract as large an international television audience as possible, initially included Argentina, Italy, Romania, the United States, Canada, Japan, USSR, Fiji and Tonga. However, according to Wyatt (1995: 32), the invitation to the USSR was not accepted. Of these nine invited teams, Argentina gained a top seeding in place of South Africa despite some protest from the English IRB members in the wake of the Falkland crisis.

The inclusion of Fiji, Tonga and Romania provided these nations with associate membership of the IRB (although this membership did not include a voting right on the IRB) while the remaining six nations already had associate membership. By 1995, Argentina, Italy, Canada and Japan had each gained a one-vote representation on the IRB. Wyatt (1995: 32) suggests that the inclusion of Zimbabwe, instead of the USSR, was a reward for South Africa’s withdrawal from the event because it gave ‘white’ Africa a place in the final. What made this decision even more controversial was the fact that Western Samoa, along with South Korea, gained status only as a replacement team and was not required for the tournament. Western Samoa, arguably, had a better international record than Zimbabwe having played annual tests against Tonga and Fiji since 1924 and regular matches against the New Zealand Maori teams since the 1960s.

the last two in 1959 and 1966. The four home unions’ “individual” southern hemisphere tours since the 1960s have recorded more test series losses than wins. However, England had the strongest record having won one test series against South Africa and New Zealand. By contrast, Ireland, Scotland and Wales have only won one test series each against Australia while on southern hemisphere tours. French southern hemisphere tours since the late 1950s produced four test series wins out of sixteen, while French teams have won a high number of their home tests against the three southern hemisphere nations (Bath, 1997).

By contrast, the former Rhodesia had played only one match against an All Black team touring South Africa in 1960.

Sports reporters' concern that the new tournament included too many teams that lacked the ability to create exciting matches proved to be wrong. The surprise team in the inaugural tournament was Wales, winning its pool and progressing to the semi-finals by beating England in the quarterfinals. The All Black team, which won the tournament, "played at a higher level" (Wyatt, 1995: 47, 52-53):

In every sense RWC '87 was a marker. It confirmed the All Blacks as the best team in the world and acted as an incredible spur to them as they thrashed just about every team on earth for the next two and a bit years...Yet in a way RWC '87 proved nothing. The IB (sic) countries selected themselves and took most of the money; the invited countries had at that time no real sense of their positions in the game. The World Cup helped them to define themselves. The hidden agenda was to be found in those countries not present – the Western Samoans, the Namibians, the Russians, the South Koreans, the Paraguayans and the Dutch. They now had an inkling of what they needed to do to qualify for 1991.

As Wyatt suggests, the IRB members had ensured themselves of the financial benefits of the tournament. The hosting unions, New Zealand and Australia, received the net gate takings⁵⁷, while the remaining income was distributed with 50 per cent to management (10 per cent of which was to go to the IRB and 40 per cent to the host unions) and 50 per cent to distribution. The 50 per cent for distribution was divided into 25 parts with 16 parts going to the eight IRB member unions (including South Africa) and the remaining nine parts to the nine other unions participating in the tournament with the IRB covering an eventual loss (Wyatt, 1995: 35-36). This distribution arrangement provided New Zealand and Australia with an equal share of the gate-takings and 48 per cent of the remaining income with the other six IRB members sharing 24 per cent between them. The other nine participating teams received only 18 per cent of the income. Despite this advantage to the host nations, the NZRFU's annual financial statement for 1987 indicates a loss of \$260,352 for all tours and fixtures. However, the union's sponsorship income of \$841,082 for that year represented a doubling from 1986 (NZRFU, 1986-1987). The NZRFU's negative balance for fixtures in 1987 is consistent with the relatively modest profit of \$A3.4

million generated by the tournament (Wyatt, 1995: 33-34; Hutchins and Phillips, 1999: 151).

The top eight teams in the 1987 Rugby World Cup were automatically included in the second tournament in 1991 and a world qualification tournament was hosted to decide the eight remaining teams to qualify. This pattern of qualification was repeated in the third tournament in 1995 despite continued criticism that this favoured the eight IRB members. Out of the seven IRB members (less South Africa) only Ireland had not gained automatic qualification. Fiji and Japan joined the six IRB members as top seeded nations in the 1991 tournament. Despite introducing a qualification tournament, which encouraged a greater involvement in and promotion of the World Cup final, only one change was produced to the teams that competed in the inaugural event. Western Samoa replaced Tonga and thereby gained associate membership of the IRB⁵⁸.

The Western Samoan team 'justified' its inclusion to the tournament by making it to the quarterfinals after defeating Wales in the tournament opening match in which "Wales would lose its status as a major rugby-playing country altogether" (Wyatt, 1995: 84). This symbolic realignment of relations between rugby union nations paralleled that observed by Appadurai (1995) in cricket. Commenting on the case in cricket, Appadurai (1995: 40) notes that "by 1983 England appeared to be a spent force in test cricket (in spite of occasional stars like Ian Botham) and India a major one". Despite Wales' automatic entry, it did not perform according to its top eight seeding in the 1991 tournament. Neither did the Fijian team. However, Ireland's near victory over Australia in the quarterfinals and the All Black team's loss to Australia in the semi-final again showed how the tournament 'selection' created surprise results. As Wyatt (1995: 85) suggests: "This result caught the imagination of the public and set the media alight. The tournament got the kick-start it needed".

⁵⁷ In 1995, when the South African Rugby Board hosted the third World Cup, only 50 per cent of net gates could be retained by the host union (Wyatt, 1995).

⁵⁸ Wyatt (1996: 84) notes that "From the Americas came the United States, Canada and Argentina; from Africa, Zimbabwe; from Asia, Japan; from Europe, Italy and Romania; and from Australasia, Western Samoa, who had beaten off the challenge from Tonga to win a place in their first World Cup".

The qualifications for the 1995 World Cup tournament produced four changes to those teams that participated in the 1991 tournament. Three of the changes were a result of qualifying matches while one was the result of South Africa's automatic inclusion in the tournament, as host nation, following the abandoning of apartheid policies and the lifting of international sanctions in 1992. South Africa's inclusion allowed the Ivory Coast to gain entry by beating other African contenders in the African world-zone qualification matches. Tonga replaced Fiji in the Pacific region. The media sponsored tournament structure therefore provoked the inclusion of minor rugby nations and realigned relations between rugby union nations of the 'former orderly colonial community' (Appadurai, 1995: 42). In doing so, it also provoked tension among IRB members over control of the tournaments. This tension was evident in the English captain's complaint that the tournament was deliberately structured to disadvantage England:

Will Carling, in-again, out-again England captain (after his "57 old farts" description of the England rugby administrators) is furious at the way the World Cup seedings have been worked out. England will face either South Africa or Australia in the quarter-finals, a torrid test for a team who were World Cup runners-up last time. "There is no doubt the organisers have put as many hurdles in our way as they possibly can," says Carling. "We can't spend too much time thinking about it, because it just depresses us" (Romanos, 1995: 25-26).

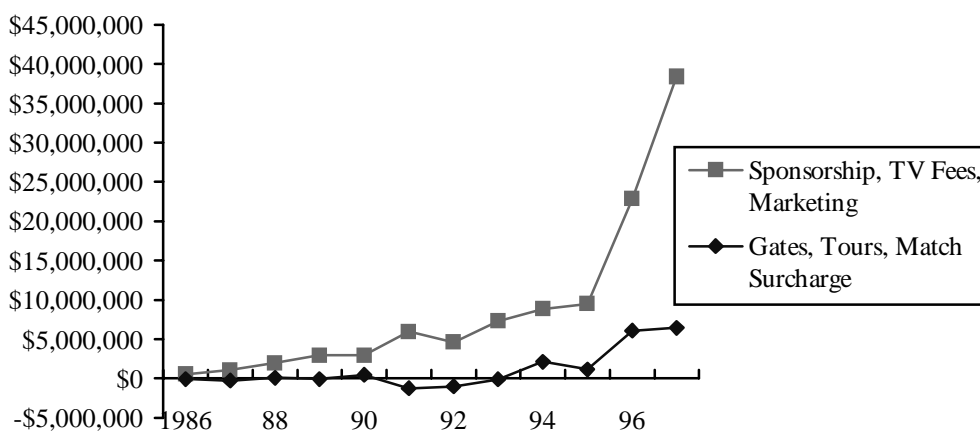
It was not until after the 1995 Rugby World Cup that the IRB introduced a qualifying tournament for all teams except the host nation and the top three teams in the previous tournament. This rule change further eroded the privilege previously awarded the 'original' eight IRB members and gave the third-place play-offs match between the losing semi-finalists meaning as a spectacle by acting as a qualifying match for the next World Cup tournament in 1999. However, while the four 'home unions' were required to qualify for the 1999 Rugby World Cup, because none of them reached a top three placing in 1995 Rugby World Cup, their chances of reaching the 1999 finals were increased due to the decision to expand the tournament from 16 to 20 teams⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ The qualifying elimination tournament for the 1999 Rugby World Cup, with Wales as the official host, expanded the previous years' World Cup qualifying tournaments by including 66 countries divided into seven world zones playing a total of 165 qualifying matches. Eleven countries were seeded in these qualifying pools including the Ivory Coast, Morocco, Argentina, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, Manu Samoa, Ireland, England and Scotland. Wales qualified automatically

5.2 *Broadcasting deregulation and competition for national television publics*

The World Cup tournament's attachment to television broadcasters occurred at the time when media expansion, through telecommunications developments and deregulation, had created a 'seller's market' for sport (Klatell and Marcus, 1988; Bellamy, 1989; Bellamy, 1999). The tournament's success with viewers and broadcasters was evident in the growth in viewer numbers and media and sponsorship income between the first two tournaments. It was estimated that 300 million television viewers in 17 countries watched the inaugural tournament. The second tournament's expanded television market included an estimated 1.75 billion viewers in 103 countries following ITV's purchase and on-sale of the broadcasting rights to international satellite broadcasters (Wyatt, 1995: 70; Hutchins and Phillips, 1999: 153). In contrast to the NZRFU's modest income from the inaugural tournament, its \$2 million income from the second World Cup in 1991 represented approximately a third of the union's total income that year and confirmed this media-generated income as the union's most significant (NZRFU, Annual Financial Statement, 1991). Between 1986 and 1995 this income multiplied nearly twenty times from approximately \$500,000 to \$9.5 million, replacing gate-takings as the game's secure and growing revenue (NZRFU, Annual Financial Statements, 1986-1995). However, from 1995 to 1997, the NZRFU's sponsorship income increased to nearly \$40 million (see figure 5.1).

as the host and South Africa, New Zealand and France qualified as the top three teams in the 1995 Rugby World Cup. Fifteen teams qualified for the finals in the qualifying tournament and one team from the repechage tournament: From the three European zones Ireland, Romania, England, Italy and Scotland and Spain advanced to the finals, from the Pacific zone Australia, Manu Samoa and Fiji advanced, from the Asian zone Japan advanced, from the Africa zone Zimbabwe and Namibia advanced, and from the Americas zone Argentina, Canada and USA advanced to the finals. Tonga and Uruguay advanced to the final from the repechage tournament.

Figure 5.1 NZRFU income 1986-1997

(NZRFU Annual Financial Statements, 1986-97)

In contrast to the NZRFU's expanded marketing opportunities associated with the introduction of the World Cup, New Zealand provincial unions were not able to increase their income from broadcasting fees because they were the property of the NZRFU. These unions sought their own media revenue generating solutions. Beginning in 1980, the Canterbury provincial union invited New South Wales to play a one-off match and received an estimated \$4,200 in sponsorship from the Apple & Pear Marketing Board to cover the expenses involved in flying the team over (Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Report, 1980). In 1982 the Canterbury team began a 'tradition' (until 1986) of playing an annual match against Queensland, alternately in Christchurch and in Brisbane.

By the mid-1980s such match arrangements between large city-based New Zealand provincial unions and Australian state unions became formalised into the first transnational competition, the South Pacific Championship (SPC). This competition involved three New Zealand provincial teams: Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury; the two Australian state sides, Queensland and New South Wales; and the Fijian national team. From the point of view of the participating provincial unions in New Zealand, the competition was a means to increase their revenue from gate-takings and media generated sponsorship opportunities. This was suggested in an interview with the

chairman of the NZRFU who, at the time of the establishment of the SPC competition in 1986, was a club delegate on the Auckland provincial union's board:

A lot of the major unions were arranging one off matches here and there as a means of an additional gate...about the early 1980s, I don't know if it was driven by Australia or New Zealand, a contact started to build up initially between, I think, Queensland and Canterbury. So you had this that seemed a bit more exotic, let's have an overseas province in. After a little while the major provinces were all playing NSW and Queensland. I don't know who first came up with the idea but somebody said, 'well look instead of all these one-off games why don't we have a competition?' So we started the South Pacific Championship which was Auckland, Wellington, Otago, Canterbury, Queensland, NSW and Fiji. No Otago were not in it. There were three New Zealand teams, the Fiji team plus the two Aussie teams. That worked quite well for the unions that were in it. It didn't work well for the unions who weren't in it and they were very unhappy about it. Sort of the rich getting richer, poor getting poorer. That was the SPC which became the Super 6 ...[which] started with better marketing, it was a bit jazzier (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

For the Canterbury provincial union the *cumulated* gate-takings (less costs associated with travel etc.) from the 'A-team's' participation in the SPC and the Super 6 competition in the period between 1989 and 1992 generated only \$75,000 (Canterbury Rugby Football Union, Annual Financial Statements 1989-92)⁶⁰. By contrast, the Canterbury provincial union's sponsorship income (and interest⁶¹) almost doubled in the period from 1986 to 1992 from \$250,00 to \$450,000 *per year* (Canterbury Rugby Football Union, Annual Financial Statements 1986-92)⁶².

The SPC was renamed 'Super 6' in 1992 but continued, despite criticism from the NZ provincial unions not involved in the competition, with the same six teams. The New Zealand teams participating in the SPC played five matches each in April and May and TVNZ presented 50 minute highlights of these matches, some with a week's delay, on Channel One's Saturday afternoon sport's programme. Inter-provincial and international rugby union matches were broadcast on a regular basis between June and September. In 1987 the coverage of both the SPC and the Rugby World Cup included delayed coverage of the SPC in April and May, and a mixture of delayed coverage and

⁶⁰ The income for the two SPC home games in 1989 was \$16,479 and \$7,177. In 1990 the income was \$13,106, \$40,419 and \$7,444, while the union incurred a loss for home games in 1992 of - \$3,192, totalling for that period \$81,433.

⁶¹ Sponsorship income and interest were accumulated in the Canterbury Union's Annual Financial Statements in the period between 1984 and 1993.

⁶² The Canterbury Provincial team's Ranfurly Shield era from 1982 to 1985 may also have helped boost the union's sponsorship income despite the loss of the shield in 1985.

live broadcasting of all the 32 Rugby World Cup matches during May and June. From 1987 to 1989 the national broadcaster's coverage of the SPC competition was moved to the Sunday *Grandstand* programme (modelled on the BBC *Grandstand* Saturday afternoon sports programme first aired in the late 1950s (Barnett, 1998)) on the public broadcaster's second channel, Channel Two.

In 1989 the *Grandstand* sports programme also included coverage of the CANZ competition. CANZ was established in 1989 and involved three other New Zealand provincial teams which were dominant in the NPC 1st division: Otago, Waikato and North Auckland, as well as the Canadian national team and two Argentinean teams: Banco Nationale and San Isidro (Palenski et al., 1998: 239). In 1990, CANZ was reduced to four teams when the two Argentinean teams withdrew, but increased to five teams in 1992 when the newly established North Harbour union, which had progressed through the NPC lower divisions to reach 1st division status, joined the competition (Palenski et al., 1998: 239). This competition lasted until 1992.

Television broadcasting of the new transnational competitions coincided with the end of the 'public interest/public service' principle of broadcasting regulation in New Zealand (Bellamy, 1993: 169). For TVNZ, new commercial requirements meant an emphasis on programmes with a high viewer rating, including sports, which could attract increasing advertising income. As an already high-rating media product, rugby union benefited from this new commercial requirement (Spicer et al., 1996: 64). Broadcasting of the new transnational competitions in the traditional southern hemisphere rugby union 'pre-season' meant that these competitions overlapped with, and added to, the existing televising of Australian and English knockout rugby league competitions beginning in the 1980s (*Listener & TV Guide*, 1980-88). The latter had previously been relatively 'unopposed' except for some coverage of the northern hemisphere's (then) Five Nations rugby union Championship competition in March and April.

TVNZ's coverage of Australian rugby league competitions did not include the premier Australian rugby league competition, the Winfield Cup which involved the

professional, predominantly Sydney-based clubs (Wilson, 1990). However, this was to change with the establishment, in 1989, of a new, private terrestrial broadcaster, TV3. This new network was 15 per cent owned by the American television network NBC (Wood and Maharey, 1994). To launch the channel in New Zealand, TV3 sought to copy the successful Australian example and use the Winfield Cup (McKay et al., 1993). Not wanting to be outflanked in the new competitive media marketplace, TVNZ also became interested in broadcasting the Winfield Cup (Hyde, 1991: 93) and expanded its coverage of rugby union and rugby league in a pre-emptive move to retain its national market dominance.

The New Zealand television broadcasters' interest in the Winfield Cup competition was sparked by its successful promotion in Australia by the Kerry Packer owned television station, Channel Nine, and the station's commercials for the competition featuring Tina Turner. These commercials were among the highest rating segments on Australian television (McKay and Miller, 1991: 89). By purchasing the Winfield Cup, TVNZ added to its Australian rugby league broadcasting of the popular State-of-Origin rugby league series between New South Wales and Queensland (McKay and Middlemiss, 1995)⁶³. Rugby league writer Becht (1994: 12) notes that the Winfield Cup competition established its popularity in New Zealand due to a fortuitous Grand Final match that went into overtime and delayed TVNZ's news, thus accidentally drawing in the largest viewer audience of all television programmes:

⁶³ The success of rugby league as a television product was likewise a result of the reworking of an existing inter-state rugby league competition. The establishment of the new rugby league State-of-Origin competition in 1980, between Queensland and New South Wales, was itself introduced as a solution to the dwindling spectator numbers for the New South Wales Rugby League competition in the 1970s (Phillips, 1994). McKay and Middlemiss note that the two states (which produce most of the national Australian rugby league and rugby union players) had participated in annual inter-state rugby league matches prior to the introduction of the State-of-Origin competition. However, because of the 'brain drain' of players to the Sydney based New South Wales Rugby League club competition in the 1970s, the inter-state competitions favoured New South Wales to the scale of 26 wins to three, and one draw, and spectator attendance dwindled. By the late 1970s, and coinciding with the success of Queensland over New South Wales in their inter-state rugby union matches, there was concern that Queenslanders would switch their allegiance to the 'amateur' code. It was therefore proposed that the selection of players for the two rugby league state teams should be based on the players' first club affiliation. In the first State-of-Origin match Queensland beat New South Wales and helped generate new interest in the event (1995:31). By 1983 the State-of-Origin best of three match series had been introduced and consistently attracted the highest television viewer rating of all free-to-air programmes broadcast in New South Wales and Queensland (Hutchins, 1996; Rowe, 1997).

It is widely accepted that the superlative 1989 grand final between Canberra and Balmain was the catalyst that ignited Winfield Cup mania in New Zealand. The live telecast of Canberra's extra-time win rated its drawers off, delaying Television New Zealand's news that night.

TVNZ presented delayed highlights of the 'State-of-Origin' competition in 1988 and a one-hour, *weekly* highlights coverage of the Australian Winfield Cup competition in 1989. These broadcasts ran from May to August on its new Monday night *Wide World of Sport* programme. This programme was modelled on an American network's *Wide World of Sport* programme and was successfully copied by ITV in England and Channel Nine in Australia (McKay et al., 1993; Barnett, 1996).

This television presentation of sports, adopted in New Zealand by television broadcasters as a way to attract viewers and advertisers, escalated the rivalry between the two rugby codes. The advent of a third television broadcaster in 1990, the pay-TV satellite provider SKY Television Network⁶⁴ further increased this rivalry and the competition for popular sports between broadcasters. SKY Television was predominantly owned by an American consortium⁶⁵ and offered three channels, one solely dedicated to sports. It bought the live rights to the Winfield Cup as a draw-card for its 24-hour sports channel. In 1991, this meant that TVNZ and SKY Television were showing rugby league three nights of the week while rugby union was being broadcast only two hours a week on Saturday afternoons and occasionally one hour on Sundays by TVNZ (Hyde, 1991: 93). This daily media coverage of rugby league by both television broadcasters and newspapers provoked the chairman of the NZRFU, Eddie Tonks, to call a meeting of leading sports journalists to discuss how to improve their media coverage of the national game of rugby union. Rob Fisher, the Auckland provincial union chairman and a key figure in national rugby union, was quoted as saying that "the Winfield Cup comes across well because of the expertise of the Australian television" (Hyde, 1991: 92).

⁶⁴ TVNZ obtained an 18 per cent share of SKY Television Network which it held until the end of the 1990s, as well as a position on the SKY Network board. This cross-ownership position encouraged criticism of TVNZ when in 1992, the two broadcasters fought over the right to present live coverage of the All Black team's South Africa tour matches (see below).

⁶⁵ By the late 1990s, Independent Newspapers Limited, part owned by News Corporation, bought a controlling share of the satellite broadcaster.

In contrast to TVNZ and the pay-TV broadcasters' increasing competition for, and coverage of, both rugby codes, TV3's financial difficulties in 1989-90 (it went into receivership in 1989 before a Canadian media organisation, CanWest, bought a controlling share in the network in 1991) meant that it lost out on broadcasting rights to the popular Australian rugby league competitions. This growing concentration of the most popular sports with the public terrestrial and the pay-TV broadcasters forced the private terrestrial network to broadcast other sports. In 1990, it began a Saturday night live coverage of the 'Rheineck' national basketball league and a Wednesday *Mobil Sport* programme featuring 'minor' and new sports such as beach volleyball, skateboarding, snowboarding, motor racing, while expanding its coverage of boxing (Hyde 1994). In 1991, coinciding with TV3's continued financial difficulties, broadcasting regulations changed to allow for 100 per cent foreign ownership. The new legislation made New Zealand one of the least restrictive countries regarding foreign ownership of television and radio networks (Wood and Maharey, 1992). The increasing competition between broadcasters, who used popular sports to attract

audiences, pushed national rugby union administrators to take control of, and reorganise, the transnational rugby union competitions.

5.3 *A centralised solution to competition for 'pre-season' television viewers: The transnational 'Super 10' competition*

The deregulation of television broadcasting not only served to encourage the rivalry between the two codes of rugby union and rugby league, but also created a 'two-tiered' New Zealand sports viewing public, fragmented along the lines of free-to-air and pay-TV access (Williams, 1994; Rowe, 1996; Booth and Doyle, 1997). This shift from free-to-air broadcasting of popular New Zealand sports by the public broadcasters paralleled the shift in Europe where the most popular sports moved from terrestrial advertising-supported channels to pay services (Whannel, 1992; Bellamy, 1993: 172). The first indication of this move in New Zealand was in 1992 when the NZRFU decided to sell the broadcasting rights to its tour of South Africa to SKY Television, thereby helping to boost the pay-TV provider's subscription numbers. Unexpectedly,

as the chairman of the NZRFU explained, this also provided the NZRFU with a significant financial bonus:

The thing that gave television a big kick along was when Eddie Tonks [former chairman of the NZRFU] and I negotiated a deal with SKY, the first time we put rugby on SKY. I think what they agreed to pay was a couple of hundred thousand dollars. But they said why don't you take the risk with us and we agreed. They had a base of 93,000 viewers or households and they had their projections and we were going to get \$10 for every sign-up over their estimate. Well as it happened, rugby really drove their sign-on and we made about a million dollars, much to our surprise as to theirs. Interestingly enough they decided they didn't want to do it that way anymore but it was a terrific boost for us and it certainly got SKY very interested in rugby (interview with Rob Fisher, former NZRFU chairman 1996-2000, March 1998).

The new broadcasting contract with the pay-TV broadcasters increased the NZRFU's combined income from broadcasting rights sales, sponsorship and marketing from \$2.9 million in 1990 to \$5.9 million in 1991. At the same time, and further highlighting the significance of this growing media-generated income, income from tours and fixtures dropped from \$500,000 in 1990 to a deficit in excess of \$1 million in 1991 (NZRFU, Annual Financial Statements, 1990-1991).

The NZRFU-SKY broadcasting deal, which ended TVNZ's monopoly on rugby union broadcasting, provoked the public broadcaster to challenge SKY's exclusive rights in court. The significance of the deal, which involved television coverage of the tour involving the first All Black-Springbok tests in eleven years, raised the stakes for the domestic broadcasters. TVNZ, which held the free-to-air broadcasting rights to all domestic rugby union matches, protested against SKY's intentions to broadcast the tour matches exclusively live on the pay-TV channel. A court ruling settled the dispute whereby SKY presented live (midnight) coverage and TVNZ delayed coverage the following morning. Additionally, the court ruling included an agreement between the two broadcasters giving SKY exclusive right to all other All Black tour matches, matches involving the Australian team, the South African inter-provincial Currie Cup competition and international tours of South Africa for the next three years. TVNZ was allowed to present delayed coverage of some of these matches including the All Black-Springbok tests (*TVNZ Networks*, 1992a; 1992b).

Coinciding with this deal between broadcasters, rugby league promoters in New Zealand revealed plans to establish a New Zealand Winfield Cup team (Becht, 1994). This plan coupled with the success of the television coverage of the competition, boosted rugby league player numbers and teams in New Zealand by 20 per cent in 1991 (Hyde, 1991). In turn, this provoked the NZRFU to approach national rugby union administrators in Australia, South Africa and the Pacific nations with a proposal for a new transnational competition. The chairman of the NZRFU explained:

Super 6 became Super 10 when Dick McGrutha, he is the Chairman of the Australian Rugby Union and myself, we went to South Africa to interest them in joining the tournament. Despite some opposition from Louis Luyt they agreed to come in with three provinces and thence Super 10 (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

The ‘wisdom’ of this new centrally-controlled and organised transnational competition, as New Zealand rugby writer Knight (1994: 18) notes, was that “without the Super 10 the main media focus, particularly that of television, would be on rugby league and the Winfield Cup”. The Super 10 competition, involving teams from New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and the Pacific Islands, included an organisational expansion of the existing transnational competitions aimed at cultivating larger, enduring media publics. Additionally, the NZRFU sought to use the competition as preparation and training for the best players in New Zealand, thereby strengthening the All Black team. This was regarded as an acute problem after the All Blacks’ disappointing semi-final loss in the 1991 World Cup, which rugby commentators blamed on the cancellation of the Super 6 and the CANZ transnational competitions that year (Knight, 1994: 18).

The new transnational Super 10 competition ran from March to the end of May and coincided with the staging of All Black trial matches, followed by test matches against visiting national teams. While this competition was regarded by the national administrators as a necessary means of improving the All Black team’s performance, and to keep aspiring All Black players from taking up ‘rugby jobs’ with northern hemisphere clubs in the off-season, rugby writers in New Zealand commented on a growing concern expressed by club rugby representatives over the expansion of the season (see chapter six). They argued that the competition would benefit Australian and South African rugby more than New Zealand and New Zealand rugby would

suffer because the competition would mean an absence of top players from club rugby – “something that would seriously undermine the domestic competition” (Knight, 1994: 18).

The organisational changes, including the introduction of qualifying criteria, to the transnational competition represented a shift from the previous ‘invitation only’ transnational competitions. These changes increased the uncertainty of the outcome of the new competition and significantly linked it to the domestic competitions. The inclusion of four New Zealand and three South African teams in the competition was a reward for reaching the top of their domestic inter-provincial competitions and, in contrast to the previous transnational competitions, the new competition provided the three Pacific Island nations, Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa, with an opportunity to gain entry and media exposure through victory in their own annual Pacific three-way series. Only the two Australian state-teams, New South Wales and Queensland, gained automatic entry. This ‘open’ entry regulation to all but the two Australian teams was regarded by the NZRFU as making the competition more appealing to the New Zealand provincial unions as “it was the first four teams in the NPC that got into the Super 10. It got around the elitism with the same teams being in by invitation” (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998). Similarly, Knight (1994: 18) notes that the added incentive would work to increase the performance in the NPC as “the granting of a Super 10 spot to the first-division semi-finalists adds a significant incentive to the national championship”.

The new transnational competition also differed from the previous competitions by dividing the ten teams into two pools and including a play-off between the two pool winners. This final match introduced a greater degree of uncertainty, a feature, following Leifer’s (1995) argument, that would make it more attractive to television publics. However, South African and Australian teams dominated in the competition’s three seasons despite the numerical domination of New Zealand teams. Natal won the competition in 1993, beating Auckland in the final, and Queensland won the competition in the following two years by defeating Natal in 1994 and Transvaal in 1995. Despite the organisational changes to make the competition more appealing to

television publics and the participating teams, it was suggested that other organisational factors worked to both create an advantage for South African teams and disadvantage New Zealand teams. As a means of encouraging the participation of South African teams in 1993, it was agreed that the final be staged in South Africa regardless of whichever team won the two pools. This agreement was struck, according to Knight (1994: 18), because the South African union had “put up much of the sponsorship money [and] there weren’t too many objections”. This competitive advantage given to the South African union to encourage its participation and, importantly, its funding of the competition highlights the difficulty in creating a transnational competition that could encourage both publics’ and teams’ involvement.

The fact that no New Zealand team won the competition over its three-year existence highlights the fact that the competition itself was not guaranteed to be successful with New Zealand television publics. If the NZRFU hoped that the competition would strengthen New Zealand rugby and, in particular, the All Black team, the poor performance of the New Zealand teams in the Super 10 and the All Black team’s second placing in the 1995 Rugby World Cup, raised questions regarding the value of the competition. The NZRFU’s desire to strengthen the All Black team would become a key feature in new NZRFU-controlled ‘regional’ teams participating in the new transnational Super 12 competition in 1996. The establishment of this competition coincided with intensified competition between Australian and global pay-TV broadcasters for the premier Australian rugby league competition (Hyde, 1995a). This pay-TV battle would come to involve the amateur rugby union code and thereby present the most severe threat to the national administrations’ control over both sports in the period of television broadcasting. In each case, elite players influenced the new media deals between pay-TV broadcasters and the sports’ national administrators. In the case of rugby union, this provoked the introduction of professionalism in the southern hemisphere.

5.4 *Global media sponsorship and player revolt in Australia and New Zealand*

Television broadcasters' interest in the Winfield Cup rugby league competition intensified following the introduction of pay-TV to Australia in 1995. In contrast to the introduction of only *one* national pay-TV channel in New Zealand in 1990, which began to dominate the national broadcasting of rugby union from 1992, it was not until 1995 that the Australian government opened the way for pay-TV providers. As in New Zealand, this deregulation was followed by intensified competition for popular sports and a public debate over anti-siphoning legislation to prevent these from being owned exclusively by pay-TV providers (Rowe, 1996: 575; Jacka and Johnson, 1996).

Similarly, for the terrestrial network owners in New Zealand, pay-TV presented the biggest threat to their viewer markets and advertisers. Competition between media organisations was to result in three pay-TV providers competing for a limited number of popular programmes including rugby league (Rowe, 1997). These new cable service pay-TV broadcasters included Foxtel and Optus Vision. Foxtel was formed by News Limited, a subsidiary of the ex-Australian media magnate Rupert Murdoch's global media 'empire', News Corporation, and Telstra, the public telecommunication company. News Limited's media rival, Optus Vision, was established by Optus Vision, which was partly owned by Australia's wealthiest media magnate Kerry Packer through his majority share in Publishing and Broadcasting Limited. This company runs the successful terrestrial free-to-air Channel Nine, and the U.S.A. -based cable company Continental Cablevision.

The television rights to the Australian Winfield Cup rugby league competition came to play a significant part in the unfolding pay-TV war between the Murdoch and Packer controlled media interests. The significance of popular sports to attract pay-TV subscribers had already been highlighted in 1992 when Murdoch reversed the ailing fortunes of the BSkyB satellite service in Britain through the purchase of exclusive rights to the popular English Premier League soccer (Williams, 1994). This 'groundbreaking' BSkyB deal with Premier League soccer had provoked the establishment of a breakaway group of the wealthiest 22 soccer clubs in 1992 which benefited from this new sponsorship arrangement (Williams, 1994: 380). Similarly, exclusive rights to popular sports and, in particular, the Winfield Cup represented the

most sought after product with which to attract subscribers for the new pay-TV broadcasters in Australia. This battle over rugby league between Foxtel and Optus Vision would also provoke a change in relations between national rugby league organisations, and between the Australian Rugby League (ARL), rugby league clubs and players.

To break the long-standing media sponsorship between the ARL and Kerry Packer, which included Packer's right to both free-to-air and pay-TV broadcasting of rugby league until 2000, Murdoch established a rival rugby league organisation, Super League, through News Limited (Tasker, 1995). The new Super League organisation proposed to give the game a 'global' vision (Rowe, 1997) by expanding the sport's global coverage through Murdoch's pay-TV conglomerate which reaches a third of the world's television households via BSkyB in Europe, Star TV in Southeast Asia and Fox in the U.S.A.

The Super League organisation encouraged clubs in England and Australia to join the new organisation by proposing to give them greater financial autonomy and to rationalise existing rugby league competitions. Similarly, it gained international momentum by securing agreements with the New Zealand, English and French national rugby league organisations for 'test' rugby league (*Super League*, 1996; Denham, 2000). However, predictably, it encountered strong opposition from the ARL. The ARL responded to the Super League challenge to its control by asking all players and clubs in the premier rugby league competition to sign loyalty agreements which News Limited then challenged in court as a violation of the restraint of trade practices legislation (Pengilley, 1998). The first court decision favoured the Packer/ARL/Optus Vision group which proceeded to stage the premier rugby league competition, now named the 'Optus Cup', in 1996 while banning Super League from establishing in Australia (Tasker, 1996). However, later that year this decision was reversed to allow the Super League organisation to proceed in 1997 in direct competition with ARL's 'Optus Cup' (Rowe, 1996).

The fallout between pay-TV sponsors and rugby league organisations thus split the code in Australia into two professional rugby league competitions sponsored by Murdoch and Packer's two rival media organisations. This resulted in an almost doubling of rugby league clubs, including the establishment of the New Zealand-based Auckland Warriors Super League team. In mid-1995, the increasing competition between the two rugby league organisations led to rising salaries being offered to rugby league players and a large number of elite rugby union players in both Australia and New Zealand. This escalation of salaries in rugby league, in turn, forced the NZRFU to pay All Black players \$50,000 for promotional services associated with their involvement in the Rugby World Cup in 1995 and the tour to France and Italy at the end of that year (see next chapter). This contributed to the union's annual deficit of \$3.2 million and provoked the NZRFU to seek more substantial contracts with media sponsors. The chairman of the NZRFU explained:

Super League emerged in April [1995] with the ARL. We knew that a lot of players had actively been sought after by Japanese clubs, we had already paid the All Blacks about \$50,000 leading up to the World Cup. We knew that we had gone so far down that track that we were never going to say, okay boys, that was the World Cup, we are not going to pay you. And we desperately needed the money (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

The first substantial media sponsorship proposal offered to the NZRFU and the Australian Rugby Union in 1995 was by Sky Television and included a \$20 million a year payment over a three-year period (Hyde, 1995b). However, the two national organisations turned it down and instead, together with the South African national rugby union, negotiated a contract with News Corporation for television rights to rugby union in the three countries. This contract included a payment of \$NZ824 million over a 10-year period with a further five-year option providing the basis for a 15 year sport/media/sponsorship relationship (Hyde, 1995b; FitzSimons, 1996: 97). The significance of this contract was that it included a re-organised Super 10 competition in the form of a new competition that was to include 12 teams from the three countries in a transnational, closed circuit league, and annual test matches between the three national teams.

The contract between News Corporation and the new organisation, SANZAR, formed by the South African, New Zealand and Australian national rugby unions to control southern hemisphere rugby union, was confirmed during the third Rugby World Cup in South Africa in 1995. Despite securing this sponsorship agreement the threat to the NZRFU's control over elite players intensified as a result of the establishment of a rival, global professional rugby union organisation, the World Rugby Corporation (WRC). The WRC established during the 1995 World Cup tournament with support from Packer's media organisation Publishing and Broadcasting Limited, escalated and expanded the rivalry between the two Australian media magnates to include rugby union. The WRC approached players world-wide with a proposal for a global professional rugby union competition. This proposal encouraged players to criticise the length of the News Corporation contract and to object to their national unions' new plans for them. An All Black player explained:

We were quite surprised actually when we heard about that Murdoch deal. It just sounded like they [the NZRFU] had just gone in and, I mean there are not a lot of big offers like that, but it just seemed like they were just taking the first bloody offer. A whole lot of money in front of their eyes and woohoo, let's just commit our players to god-knows-what for ten years (interview with All Black player # 1, November 1996).

This criticism was enough to make the NZRFU chairman defend the contract as "driven by a necessity of the situation". The chairman explained:

We kind of heard a little about the World Rugby Corporation in the background and thought it looked a bit shadowy, but if we had known about the WRC we would have been even more determined in our efforts. So when we first negotiated that deal we had Seaside, our brokers...had sat down and done the number on what they thought the rights were worth. I can remember sitting at Ellis Park [imitates a South African accent] on the Saturday after the World Cup opening and Ian and Jim put in front of us figures for what the rights were worth. This was for the Tri-Nations, the Super 12 and the NPC. And they were much, much larger sums than what we had been used to but we had already lifted our sights. We already knew the salaries we wanted to pay the players and it wasn't going to be enough. That was on a five-year term. So the strategy was, well if you give them the rights for ten, not only will your second five years go up significantly, but we can get more money for the first five years. And so somewhat reluctantly we agreed to the ten-year term. And just as well we did because if you have a look at...we have made losses of three million and six million over the last two years and if we were operating on the sort of money we would have got had we not done the ten year term, leaving aside what might happen with the apparel contract [adidas sponsorship commenced in 1999 worth an estimated \$100 million over ten years], we either had to significantly reduce the player payments, which might well have meant that we would have lost more players, or else would probably have

been insolvent by now. That is the harsh reality (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

However, as in rugby league, the establishment of a rival media-backed organisation provided elite players with a strengthened bargaining position vis-à-vis their national unions. A former All Black player explained how New Zealand players had been receptive to the WRC proposal:

If the WRC had taken off a lot of guys wouldn't have gone to rugby league, they would have stayed with rugby, hell yes. What had happened was, while the All Blacks were at the World Cup, a WRC man over here had approached some of the older guys in the...team and said go and talk to some of the younger guys and that was basically what we did. As a team we were keen on the WRC concept (interview with former All Black player # 4, March 1998).

As this player explains, initially a large number of international players signed contracts with the World Rugby Corporation and exposed the vulnerability of the contract between News Corporation and the three national rugby unions. According to Peter FitzSimons, journalist and former Australian representative rugby union player, players in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, France and a few in England had signed confidentiality agreements with the WRC, giving their support to the WRC's global plan for rugby. Several test players in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa had also been offered Super League contracts and, more worrying for the national rugby unions, the top players in the three southern hemisphere countries had not committed themselves to the SANZAR contract offered to them by their national unions.

This forced the SANZAR organisation and News Corporation representatives to meet for a 'crisis' meeting. At this meeting, Ian Frykberg, the CEO of Communications Services International, SANZAR's London-based international brokerage house for television rights, told them "you've lost all the All Blacks, 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: 175). This rejection by players of the News Corporation deal was to force the three southern hemisphere rugby union administrations to offer elite players professional contracts and thereby openly defy the amateur regulations and the IRB's global control over the game. In doing so, they blamed their move on players' greed.

Pressure was put on players to break their contracts with the World Rugby Corporation. The NZRFU issued media statements emphasising that it was the guardian of the national rugby union tradition, that players owed their loyalty to the 'establishment', that it controlled the All Black name and that no World Rugby Corporation player would ever wear the All Black jersey (MacDonald, 1995; Hutchins, 1996: 158). Sports writer Tom Hyde (1995b) suggests that after a period of contract

negotiation between players and the NZRFU, the contracts to All Black and top provincial players were increased. Additionally, the NZRFU's contract negotiator, former All Black Jock Hobbs, toured the provincial unions and approached the unions' top players, appealing to their loyalty to their provincial team and highlighting differences between the WRC's contract offers to provincial and All Black players. Within a month every All Black and elite provincial player had signed with the NZRFU.

Some accounts suggest that the WRC's proposal failed because the NZRFU's discourse of 'nostalgia', which labelled players' support for the WRC proposal as 'traitorous', worked to turn the players against the WRC (Hutchins, 1996). By contrast, an All Black player suggested that the agreement with the WRC was too secretive and encouraged a public backlash against the WRC:

The actual WRC group at the time didn't really give enough information to people. It was too secretive and that turned everyone against it. The whole public had a perception of this rebel organisation and that kind of stuffed them (interview with All Black player # 1, November 1996).

The same player also noted that the NZRFU persuaded some former All Black players, with contracts in excess of what they had been offered by the WRC, to sign with the union and thereby forced the hand of the remaining players:

...of course, some of the other players around the country, without mentioning names, some former All Blacks didn't feel they were on as much as they should have been with the WRC – they thought they should be on a much higher level of payment and weren't happy. And they went round and sort of organised groups of guys and turned them back to ...and as soon as they signed with the rugby union, you know, we couldn't really go with the WRC because it would have had guys going into two camps and it just would have done what League's done this year – which is just a complete shambles (interview with All Black player # 1, November 1996).

This split in the All Black group was confirmed by Jock Hobbs who suggests that the "the significant day in terms of turning the situation was when we signed fifty or sixty of New Zealand's leading provincial players, and also two All Blacks, Jeff Wilson and Josh Kronfeld (cited in Quinn, 1999: 199-200).

FitzSimons (1996: 244) attributes the WRC failure to the South African World Cup squad, which broke its commitment to the WRC plan because of the pressure, and guaranteed contracts of approximately US\$250,000 a year for three years, with its national rugby union. He suggests that without the South African team, the 1995

World Cup winners, the WRC could not succeed. By contrast, the chairman of the NZRFU in 1995, Richie Guy, suggests, “had the WRC come up with the money in the finish, they actually had the players. That’s really the reason we were able to get the players back” (cited in Quinn, 1999: 198). Others, again, suggest that Murdoch and Packer struck a deal whereby Packer withdrew his support for the WRC in return for free-to-air broadcast rights to Super League on his Channel Nine (Rowe and McKay, 1999: 207; Quinn, 1999: 202).

Despite the apparent collapse of the WRC, the NZRFU was concerned that Super League might ‘raid’ the All Black team. Additionally, as part of the new agreement between the senior All Black players in the 1995 World Cup squad and the NZRFU, the NZRFU had agreed to contact the head of News Corporation, Sam Christolm, to ask for an assurance that the Super League administration would not sign All Black players (FitzSimons, 1996: 301-302). This agreement between the NZRFU and All Black players had been brokered by Kevin Roberts, CEO of Lion Nathan, the largest beer brewery in New Zealand and the NZRFU’s ‘Steinlager’ sponsor, who had been active in generating sponsorship income for the All Blacks from 1994. Later, as CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, he would be appointed to the restructured NZRFU board (see chapter seven). Thus, News Corporation’s sponsorship of both rugby league and rugby union provided an opportunity for the All Black players, the NZRFU, and one of its sponsors to unite to combat the threat from Super League. However, despite this united front, two players from the All Black 1995 World Cup squad, John Timu and Mark Ellis, signed contracts with Australian rugby league clubs in 1995.

The shift from selling broadcasting rights directly to broadcasters to selling them to an international media consortium meant that the NZRFU lost control over which television channel rugby union matches would be televised on in New Zealand. Following the NZRFU’s contract with News Corporation, SKY Television purchased the exclusive rights to all domestic and transnational rugby union matches, out-bidding TVNZ, amidst large public debate and criticism. The public debate polarised towards two positions: one emphasising the commercial reality of the competitive broadcasting market and the new owner’s (News Corporation) need to sell the rights to the highest

local bidder (Hunt, 1996), the other the right to free-to-air viewing of cultural icons through the national sports (Strongman, 1996). The debate highlighted how the attachment of a game to a global pay-TV consortium transforms the context in which national sports are produced, controlled and mediated. National sports and audiences are now fragmented along the lines of pay-TV and free-to-air viewers.

Significantly, the contract with News Corporation involved the establishment of the SANZAR organisation as a southern hemisphere confederation, not unlike the UEFA organisation in soccer. This media-backed organisation had the power to challenge the IRB because it controlled some of the most valuable players and teams and, in terms of broadcasting and marketing, some of the most valuable existing and new competitions. In this new context, the introduction of professionalism in the southern hemisphere forced the IRB to legalise 'pay for play', thus reversing a 100-year old rule. In turn, this rule change provoked a significant increase in player migration, provoking national rugby unions to implement regulations to limit movement between clubs and nations (see chapter six). The establishment of the new streamlined 'Super 12' and the Tri-nations competitions also meant a new realignment of international relations in the South Pacific through the exclusion of the Pacific Island nations from the new professional transnational competitions.

5.5 *Summary: Building renewed and new national and global audiences*

The general argument that 'it is television revenues and especially the potential for satellite and cable revenues that are driving the transformation of the traditional structures of sports' (Whitson, 1998: 70) highlights the opportunities these new broadcasting technologies have provided for popular sports to expand their markets globally. As in North America where, according to Whitson (1998) and Leifer (1995) 'the progressive transformation of American sports' was spurred by the 'logic of business and the imagination of marketers', rugby union and rugby league changed to take advantage of new business and marketing opportunities. However, unlike in North America, the changes to both rugby union and league cannot be understood

without reference to both the interests of national administrators and the transnational environment that both games operated in.

Whitson (1998: 70-71) argues that this transformation of professional sports in North America was gradual but he also suggests that a more rapid transformation took place outside of North America following the introduction of global satellite broadcasting. He states that 'outside North America professional sports remained tradition-bound for much longer, comfortably secure in their traditional national markets'. In this chapter I have shown that neither the professional rugby league nor the amateur rugby union code was particularly secure in the period before the establishment of satellite broadcasting services in the southern hemisphere. In addition, national administrators involved in both codes, in New Zealand and Australia, identified television broadcasting as a significant means of both protecting and renewing their regional and national games and for promoting their competitions to existing international publics from the late 1970s. They sought to exploit television's potential to reach national and international audiences through expanding existing and introducing new, significantly transnational competitions. In so doing, television broadcasting exacerbated the rivalry between the two codes.

Before 1989 in New Zealand, the public, national broadcaster had a monopoly on broadcasting and facilitated the construction of reliable, albeit infrequent, national audiences for rugby union events. In this context, it mattered less that the rival code, rugby league, was also provided with television coverage because the public broadcaster did not broadcast a rugby union and a rugby league match at the same time and in direct competition on its two national channels. However, the arrival of a private, national broadcaster, TV3, and the pay-TV provider, SKY Television, intensified the competition for both rugby codes and provoked the NZRFU to take control over and reconfigure the existing transnational competitions into a more appealing Super 10 competition featuring South African, Australian, Pacific Island and New Zealand teams. The NZRFU identified the new competition as a link between the domestic provincial competition and international competition. This link was increasingly identified as necessary to strengthen the All Black team.

Competition between national terrestrial television broadcasters intensified the competition for national publics, which both rugby union and rugby league administrators sought to exploit through expanding existing, or introducing, new competitions. At the same time, the arrival of television also meant a realignment of existing power relations within the codes. In the code of rugby union, this involved the inclusion of the Pacific Island nations as participants in the South Pacific Championship, as IRB members through their participation in the Rugby World Cup, and as Super 10 participants. The introduction of the Rugby World Cup also confirmed the domination of the three major southern hemisphere rugby union nations on the playing fields and thus exposed the code's appeal in the southern hemisphere to global media networks.

The arrival of global pay-TV networks presented a significant threat to the established organisations in both rugby union and rugby league by sponsoring the establishment of the rival organisation, Super League and the World Rugby Corporation. The Packer sponsored WRC attempt to break the national rugby union administrations' control over the game by contracting high-profile, national representative players to a global rugby union circuit mirrored his move in establishing the One-day Cricket series in the late 1970s. However, while the One-day event had been successful two decades earlier, the Packer-backed WRC failed. However, in both rugby union and rugby league, the pay-TV sponsored, rival organisations provoked a shift in the balance of power between elite players, clubs and national administrators which resulted in significant changes to both codes.

A consequence of the arrival of pay-TV providers in both New Zealand and Australia is the emergence of a 'two-tier economy of sports coverage'. As was the case in Europe, this happens through the fragmenting of national audiences. This change encouraged debate as to the value of universal, public access over consumer choice for priced sports programming. Both the global media organisations and the national administrators of rugby union benefited from these developments, while public and private terrestrial broadcasters lost their previous national market dominance to the

new global media oligopolies. Although some national viewers were lost in the process of rugby union being broadcast exclusively live on pay-TV, this was outweighed by the potential market reach provided through global satellite networking and its associated, and potentially unlimited, market opportunities for rugby union 'products'. In this context, the code of rugby union was better prepared than rugby league to take advantage of the global marketing reach of pay-TV broadcasting because it already enjoyed an international reach, albeit limited to mostly Commonwealth nations. Their advantage was realised through the development of annual transnational competitions in rugby union. These competitions became identified as attractive to advertisers and sponsors as global media organisations promoted the code's potential as a global game.

The breakaway and establishment of the SANZAR confederation, between the three major southern hemisphere national rugby unions constitutes a new power-block in rugby union. This is similar to UEFA in soccer, which controls some of the most valuable assets in the sport. Secondly, unlike the introduction of the transnational competitions from the mid-1980s, the new professional SANZAR competitions exclude Pacific Island nations, marginalising them within the southern hemisphere. More speculatively, and as Leifer's analysis would predict, the introduction of professionalism in the southern hemisphere, in repeating the regional breakaway in the North of England and the split into two rugby codes 100 years ago, has potentially opened the way for a merger between the now two professional rugby codes.

6

DILEMMAS OF A CENTRALISED SYSTEM: SUCCESS, FAILURE AND UNEVEN GLOBAL MIGRATION

6.0 Introduction

In 1995, professional contracts replaced amateur eligibility regulations as the principle for allocating sporting opportunities to rugby union players. In the northern hemisphere clubs controlled these contracts. By contrast, in the southern hemisphere they were controlled centrally by national unions. These differences in contracting facilitated a complex global pattern of player and coaching migration. In the southern hemisphere the NZRFU control of contracts was geared to securing strong national teams. In the northern hemisphere premier clubs, backed by wealthy new owners, dominated the 'open market' system. The flexibility of the open market system also allowed clubs to attract southern hemisphere players and coaches with better financial opportunities (Bale, 1991).

In contrast to the NZRFU's early adoption of organisational forms of professional competitions, both the NZRFU and the IRB had blocked the introduction of formal player contracts and payments. Both federations focused their efforts on protecting the

game as amateur by restricting players' ability to earn an income from the game. Increasing media interest in rugby players emerged as a threat to the IRB and national unions' ability to control the sport as amateur however, and in the 1970s preventing elite players from making money through association with the game became increasingly difficult.

The establishment of the media-sponsored Rugby World Cup in 1987 escalated these problems. Following the success of the competition, high-profile players and coaches established promotional companies, sold biographies and increasingly took up off-season club contracts in the northern hemisphere which enabled them to earn income as 'full-time' amateur rugby players and coaches. Additionally, increasing media coverage of, and greater financial prospects in, the rival rugby league game in the southern hemisphere encouraged an exodus of rugby union players to the other rugby code. In an effort to halt this exodus to league, the NZRFU and provincial unions began to establish promotional companies and centrally disburse sponsorship income to All Black and provincial players. This replacement of amateur control with a centrally controlled 'professionalism' (Wilson, 1994: 204, 362) exacerbated differences in the economic opportunities in rugby playing countries. The NZRFU-controlled organisational practices which provided income to players became further centralised in the southern hemisphere when the three major national rugby unions introduced professional contracts to elite players in 1995.

Following the establishment of the transnational Super 12 'television league' (Leifer, 1995: 140), the NZRFU contracted 150 players and five coaches to the five New Zealand teams. This contracting system made the NZRFU the only 'buyer' of rugby talent to the new regionally-based, but NZRFU created and controlled, Super 12 teams. This monopoly control created an exceptional player and coaching labour market subordinated to the national team. Payment structures, mobility and eligibility regulations were designed to strengthen the All Black team. Selection for the All Black team was to be conditional upon a player's selection and contracting to a Super 12 team and the tiered contracts included a requirement to participate in the Super 12 and the NPC competitions as well as any other team as directed by the NZRFU.

Tight restrictions on players' and coaches' mobility limited the scale of players emigrating from New Zealand. By contrast, the exclusion of the Pacific Island nations from the Super 12 and the Tri-Nations competitions provoked the migration of Pacific Island players to both New Zealand and northern hemisphere rugby union and rugby league clubs. This flow of players created a 'deskilling' of Pacific Island rugby and exacerbated the 'dependent development' of rugby in this 'periphery', a process mirroring the dependent development of sport in other 'peripheral' regions (Klein, 1989; Klein, 1991b; Arbena, 1994; Bale and Sang, 1994; Moorhouse, 1994; McGovern, 2000). To protect the appeal and integrity and their control over the international game, the IRB and national unions in both hemispheres attempted to restrict both clubs' importing of players and national eligibility criteria.

6.1 *Making a career in an amateur game: The emergence of 'Star' players and off-season rugby jobs*

Affiliation to the IRB had always meant that NZRFU administrators could not adopt the professional practice of paying players. Their *organisational* approach to amateurism, which included the adoption of aspects of organising 'professional' competitions to cultivate publics for matches, was tolerated but payments to players, except for a small tour allowance, would have provoked exclusion from the international game. Gallaher and Stead's (1906: chapter three) account of the Auckland provincial union's organisation of rugby highlights the fact that amateurism was regulated by provincial unions through player residential qualifications and the centralised control of clubs and gate-takings for club matches. Despite these regulations which ensured that clubs had very limited income that could be used to pay players, Howitt (1989: 14) explains that, by the middle of the 20th century, clubs were providing their All Black players with a 'club collection' when they went on tours:

Traditionally, when a player is selected for the All Blacks his club takes the hat around and quietly hands him the entire collection. It's not done too officially, for technically it transgresses the game's stringent amateur regulations; it's simply a quiet show of appreciation from the individuals in the club. Some of those individuals have been so generous down the years that bright-eyed young All Blacks, with scarcely sufficient in their bank accounts to pay their annual subscription, have taken off to do battle with Springboks or Wallabies, Frenchmen

or British with anything up to five or six thousand dollars in their back pocket. That's how it used to be when club rugby was the life-blood of the game in New Zealand when an All Black pulled on his club jersey more times in a season than any representative jersey.

This account of how clubs, in fact, paid their All Blacks also highlights how the increase in matches and tours undertaken by All Black players limited them from playing for their clubs and, as a consequence, lessened club patrons' willingness to sponsor them. This reluctance by clubs to sponsor their All Black players thus coincided with an increasing demand on these players. Being an All Black player before the 1970s meant participation in few overseas tours and few tests against visiting national teams (Boston Consulting Group, 1994). Regular contact with Australia was established with Bledisloe Cup matches from 1931, but even these matches did not become annual events before the 1980s. Only four northern hemisphere tours took place before the mid-1950s⁶⁶. These trans-hemisphere tours, which took place before the introduction of air travel, tended to be less frequent, of longer duration and included more games.

However, from the 1970s there was a sharp increase in the number of tours undertaken by national teams and a change to the rugby season. Infrequent but long tours, at times as long as six months (excluding the 1888-89 13-month tour), were replaced by shorter but more regular tours. All Black Andy Haden (1983: 228), an outspoken player who was critical of the lack of adequate financial compensation, notes in his biography that "[B]etween 1905 and 1967, a span of sixty-two years, there were six All Black tours to the United Kingdom, but between 1972 and 1983, a modest eleven-year span, there were six further tours".

⁶⁶ All Black teams toured northern hemisphere countries 19 times between 1905 and 1997 during the New Zealand off-season from September till March. These tours took place during 1905-6, 1924-5, 1935-6, 1953-4, 1967, 1972-3, 1974, 1977 (only France and Italy), 1978, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1986 (France only), 1989, 1990 (France only), 1993, 1995 (only France and Italy) and 1997. Before the first official tour the Native Team toured the northern hemisphere for 13 months, playing 108 matches in 1888-89. The length of the first four tours *excluding* the time spent travelling, was five months while the next two tours, in 1967 and early 1972-73, lasted three and four months respectively. Transportation times of eight weeks preceded (and concluded) the 1924 'five months' northern hemisphere All Black tour (de Jung, 1986:35). The last 'long' tour in 1978 lasted two months while the tours from the 1970s generally lasted between four and six weeks.

The financial pressures on All Black players while on tour had been a point of contention since the beginning of the century. The first tour allowance to All Black players in 1905 of three shillings a day was defended by the NZRFU as compensation for player hardship, but viewed as a form of “creeping professionalism” from the Scottish RFU’s standpoint (Ryan, 2000b: 48-49). This tour allowance of three shillings per day was also paid to Australian players on their 1908-09 northern hemisphere tour and, more significantly, to the English and Welsh players on the Anglo-Welsh tour of Australasia in 1908-9. Disagreements between the Home Unions over this allowance were resolved by referring the issue to the IRB which resolved that the allowance could not be paid to players in cash. This was confirmed by All Black Eric Tindill who explained that his three shillings per day allowance on the 1935 tour was a voucher that “had to be spent at the hotel we were staying in. So if you didn’t drink, and the hotel didn’t sell things like razor blades or hair oil, you were at a loss to spend the vouchers” (cited in Quinn, 1999: 187). The tour allowance was increased in 1947. However, despite this concession by the IRB, All Black Maurice Goddard openly criticised the meagre increase of one shilling to a total of four shillings and other All Blacks record hardship in their biographies (de Jung, 1986: 34).

Over the next two and a half decades the daily tour allowance increased to 75 English pence or New Zealand \$1.50. But this increase did not offset the necessity for All Black players to ‘invent’ their own ways of making money. All Black Andy Haden, who received the nickname ‘Minister of the Lurks and Perks Committee’ on the 1972-73 tour of Great Britain, records how this committee had the responsibility to try to “outdo” previous tours by “raising money in all sorts of ingenious ways”:

We found we couldn’t send a stamped envelope home, buy a beer and buy a razor blade on the same day...a lot of players were under hardship. I could see that it was terribly unfair, so we did what we could during tours - got into all sorts of mischief, writing articles for papers and putting the money in the team fund, selling guest tickets...We tried to make ends meet by selling the small allocation of tickets we got. It was frowned on by the Rugby Union, the RFU and the IRB. One day I was delegated to be outside the main gates for a certain match selling tickets. The secretary of the Irish Rugby Union came up to me to buy a ticket for a friend. I didn’t recognise him. Just before kick-off I sat in my seat, which was one removed from the secretary of the Irish Rugby Union. I looked along and winced (cited in Quinn, 1999: 188).

By the late 1960s, players supplemented these informal arrangements on tours with new opportunities to promote their public profile. A steady increase in player

biographies emerged although players could not receive the royalties for these publications⁶⁷.

In the 1970s and 1980s, coinciding with the NZRFU's increased income from broadcasting rights sales and sponsorship, the issue of player income became more contentious. Between 1970 and 1987, 15 biographies of high-profile All Black players were published. These biographies, some of which openly criticised the NZRFU and the IRB for what players saw as a hypocritical attitude towards encouraging gate-takings and television fees while prohibiting players from receiving income from selling their public profile (Laidlaw, 1973, Haden, 1983⁶⁸), put pressure on the national administration to reconsider the ban on players receiving royalties from these publications⁶⁹. 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 IRB because he openly accepted royalties from his rugby biography. In 1984, All Black Stu Wilson received a similar ban for the same 'offence' but, according to Gifford (1989), applied for a reinstatement of his amateur status. This

⁶⁷ Of the five books on All Black players published in the 1960s, four were biographical accounts while *Rugby on Attack* written by All Black Ron Jaden in 1961, predominantly included instructions on how to play the game. Three of the four biographies were autobiographies or co-authored by All Black players: *On With The Game* by All Black player Norman McKenzie in 1961, *I, George Nepia* by All Black George Nepia and rugby writer T.P. McLean in 1963, and *The Boot*, co-authored by All Black Don Clarke and writer Pat Booth in 1966. *It's Me Tiger*, about All Black Peter Jones, was written by Norman Harris in 1965.

⁶⁸ In 1983 Haden made himself unavailable for the All Black tours of England and Scotland because he was promoting his biography. He also established a sport marketing company, Sporting Contacts, which was appointed as the NZRFU's marketing adviser in the mid-1980s after Haden had been cleared of breaching the amateur regulations. The NZRFU's investigation related to Haden's alleged association with David Lord and his proposal for a professional rugby circuit and his appearance in television commercials (Palenski et al., 1998:81). In 1988 Andy Haden published a "sequel" to his first rugby biography entitled *Lock, Stock and Barrel*.

⁶⁹ Seven biographies were published in the 1970s including one autobiography which was openly critical of the NZRFU (Laidlaw, 1973). The 1970s All Black biographies were, in order of publication: Fred Allen (*Fred Allen on Rugby*, Alex Veysey 1970), Chris Laidlaw (*Mud In Your Eye*, 1973), Colin Meads (*Colin Meads, All Black*, Alex Veysey 1974), Fergie McCormick (*Fergie*, Alex Veysey 1976), Grant Batty (*Grant Batty*, Bob Howitt 1977), Sid Going (*Super Sid*, Bob Howitt 1978), Ian Kirkpatrick (*Kirky*, Lindsay Knight 1979). Between 1980 and 1987 a further eight biographies of eleven All Black players were published, three of which were co-authored by All Black players and one (Haden, 1983) an autobiography. They were, in order of publication: Brian Williams (*Beegee*, Bob Howitt 1981), Graham Mourie (*Graham Mourie, Captain*, with Ron Palenski 1982), Andy Haden (*Boots 'n All!*, 1983), Bernie Fraser and Stu Wilson (*Ebony & Ivory*, with Alex Veysey 1984), Allan Hewson (*For the Record*, Ian Gault 1984), Dave Loveridge (*Loveridge, Master Halfback*, Ron Palenski 1985), John Ashworth, Andy Dalton and Gary Knight (*The Geriatrics*, Lindsay Knight 1986a) Murray Mexted (*Pieces of Eight*, with Alex Veysey 1986).

meant that he could coach and administer rugby five years after the publication of the book, *Ebony and Ivory* (1984) that he co-authored with All Black Bernie Fraser. Haden was again, most outspoken about the issue. After retiring as an All Black in 1985 he wrote (1988: 226):

The rugby union runs a business. It has made a market for players' time. The rugby union sells their time but it won't pay them for it. Therefore the rugby union maintains the fiction that their time is a valuable commodity to its customers, while to players the rugby union maintains the fiction that their time is not commercially viable, which is clearly a double standard.

Players' criticism of the amateur regulations put pressure on the IRB to make amendments to the amateur regulations and tour allowances were raised to \$30 per day in 1984. In addition, the IRB introduced an exemption from regulation 4.2 regarding Appearances, Communications and Advertising which, until the early 1980s, had stated that "a person may not receive directly or indirectly any material benefit for appearing in assisting with or communicating any advertisement or endorsement or promotion of any product service or item which...relates...to the Game". The new ruling accepted that if a person's "principal bona fide occupation involves the selling or marketing of any product, service or item which relates to the game" exemption may be granted from Regulation 4.2 (IRB, *International Rugby Football Board Regulations and Resolutions*, 1993: 43). This change enabled All Black player Andy Haden to receive income from royalties and speaking engagements without punishment because he listed his occupation as journalist (Edwards, 1997: 79).

Increasing trans-national rugby contact also raised New Zealand players' profile in the northern hemisphere and, as a result, a number of high-profile players were offered off-season 'rugby job' opportunities with wealthy clubs. From the 1970s All Black players played for clubs in England, France, Italy and South Africa. For a few these overseas rugby visits coincided with their educational advancement⁷⁰, but for the

⁷⁰ Tony Davis (AB player 1960-62) played for Blackheath in 1971-71 and London Irish 1972-74 while in England to further his medical studies; Earle Kirton (AB player 1963-64,67-70) played for Harlequins in 1971 after going to England to further his dentistry education; and Chris Laidlaw (AB player 1963-68, 70) played for Oxford University club in the 1969-70 season when a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. He later played for the Lyon Club in France.

majority it was a move they made at the end of their New Zealand rugby careers⁷¹. However, from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, All Black and provincial players began fitting in playing for overseas clubs in their New Zealand off-season. Andy Haden, who represented New Zealand from 1972 to 1985, was one of the first All Black players to play for European clubs in the off-season. This could involve playing for more than one club. Palenski et al. (1998: 81) note, “for a period, Haden played Saturdays for the London club Harlequins and Sundays for a club in Italy”.

During the 1992-93 New Zealand summer 208 players were given clearance by the NZRFU to play overseas. This exodus of players and coaches encouraged journalists to comment that “Japan, Italy, France and South Africa offer economic prospects outweighing any advantages for players or coaches here” (Sanders, 1992: 41). The new playing arrangements with northern hemisphere clubs also led to allegations of ‘under-the-table’ payments and emergent problems regarding the regulation of the rugby seasons in the different hemispheres. French and Italian clubs had sponsorship relationships with large companies and could afford to pay players for work carried out for the club or the club’s sponsor. Former All Black player (and current All Black coach) Wayne Smith, who played and coached in Italy during 1986-88 and coached during 1992-94, explained how such contracts were investigated by the IRB for breaching the amateur regulations:

Yes, the bigger the club the more funds available and the more able they were to pay people, but most of the players had some sort of job for the club whether it was caretaker, mowing the lawns, marking the grounds, that sort of thing. John Kirwan and Michael Lynagh, both

⁷¹ ‘Sandy’ McNichol (AB player 1973) played for the French club Tarbes between 1973 and 1976; Robert Burgess (AB player 1971-73) played for Lyon in 1974; Kenneth Carrington (AB player 1971-72) played for the Italian club Casale between 1975-78; Kit Fawcett (AB player 1976) played for Natal University in 1979 and later for Wasps in England; Ken Granger (AB player 1976) played for the Harlequins club in 1980; Laurie Knight (AB player 1974-76, 77) played for Paris University in 1977-78; Terry Morrison (AB player 1973) played for the English clubs London New Zealand and Harlequins from 1979; Doug Rollerson (AB player 1976, 80) played for the London New Zealand club in 1979-80; Herbert Sapsford (AB player 1976) played for the Harlequins club in 1977-78; Gary Sear (AB player 1976-79) played for the Italian club Francasso San Dona in 1979; Ian Stevens (AB player 1972-74, 76) played for the Diggers club in South Africa in the late 1970s; Alan Southerland (AB player 1968-70, 73, 76) played and coached in Rhodesia and later coached in South Africa; and Graham Thorne (AB player 1967-70) played for the Northern Transvaal province and later Natal after the 1970 All Black tour and later returned to New Zealand as coach and selector (Palenski et al., 1998).

worked for Benetton. They used to read English newspapers and look at fashion trends, sporting trends, and report back. So they did things like that. So it was pretty much above board and the IRB, when they sent their rep over they decided yes it was bona fide work. But yes I mean it was just a matter of funding. The smaller clubs clearly haven't got the funds available and can't do that sort of thing (interview with Wayne Smith, Canterbury Crusaders coach, Oct. 1998).

In addition, Sanders (1992: 40) reported that players' off-season contracts were increasingly viewed by the NZRFU as compromising players' ability to perform for New Zealand teams: "Tonks [NZRFU chairman] says New Zealand can tolerate top players spending our summer in Italy, but something must be done about the length of the Italian season". Additionally, Sanders (1992: 40) quoted Tonks referring to the Italian rugby season: "It needs a bloody great tidy up. Their season seems to have drifted into ours". Some argued that the 'star' All Black winger, John Kirwan, was dropped from the All Black team because his form was affected "especially early each season when he'd returned from a season in Italy" (Palenski et al., 1998: 105).

6.2 *Promotional companies and amateur player contracts*

After the success of the inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987, which a New Zealand rugby writer characterised as "totally professional" except that "no money for lending themselves to this massive advertising drive...goes to the players" (Gifford, 1989: 23), players began to receive more income. In the early 1990s, in response to the northern hemisphere 'open market' and individually negotiated deals between New Zealand players and club sponsors, the NZRFU and provincial unions set up companies to organise 'promotional' work and payments to players. This replacement of market relations with centralised control by the federation mirrored the IOC's new regulations for the appropriate manner for amateur athletes to earn income from their sports "so long as it was deposited in a trust fund administered by the athletes' national sport federation" (Wilson, 1994: 378). This development became increasingly important as a means of retaining players in the rugby union game because the rewards offered in

rugby league were reducing an increasing number of players' 'aspiration' to become an All Black player.

High-profile players and coaches were first to take advantage of the "Appearances, Communications and Advertising" rule changes and All Black John Kirwan was one of the first players to make a full-time living of rugby. In June 1987, coinciding with the publication of his biography, *John Kirwan's World* (1987), he established Forza Promotions, which employed him to do promotional work for which he was paid as an employee (Misa, 1987). Apart from doing promotional work for sponsors, these companies also enabled players to be paid as coaches. For example, setting up a company enabled former All Black player Wayne Smith to be paid as coaching director for the Canterbury provincial union:

In 1989 I took on the role as coaching co-ordinator for the union so my job was coaching schools, coaching clubs, set up programmes at university and Teacher's College. But as a paid employee of the union, according to the IRB rules, I couldn't coach a rugby team. So I could be employed [as a union official/administrator] but I couldn't coach. I wanted to keep coaching so what I did was I started up a company called Tryline which took on the contract from the union and I just happened to do some work for Tryline as an independent contractor and I was then able to coach a team (interview with Wayne Smith, Canterbury Crusaders coach 1997-1999, Oct. 1997).

Players also began appearing in television advertisements. In the late 1980s, Kirwan began featuring in television advertisements for Para Pools. All Black players Stu Wilson and Bernie Fraser began advertising Jockey underwear and former All Black player Colin Meads featured in a television advertisement for tanalized fence-posts and later for pinetrees (he was a farmer and his rugby nick-name was "Pinetree") (TVNZ, 1998). Additionally, a total of 14 All Black biographies (13 All Black players and one biography by All Black coach John Hart) were published in the five years between 1990 and 1995 (the Australian coach Bob Dwyer published his autobiography in 1992)⁷².

⁷² Joe Stanley, *Smokin' Joe* (Gifford, 1990); Wayne Shelford, *Buck: the Wayne Shelford Story*, (with Gray, 1990); Alex Wyllie, *Grizz: the Legend* (Gifford, 1991); John Gallagher, *John Gallagher: The Million Dollar Fullback* (with C. Brown and A. McColm, 1991); Gary and Alan Whetton, *Brothers in Arms* (1991); Grant Fox, *The Game The Goal* (with Veysey, 1992); John Kirwan, *Running on Instinct*, (with Thomas, 1992); Va'ainga Tuigamala, *Inga The Winger* (Howitt, 1993); John Hart, *Straight from the Hart* (Thomas, 1993); Sean Fitzpatrick, *Fronting Up* (with O'Meaghers, 1994); Michael Jones, *The Iceman – The Michael Jones Story* (with McConnell, 1994); Mike Brewer, *Mike Brewer* (with Gifford, 1995); and Zinzan Brooke, *Zinny* (with Veysey, 1995).

These new economic opportunities for players and coaches were supplemented by increases to players' tour allowances. From 1989 to 1991 it doubled from \$40 to \$40 in tour allowance with an extra \$40 in 'hardship allowance' per day. The NZRFU chairman, Russell Thomas, explained in 1989 that quite a few All Black players had received the new allowance which was 'completely within the IRB rules': "Where it could be proved that a player, let's say a self-employed man or a man taking leave without pay to tour, was financially disadvantaged by touring, we were able to pay an extra allowance" (cited in Gifford, 1989: 23). By 1994 players also received an allowance for home tests (paid by the NZRFU) and an increase in the players' overall allowance income enabling them to earn \$60 for home and away tests, \$60 in hardship allowance and \$60 for 'restraint of trade', totalling \$1260 per week tax free (*Sunday Star-Times*, 1994: B3). In addition to these allowances players received clothing packages, the value of which was estimated to have risen from \$500 to \$5000 between 1984 and 1994. Players' travel and accommodation standards were also upgraded over the decade from flying economy class and staying in three-star hotels to flying business class and staying in five-star hotels.

Despite these new opportunities for make a living out of the game, for both elite players and coaches, the gap between the increasing demands on players and the financial compensation encouraged eight All Black players to switch to rugby league in 1989-90 (Coffey, 1995). All Black player John Gallagher, who was voted by the British press as international rugby union player of the year for 1989, met officials of the Leeds rugby league club while he was in London to receive the award early in 1990, and a month later signed with the club. Additionally, Palenski et al. (1998: 72) note "with All Blacks Ridge, Botica, John Schuster and Paul Simonsson also switching to rugby league in 1990, as well as leading provincial players such as Darryl Halligan and Clarry and Brett Iti, it was the biggest New Zealand loss to league in a single year since league's foundation year in 1907".

One of the All Black players to take up a contract with an English rugby league club in the early 1990s commented on the financial incentive to switch codes:

At the time I needed a change, there was a lot of rugby league on television...and I was keen to give it a go as a challenge and of course also the financial rewards were at that stage a lot greater than in rugby union. I looked at it as a way of starting to secure a future a little bit. I was working for Panasonic, doing a marketing cadetship, which I wasn't really into. It was more a rugby job really. They looked after me well when I was away touring. So they were good in that respect but it wasn't a job that I saw myself in long term. Then I felt, well why not get paid for what I do best and that was football. So, it was a good move, I think (interview with former All Black player #4, March 1998).

Such 'rugby jobs' began to be offered to All Black players from the early 1990s when national and provincial unions formed companies (see chapter seven) which undertook to provide promotional work and seek out jobs for players in representative teams. The All Black Promotions Limited (sometimes referred to as the All Black Club although the two are separate NZRFU organisations⁷³) was formed with sponsorship from the major NZRFU sponsors including Steinlager, Coca-Cola, Phillips and Ford Motors, and some of the leading All Black players were offered jobs with these companies. For example, All Black Zinzan Brooke took up a job with SKY Television Network, All Black captain Sean Fitzpatrick with Coca-Cola and All Black Ian Jones with Phillips. All Black Graeme Bachop took a different route. He turned down two marketing job offers instead taking up a contract with the Japanese company Sanix for three years that involved playing and working for the company which specialised in the fumigation of houses. "The All Black Club had two job offers for the unemployed Bachop - he lost his carpenter's job with a Christchurch firm when rugby duties became more time-consuming than his work hours - but he never seriously contemplated them. 'The offers came at the time of the test series. Both involved sales opportunities and I wasn't sure whether I was suited to that'" (Schumacher, 1994: 64).

The establishment of All Black Promotions Limited represented a significant shift in the relations between the NZRFU and players. The new centralised system for

⁷³ The All Black Club was set up in 1994 in conjunction with the 1995 Rugby World Cup as a supporters' and fundraising club to which members paid a \$30 or \$50 contribution per year to support players. In return, they were given preferential ticket booking rights and the opportunity to meet the All Blacks. Kevin Roberts, the CEO of Lion Nathan, the largest brewery in New Zealand and sponsor of the All Black team through the beer brand Steinlager, was, according to Palenski et al. (1998: 222), "a key figure in the establishment of the All Black Club". In 1997 it was wound up because of dwindling membership numbers (Hill, 1997:13). By contrast, All Black Promotions limited, established in 1990, has continued to be the organisational arm of the NZRFU contracting players to the NZRFU.

generating and distributing income to players (Wilson, 1994: 204) was concerned to secure greater control over players by encouraging them to replace their individually arranged market relations with sponsors with NZRFU contracts. By centrally managing economic transactions involving players and sponsors, the NZRFU and provincial unions sought to ensure that player income was both generated and distributed according to amateur regulations and that players would remain in New Zealand where they were contracted to perform promotional services. The CEO of the NZRFU explained in 1994 that All Black Promotions Limited was a means for the union to ensure that players received income in accordance with the IRB amateur regulations for promotional activities:

We have established a promotion company for our All Blacks and we market them so they can earn income in the correct manner. And that has been reasonably successful. That has been in place for three, four years They are not paid to play. The ethic of the sport - and that is enshrined in rules internationally - is that you are not paid, can't be paid. However, you can be paid to be involved in promotional activity associated with the sport. For example, you see some of these players in television advertisements etc., that is permissible. Right, that is okay, but what is not okay is like \$10,000 a test match or \$11,000 for a win bonus, or whatever. So the amateur status is essentially the no-no is to pay for playing, but you can earn income from your profile in ancillary activities (interview with George Verry, CEO of the NZRFU, July 1994).

The CEO suggested that All Black Promotions limited operated within the IRB amateur regulation in contrast to some rugby clubs in Japan or Italy which, he argued, "ostensibly pay players as professionals". He distinguished between those clubs or companies which helped "players develop careers" and provided "jobs as part of the company", and those players who are "just up there to play rugby for Toyota or Nissan rugby club" (interview with George Verry, CEO of the NZRFU, July 1994).

Not all national unions provided players with the same kind of financial support and assistance. The captain of the Scottish national team, Gavin Hastings, criticised the promotional companies and the kinds of financial support players were receiving in countries other than Scotland, highlighting this as a form of professionalism. He claimed that the differences between what players were receiving meant that some were given an advantage over others, thereby destroying any illusion that players competed on a "level-playing-field":

There are now underhand payments, not only in South Africa, but in Australia, New Zealand, England, Wales and Ireland. I do not mind that, but it irritates me that the only one of the senior countries where this does not happen is Scotland. I am not bitter about it, but I wish

people would say what is going on. They should stand up and be counted against such hypocrisy, so that every rugby player in the world is performing on the same level playing field (*The Press*, 1994).

Similarly, a Welsh rugby journalist suggested that the significant variations in the payments provided to international players were a concern in the northern hemisphere:

The Welsh squad received less than 1000 pounds (\$2600) each from their basic marketing scheme, but England are guaranteed 10,000 pounds (\$26,000) a man this season from their Playervision scheme, and a few should at least double that with personal activities outside the squad, with perhaps five reaching the 50,000 pound (\$130,000) mark. The schemes in Australia (Wallaby Promotions) and New Zealand (All Black Supporters Club) are also going concerns, the latter, according to the NZRFU, as a 'nation-wide backlash' against league's perceived threat to its heritage (Jones, 1995: B2).

By the third Rugby World Cup in 1995 the increasing threat from rugby league, following Murdoch's plan to establish the rival Australian Super League competition, forced the NZRFU to offer a \$50,000 contract to All Black players involved in the Cup and the end of year tour of France. This was the first contract that guaranteed players a specific income (almost twice the average national income at the time), which also included an incentive scheme related to the All Black team's performance. An All Black player explains:

Players were given x amount of dollars with an incentive, the longer you went through the World Cup, with the quarters, the semis and the final and if we won it, we would be given x amount more. That went through the World Cup and then we toured France at the end of 1995 and we were given another bloc of payment and that all came out of the All Black Club sponsorship... Those contracts were purely for that one-year period. They were just designed to tie players over, to keep them in New Zealand more than anything, to play rugby for the All Blacks, to stop them going overseas (interview with All Black player #2, March 1998).

By the end of the 1995 World Cup the threat from rugby league and the rival rugby union World Rugby Corporation to the national unions in the southern hemisphere had provoked the establishment of professionalism secured through a media sponsorship deal with News Corporation. This media sponsorship involved the establishment of the Super 12 and the Tri-Nations competitions and enabled the three national unions to provide players participating in these competitions with professional contracts. In New Zealand the new professional contracts, like the earlier amateur promotional contracts, would be centrally controlled, creating an exceptional player labour market subordinated to the All Black team.

6.3 *The Super 12 'television league' and centralised contracts*

The establishment of the transnational professional Super 12 competition by administrators from the three southern hemisphere national rugby unions in 1996 was a means to secure a media sponsorship contract that could provide enough income to retain control over the top southern hemisphere rugby union players. This development in the southern hemisphere contrasted sharply with the UK where the introduction of professionalism, provoked by the developments in the southern hemisphere, led to senior clubs contracting players. Mike Cain (1998: 43), the British *Sunday Times* rugby correspondent, makes this point:

The Tri-Nations have primacy of contracts with players who are bound directly to the national union, in Britain they do not. Instead that primacy rests with the clubs, mainly because of an act of staggering ineptitude on the part of the RFU when they let the England player contracts lapse a year-and-a-half ago. The slack was, not surprisingly, taken up by the clubs.

This contractual arrangement meant that the English RFU came to face a situation where it could not demand players' release from club duties to participate in international matches and disputes erupted between the 1st division English clubs, organised into the English Professional Rugby Union Clubs, and the English RFU. These disputes threatened to split rugby union for a second time (Stafford, 1996: 17).

The conflict between the 1st division clubs and the English RFU, and the contrasting system of contracting players between the northern and southern hemisphere are referred to as a case of 'club v country'. In this conflict the southern hemisphere national unions took side with the English RFU and the IRB against the power of clubs to decide whether a leading player would be released to play for England or not. This alliance of national unions reversed a one hundred-year trend of southern hemisphere unions' opposition to the northern hemisphere power block. The three southern hemisphere unions' concern was to guarantee that English teams touring the southern hemisphere were at full strength. According to the Australian national union, "weakened touring teams means enormous difficulty getting crowds to Sydney and Brisbane Test matches" (Growden, 1998: 53). This concern to protect the integrity of the international game was validated in England's 76-0 loss to Australia on the southern hemisphere tour in 1998. It was blamed on the English clubs:

Fran Cotton, the former British Lions manager, has predictably blamed the clubs for the fact that so many of England's first-choice players are injured or unavailable. Yet it was the RFU, chaired by Cotton's ally, Cliff Brittle, that set up the southern hemisphere tour in the first place. It was the lack of a properly structured season - caused by the failure of the RFU and the clubs to reach agreement - that brought about the log-jam of fixtures that shattered the leading players and led to Saturday's debacle (Trelford, 1998).

In contrast to this weakening of the power of the English RFU and the IRB, the NZRFU gained a significant degree of control through a system of centralised contracting to the Super 12 competition. This new system shows a high degree of continuity with the central control at the turn of the 20th century, as highlighted by Gallaher and Stead (1906: 36): "The work of the governing body must be active, not passive...if it aspires to hold its own, or a little more, in competition with its contemporaries". In the early New Zealand rugby 'system' the aim of creating strong national teams required strong domestic competitions and centralised control over clubs and players. By contrast, in 1995 the NZRFU's aim to protect the All Black team required it to create teams to participate in a transnational competition. This replacement of the national form with a transnational competition to produce strong national teams was also pointed out by a Welsh rugby writer (G. Jones, 1999):

It gives them the ability to make decisions solely motivated to produce the strongest possible national side. The purpose of this domestic game is to produce players with the athletic ability and necessary skill to play international rugby. It provides them with matches of virtual international intensity on a weekly basis. It has also got a snappy name, Super 12.

This centralised control of teams breaks with the tradition of ensuring professional teams' independence to avoid fans' view of the outcome of games as highly suspect (Wilson, 1994: 126). For Wilson, this is a requirement of professionalism but, while local fans would object to the directives by the NZRFU to move players from one team to another, there would be general support for the national union's project of strengthening the All Black team.

The confidence of the NZRFU in its ability to control the domestic game was symbolised by the fact that the Super 12 "television league" (Leifer, 1995: 139) was secured with media sponsorship before any players were signed. The Super 12 competition, restructured from the earlier Super 10 competition, was introduced in the traditional 'pre-season' running between February and May and culminating in the Tri-nations series in June-July. The Super 12 and Tri-nations competitions thus fitted in

with existing international and domestic competitions. The chairman of the NZRFU was explicit about the reasons for introducing the new league. It was designed to retain the top players and to secure the strength of the All Black team:

When it came to looking for a new product we had the basis of a pretty good product [in the Super 10 competition]. New Zealand had the desire to protect and retain the top 150 players. It was the sort of number you need as the basis of a successful All Black team. So 150 divided came up to six teams. We wanted six, we gave Africa four and Australia two. As the negotiations went on, the Australians said we're really trying to develop in our country and we have got enough strength for three teams. So they put it to us that we should drop down to five. So we went from four teams in Super 10 to five in Super 12. South Africa went from three to four and Australia went from two to three. That is right because the top [Pacific] Island nation was playing in Super 10 so that is exactly how it went. So everyone went up a team. Somehow we managed to package it in a way that made it more attractive to television authorities (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

The new 'product', and the chairman's language is significant, consisted of a round-robin competition between 12 teams in the three countries. It would culminate in a Tri-nations series consisting of home-and-away matches between the three national representative sides in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. The Super 12 competition included a play-offs format similar to that introduced in the NPC in 1992, involving the top four teams on points. In the Tri-nations series, score-differential would be used to determine a winner in the event of a 'dead heat' between two national teams.

To encourage the cultivation of local publics, like the teams in the USFL 'television league' which drew players from "local area" colleges "to cater to anachronistic fan localism" (Leifer, 1995: 140), the five New Zealand Super 12 teams were allocated to existing provincial unions. Moreover, these unions acted as 'care-takers' of the Super 12 teams, which were made up predominantly of players from within the 'region'. The regions were constructed by the NZRFU by dividing the 27 1st, 2nd and 3rd division provincial unions into five regions and a Super 12 team 'attached' to the largest first division union within each. The selection of four South African provincial teams to participate in the Super 12 competition followed the qualification procedures for the earlier Super 10 competition to which the top provincial unions in the domestic Currie Cup qualified. However, by 1998, the four South African Super 12 teams would become regional as in New Zealand, with the best players selected from the 14

provincial unions. In Australia, the three state representative teams, New South Wales, Queensland and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) were automatically included in the competition.

The NZRFU's centralised contracts covered not only the All Black team but also the five Super 12 teams, thereby creating an exceptional situation where the national union controls all professional teams in the country. The NZRFU also introduced further player labour market restrictions including a transfer system involving the movement of players between provincial unions (see chapter seven), not unlike the restrictions in North American professional sports which limit competitive bidding between teams for players (Wilson, 1994: 80-84). This form of centralised contracting, involving several 'levels' of rugby union competitions, was regarded as the strength of the exceptional New Zealand system by the NZRFU's contract negotiator:

All we have done is put between our national championship [NPC] and the All Blacks, Super 12, a professional competition. Most other sports only have one professional competition, whether it is the NFL, there is one club competition, the NRL, English soccer, that is all it is. They may have a few international matches but they don't have an international competition and they also have contracts based on clubs and therein lies the English rugby problem. Even compared with South Africa and Australia we are different. We have got these centrally based contracts (interview with Bill Wallace, NZRFU Director of Rugby Services, March 1998).

The chairman of the NZRFU expressed similar satisfaction with the centralised contracting system, highlighting the strength of the NZRFU relative to other national unions:

The English club situation is proof that our decision to contract the players at national level was the correct one. And there is not a major national union that I have spoken to that doesn't wish that they had done the same as us. So we plainly have better, I don't like using the world control, but I guess that is what we have. I wouldn't say control over the players, we have control over the situation in as much as we are saying into which competition and into which teams the players can play. Whereas I think it is quite untenable, given rugby is truly an international game, that you can have a collection of clubs saying to the national union, 'well, you can have the players but you can only have them so often' (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

Provincial union administrators did not share this confidence by the NZRFU administrators in their 'system'. They were concerned that the system of centralised contracting had not been tested anywhere else in professional sports. McConnell (1996: 265) quoted provincial administrators as saying: "I can't think of another sport where the national union contracts players", "I don't think there is a pro competition in

the world where the players are owned by the people running the competition. I don't know where we get this blueprint from, but it is an untried one". A CEO of a provincial union expressed similar doubts over the centralised contracting: "I think the jury is still out on whether a centralised contracting system works better than just giving us the money and let us buy the players we want the services of" (interview with CEO of provincial union, April 1996).

The NZRFU's control extended beyond the contracting of players to include the composition of the five Super 12 teams. It contracted a select group of 130-150 players (out of a total of approximately 900 provincial players) and five coaches to participate in the five teams. The five coaches were allocated to a team consisting predominantly of their 'wish-list' of players drawn from within each Super 12 'region'. However, the Super 12 coaches would meet with the NZRFU Super 12 selectors, including the All Black coach, All Black selectors and NZRFU administrators, who themselves would make a list of players, before a final decision on which players to contract would be made. The All Black coach, John Hart, explains:

I list players, with my fellow selectors, we sit down and say these are the players we rank as potential All Blacks within the next two years, so they are above the line, and below the line are a host of players we rate in that position. So we do it by position. And then the New Zealand Union calls a meeting with the Super 12 coaches where they are asked to come and put a presentation as to what players they want to pick (interview with John Hart, All Black coach 1996-1999, March 1998).

In 1995, the NZRFU offered contracts to 140 players, or 28 players per team, but contracted only 125 (25 per team). However, due to the number of injured players in the first season, the teams were increased to include 26 players in 1997 (excluding replacement players for injured players).

Initially the coaches were given first right to select up to the team quota of NZRFU contracted players in their region. Those contracted players not selected for the Super 12 team within whose boundaries the players were resident, were placed in a pool from which Super 12 coaches selected players up to their player quota. This selection regulation, together with the uneven spread of NZRFU-contracted players between the regions, meant that two of the five teams included a high number of drafted players in

the first seasons⁷⁴. This included the Canterbury Crusaders team which drafted a total of 13 players in 1996. At the end of the Super 12 competition, the drafted players returned to their provincial unions to take part in the NPC competition. In the first season, the Super 12 player draft was based on the placing in the 1995 NPC competition of the provincial unions hosting the Super 12 teams. This gave the Canterbury Crusaders first choice from the player pool because the Canterbury NPC team had finished last among the five Super 12 'hosts'. After the first season, the order of the pool player draft was decided on the basis of the five teams' placings in the preceding Super 12 season.

This "inverse order draft" was copied from the North American major leagues' inverse order draft of amateur, college or "rookie" players (Wilson, 1994: 88-90). However, while the North American drafts aim to both limit the competitive bidding for players between teams and to accommodate publics' desire for even competitions (Leifer, 1995), Super 12 teams have no opportunity to bid for Super 12 players. The significant degree of control by the NZRFU over the Super 12 teams, which raised criticism from provincial unions, can thus be regarded as an attempt to involve local publics by appealing to fans' sense of equity and their desire for balanced competitions. In this way, the NZRFU cultivates both local publics' support for the competition and ensures that the best players are given maximum playing opportunity while limiting the degree of control and autonomy of Super 12 teams and coaches. The success in achieving this balance helped counter criticism of the NZRFU when national selectors requested that a player be moved from one Super 12 team to another.

Success, however, was not always forthcoming and the NZRFU selectors came 'unstuck' on a number of occasions. John Hart, again:

...we have still got to make sure that coaches get what they want, that the teams are strong, that we have got five good teams and that our top players are playing Super 12 and are not on the bench all the time. The unions have control; the process says you can pick any players in your region first. It was only on three occasions that we, the New Zealand Union, took the decision that they were going to move a player from one union to another, like Leon MacDonald and Paul Thompson, who went to Waikato but unfortunately got an injury, and

⁷⁴ In 1999 coaches' 'first pick' of players from their region decreased to 15 in an effort to reduce this imbalance between regions, but it increased again to 22 in the 2000 season (Hill, 2000).

Glen Taylor who went to Wellington (interview with John Hart, All Black coach 1996-1999, March, 1998).

Wayne Smith, the Canterbury Crusaders coach, explains what was involved in Super 12 coaches criticising the selectors' decision to move players from one team to another:

If we name a player who is not in the 130, we have got to fight really strongly to keep him so he gets a contract because they prefer to see him out and bring in someone from another region who wasn't going to get a contract there (interview with Wayne Smith, Canterbury Crusaders coach 1997-1999, Oct. 1997).

He went on to explain the limited power he has in securing 'local' players for 'his' region's Super 12 team:

Well the worst part from the point of view of your own players being asked to move is that you have developed and nurtured them, they are happy in the environment, you have got them to a stage where the selectors are interested in them and then they are told that it would be better if they moved out of Canterbury to play for another team so that they get more exposure or more playing time or whatever. That is difficult to accept from our point of view. And I am not very comfortable with that because if you take the philosophy that the player comes first and it should be the player's decision where they play, and if they take the stance that they are happy playing in Canterbury I think we should back that and I think the NZRFU should back that. So from that point of view it is difficult (interview with Wayne Smith, Canterbury Crusaders coach 1997-1999, Oct. 1997).

In response to this regional team-based criticism, the NZRFU's CEO, David Moffett, defended the New Zealand selectors' decision to move players against the wishes of the Super 12 coaches on the grounds of the national team: "Those shifts reflected a desire by the union and the All Black selectors for top players to play in their favoured positions and not be reserves" (NZPA, 1997). Moffett's argument is significant in that it privileges the NZRFU's control of players. He is clear that the movement of Super 12 players was a way of providing them with a better playing opportunity and thereby to develop as many players as possible. In this way, the NZRFU selectors use their extraordinary and almost total control over the selection and composition of Super 12 teams not to create balance in the competitive strength of the teams, a tendency in North American major leagues (Leifer, 1995), but rather to strengthen the pool of players from which to select the All Black team *and* to ensure New Zealand success in the Super 12 competition. John Hart was concerned enough about this role to defend it against critics:

My role is really misunderstood publicly. I think people think I pull the teams together. What I do is just work with the coaches in what they want to achieve. Because what we want to achieve is to get five good sides but ensure that we have got two or three that are really competitive to win the final. Because there is no point in having five even sides, we are going to get beaten. What is the point? The desire to even-out our five sides will only make our competitive strength weaker (interview with John Hart, All Black coach 1996-1999, March 1998).

6.4 'Tiered' NZRFU contracts and All Black aspirations

The NZRFU designed the player contracts to ensure player participation in different competitions and different teams. To achieve this, it created a tiered scale of payments linked with each competition. This was an attempt to create 'standard' contracts and payments for players based on their participation in teams and competitions. However, standardised player contracts and fees are not used in all cases. Efforts to retain high-profile players forced the NZRFU to offer them better deals and, in doing so, created a complex contracting system in which some players would be paid regardless of selection while the majority agreed to contracts based on payment on selection.

The NZRFU player contracts required players to make themselves available for as many as five different teams and competitions. In signing the NZRFU contracts, the player agreed "to play to his best ability and skill for such Rugby Super 12 team as the Contractor may be selected...the NPC team representing the Union within whose boundaries the Contractor resides at the time of the first selection of a Rugby Super 12 team,...the All Blacks (if selected),...a New Zealand Sevens team (if selected),...such other rugby union teams sanctioned by the NZRFU...including for example the New Zealand Barbarians", and "not to undertake a competing activity" (*Contract for promotional Services*, 1998: paragraphs 6, 7).

These exceptional contracts make payment conditional upon players' participation in the NPC and the Super 12 competitions. Players receive their payment only if selected in the Super 12 squads in December each year. If a player is called into a Super 12 team later than the team naming date, he receives pay only on the basis of a daily rate. A certain proportion (\$50,000) of the payment is paid for services relating to the Super 12 competition with a lesser amount (\$15,000) paid in relation to playing in the NPC competition. If a contracted player is selected to the All Black team (after the completion of the Super 12 competition) he receives an additional \$85,000, thus, totalling \$150,000 as the base amount for All Black players. Rugby Sevens representative players receive NZ\$2,500 for each Sevens tournament the player participates in, except for a \$5000 payment for a win in the Hong Kong Sevens

Tournament. Additionally, Sevens players selected for an NPC team receive \$7,500 from the NZRFU (*Contract for promotional Services*, 1998: Schedule 2, Fees). Most players contracted to the NZRFU in August 1995 received a ‘standard’ contract providing the player with the above-mentioned payments based on selection. High-profile players were offered ‘better’ deals.

A Super 12 player explained that, at the time of the first contracts offer to players in 1995, he was told that his contract “was a standard contract that all players who weren’t either All Blacks or league threats or some special player were given. The rest, we were told, were standard contracts” (interview with Super 12 player #2, Dec. 1997). High-profile players were offered “fit and available” contracts rather than the standard player contracts, which guarantee the player payment irrespective of selection. “The ‘fit and available’ clause was to entice those who were present All Blacks in 1995 to sign” (interview with sports lawyer, April 1998). One of these All Black players explained the terms of his ‘fit and available’ contract:

Mine is guaranteed. I got a ‘fit and available’ they call it. So long as you pass the fitness criteria that Marty [NZRFU fitness trainer] sets you and you are available for selection that is the only criteria I have to fulfil. If I don’t get picked for the Super 12 or the All Blacks or my North Harbour NPC side it doesn’t matter, so long as I’m fit and available. So I’m lucky (interview with All Black player #2, March, 1998).

While the NZRFU negotiated collectively with the All Black team to outbid the WRC in 1995, All Black players, in consultation with their lawyers, negotiated all contracts individually. The same All Black player explains:

I think it had to be done individually; everyone had individual needs and different structures. If a guy had a family and mortgage, his main concern was more guarantee, maybe a lesser sum of guaranteed money rather than the younger guy who was more inclined to say a bonus structure or something like that. Maybe that is how some contracts went...I think that everyone also understood that the marketability of different guys was going to mean that the pay structures were going to be a wee bit different as well. So when we went down there, when the WRC pretty much fell over, and we went to Wellington to meet with Jock [NZRFU first contract negotiator], it was very much on an individual basis...Jock outlined the base payment, what the structures for the World Cup All Blacks were, so we knew the base structures and then we went into the room with Jock. I went by myself and Jock said, this is your contract, and I was happy with the figure. I knew the figure was right compared with the other All Blacks. I then presented my Nike contract which allowed me to have a boot clause in my contract, which was an individual need within my contract - happy - took it away. Got independent advice from my lawyer...we signed it and they signed it and it was pretty much like that (interview with All Black player #2, March 1998).

Apart from distinguishing between ‘elite’ and ‘standard player contracts’, those players who agreed last to the NZRFU contracts in 1995 “did not get a fair deal”, according to a sport lawyer “acting for more than 20 New Zealand players”:

Like all the players from Canterbury, none of them got a bit of an edge because they were the last to sign...some of them have been paid half as much as some key players in other provinces simply because they were last to sign. That is not the sign of a good system. It is certainly not the sign of a system that recognises worth or quality or player performance, which is what sporting contracts should be doing (interview with sports lawyer, April 1998).

This tension was also noted by players. For example, a Canterbury player confirmed that he was paid less than players from other provinces. He also suggested that fear tactics had been used with Canterbury players. They had been tricked into believing that they were last to sign with the NZRFU, when in fact they were first. He suggested that the elite players had first “secured very lucrative contracts” but when it came to the contract negotiations with the “2nd and 3rd tier of players” Canterbury players were told that if they did not sign “Canterbury might lose the right to one of the five Super 12 franchises”:

Jock Hobbs used the fear of Canterbury losing the rights to host a franchise as an ultimatum to players to sign now or you will miss out. We signed. We all signed three-year collective contracts with the same monetary value and conditions. There was a significant reduction in the money offered by the NZRFU than previously with the WRC...We were firmly under the illusion that we were the last group of players in the country to sign with the union. But we weren’t...when we eventually signed with the New Zealand union we were the lowest paid group (interview with Super 12 player #4, Oct. 1998).

Another Super 12 player criticised the fee structure as “way off market”, noting that many All Black players received significantly more than the ‘standard’ All Black fee of \$150,000, making their payments nearly four times that of a standard Super 12 contract:

I think the payment structure is way off market with being an All Black, yes you should get more, but 250 [thousand] compared to 65 is ridiculous. Without the provincial player an All Black would never be. So I think the difference is far too big. All right yes, you are good, but you are not that bloody good without the other players (interview with Super 12 player #1, May 1996).

These tensions between players could not be glossed over with “the myth that every player wants to be an All Black” (sports lawyer, April 1998). A sports lawyer argued that although “there is a lot of ambition to play for the All Blacks, there is also a lot of

ambition to make as much money or do as well as you can in your trade for as long as you can because that is going to set you up for life” (sports lawyer, April 1998). A Super 12 player who explained that for him aspiring to become an All Black had become less of a focus confirmed this:

I would love to be an All Black but that has not been the main focus for me. Two or three years ago it was. Everything was channelled towards that. I would still dearly love to be one but you have to be realistic...If it comes it is great but it is not my main aim (interview with Super 12 player #3, Dec. 1997).

In contrast to the first contracts, which specified the fees payable for participation in the various competitions, the contracts for 2000 and onwards did not include a standard fee (*Player Contract*, 2000: Schedule 1, Fees). Confirming that the payment rates for experienced players had increased in the second round of contract negotiations, the NZRFU’s new contract negotiator explained that:

...we have got a whole complexity of different contract environments and they are far removed from the original 1996 situation...in exchange for asking players to extend their contracts with us, we have improved their remuneration, but it is done entirely on re-evaluating our perception of their value and we have established a ‘relativity’. I know it vacillates because some people will negotiate higher than others. Some are in specialist areas where we might be prepared to move a bit (interview with Bill Wallace, NZRFU Director of Rugby Services, July 1998).

However, contrary to Wallace’s suggestion that increases in payments for players renegotiating contracts with the NZRFU were based on player performance, the sports lawyer claimed that two All Blacks selected in 1997 were “not being paid as much as the other members of the team” (interview with sport lawyer, April 1998).

In contrast to the All Black players, who could use the presence of a rival WRC organisation and rugby league contract offers as a means to negotiate better deals, a number of “2nd and 3rd tier” players attempted to negotiate collectively as a means of strengthening their bargaining situation. However, lack of an effective players’ association, one of the major means of improving professional players’ economic welfare (Coakley, 1998: 356, Wilson, 1994: chapter 5), meant that the New Zealand contracting system favoured the NZRFU. A players’ association, the Rugby Union Players’ Association (RUPA), which was established by a group of provincial players in 1996, launched an unsuccessful appeal against the introduction of the player transfer

system between provincial unions (see chapter seven), but not all the players I interviewed had heard of it. RUPA appealed a legal decision that authorised the transfer system. This system prevented provincial unions from transferring more than five players a season, introduced transfer fee bands on players in accordance with their experience and participation in current competitions and restricted transfer negotiations to one month per season. One All Black player said that RUPA had attempted to get All Black players' support for the appeal by sending out letters requesting signatures. However, he argued that because only a few players had heard about it "some guys thought that some of them might have been just in there to push their own barrow" (interview with All Black player #1, Nov. 1996). Difficulties with forming a players' association were suggested by a Super 12 player:

They tried to formulate something last year with regard to it but it seemed very much [to be] from four players from different unions who were not getting the publicity they would normally get....But I don't know what their reasons or motives for forming this Players' Union was, was it for their own gain, for themselves, like come to us if you want to know where the union is going. Or is it generally for the players, do they generally have the players' interests at heart? We were approached but I don't really know. I think it has died a natural death. Basically All Blacks dictate where rugby goes. They have got the most clout. They [the NZRFU] have a players' committee and All Black players get called in for interviews when the Union wants their view, 'what is the general feeling in your union about these things'. Players, they have no clout at all... (interview with Super 12 player #3, Dec. 1997).

This reluctance to unionise, especially by elite New Zealand rugby union players, is in agreement with Wilson's (1994: 156) suggestion about the ambivalence of athletes concerned with protecting their status as 'indispensable'. Their reluctance to unionise turns on a reluctance to risk a pay-cut to ensure that "2nd and 3rd tier" players receive better minimum payments. Wilson (1994: 157) makes the argument, regarding co-operation between workers, that it has less appeal to those occupying jobs that are structurally ambiguous. In his terms, players, being tied neither to the "capital function" nor unmistakably to "labor", prefer:

...to see themselves as independent craftsmen (sic) or, more lately, as independent practitioners, true "professionals". Unionism is also slow to take hold where each worker's services are highly specific, difficult to replace. For many years, athletes exhibited their ambivalence about the nature of their services, all too aware of their replaceability, but anxious at the same time, to demonstrate their indispensability (Wilson, 1994: 157).

A group of Super 12 players, with no connection to RUPA (but some with offers to play for northern hemisphere clubs), did try to negotiate collectively with the NZRFU.

A player explained that 15 Super 12 players, based with the same provincial union, attempted to negotiate collectively with the NZRFU in the second round of contract negotiations in late 1997:

We, as a collective, decided to form together to raise our bargaining strength and power. There were 15 members in the group. That gave us considerable strength based on the value and worth of the ...team and their contribution to New Zealand's rugby strength. But the rugby union insisted that we sign individual contracts and we had to negotiate individually (interview with Super 12 player #4, Oct. 1998).

In contrast to this effort to collectively negotiate, most of the interviewed players said that they were not interested in knowing other players' fees. One All Black player said that the payment structure "is something that we have never really spoken about. All the contracts of the top 40 players are being renegotiated this year [1998] and we just don't discuss it" (interview with All Black player #3, March 1998).

Another Super 12 player spoke about the "secrecy" surrounding player contracts as "the unwritten rules of professional sport":

It is quite amazing, that is the unwritten rule of professional sport, that people don't really discuss what their contract is, how it is set up and how much you get paid. People outside the sport always ask you but no one ever asks you within the sport. We hardly ever, ever discuss it. We might discuss clauses or things like guys would be saying are you having problems negotiating contracts say this and this, but we don't say figures and numbers and that (interview with Super 12 player #3, Dec. 1997).

A lawyer acting for New Zealand rugby players argued that this secrecy worked to the NZRFU's advantage by limiting escalations in player payments. As a result of the secrecy, the NZRFU had the "knowledge and therefore the power" in the negotiating situations which they used to "rule by fear":

The person who holds the greatest power is the person with the greatest knowledge and the person with the greatest knowledge is the NZRFU. So they can come and tell you and you don't know better unless you represent a whole lot of other people that this is the best deal that you are going to get. What we should do is it should be transparent. You should be able to say to all these players, these are the figures they are being paid. This is 'hide and seek' sort of stuff. But we are still in kindergarten so until we get out of kindergarten and into a bigger world, then, we don't know (interview with sports lawyer, April 1998).

A Sydney-based sports agent, who acted for Australian and New Zealand rugby union players, made a similar comment on the NZRFU's monopoly on player contracts for Super 12 teams. He claimed that sports agents have less power when dealing with

only one body (cited in Matheson, 2000: 28). The New Zealand-based sports lawyer suggested that this silence might “be broken” if the All Black team, “which is supposed to be the best in the world”, played a team “who is not nearly as good as us, and their players are being paid three times as much. Sooner or later our players are going to say, ‘Hang on, that is not good enough’” (interview with sports lawyer, April 1988). The lawyer confirmed that one of the reasons for the continued secrecy was the lack of a players’ union. “They haven’t yet got an effective players’ association and until they do, they are in trouble”.

Interviews with NZRFU administrators conducted in 1997 suggested that the union did not have a good working relationship with RUPA (Robertson, 1997: 45). Coinciding with RUPA’s court appeal, the NZRFU began establishing its own players’ association⁷⁵. Significantly, this was intended to function only as a voice for all Super 12 players. However, in 1999, it was extended to include all 1st division NPC players. A Super 12 player confirmed that the NZRFU had approached players with the intention of establishing a players’ association. He argued: “In my opinion it would fail because it would be considered part of the controlling body who would be able to control this association like a puppet organisation” (interview with Super 12 player #4, Oct. 1998). In November 2000, this NZRFU-sponsored New Zealand Rugby Players’ Association (NZRPA), spoke out against the possibility of a players’ strike when English representative players threatened the English RFU with strike as a result of a dispute over payments to play for the English national team. Cleary (2000) noted that this was the third time that English players had affected change by acting collectively:

The first was back in 1995, when the threat of a world circuit prompted the game to go professional, and the other was in 1996, when the players sided with the clubs to give them primacy of contract, and effectively the power within domestic rugby.

In contrast to this threat of strike the executive manager for NZRPA, which represented 220 NPC 1st division players, suggested that the association had good lines of communication with the NZRFU which would prevent any possible disputes from escalating.

⁷⁵ I was told, in a conversation with a former national administrator for a New Zealand sports organisation, that the establishment of players’ committees by national amateur sport organisations ‘has tended to be the New Zealand way’.

We have clear lines of communication with the NZRFU and a forum to address and form employment conditions which is different from England...We both (the association and NZRFU) have a common aim to improve the game and create a better environment for players (Reuters, 2000; NZPA, 2000).

The New Zealand players' reluctance to collectively negotiate rugby contracts was further revealed in their preferred status as 'independent contractors' as opposed to employees. In this matter the NZRFU agreed with the players. Their status as independent contractors benefited the most highly paid players. However, this was not the view of the New Zealand taxation department, the Inland Revenue Department (IRD). The IRD disputed the status of All Black players as independent contractors, arguing instead that the high degree of control by the NZRFU over players determined that they were employees and that their income should be taxed at the 33 per cent taxation rate. As employees they could not claim back GST (Goods and Service Tax) on work-related expenses including travel costs such as petrol and vehicles (Lilley, 1997). Additionally, the IRD argued that, as an employer, the NZRFU was required to deduct the players' tax and to pay the players' Accident Compensation Corporation levies. The NZRFU was forced to seek legal verification of the 'independent contractor' status against the IRD. Chesterman (1996: 171) noted that the control clauses in the NZRFU contracts were likely to make the courts find in favour of the IRD and involve the NZRFU in having to consider issues such as holiday arrears, sick pay and leave entitlement. At the time of writing (Dec. 2000), this dispute has not been settled.

The implications of this dispute over player status were pointed out by an All Black player. He argued that the IRD's definition of players' status meant that the NZRFU had not fulfilled his contract because he was taxed higher than what he had been promised in the original contract negotiations:

When we were first presented with the contracts in 1995 we were meant to be contractors which is quite crucial, we were going to be paid x amount of dollars, and that was what we were going to get in the hand. We were going to be self-employed rugby players to the Rugby Union as we look after all our tax and we can write off all our expenses... A very short while after the IRD stepped in and made us employees which in effect [meant] we had to pay tax on the amount that we had agreed to ... Under the old way as contractors we could have written off a lot of our expenses at the same time so we would have got that amount less expenses and then less tax. At the moment we are that amount minus 33 per cent tax. So what we actually

signed for wasn't in the end what we ended up with (interview with All Black player #2, March 1998).

Apart from the disparity in contract payments, and the selection clause affecting most players, players also expressed dissatisfaction with the wording of the contracts. They highlighted that the contracts suggested that players were, in fact, not professional players but continued to be amateur players who were provided with income for providing promotional services. The first NZRFU three-year standard contracts with players were worded as promotional contracts as had been the case with the promotional contract players signed in 1995 for participation in the World Cup and the tour of France and Italy. One of the explanations given for this was that, at the time the NZRFU began contracting players, the IRB had not ratified changes to the amateur regulations and any introduction of professional player contracts would have been a breach of the amateur regulations. The IRB ratified 'pay for play' at the end of August 1995. However, the standard player contract in 1998 for a new three-year period (1998-2001) continued to be worded as promotional contracts. Although the title of the contracts changed from 'Promotional Contracts' to 'Player Contracts' in 2000, the 2000 contracts still included the condition that the player was required, apart from playing for certain New Zealand teams, to undertake promotional services (*Player Contract*, 2000: Background, B: 1).

The contracts stipulate that, apart from training and making themselves available for selection, players are required to provide promotional services for the NZRFU and for the provincial union within whose boundaries the player resides. This meant that the NZRFU contracts guaranteed provincial unions players' availability to perform promotional services, albeit controlled and approved by the NZRFU. A Super 12 player explained how the NZRFU contract required him to provide promotional services both in relation to his Super 12 team and his NPC team. His contracts did not specify how much promotional work he was required to do but a refusal to provide promotional services would constitute a breach of the contract:

S12P: ... all our contracts are promotional contracts, which I am a bit iffy about because it seems hypocritical. They say they are paying us for promotional activities but they are not, they are paying us to play. I would rather have a contract saying this is a playing contract and maybe that contract has written into it that I have to do so many hours promotional activities but at the

moment it is all based on promotional contracts even though that is not how the payments are done. They are done per game....They said it [promotional services] would be reasonable and they had to give you enough warning about it. It is hard.

CO: *So you really can't turn it down?*

S12P: No, but I haven't really had... most of the promotional work we have had comes from the Canterbury Union, for the Crusaders. The Canterbury Union handle their sponsors [the Canterbury Crusaders] but when we got back to Canterbury [the Canterbury NPC team], and because part of our payment come from playing NPC, we have to do promotional work for Canterbury and there is probably more promotional work that we have to do for Canterbury than we have to do for the NZRFU. I suppose that is because the union has to generate money itself (interview with Super 12 player #2, Dec. 1997).

An All Black player explained in an interview how his contract required him to make himself available to do promotional services and to play for his provincial union so long as these did not clash with the promotional services for the NZRFU. Additionally, his NZRFU contract also covered the licensing rights to his profile. This meant that he was required to seek approval in relation to his personal sponsorship contracts from the NZRFU in case these would conflict with the NZRFU's sponsors. This ambivalence of players regarding their contractual status confirms the NZRFU's extraordinary control. This All Black player elaborated:

The contract I've signed with All Black Promotions is pretty much all encompassing. I've signed away the rights to most, pretty much everything. Licensing rights to me as an All Black, as a Rugby Super 12 player, or as an NPC player. So, basically, anything I do, where I'm identified as a rugby player, I have to get approval from the NZRFU. And because I've given them those rights, I can't really sign those away to Canterbury [the Canterbury Provincial Union]. But, for any promotional stuff we have to do, any advertising, we've got to clear it with the Union, and presumably they just look and see if it clashes with a major sponsor and that's about it (interview with All Black player #1, Nov. 1996).

At the end of the 2000 New Zealand season star-All Black player, Jeff Wilson, 'resigned', citing publicity and promotional demands on him as limiting his pleasure to play for the All Black team (TVNZ, 2000b).

These contracts offered to New Zealand players contrasted with those offered to players in Australia and South Africa. The Australian contracting of players included a contract structure in which players were guaranteed payments to play for their Super 12 team. These contracts were based on an agreement, signed in 1995, by players and the Australian RFU and finally confirmed in 1997. This agreement states, "no fewer

than 21 of the 37 contracted players of each state shall receive minimum salaries of \$50,000 for 1997, increasing to \$67,000 in 2000. The remaining sixteen players are to receive minima of \$25,000 for 1997, increasing to slightly less than \$29,000 in 2000” (Dabscheck, 1998: 43). National representative players received “Wallaby bonuses” of A\$10,000 per test match in 1996, reduced to A\$9,000 in 1998. This was due to a concern from the players’ association that “increasing payments to the Wallabies would ...translate into reductions in payments to other players” (Dabscheck, 1998: 31)). This enabled a Wallaby player to receive A\$117,000 in match fees alone in 1998 (Tucker, 1998: 14).

A sports lawyer commented that, despite participating in the same professional competition, players were paid according to different systems and that NZRFU contracts created inequities between players in the competition:

As a participant in the competition, New Zealand is one of three and we have two others with different payments for their players and different approaches to how they play in the competition which leads, at the end of the day in my view, to some inequities from a player’s perspective. It is probably one of the only leagues in the world where a player cannot get the same deal from a different team. You get a different deal according to whether you play in South Africa or Australia or New Zealand (interview with sports lawyer, April 1998).

One explanation for the difference in contracts offered to New Zealand and Australian players is the difference in the players’ attitude to collective bargaining. In contrast to the elite players in New Zealand, who were reluctant to unionise, national representative players in Australia collectively negotiated a contract with the national union and the three state unions in 1995. With this agreement they achieved an extraordinary deal “that ensured that 95 per cent of the television income was to be distributed to players at the ‘discretion’ of a yet to be formed players’ association” (Dabscheck, 1998: 25). Another explanation for the difference in rugby players’ approach to contract negotiations in New Zealand and Australia, is that players’ associations in Australian professional sports, including Australian Rules, soccer and rugby league, go back as far as 1913 (Dabscheck, 1994; 1996). By contrast, RUPA was the first attempt to establish an independent rugby players’ association in New Zealand. Additionally, in 1990 the then newly-elected National government introduced the Employment Contract’s Act which discouraged the formation of labour unions and collective bargaining (Harbridge and Moulder, 1993).

6.5 *Northern hemisphere migration and declining All Black aspirations*

The requirement to participate in several competitions meant ironically that players contracted to the NZRFU became less likely to participate in domestic competitions, a feature already identified in the 1980s (Gifford, 1989). While clubs showed their disapproval of their All Blacks' inability to play for them by a reluctance to sponsor them on All Black tours, Super 12 players' withdrawal from the NPC in the new professional context became regarded as a threat to the 'aspiration channels' to becoming an All Black. In 2000, steps were taken to address the structure of the NPC competition (see chapter seven). Additionally, the tiered payments structure, designed to boost players' aspirations to be selected to the All Black team, did not encourage all 'star' players to remain in New Zealand because of the disparity between the NZRFU contracts and the contracts players were offered by rugby union clubs in the northern hemisphere. These different economic markets in the two hemispheres exacerbated the flow of players which was already a factor under 'amateurism' when star players from New Zealand and Australia increasingly had taken up off-season player contracts with wealthy northern hemisphere clubs (Maguire and Tuck, 1998). The new professional opportunities in the northern hemisphere, which provoked these migration patterns, are characterised by competition between wealthy rugby union clubs in Europe and Japan for rugby union players.

In New Zealand, players' contracts requiring participation in a long season of rugby, including involvement in a minimum of two competitions, are seen as compromising the 'lower' levels of competition and potentially undermining the 'channels of aspiration' to become an All Black. These requirements contribute to the migration of players to less demanding, but more financially rewarding, club contracts in the northern hemisphere. The extended season means that Super 12 and All Black players are less likely to participate in their New Zealand club's matches, as noted by a Super 12 player:

I only got to play three club games because we had the Crusaders which took up the early part of the year till May and then we had the All Black trials and then the New Zealand Maori games so I was away for another five or six weeks in which I would otherwise have played club rugby. So I only got in three games (interview with Super 12 player, #2, Dec. 1997).

Another Super 12 player noted that not all NZRFU contracted players wanted to “go back” and play for their New Zealand club:

I am a bit different in that I still feel a bit of an allegiance to play for my club. Some guys don't. Some guys think that is too much rugby and too much pressure. I suppose again it is because I played a lot of club rugby to get to provincial rugby and because I have come from that, I am in the in-between age bracket where you had to play club rugby to get to provincial rugby and now you don't necessarily have to do that (interview with Super 12 player, #3, Dec. 1997).

Despite suggesting that professional players do not have to participate in their clubs' matches, the two Super 12 players had been strongly encouraged by their NPC coach to participate in the local club competitions. To encourage greater competitiveness within the province, the NPC coaches encouraged all 'aspiring' players to view participation in the local club competition as a 'requirement' for selection to the provincial NPC team, as explained by a Super 12 player:

The coaches this year for Canterbury put a strong emphasis on that being a direct path. You play well in club rugby and you get trials and then you go to the town-country, and then to Cantabrians and then you get to Canterbury. They sort of made a clear path that anyone who had ambitions to play for Canterbury had to go through this process regardless of whether you are a proven player or not (interview with Super 12 player, #3, Dec. 1997).

However, despite significant variation in their participation in club competitions, all NZRFU contracted players have gained selection to their NPC teams.

While provincial coaches placed an emphasis on Super 12 players' participation in local competitions, it became increasingly more difficult to ensure that All Black players would participate in rugby competitions 'below' the professional competitions of Super 12 and international matches. One All Black player, who did play in his local club competition, said that the increasing demands meant that he was reconsidering his commitment to NPC participation:

I'm starting to waver - maybe because I'm getting older - on the idea of the NPC being... it is the most important New Zealand competition, but the game has changed in intensity and physically it is so demanding and this year [1998] even more so than last year. It is so demanding (interview with All Black player #2, March 1998).

He continued to criticise the NZRFU's aim of All Black players participating in all levels of competition as "unrealistic":

I don't really see how it can sustain the intensity from now right through, if you are an All Black, to June-July and then try to redo that in a lesser competition like the NPC. The playing ability of players in that competition is a lot less than in the Super 12 and the All Blacks...I don't think it has worked in the last three years. I think it is something they have to look at. I don't see the need for players doing that. I would probably think differently if I was a 23-year old and on the fringe of becoming a Super 12 player and an All Black. Then I would definitely see the need for it. That is where people learn their trade and that is where players need to start so that New Zealand rugby is always going to need that, the NPC, it always needs that domestic competition but I don't think it always needs the top line players playing in it and just prolonging their season any longer than it needs to be. I think I played 36 games last year...I will play NPC this year [1998] but not next year. I could easily not play this year but I will because I'm an idiot [laughter] (interview with All Black player #2, March 1998).

The All Black players' withdrawal from the NPC competition in 1999 was a requirement set by the All Black coach. He requested this as a result of the increasing demands on All Black players, poor results in the 1998 season and because of the overlap of the NPC competition and the 1999 Rugby World Cup. In 1997, the All Black team played 17 matches, including a tour of England, Ireland and Wales. The team played seven matches in 1998, losing five.

This decision was regarded with a high degree of concern by NPC and Super 12 coaches because they saw it as weakening the competitive level of their player base:

I can see John Hart's perspective with the All Blacks not playing NPC in the World Cup year but so long as it is a one-off situation that is fine, that is something that we have got to live with and it might be positive in bringing through a lot more players up to NPC level. That might have a spin-off effect there. But if it was to be an NZRFU philosophy that All Blacks wouldn't play NPC that would be disastrous because we see in club rugby that the players in the club aspire to be the best player in that club. And if the best player in the club is a club player, then you are not aspiring to much. And Rugby Super 12 players going back to their clubs this year illustrated that clubs that were struggling for motivation, struggled for results, started to perform once their role-models came back in and the players didn't have that big a difference playing wise. It was more the way they operated, the professionalism, the skill level and the players grew with that. Something has got to be done to really encourage our club competition and our NPC... (interview with Wayne Smith, Canterbury Crusaders coach 1997-1999, Oct. 1997).

Despite the attempt to address the demands on All Black players, an increasing number of players were beginning to view contract offers from rugby union club competitions in Europe and Japan as more attractive than the NZRFU contracts offered to them. In

September 1997, Matheson (1997) listed 45 players and one coach contracted with English clubs and a further five players involved in contract negotiations. The majority of the NZRFU contracts signed in 1995 were about to expire in 1998 and a large number of the professional players in New Zealand were without NZRFU contracts but several had offers to play for rugby union clubs in Japan and Europe. This timing made the NZRFU particularly vulnerable to an exodus of players and placed it under some pressure to improve the player contracts in the 'second' contract negotiations round.

Against the criticism that the NZRFU contracts did not include adequate 'incentive' for players to stay in New Zealand, the NZRFU contract negotiator argued that the contracts offered players more than money. Most importantly they offered "the aspiration to become All Blacks":

People are saying to me, your contracts are not 'incentivised'. Well, League's aren't incentivised. You can sit on the bench and get paid. We argue that our contracts are absolutely incentivised because you have got to be selected, which is a pretty important criterion. There is no real security and I think that is the nature of the beast. We offer players three things basically: we offer them the aspirations to become an All Black. We have got to make that really special. To do that we have got to maintain the value of the All Black brand, that is something unique; secondly, we offer them extraordinarily, good pay by NZ standards; and thirdly, we offer them the best competitions and living in NZ. That is what we offer. We are not offering a Japanese rate of pay or a UK rate of pay. So when we go into contract negotiations that is what we say. We say to them, don't put an overseas contract on the table because we won't match it in terms of the remuneration (interview with Bill Wallace, NZRFU Director of Rugby Services, March 1998).

Pleas for loyalty aside, players entering negotiations for their second NZRFU contract increasingly viewed the conditional contract terms as a disincentive to remain in New Zealand. In particular, a large number of 'fringe' All Black players began to view their chances of All Black selection and the associated pay increase as too small or uncertain compared with contract offers from overseas clubs guaranteeing them payments for participation in only one competition.

A Sydney-based sports agent acting for both Australian and New Zealand rugby union players argued that the selection requirement to be paid meant "players can be at the whims of a coach. At the moment the players bare all the risk" (cited in Matheson, 2000). During the contract negotiations in 1998, the selection clause, the length of the

new contracts and the release clause became contentious issues for players. One Super 12 player explained that the NZRFU refused to sign any one-year contracts, suggesting that this was because the NZRFU feared that if it did, a large number of players would leave after the 1999 World Cup (interview with Super 12 player #4, Oct. 1998). Another player explained that the possibility of his selection to the All Black team was used by the NZRFU as an incentive to get him to sign a new three-year contract:

They [NZRFU contract negotiators] said that they wanted to extend my contract to 2001 and that if you became an All Black they would increase it. That was the incentive for me to extend my contract. The incentive for me was that if I became an All Black they would increase my base salary. I said 'if I become an All Black does that mean that I have to stay around to 2001?' They said that if I didn't make the All Black [1999] World Cup squad, then they would let me get out of my contract for next year after the Super 12 [mid-2000] if I wanted to go overseas so that it fitted in with Super 12. They said that I could pull out of my contract the year after the World Cup after the Super 12 but that they had first right of refusal if I did have an offer (interview with Super 12 player #2, Dec. 1997).

Additionally, he suggested that he was concerned with extending his contract for several years because of his age: "I mean, three years contracted, when we signed up in 1995, three years didn't seem like a long time. I was young. I thought when I finish I will only be 26. But to sign on for another three years is a big decision. Especially when you have these opportunities overseas" (interview with Super 12 player #2, Dec. 1997). This Super 12 player became an All Black in 1998 but was not selected for the 1999 World Cup squad. He opted out of his NZRFU contract at the end of the 2000 season and took up a contract with a French club.

On May 13 1998, it was reported that 80% of the players on NZRFU contracts to the end of 1998 had re-signed with the NZRFU for a further three years (Currie, 1998: 31). One All Black player noted that, despite the possibility of greater pay in Japan and England, he was in the process of signing with the NZRFU because he preferred to live in New Zealand:

It is just lifestyle and I'm getting reimbursed for something that I am happy with, probably not the same amount that I could earn potentially in England and Japan, but I don't want to live in England and Japan. I want to live here. My wife works here, we have got friends here and a lifestyle. I think the Rugby Union has done well by me anyway, by most of the All Blacks. Maybe it is not the same for the fringe players...Playing for the All Blacks is obviously a big carrot, but to live in New Zealand is a bigger one...Hell, we've got a really nice place up North, I am heading there tomorrow to spend a couple of days. You can't do that in England, definitely can't do that in Japan. That is pretty much the reason and financially I am getting

paid well anyway so I don't need to go there. Cold and miserable, and play shit rugby for not much more, really (interview with All Black player #3, March 1998).

Notwithstanding his 'lifestyle' choice in re-signing with the NZRFU in 1998, the player retired as an All Black after the Rugby World Cup in 1999 and took up a contract with an English 1st division rugby club.

On the issue of the flow of players to northern hemisphere clubs, sports agent and former All Black player, Andy Haden, was quoted as saying "It is simple maths...Subtract the number of All Blacks from the number of contracted players, and the rest are looking to make their way in the world". This statement followed the announcement that a high-profile Super 12 player had declined to re-sign a contract with the NZRFU (Longley, 1998: 22). In a radio interview, another sports agent highlighted a number of aspects that could influence players' decisions to take up a contract with an English club. The agent estimated the contract fees for foreign players in English clubs to be between \$100,000 and \$400,000. He also highlighted that the NZRFU contract clause which required players to be selected to a Super 12 team in order to be paid the Super 12 portion of the contract fee (\$50,000), did not present an incentive for players to re-sign their contracts. In addition, the 60 days stand-down period for players seeking a release from their contracts if not selected for a Super 12 team (as stipulated in the contract clause para. 10) was described by the agent as a significant restraint on players' movement (*Radio Sport*, 1998).

The ability of the NZRFU contracts to encourage players to stay in New Zealand was also questioned by a Super 12 coach. The coach highlighted the fact that the value of players on the global players market exceeded the current payment to players which placed greater pressure on Super 12 coaches to create an attractive 'environment':

Well, I am one of the chain to try to make the Crusader environment so positive and so exciting that people will want to stay here. I am sure ... that many of the Crusaders will come out of contract next year and will be, already have been contacted by overseas clubs. That will become more prevalent next year [1998]. How do we keep them here? What is it that is going to keep them here? It is going to be positive environment, aspirations, style of play, enjoyment, competitive salary...[and]... they have to be paid more. How much more is the moot point, we don't know.... there is a huge gap between All Black and Manly rugby league [Australian rugby league club]. There is a huge gap between Super 12 and Wasps or Harlequins [English premier division clubs]. And there is a big gap between provincial and

Japanese companies (interview with Wayne Smith, Canterbury Crusaders coach 1997-1999, Oct. 1997).

The Super 12 coach explained that one player had gone to England to play for a club for financial reasons:

He didn't feel he had the aspirations nationally any more, he was at a stage of his career where he decided to go for the money. He went to a club in England who were paying more than twice as much as he was getting for Super 12. The New Zealand Union sat down with him because he was contracted to them and they had the ability to stop him but the club just paid out the escape clause. So money wasn't an object. And it is difficult under the circumstances to keep players (interview with Wayne Smith, Canterbury Crusaders coach 1997-1999, Oct. 1997).

By November 1998, 13 of the 140 1998 Super 12 players had “turned their backs on New Zealand rugby” (Matheson, 1998: 26). They joined an increasing number of New Zealand players and coaches contracted to clubs in Britain (58 players; 5 coaches), Ireland (44 players; 1 coach), Japan (31 players; 1 coach), the United States (18 players; 2 coaches), France (9 players) and South Africa (5 players; 1 coach). In November 2000, Matheson (2000) reported on the continued migration of New Zealand rugby union players. While the player migration to the UK appeared to have dropped off, an increasing number of players had taken up contracts with French and Japanese clubs and companies. A total of 112 New Zealand players and three New Zealand coaches were listed as contracted to overseas clubs and companies: Britain (39), Japan (52) and France (21). However, while fewer players appeared to be heading for northern hemisphere clubs, Matheson (2000: 24) argued “the days of the player drain being filled by only a handful of former All Blacks and a large amount of club standard players, are gone. The players leaving New Zealand to take up lucrative contracts overseas are now of an All Black standard”.

Matheson (2000: 28) explained the flow of players and coaches to northern hemisphere clubs, companies and unions by highlighting the increasingly uneven economic opportunities in the game:

An average All Black earns around \$200,000 a year. Those same ‘average All Blacks’ could earn double that amount overseas. Japanese clubs are the highest payers. Adrian Cashmore and Dylan Mika can expect to earn \$500,000 each season they play there. That fee is available to players with an ability to captain sides - like former Canterbury half-back Graeme Bachop and former Otago star Arran Pene and Jamie Joseph. The French are good payers as well. If Josh Kronfelt decides to play in France next year, he can expect a paycheque of about

\$450,000. A Super 12 star's pay packet starts at \$300,000. In England, where eight All Blacks are currently starring in the Zurich Premiership, players of an All Black standard earn around \$350,000. A Super 12 or NPC standard player in the UK pockets around \$180,000.

This migration of New Zealand rugby union players to northern hemisphere rugby union clubs and companies differs from other forms of player migration. As Maguire (1999: 104) notes about the general context of player migration "the sports labour process is bound up in a complex political economy that is itself embedded in a series of cross-cultural struggles that characterize the global sport system". Some case studies of the migration of players, from a 'donor' country to a 'host' country with a higher paying professional competition, refer to these relationships as core-periphery relations following Wallerstein's (1974) world system theory and Cardoso and Faletto's (1979) neo-marxist dependency theory (McGovern, 2000: 402). However, in contrast to those cases of cross-national competition for player talent in baseball (Klein, 1989; 1991) and soccer (Arbena, 1994), which result in dependent development "constrained by uneven exchanges with the developed core" (McGovern, 2000: 403), the cross-national competition for New Zealand rugby union players does not dictate a form of dependent development in New Zealand.

However, the increasing movement of players from the southern hemisphere and from Europe to particularly English clubs (Maguire and Tuck, 1998: 122) provoked those national rugby unions facing the greatest 'losses', including New Zealand and Argentina, to lobby the IRB to introduce an international transfer system in September 1999. This international transfer system requires the 'affected' national unions or clubs to negotiate the player transfer fee and, if an agreement cannot be reached, an independent judiciary is appointed by the IRB to arbitrate (Hill, 2000). This new international player transfer regulation, which seeks to halt the migration of players, has thus added to the cost of attracting foreign star players for investors in English 1st division rugby clubs, including Sir John Hall (Newcastle), Nigel Wray (Saracens) and Cecil Duckworth (Worcester). Additionally, this immigration of, in particular, southern hemisphere but also French, Scottish, Irish and Welsh rugby union players to England and Japan, which mirrors the migration of basketball, ice hockey, cricket and soccer players to Great Britain (Maguire, 1988b; 1996; Maguire and Stead, 1998;

Stead and Maguire, 2000), results in fewer professional playing opportunities for local talent. This high number of ‘imported’ players makes England’s first division “the most cosmopolitan rugby competition in the world” (Matheson 1997: 24). The English national coach described the fact that he could not make sure that the best English players were playing in the best English division as a “joke” (Lovell, 1998: 46-47).

Making this migration pattern more complex is the increasing demand for both rugby union and rugby league players. For example, the legalisation of professionalism in rugby union encouraged several ex-All Black players including John Gallagher, Frano Botica, Craig Innes, Mark Ellis and Va’aiga Tuigamala to return to rugby union (Clutton, 1996; Magiure and Tuck, 1998). Despite this potential threat to rugby league, Hadfield (1996: 75-76), writing for the *Independent* in England, argued:

...rugby league has nothing to fear from openness in union...Although you might not know it from reading much of the mainstream press in this country, former rugby union players have never formed more than a small minority of those playing rugby league...we have kissed a lot of frogs to find the occasional prince...The prospect, if it was a real prospect, of losing players in their prime...would be a different matter. But one of the novel features of this new universe into which rugby union is entering is that things and people have their market value - their genuine, over-the-counter-price...Club rugby union, watched in most cases by three men and a dog, will not be able to finance many of those adventures.

However, while the movement of players from league to union might not be as significant as some rugby union administrators would predict, the possibility of pursuing an international rugby union career would become an added draw-card for some former rugby union players. For example, ‘returned’ former All Blacks including Frano Botica and Va’aiga Tuigamala went on to represent Croatia and Manu Samoa respectively.

6.6 *National eligibility criteria and the ‘deskilling’ of Pacific Island rugby*

Prior to 1996 and the introduction of professionalism, players faced limited restrictions on their domestic and international movement. A player could represent one country in one year and elect to play for another country the following year so long as he fulfilled the national eligibility criteria. Until 1996, the NZRFU regulations regarding

eligibility for national selection “relating to players being eligible to play for New Zealand and another country during the same calendar year” required that a player who is eligible to play for another country, could be eligible to play for the All Black team so long as the player is resident in New Zealand and plays for a club in New Zealand, and has not represented another country in that same calendar year and states to the NZRFU that he intends only to make himself available to represent New Zealand (NZRFU *Handbook including Constitution and Rules* 1993: 105-106; *Handbook*, 1994: 86-87).

For players like Peter Fatialofa, Frank Bunce, and Steven Bachop, the early regulations regarding national representation enabled them to represent both Western Samoa and New Zealand during their rugby careers. Peter Fatialofa’s international career is a case in point:

After turning down offers to play for Western Samoa for years in the hope of All Black selection (the rule being that you can't play for more than one international side in the same year), Fatialofa finally relented last year and went with the Western Samoan team to Wales and Ireland, where he played all 10 games of the tour. This year, again in top condition, he was a reserve in the solitary All Black trial in Hamilton at the end of May, but was not called upon to play (Allison, 1989).

Peter Fatialofa went on to represent Western Samoa in the 1991 and 1995 World Cups.

On the double international rugby career of Steven Bachop, Lilly (1994: 14) reported:

Steven Bachop, 28, toured Ireland and the United Kingdom in 1984 with the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Rugby team. Steven played six seasons with Canterbury from 1986-1991 and for Western Samoa in the 1991 World Cup. He was picked as an All Black in 1992 and played 13 games but was dropped from the squad in late 1993. In July this year he pulled on the All Black jersey again to play France.

Steven Bachop went on to represent Manu Samoa in the 1999 Rugby World Cup. Like the New Zealand players with ‘British heritage’, these migration trails are contoured along lines of ethnic heritage as much as economic opportunity. These rugby union players were able to “claim cultural affinity and national status” which enabled them to “navigate a route” (Maguire, 1999: 109) through relatively unrestricted national eligibility regulations.

However, following the introduction of professionalism, the IRB changed the eligibility regulations for national representation to prohibit players with dual national

eligibility from representing more than one country in a three-year period. This prevented Dylan Mika, who represented Manu Samoa in 1994 and early 1995, from becoming a member of the 36-All Black player squad to tour South Africa in 1996. Similarly, Joeli Vidiri, who represented Fiji in 1994, was not available for All Black selection until 1998 (Knight, 1998: 40). The Japanese national rugby union's residential qualifications were an exception in that they required players to have five years residency in order to be eligible for the Japanese national team.

In 1997, the IRB accepted a proposal from Argentina to further restrict the national eligibility rule by allowing players to represent only one country in their career (Howitt, 1997). The new national eligibility rule also included players selected to a "shadow" national team as having represented that country. The NZRFU introduced further restrictions on players eligible for All Black selection. Not unlike the Japanese national rugby union's attempt to ensure the development of local talent and to restrict players' movement, the NZRFU restricted players and coaches' movement by introducing a new eligibility rule in 1998 which required players to be resident in New Zealand in order to be eligible for All Black selection and made any coach of another national team ineligible to coach the All Black team. As the chairman of the NZRFU noted, this meant that the All Black coach could not select former All Black player Graeme Bachop to play for the All Black team in 1997:

The NZRFU Board has a policy that it will only select players to the All Blacks if they are resident in New Zealand. Hence our decision that John Hart [All Black coach 1996-1999] could not have Graeme Bachop last year [1997]. John reminds me that is one of the few things that we disagree on (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

Despite the restriction on coaching staff, successful Super 12 coach for the Auckland Blues team (winner of the 1996 and 1997 Super 12 competition), Graham Henry, took up a contract in 1998 as coach of the Welsh national team for a five-year period. He took up the contract despite being told, "if I ever went to Wales to discuss the proposal, I would never coach the All Blacks" (Henry, 1999: 98). Additionally, the Auckland provincial union, for which Henry had signed an NPC contract for the 1998 season, initially demanded \$250,000 to release Henry but later agreed to lower that figure to \$150,000 payable over three years (Henry, 1999: 113).

Despite these restrictions on eligibility for national teams, the 1999 Rugby World Cup featured - apart from the All Black team - ten national teams with New Zealand born players and seven teams with New Zealand born coaching staff (Harding, 1999). The selection of three New Zealand born players to the Welsh team caused considerable disruption and forced the Welsh rugby union to investigate the players' heritage. The result of this investigation was that the three players did not have "any Welsh blood", as they had claimed, and they were dropped from the Welsh national team. This scandal exposed the dilemmas of constructing competitive national rugby teams - the Welsh coach, Graham Henry, was quoted saying: "My job is to pick the strongest available team and I won't let colour, creed or nationality stand in the way" (Hewett, 2000) - against the importance of protecting the appeal and integrity, to international publics, of national teams and international competitions. As a result of increasing migration and the problems of ensuring strong oppositions, the three southern hemisphere unions further lobbied the IRB to introduce an international calendar that could ensure the continuity of international tours of national teams with the best players.

The drain of players and coaches did not only involve migration from New Zealand to northern hemisphere clubs. While the flow of players and coaches out of New Zealand became viewed as an increasing concern by the NZRFU, it was offset, in part, by the return of rugby league players, but most significantly by the flow of Pacific Island players *into* New Zealand. Both political and economic ties have facilitated the movement of Pacific Island players from the Island nations to New Zealand and Australia. Apart from close political ties to the Cook Islands and Niue⁷⁶, Western Samoa was under New Zealand rule from WWI to 1962 when it gained independence. Many Samoans migrated to New Zealand in the post-war period when manual labour was in demand and thereby gained permanent residence with full citizenship rights

⁷⁶ The Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing Islands in free association with New Zealand and the 26,500 Cook Islanders and 8,500 Niueans have full citizenship rights in New Zealand. There are, in fact, more Cook Islanders and Niueans in New Zealand than in the Island communities. However, the largest Pacific Island ethnic group in New Zealand is Western Samoans (70,000), while Tongans represent the third largest Pacific Island ethnic group (18,000) (NZ Population

(Mulgan, 1997: 31-34). Additionally, in 1982 New Zealand legislation granted full citizenship rights to all Samoans living in New Zealand at the time. While these legislative changes enabled especially Western Samoans to migrate to New Zealand, many families resident in Western Samoa sent their children to New Zealand to complete their secondary education.

Within the South Pacific New Zealand acts as a rugby 'core', attracting Pacific Island born players with better sporting opportunities. One survey (Melnick and Thompson, 1996) in the early 1990s provides an indication of the presence of Pacific Island players in the NPC although the method of identifying the ethnicity of players does have flaws. In 1992, coaches of the 27 provincial unions were instructed to indicate the "race/ethnicity" of each of their players as European, Maori, Pacific Islander or other in a survey to test the "presence of positional segregation" in rugby union. Out of a total of 673 players 51 were identified as Pacific Islanders (7 per cent), while 202 were identified as Maori (32 per cent). This proportion of both Pacific Island and Maori players in provincial teams constituted approximately twice the size of these ethnic groups in total population statistics, 3.5 and 15 per cent respective (Melnick and Thomson, 1996).

Professionalism further encouraged Pacific Island players to seek playing opportunities in New Zealand (and in the northern hemisphere). Additionally, the exclusion of the Pacific Island nations in the new professional competitions in the southern hemisphere has the potential to further provoke the 'deskilling' of Pacific Island rugby and undermine the development of rugby union in the larger Pacific Islands, Western Samoa, Tonga and Fiji, where rugby union is the most popular sport. Reflecting on the possible consequences of professionalism for the Pacific Islands Raganivatu (1995: 52) argued "professionalism will certainly increase the gulf between international rugby's rich and poor". Similarly, Kacimaiwai (1995b: 52-53), commenting on the proposal for a professional transnational southern hemisphere competition in 1995, argued that an exclusion of the Pacific nations could boost the strength of rugby league:

Census, 1991). Close political relations between New Zealand and Western Samoa influence the large proportion of Samoans in New Zealand.

Pacific unions are fearful of mass defections to league if they are kept out of the lucrative Super 12; already the Samoans have lost two key players to the rival code since the World Cup and are warning of more to come if nothing is done to combat it...Ironically Island unions have almost as much to fear from their wealthier trans-Tasman neighbours as they do from league with players opting for greener fields with its better opportunities.

Kacimaiwai (1995a: 53) noted that only in Fiji did the success of the Sevens rugby union game and cash prizes for local Sevens tournaments, which were comparable with the financial opportunities in the local rugby league game, encourage players to remain in Fiji and to stay with the rugby union game.

Not only did the exclusion of Pacific Island nations from the Super 12 and the Tri-Nations competitions threaten the development of rugby union in these countries, the national unions' problems were compounded by the high number of Pacific Island rugby union players eligible to represent both an Island nation and New Zealand. In 1996 Raganivatu (1996: 51) observed, "no fewer than eight members of the Auckland Blues squad that recently won the Super 12 [are] players eligible to represent Tonga, Fiji or Western Samoa, but who, for financial reasons, are committed to other countries". This number increased in 1997. In this season, the Auckland Blues team retained its eight Pacific Island players while both the Wellington Hurricanes and the Otago Highlanders included five and the Canterbury Crusaders three (Raganivatu, 1997: 41-42). By contrast, in Australia only three Island players were included in Super 12 teams. A large proportion of these Super 12 players had previously represented a Pacific Island nation. In 1999, a total of 32 players, who previously represented overseas countries, were affiliated to provincial unions participating in the NPC. Twenty-three of these 32 players had represented Samoa, Fiji or Tonga and 11 of these 23 Pacific Island players were contracted to Super 12 teams in 1999 (Akers and Miller, 2000: 61, 64, 67, 70, 73, 208).

This inclusion of Pacific Island players in New Zealand competitions was explained by the chairman of the NZRFU as 'reasonable' because the players were resident in New Zealand:

The policy we have today is that it [Super 12] should be a competition for New Zealand players and that there is very little sense in filling teams up with top players from around the world and finding that your own players are drifting off to play in England or wherever. So

that has been our basic philosophy. The major exception to that is that there are quite a lot of players from either Fiji, Tonga or principally Western Samoa, who are playing for our New Zealand NPC teams, they are playing in the Super 12 but they are not eligible for the All Blacks because they have played a test for one of the Island nations. That is an exception, but I think that is a reasonable exception, and a genuine exception, because, despite what our northern friends in the northern hemisphere think, most of the Western Samoans who play for Western Samoa live in New Zealand, as opposed to the All Blacks being full of Western Samoans (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

Additionally, the chairman noted that these players were needed to ensure the strength of the New Zealand Super 12 teams:

Running five teams you basically need six because of injuries and if you look around the country now, we are starting to get some pretty ordinary talent coming forward. So if you said Island players can't play Super 12 we would really be in the crap. We couldn't sustain five teams (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

While the NZRFU provides sporting opportunities for these Pacific Island players, a sports lawyer noted that those Pacific Island players eligible to represent New Zealand may be encouraged to aspire to become All Black players and forfeit their Island representative status. He suggested that the selection of those Pacific Island players, eligible to represent both an Island team and the All Blacks, to the New Zealand 'A' (or 'shadow' All Black team) could be seen as a deliberate attempt by the NZRFU to make these players ineligible for selection to their Island national team:

I would suggest that what will happen this year [1998] is that New Zealand selectors will pick as many of those Islanders to play for the New Zealand A team as they possibly can so they are out of the running for Samoa. Otherwise we are going to have a very good Samoan team, which is not good for New Zealand because we might play them and they might beat us [in the 1999 World Cup]. That is probably not going to happen but you have got guys like Filo Tiatia, Eroni Clarke, those sorts of blokes who can play for Samoa, but there is a carrot being held out to them. Play for New Zealand A, you will make the All Blacks. It is not going to happen...I have advised several players to work out what they really want to do in their rugby career...A lot of them want to play for the All Blacks, that is fine, that is a good ambition to have. But if you can't play with the All Blacks, do you still want to play international rugby? Haven't thought about it. Maybe you should think about it, because when you are retired, you are retired a long time (interview with sports lawyer, April 1998).

The presence of Pacific Island born players in the Australian and New Zealand national teams was already noted at the 1995 World Cup in South Africa where the two teams' World Cup squads included between them "five Western Samoans, two Fijians and three Tongans" (Raganivatu, 1995). However, Raganivatu (1995: 51) argued a more significant concern for Pacific Island rugby union was:

...the large number of exiled Pacific Islanders who were omitted from these squads yet declined opportunities to represent Western Samoa or Tonga in South Africa, preferring to remain eligible for the All Blacks or the Wallabies in the future. Five members of the kingdom's [Tonga] original squad did this and Manu Samoa were similarly affected.

This desire of Pacific Island players to play to the highest of their abilities in the New Zealand and Australian competitions reflects the desire of players from the 'periphery' to take advantage of the better economic *and* sporting opportunities at the "core economies of the global sports system" (McGovern, 2000: 402). Likewise Raganivatu (1995: 52) argued:

...players do not turn their backs on Fiji, Tonga or Western Samoa because they lack patriotism but because All Black and Wallaby call-ups provide greater kudos, financial opportunities and prospects for international glory.

The increasing international competition for players from both clubs and national unions was highlighted in the case of the Fijian player, Manasa Bari. Bari had agreed to a contract with the New Zealand Waikato provincial union for the NPC competition in 1996 after playing in the Brisbane club competition for the Brothers club in early 1996 and fulfilling his international commitments to the Fijian national union. Concern was expressed mid-1996 by the Waikato provincial union that Bari might not honour his New Zealand contract because other unions, including Otago and New South Wales, had expressed interest in the player. The Waikato provincial union chief executive had therefore sought and received a guarantee from the Fijian national union that Bari would be released to the union after his national commitments:

He's contracted to us from July 12 and we have a commitment from the Fiji Rugby Union that he will be with us as soon as he completes his Fijian commitments... the Fijian union won't give him a clearance if he wants to go back to Brisbane after his involvement with the Fijian team (cited in NZPA, 1996).

In this case, 'clubs' in New Zealand and Australia act as the economic and sporting core of rugby union within the South Pacific, drawing players from the Pacific regions with lesser economic and sporting opportunities. The case of Bari highlights that the increasing exposure of Pacific Island players raises their market value, thereby weakening the power of the player's national union. These different economic opportunities facing Pacific Island players outside of their home countries were highlighted again in 2000 when a planned tour by the Manu Samoan team of Britain

was marred by player unavailability. Players listed the unavailability of the team's New Zealand coach John Boe, whom the NZRFU would not release to coach the team on the tour, and the lack of financial and insurance guarantees for their withdrawal. Logan (2000) reported that the players would be guaranteed only \$US25 per day while on the tour.

A consequence of this migration of Pacific Island players to New Zealand, Australia and northern hemisphere clubs is the 'under-development' or 'dependent development' of rugby union in the Pacific Islands. This situation parallels the dependent development of Irish and Scottish soccer (Moorhouse, 1994, McGovern, 2000), of Dominican Baseball (Klein, 1989, 1991a, 1991b), and of Latin American soccer (Arbena, 1994). Yet, this should not be understood as exclusively a "zero sum game" (McGovern, 2000: 415). Despite the tendency to select overseas-based players to the Pacific Island national team, the skills of these players have improved the national teams' international standing and can further the national rugby unions ability to obtain sponsorship and to encourage the development of young talent. Additionally, the terms of dependency have changed so that it is in the interest of the IRB and for individual rugby playing countries, including New Zealand, to encourage the continued development of Pacific Island players *in* the Islands.

To reverse the deskilling of Pacific Island rugby union and to expand the international game, the IRB proposed to establish the Pan Pacific Series involving Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa, the United States, Canada, Argentina, Hong Kong and Japan in an international Sevens Circuit (see chapter three) (Williams, 1997). However, the plan to have all eight nations involved in the Pan Pacific competition in 1996 failed as did subsequent proposals to establish a combined, *regional* Pacific team and to have the New Zealand Maori team participate in the Pacific Tri-series (Raganivatu, 1996: 50-51). A depleted Pan Pacific Cup with limited media sponsorship began in 1996 involving only Japan, Hong Kong, the United States and Canada in one round-robin series. This competition was won by Canada in the first three years. Not until 1999 did the three Pacific Island nations join (while Hong Kong left the tournament).

6.7 *Summary: Systems, success and failures*

In the first years of professional rugby union the 'New Zealand system' was heralded as the most effective at producing winning teams. New Zealand Super 12 teams won all Super 12 competitions yet only three out of five Tri-Nations series. Despite losing an increasing number of tests against Australia and South Africa in 1998 (but winning the Tri-Nations series in 1999), northern hemisphere newspaper reports continued to regard the southern hemisphere rugby unions' 'rugby system' as superior: "Carling [England captain] stopped short of blaming Woodward [England coach] for England's premature World Cup demise, insisting the entire structure of the northern hemisphere game has to change before they can compete with the likes of New Zealand and Australia" (AP, 1999). Newspaper reports likewise predicted New Zealand's victory in the 1999 Rugby World Cup semi-final against France:

The All Blacks. They'll beat France today at Twickenham and reach the World Cup final, and the colleague who generously offered me 40 points to back France was not, for my betting tastes, quite generous enough...Expect no epoch-making events. Just a run-of-the-mill, seen-it-all-before demonstration of rugby excellence. All Blacks. Love them or hate them, or seethe with envy at them, they still take all the besting in the world" (S. Jones, 1999).

Even in reports of the All Black team's loss in this match against France the suggestion remained that this was such a great 'upset' that only an extraordinary explanation could make sense of it: "Somebody somewhere had to give a rational explanation to one of the most extraordinary reversals in sport ..." (Glover, 1999).

In New Zealand the All Black team's elimination by France in the semi-finals at the 1999 World Cup provoked debate about the effect of professionalism on New Zealand rugby union. At the end of the 2000 season in which the All Black team lost to Australia, South Africa and France, the All Black coach argued that "professionalism" had "levelled the playing field" which previously had favoured the All Blacks (cited in Hinton, 2000: B3):

Professionalism has done it...Once upon a time the All Blacks were the only professional team in world rugby. And I'm not talking about money. I'm talking about preparation and the advantage that gave us. Other teams have closed that gap. Now at the top end of the game anyway every team is going to have a good day. England and France in particular have got big player bases and if they get things right at the top they're obviously going to be major threats.

Such a suggestion highlights that no 'system' can guarantee success. It also suggests that the introduction of professionalism has enabled the playing standard of rugby union in the northern hemisphere unions to catch up with the southern hemisphere standard. In the case of New Zealand rugby, the high playing standard was ensured through organisational practices mirroring those of professional sports.

The centralised control by the NZRFU of players, unions and clubs at the beginning of the 20th century, outlined in Gallaher and Stead's (1906) account, and the new professional contracting structures reveal a remarkable continuity. The centralised contracting of players in New Zealand, heralded as the strength of the current New Zealand 'system', creates an exceptional player labour market subordinated to the national team. The NZRFU justified this system of contracting, requiring players to participate in as many as five different teams and competitions, on the basis that it would strengthen New Zealand teams. This exceptional player labour market consolidated the NZRFU's 'paternalistic' control over its constituent members, provincial unions, and players. The centralised contracts and the lack of an effective players' association ensured the lowest payments to New Zealand Super 12 players as well as highly differentiated, longer-term, individually negotiated player contracts. It enabled the NZRFU Super 12 selectors to control the drafting of players into the five Super 12 teams and to dictate the teams' composition, ensuring the establishment of a few highly competitive teams. Provincial union administrators and players questioned the necessity and logic of this form of centralised control, exceeding even that of leagues in North America. Additionally, they highlighted the fact that the NZRFU's ownership and control over teams, players and coaches was highly unorthodox in professional team sports.

This centralised contracting of players in New Zealand contrasted with the contracting of players by clubs in the northern hemisphere. Not surprisingly, the greater sporting and economic opportunities offered by these clubs encouraged increasing migration of players and coaches to the northern hemisphere. New Zealand-born players, on the fringe of All Black selection, including some with British eligibility, took up residence in the UK. Additionally, Pacific Island players resident in New Zealand and Australia,

with dual national eligibility, pursued selection to New Zealand and Australian national teams. This forfeiting of their Pacific national eligibility, encouraged by the introduction of professionalism and the greater sporting and economic opportunities in the two major South Pacific rugby nations and in the northern hemisphere, provoked a further deskilling and marginalisation of Pacific Island rugby.

The controversial selection of southern hemisphere born players to half the national rugby union teams in the 1999 Rugby World Cup, and the reluctance of English clubs to release players for international tours, had the potential to undermine the appeal of international competitions. This provoked national unions to seek to minimise the migration of players and coaches by imposing greater restrictions on eligibility for selection to national teams. It also encouraged the IRB to expand international tournaments thereby providing greater international sporting opportunities for Pacific Island national teams through the establishment of the Pan Pacific Cup and the international Sevens circuit. This international alliance between national unions was provoked by the increasing strength of clubs, gained through the introduction of professionalism, and the lack of national, centralised contracting systems in the northern hemisphere.

An unintended consequence of New Zealand's centralised contracting and drafting system was the emergence of 'super' teams in the Super 12 transnational professional competition. This competition, which was created by the three southern hemisphere national unions to generate a global media sponsorship and ensure their control over the game against a rival rugby union organisation, had created successful New Zealand teams but not guaranteed a successful All Black team. This new competition became the important component in the effort to retain New Zealand players and to strengthen the All Black team. However, it resulted in widening the gap between the bigger and smaller provincial unions within New Zealand, and in changing the relations between clubs and provincial unions.

7

REGULATING RELATIONS: THE NZRFU, PROVINCIAL UNIONS AND PLAYERS

7.0 Introduction

Relations between the NZRFU, provincial unions and players were changed by the introduction of professionalism. These changes resulted from the NZRFU's introduction of market solutions to secure the viability of smaller provincial unions, to cultivate local publics, and to strengthen the All Black team. The introduction of these market solutions thus continued the NZRFU's adoption of aspects of professional competitions in the amateur era aimed at protecting the viability of teams and unions. As in the amateur era, in the new professional era the NZRFU continued to maintain a high degree of centralised control over both players and provincial unions. However, despite this centralised regulation, financial and competitive differences between provincial unions increased by the turn of the 21st century and this forced the NZRFU to introduce new regulations, which, not surprisingly, met most resistance from the smaller unions.

Changes to the 'organisational field' (Wilson, 1994: 137) following the introduction of professionalism included greater interdependence between provincial unions and local sponsors, the establishment of 'independent' union boards and the employment of 'professional' staff, the NZRFU's introduction of a player 'transfer system', the establishment of the five Super 12 'franchises' and the restructuring of the NPC competition. These changes increased the NZRFU's centralised control over the movement of players and also increased provincial unions' dependence on sponsorship.

Provincial unions' increasing dependence on sponsorship provoked the replacement of volunteer administrators with professional staff and the establishment of independent decision-making boards, which included 'independent' members elected for their business contacts. This shift from a 'rugby network' to a 'business network' was implemented in the larger provincial unions, however, not without criticism from volunteer administrators. By contrast, resistance to a restructuring of the NZRFU's national council from smaller unions meant that the new NZRFU board continued to be dominated by provincial union representatives.

The NZRFU's efforts to centrally regulate the off-field competition between provincial unions included the introduction of a domestic transfer system, which limits the flow of the best players to the wealthiest unions. Player resistance to this regulation focused on the transfer system's inability to undo the uneven distribution of NZRFU-contracted players across unions. This uneven distribution meant that smaller provincial unions with few NZRFU-contracted players faced a greater financial burden in attempting to retain players while 'medium-sized' provincial unions most aggressively used the transfer system to boost their player strength. As a result, both the smaller and the medium sized unions increased their financial dependence on NZRFU grants. In contrast to these financially struggling unions, the large city-based unions expanded their 'farm systems' (Wilson, 1994: 80) to ensure a continuous supply of player talent.

The NZRFU's establishment of the five regional Super 12 teams as 'franchises' hosted by the large city-based unions including the four test hosting unions, Auckland,

Wellington, Canterbury and Otago, and the North Island union Waikato further increased the financial and competitive differences between provincial unions. The allocation of the regional teams exaggerated existing tensions in the relations between ‘big’ and ‘small’ unions, created in the amateur era when large city-based unions including Auckland, Wellington and Canterbury dominated the Ranfurly Shield and, together with the Otago union, the NPC 1st division. While the Super 12 host unions experienced greater financial prosperity because they were able to generate more income from sponsorship relations, which they, in turn, used to attract the best players, this form of franchising was tempered by the NZRFU’s control of players and teams. As a result of these different economic opportunities between provincial unions, the Super 12 host unions consolidated their dominance over the transfer market. This exaggerated the competitive imbalance between provincial teams and forced the NZRFU to recommend new changes to the NPC competition.

7.1 Sponsorship dependence and independent boards: creating rugby business networks

From the mid-1980s, the larger 1st division provincial unions’ expenses grew as a result of their participation in the transnational South Pacific Championship, the Super 6 and the CANZ competitions. Their new expenses came from increasing travel costs and their decision to pay players promotional wages in return for participation in these competitions. To offset these costs, the participating unions sought to attract increasing sponsorship income.

By the early 1990s both the NZRFU and the larger provincial unions employed experts in the areas of marketing and management to promote teams and competitions to both publics and sponsors and to oversee the new legal and managerial requirements associated with the contractual relations with sponsors. Between 1986 and 1996 the NZRFU increased its paid full-time administrative staff from four to 25 (interviews with the CEO of the NZRFU, July 1994; Life Member of the NZRFU & Canterbury provincial union, May 1996). In that same decade the Canterbury provincial union increased its paid staff from one full-time ‘secretary’ or ‘chief executive’ to 12 full and

part-time paid administrative and coaching staff (interviews with the CEO of the Canterbury provincial union, August 1994; Rugby Manager of the Canterbury provincial union, July 1996).

The appointment of these experts reworked relations between rugby and the community but did not go unchallenged. The 'project' involved the replacing of existing "civically rooted, less entrepreneurial structures" with more "entrepreneurial focused structures" (Whitson, 1998: 58). This project was typical of the changes in the administration of amateur sports in several countries (Cameron, 1996; McKay, 1997; Houlihan, 1997). For example, from the 1980s Canadian federal and professional interests have come to "redefine what is really a redirection of resources and an appropriation of policy prerogatives" (Whitson and Macintosh, 1989: 436-437). In the case of rugby union in New Zealand, government or public grants from the Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport had also required changes to the administration of the NZRFU from the 1980s. Concern over these changes expressed by volunteer administrators and club members focused on increasing 'bureaucratisation' as a result of the new level of administrators:

The advent of professional administrators came with the Hillary Commission saying 'you have got to be more professional in your outlook. You have government money you are spending'...so we have got this new breed of administrators who came though and had to raise funds. So having to raise money became part of the reason you had more professional administrators...as we have moved into professional administration in the last five or six years it has been generated by the national body saying to local unions around the country 'you have got to be more professional'. It has generated down to clubs and they have tended now to get more professional people. But at the end of the day I have to ask myself 'are there more players playing the sport?' And the answer is, there is not (interview with life-member of the NZRFU and the Canterbury provincial union, May 1996).

This life member's concern was that the appointment of professional staff did not address falling player numbers. The shift towards 'selling the product' of rugby could be identified in the explanation for the appointment of a marketing manager with the Canterbury provincial union in 1994. His appointment came as a result of growing concern with falling spectator numbers which was explained as a result of more television coverage and the growing need to generate sponsorship income:

We have engaged in recent times a marketing manager and his responsibility is all centred around sponsorships, promotions, advertising, all that marketing of the game, and he has been taken on specifically to broaden our horizons...to develop these relationships with corporates,

to develop large sponsorships. Where the game or any sport of this nature goes without sponsorship these days - you don't go anywhere without it. So we've got to increase our image to such an extent that we can attract those sponsors of the game...we do believe that we are quite seriously affected by television coverage. The saturation is good for the game...But from our point of view...we've got less people coming through the gates. We are not getting any TV rights fees to reimburse us or recompense us for the loss in attendance...that's where sponsors become even bigger players in the game (interview with the CEO of the Canterbury provincial union, August 1994).

The new marketing manager explained that a significant part of his job was to increase sponsorship relations and income for the Team Canterbury 'company' established to provide 'promotional income' to players: "It is very competitive retaining players...that is part of my function - generating the resources to Team Canterbury so that we can actually retain players" (interview with marketing manager of the Canterbury provincial union, Oct. 1994). The Canterbury union's establishment of Team Canterbury copied the NZRFU's All Black Promotions Limited company constituted, in accordance with the 'relaxed' amateur regulations in the early 1990s, to attract sponsorship income and promotional work for All Black players. Coinciding with its establishment, other provincial unions formed similar 'player retention' companies including Team Southland, Friends of the Waikato, Team Northland and Manawatu Rugby Trust (McConnell, 1996: 52). Team Canterbury's board, formed in 1994, consisted of members of the Canterbury provincial union's management committee, including three local company directors, and the union's newly appointed marketing manager.

The establishment of such companies and the appointment of professional staff encouraged a definition of objectives, goals and initiatives in the language and discourses of 'business' (Macintosh and Whitson, 1990: 113). The Canterbury provincial union's new marketing manager used the terminology of "business", "economics" and "marketing" to describe his own appointment. His role was to 'market' the Canterbury 'product' and reverse declining local support:

I guess rugby, which is a business, we are in the business like anyone else in the marketing or retail sector, we are a retail product which is tickets to games, has been moving quite slowly at the provincial level in marketing its product. At the global and national level it has been making quite giant strides ie. the All Black's Club, ie. the marketing by the New Zealand Rugby Union of some of its products and some of its brands, but at the provincial level it hasn't really taken the bull by the horns and leveraged all the opportunities that exist in the market for it. And that is the function that I find myself in with the Canterbury Rugby Union. My role is

to drive the business of Canterbury Rugby (interview with the marketing manager of the Canterbury provincial union, October 1994).

With the appointment of the marketing manager the Canterbury provincial union's sponsorship relations became formalised into two main categories: those associated with the Canterbury provincial union and those associated with Team Canterbury. An immediate consequence was the replacement of two of the Canterbury provincial union's long-term major local sponsors with new national and global sponsors. The union's apparel sponsor, Canterbury Clothing Company, and New Zealand Breweries' local beer company, Canterbury Draught, were replaced with the global sponsors Nike and Dominion Breweries, the latter being New Zealand Breweries' major competitor. These changes, which reflected a shift from smaller/local to larger/national and global sponsors, were duplicated at the national level. The long-term local apparel sponsor of the All Black team, Canterbury Clothing Company, was replaced with the global apparel sponsor adidas (Philip, 1997).

However, these changes to the sponsorship relationships did not go uncriticised by local publics. A life-member of the Canterbury provincial union described the changes as "disappointing" and destructive to the "loyalty" of the "people down below". In an interview in 1996, the life-member described the "mutual loyalty" enjoyed between the Canterbury Clothing Company and the union when a "shake of hands" could ensure the company's continued support of the union during the controversial 1981 South African tour of New Zealand (interview with life-member of the NZRFU & Canterbury provincial union, May 1996). In contrast to this emphasis on loyalty to local sponsors, the marketing manager justified the change of apparel sponsor with reference to the new sponsor's significant presence in a global market:

Nike strategically offered us marketing clout and support that is just unheard of in NZ in sport. They are the largest apparel company in the world and they are very successful and very sophisticated at what they do. The support they put behind relationships is just exponentially greater than anything we could ever have got out of our existing deal (interview with marketing manager of the Canterbury provincial union, April 1996).

Additionally, the marketing manager highlighted the significance of generating as much income from the union's 'primary product':

...we only have one thing that earns money for our business and that is a successful A-team. If we don't have a successful A-team, like at the moment our A-team is struggling a bit, that is

reflected in our gates. Therefore our [falling] revenue and therefore all the things that we do altruistically, which is 98 per cent of all the things that we do in our business, all the school programmes, all the little rep teams from women down to... they don't generate one cent of money. So if we don't get it right at the top, there is no money to fund the bottom (interview with marketing manager of the Canterbury provincial union, April 1996).

While the union's marketing manager cultivated sponsors with a greater market-reach willing to pay "many hundreds of thousands of dollars" each per year, Team Canterbury deliberately targeted local sponsors. Team Canterbury's sponsors comprised approximately 65 local companies that were encouraged to view their sponsorship relation with the union as a form of 'patronage'. The marketing manager described these sponsorships as "glorified hospitality packages" aimed at retaining players with the union.

Annual membership for sponsors of Team Canterbury was divided into three categories; the "First XV club" cost \$50,000; the "Red club" \$10,000; and the "Black club" \$6,500. In return, sponsors were given "player time" or "emotional linkage to the players". This involved players participating in the sponsors' company functions, sometimes giving speeches and socialising with staff and clients, "media credits" in the form of paid advertising in the local newspaper and on local TV as well as corporate hospitality at home matches. Depending on the value of these sponsorship packages, sponsors were provided with hospitality for all or a number of home matches for between four and six people, totalling up to 90 First XV clients and 80 clients in each of the Red and Black clubs. This 'hospitality' in the new corporate boxes, leased from the stadium management by the provincial union, included either buffet meals with complimentary drinks or "complimentary silver service meals and bar access" (Team Canterbury Marketing Proposal, 1996)⁷⁷.

This involvement of sponsors became formalised through their appointment to the NZRFU's and the larger provincial unions' decision-making boards in the mid-1990s. Local, national and international 'business-people' or sponsors replaced club-elected

⁷⁷ These contractual relations between the union, players and sponsors are significantly more formalised than those described in the Welsh club Pontypridd. Howe (1999: 171-175) describes how player representatives on the club's committee were in charge of the club's agreement with several clubs to supply goods including diet supplements and fluid replacement products.

volunteer administrators on provincial unions' new independent boards⁷⁸. In 1995, the Canterbury provincial union's 'old' management committee of 18 members - made up of a president, two vice-presidents, ten appointed delegates from across the union's 52 affiliated clubs, delegates from primary school, secondary school, referees association and junior advisory board - was 'down-sized' to a new management board consisting of nine members (CRFU, Minutes, 1994). These nine members were nominated by the existing management committee and the professional staff and elected by the 52 member clubs at the annual general meeting in 1995. The nine members consisted, according to the union's CEO, of "five new people who had never been involved in rugby, hadn't come through the supposed network system and four from the original board". The five 'independent' members included "three chief executives or four, actually, general managers in their own right, of quite large businesses" (interview with the CEO of the Canterbury provincial union, April 1996).

The new board structure for the Canterbury union confirmed the detachment of clubs members and volunteers from the union's decision-making processes. The club and life members of the union had endorsed this shift at the annual general meeting on the condition that the union's new professional staff would meet with them on a regular basis. However, they later criticised the new board as a "hierarchy" which was "divorced" from the "day-to-day administration" (cited in interview with the Rugby Manager of the Canterbury provincial union, July 1996). The CEO of the union confirmed that criticism had been directed at the staff for not arranging these monthly

⁷⁸ This trend could also be identified in other sports organisations (cf. Cameron, 1996: 214). The CEO of New Zealand Swimming argued that the administrative changes were a result of the "demand for accountability": "The relationship between funders - the Sports Foundation, the Hillary Commission, sponsors - and the sports they fund is no longer passive. It's now a business relationship where there has to be accountability on both sides" (New Zealand Sports Foundation, 1996). The new administrative staff in sports organisations have helped encourage the view that to do their job "making decisions quickly" is essential. "These paid professionals get on with the job of running the sport on a day-to-day basis, fulfilling the modern requirement that the organisation be fast on its feet and responsive to the needs of both its business partners and its members" (New Zealand Sports Foundation, 1996). Additionally, the "rationalisation" of sports organisations' decision-making forums became referred to as a process of "streamlining what was often a cumbersome beast, as well as to improve its ability to manage million dollar budgets and to develop policy. There has also been a widespread recognition that when business people join boards, they bring their business contacts with them. These can often be invaluable in areas such as hunting for sponsorship, marketing, communications, and financial management" (New Zealand Sports Foundation, 1996).

meetings and, as a result, he expressed concern that the club and life members might challenge the board at the annual general meeting:

...if we disenfranchise the volunteers then we basically have a major problem. We still have a general committee made up of a representative from primary schools, secondary schools rugby, junior advisory board - why there would be three I have no idea - referees, country rugby and metropolitan rugby and all of our life members. And our board and myself are supposed to meet with them once a month to keep them up to date. Now we have only just had the first meeting since October, widely criticised particularly by the Life-members for not having had one prior to that. You've got to be careful that you don't go too far down that path because in the end they can make life a misery and come AGM time they can make life worse than that, unbearable (interview with the CEO of the Canterbury provincial union, April 1996).

These changes, from the supposed 'network system of rugby' to a new 'network system of business', followed the recommendations of the Boston Consulting Group's (BCG) report to the NZRFU in 1994 (Boston Consulting Group, 1994: C26-C32) and were implemented in the larger provincial unions. However, smaller provincial unions blocked their implementation at the national level.

The BCG had recommended that the NZRFU's 'old' council - consisting of 12 delegates, representing three zones covering the whole country, three members of the NZRFU administration committee, a Maori representative, a president and two vice-presidents - be 'downsized towards "a smaller and more independent board and greater delegation to a professional management team - but accountable to the provinces"' (Boston Consulting Group, 1994: C30). Under the 'old' system of electing NZRFU council members⁷⁹ the provincial unions' management committees nominated the representatives from their unions to the three zones as explained by the former CEO of the Canterbury union:

⁷⁹ "The NZRFU comprises 27 affiliated provincial unions throughout the country, and those provincial unions exercise their power by way of votes at general meetings, either at an annual general meeting or at special general meetings...There are 19 members of the council who are the equivalent of a board of directors for the Rugby Union. The 19 are elected by all the unions, but they actually come from certain sectors. Let me explain that. There are three zones throughout New Zealand geographically and four councillors are elected from each zone...but the election process is that the whole of New Zealand vote for them. And those affiliated unions have votes according to the number of teams [clubs] they have... Then there is the presidential suite which is another three - a president, two vice-presidents - that takes us to 15. We have a member of the Maori race, 16, and we have three administration committee members as they are called. That goes back a wee bit. That's an historical arrangement because going back a few years the administration committee was a committee that met weekly to deal with the day-to-day administration of the committee. That committee does not meet nearly so frequently now because the organisation is much more run by a professional body of people here" (interview with the CEO of the NZRFU, July 1994).

Those nominations would not normally go beyond the management of the Canterbury rugby union for discussion or nomination. It is the Canterbury union who are really appointed representatives of the Canterbury clubs who make that decision. The club members as such wouldn't have any input into the election of a New Zealand counsellor" (interview with the CEO of the Canterbury provincial union, August 1994).

In this system provincial unions were directly involved in the election of the NZRFU council. The recommended changes to this national election system, which required that the affiliated member unions did not gain direct representation on the national board, met with resistance from smaller provincial unions. Their numerical strength on the NZRFU council ensured that the new NZRFU board continued to include delegates from geographical zones of the country. The new management board in 1996 thus straddled an 'old', parochial representational system and a 'modern', independent board recommended by the BCG. Of the nine members, only two were 'independent' members while six continued to be delegates from the three zones, which previously had provided 12 of the nineteen-member NZRFU council. Additionally, the new board continued to include a Maori representative. The CEO of the Canterbury provincial union noted the contrast between local and national:

Ironically...the Boston report has been much more readily embraced by the [larger] provincial unions than it has by the national body. The national body has only just in the last couple of weeks [early 1996] moved to restructure and it is a pretty watered down restructure compared with what the Boston report proposed. Whereas Canterbury has been down that path 12 months prior. So it is the second year of a new board structure. Auckland, North Harbour, Wellington, Hawke's Bay, Waikato, a large number of unions have brought their boards down from anywhere up to 20-25 people who tended to get elected on a representative basis...to a smaller number of people who should just have the ability and an interest in managing the game for the game's future not necessarily for that particular club or reference group. Now at the national level we haven't managed to get that far. We still have six people out of nine who come forward as zone reps together with one Maori person and two independents (interview with the CEO of the Canterbury provincial union, April 1996).

While provincial delegates dominated the new NZRFU board, the two new independent members were elected for their 'business' contacts. One, Barry Thomas, was a high profile New Zealand company director who was also a member of the New Zealand Tourism Board and the Christchurch Casino (one of the major sponsors of the Canterbury provincial union). The other, Kevin Roberts, was an 'international executive' who had been director of Lion Nathan, the owner of the NZRFU brewery sponsor, New Zealand Breweries, and a current director of the global advertising company Saatchi and Saatchi.

The resistance towards the ‘decoupling’ of local clubs from the provincial unions’ decision-making processes, and the resistance from smaller provincial unions towards the establishment of an independent NZRFU board, reflected an increasing divide between the ‘amateur’ concerns of clubs and smaller unions and the ‘professional’ concerns of the larger provincial unions and the NZRFU. These tensions were described by an NZRFU administrator as the “problem of caring for an amateur sport and administering an amateur sport and running a professional business” (interview with the NZRFU Director of Rugby Services, July 1998).

7.2 *Controlling provincial unions’ off-field competition: the player transfer system*

Following the IRB legalisation of professionalism in 1995, sponsorship income became further entrenched as unions’ most important source of income. So did the financial concerns of smaller provincial unions who had fewer opportunities to establish stable and growing sponsorship income. In August 1995, the NZRFU had contracted All Black and Super 12 players predominantly for a three-year period. While these NZRFU-contracted players were required to participate in the NPC competition for the provincial team within whose union the player was affiliated, the introduction of professionalism also encouraged provincial unions to offer contracts to *their* affiliated players to ensure players’ involvement in the unions’ NPC teams. This enabled wealthier provincial unions to strengthen their teams by attracting players from the smaller provincial unions with professional contracts.

The establishment of more independent boards, and the greater interdependence between sponsors and provincial unions, contrasted with the restructuring of the leading clubs in the English premier rugby union competition. The importance of financial backers for English clubs became crucial following the introduction of professionalism in 1996 because the clubs were first to contract players. Competition for players saw leading English clubs including Newcastle, Saracens, Bath, Gloucester, Northampton, Sale and Richmond sold in part or fully to private investors while

sponsors gained greater financial involvement in Harlequins, Wasps and Bedford (Hunt, 1997b; Cleary, 1997). By contrast, in New Zealand provincial unions' need to generate income to contract players was less acute because they only provided 'secondary' contracts to players already on NZRFU contracts and to some of the 'second-string' players not on NZRFU contracts.

To prevent provincial unions from engaging in a bidding war for players in New Zealand the NZRFU placed a moratorium on the movement of players between unions until November 1996. Two exceptions were granted. Bay of Plenty player Scott Robertson, drafted to the Canterbury Crusaders team in the first Super 12 season, was not required to return to Bay of Plenty for the 1996 NPC season. Similarly, the Auckland union allowed Isitolo Maka to move to Otago for the 1996 NPC season after having been drafted to the Otago Highlanders for the 1996 Super 12 competition (Hill, 1997). The English RFU imposed a similar restriction in the form of a 120-day 'qualification period' that prevented players who were moving clubs at the end of 1995 from participating in the English 1995-96 clubs season. In addition, the English RFU and the Scottish RFU prohibited their leading clubs from participating in the first season of the new rugby union European Cup involving the leading clubs in France, Italy, Wales and Ireland (Cleary and Griffiths, 1997: 117). This decision was criticised by the English club managers and owners (Corder, 1996) and led to a bitter conflict between the English RFU and the clubs. This conflict resulted in clubs refusing to release players to take part in international matches (see chapter six).

While the English RFU and the leading clubs struggled for their control of players in 1996, the NZRFU implemented a player transfer system at the end of the first season of 'professional rugby'. This system, which restricted the movement of players between provincial unions, involved the 27 provincial unions and approximately 1100 provincial and age-grade representative players. The transfer system included a quota limiting the number of players a provincial union could 'purchase', a transfer payment (transfer fee) and a one-month transfer period. The quota system proposed a limit of five "banded" players transferring to a provincial union in a year. A "band" related to a group of players with similar level of playing experience. Out of the five players in

a provincial union's yearly quota, only one could be an All Black player and a union could 'purchase' a maximum of two players from each band in one year.

The NZRFU's maximum transfer fee for players in each band created a hierarchical grading system that tied a price to the existing competition structure. This centralised grading system thus continued the centralised grading of players for local club competitions implemented at the beginning of the 20th century (Gallaher and Stead, 1906). The professional grading system included four bands for All Black players: star (\$125,000), established (\$75,000), current (\$50,000), and former All Black players (\$40,000). Below the All Black bands were bands for Super 12 players (\$30,000), for senior NPC A players (\$10,000-20,000), NPC development players (\$2,000-5,000), New Zealand Colts players (\$20,000), and New Zealand Under 19 Representative players (\$15,000). Below these bands the NZRFU included bands for New Zealand representative school players (\$10,000) and academy players (\$20,000) (Pengilley, 1998). The transfer period limited the movement of players between unions to one month each year, between November 1-30. The NZRFU set the maximum transfer fees annually in consultation with the provincial unions. Under this system the "purchaser" provincial union is able to negotiate with the "vendor" provincial union the transfer fee for a player but the fee cannot exceed the maximum (Pengilley, 1998: 34).

To implement the transfer system, the NZRFU sought the Commerce Commission's legal authorisation as a means of protecting it from any future challenges (*Rugby Union Players' Association Inc v Commerce Commission (No 2)*, 1997: 301). This move by the NZRFU prompted the Rugby Union Players' Association (RUPA) to present a submission to the Commerce Commission against an authorisation of the transfer system on the grounds that it prevented players from moving to smaller provincial unions. The Commission favoured the NZRFU and authorised the system at the end of 1996. In response RUPA appealed to the High Court in 1997 but the Court supported the Commission's decision. The authorisation was granted because the Commission and the Court believed that the anti-competitive measures in the

system were minimal and that the benefits, although also minimal or difficult to determine, provided some security to the 'infrastructure' of New Zealand rugby.

The Commission had agreed with the NZRFU that the transfer system was needed to control the effect of introducing professional player contracts and to achieve this some restrictions on players' and provincial unions' liberties were regarded as "unavoidable" ((Rugby Union Players' Association Inc v Commerce Commission (No 2), 1997: 301, 305). In particular, the Court found that, based on evidence from professional team sports in the US and Australia, the regulations would "promote evenness of competition, continued player development, and team stability" ((Rugby Union Players' Association Inc v Commerce Commission (No 2), 1997: 305). In addition, the Commission's ruling suggested that the sport of rugby union had a particularly important role to play in boosting the nation's economic and political world standing, when it highlighted that:

...there were a number of other benefits of an intangible nature which the commission also took into account. These included greater spectator enjoyment, potentially improved sponsorship, increased tourism especially during rugby tours, and the overall greater exposure of New Zealand internationally which helps New Zealand's trade and standing in the world (Rugby Union Players' Association Inc v Commerce Commission (No 2), 1997: 326).

The Commerce Commission's agreement with the NZRFU's position endorsed the idea that the new regulations "would encourage grass roots development, bring order into the competition that was going on for star players, and ensure that rugby would remain competitive" (Rugby Union Players' Association Inc v Commerce Commission (No 2), 1997: 326). In particular, it supported the NZRFU's rationale for the system:

The rationale behind these three major features of the regulations are first, that the quota system will prevent richer, stronger unions from buying up talented players to create a 'dream team' and thus distort the *evenness of competition*. The limited transfer period is intended to prevent the poaching of talented players part-way through the season and again is designed to maintain the evenness of competition and the integrity of teams during the competition. The transfer fee cap is the more sophisticated mechanism. It has a dual effect. First, it prevents the financially stronger unions from outbidding the others. Secondly, it ensures that when talented players leave a union, that union gets some compensation for having developed the player and is provided with a fund with which it can either develop other promising players or, alternatively, attract a replacement player (Rugby Union Players' Association Inc v Commerce Commission (No 2), 1997: 305-306, *emphasis added*).

The features of the New Zealand transfer system which restrict the movement of players mirror the regulations in most professional sports which attempt to achieve

evenness of competition chiefly by limiting the use of “inputs” (i.e. players) rather than “outputs” (i.e. revenues) (Wilson, 1994: 117). Warren Pengilley (1998: 35), a law professor whose expertise was sought by the Commission, highlighted the fact that “world-wide homage” is paid to the concept of competitive balance, although some may feel that this concept is “a gigantic myth”.

Like the NZRFU, team owners in other professional team sports have defended their reserve systems as a way to equalise competition and to protect the appeal of their ‘product’. Wilson (1994: 121) summarised their position:

Owners claim the right to control the flow of factors of production (chiefly players) on the grounds that this is necessary to produce ‘the game’: it contributes to evenness of competition. For example, the player draft and subsequent restriction on player mobility are necessary in order to ensure that the richer teams do not buy up all the best players and upset the competitive balance.

Despite these claims to competitive balance Pengilley (1998: 35) argued that “there is a good deal of academic literature...which seems to support the conclusion that even with strong player labour controls over long periods, sporting competitions have never come close to attaining competitive balance” (cf. Scully, 1995: 33-34; Rottenberg, 1956; El-Hodiri and Quirk, 1971).

Leifer has shown the significance of Pengilley’s observation. The NFL has achieved the greatest degree of competitive balance of the four North American major leagues but does not have greater player restrictions than the other three major leagues. Instead it has the most far-reaching revenue-sharing arrangements through an equal sharing between teams of the revenue from television rights sales and a 60/40 gate-takings split. According to Leifer (1995), the example of the NFL’s revenue-sharing highlights that limitations on “outputs” are more effective at achieving competitive balance than limitations on “inputs”, i.e. players. In contrast to the NFL, the NZRFU’s transfer system regulations did not include revenue-sharing arrangements between provincial unions to encourage competitive balance.

While there is debate as to the effect of restrictions on player mobility as a means of encouraging competitive balance between teams in a league, there is general

agreement that player restrictions tend to depress player salaries. According to Scully (1995: 34), the restrictions on players' movement "have little implication for the allocation of player talent within the league [but] they dramatically affect the division of rents between owners and players". Likewise Wilson (1994: 80) has argued that what the reserve system tends to create is limited competition for players thereby "lowering the cost of competition for that new talent". The New Zealand transfer system also discouraged competitive bidding for players by granting provincial unions 'ownership' of affiliated players. However, the system does not grant provincial unions the right to place players on 'reserve' - "no player can be transferred against his will and no player can be prevented from transferring by his provincial union" (Pengilley, 1998: 34).

Compared with the high degree of control by the NZRFU over players contracted to participate in the Super 12 competition, the transfer system imposed fewer restrictions on provincial players' movement. A player on a Super 12 contract can be forced to move to another 'region' to fulfil his contract. By contrast, players contracted to a provincial union cannot be forced to move or prevented from moving to another provincial union. Additionally, the transfer system does not stipulate a minimum number of years a provincial player has to be contracted to a union before a transfer can take place and the maximum transfer fee prevents provincial unions from using an 'excessive' transfer fee to stop a player from moving⁸⁰, although this point was disputed by RUPA. A NZRFU-contracted player, who was asked to comment on the transfer system by the CEO in his provincial union, argued that the system places relatively few restrictions on his movements:

I remember [CEO of provincial union] got me into his office with a few other guys and passed a dummy proposal to us and asked us what we thought of this transfer scheme... I was an established player, one was a fringe player. If you are a fringe player and you want to go somewhere else to try and further your career how is it going to stop you, how is it going to affect you? But at the end of the day the difference between us is that we are not owned. If I don't want to shift I don't have to. The pressure can come on you to shift, you are not going to get a salary or career here but you will in the other province. That is about it, really. They can't say, like in other professional sports, they trade you like people trade bubble gum cards and they expect it. We are not owned by anyone. The NZRFU contracts - say for example, I am not good enough to make my Rugby Super 12 side and go into the pool and the

⁸⁰ Cf. Miller and Redhead's (1994: 145) discussion of the case of Belgian soccer player Jean-Marc Bosman.

Highlanders want me, then if I want to continue my contract and get paid then I have to go down to Otago to play (interview with Super 12 player #3, Dec. 1997).

Despite players' relative freedom of movement, the transfer system discouraged competitive bidding between provincial unions for players and it tended to 'depress' salaries. Additionally, provincial contracts were further affected by the NZRFU contracts which acted as a 'benchmark'. The centralised, tiered NZRFU contracts to the top 150 players in the country (approximately 60 per cent of the players in NPC 1st division teams) set a standard \$15,000 in NPC payments which tended to be adopted by the provincial unions in their contracting of players not on NZRFU contracts. This contributed to an uneven spread of the financial cost of contracting players by unions, as highlighted by the All Black coach:

One of the things we got wrong when we set up the professional game was we established contracts for players like this. We said \$65,000 was the base payment a player got for playing Super 12 and it was based on \$50,000 for Super 12 and \$15,000 for NPC. I know why it was done. There was a fear earlier on that players would only want to do that [Super 12] and not do that [NPC] and that would have been awful...the net result was, say you have a team like Auckland as an example, they might have 15 of 22 professional player getting paid [by the NZRFU] that sort of money of which they all knew \$15,000 was an NPC component. So what Auckland had to do with the other seven was pay \$15,000 for them to play NPC. If you take that to other provinces who were getting only one or two players [on NZRFU contracts], the impact was even greater and they couldn't afford that anyhow, they wouldn't pay the \$15,000 but they would have to pay something. And as a result what we have done is taken the semi-professional game into this NPC arena and as a consequence a lot of the resources of the provinces has gone to pay players...(interview with John Hart, All Black coach 1996-1999, March 1998).

In addition to placing a greater financial burden on the unions with few elite players, the transfer system granted those provincial unions with the largest number of NZRFU-contracted players the greatest 'player wealth' as determined by the transfer fee structure. This meant that the transfer system perpetuated the economic dominance of the large city-based unions. A provincial union CEO pointed this out in 1997:

Most of the money from News Corp goes into contracting players. Auckland started the professional era with a large number of high value players so it gets a disproportionate share of the salary bill, although it is justified in terms of its team strength. They're the best team and a winning team and they are generating revenue which self perpetuates as they're in the best position to buy any player they need (The Press, 1997).

7.3 *'Farm systems' and player transfers: opportunities in the market for players*

The new arrangements of professionalism provided the wealthiest unions with a decided advantage in the competition for players. Additionally, the transfer system provided provincial unions with a means to generate income from ‘selling’ players. Younger players who had been selected to the New Zealand Colts (under 21)⁸¹, New Zealand under-19, New Zealand school representative players and Academy players constituted valuable assets for unions. The high transfer band on academy players (\$20,000) reflected their high ‘market value’ and sought to ensure that provincial unions were compensated if younger players were to be transferred to other unions.

The NZRFU established the national Academy in 1995 with an intake of 20 players annually who participated in one-off matches against invitation sides (Howitt, 1997b: 54). Performing the function of a national “farm system” (Wilson, 1994: 80; Leifer, 1995: 195-196), the NZRFU Academy was established to encourage younger players to remain in New Zealand. In contrast to the English, American and Japanese academies established by *clubs* contracting young baseball and soccer players at a low cost (Klein, 1991a; Klein 1991b; McGovern, 2000), the *national* NZRFU academy included “school-leavers” as well as Super 12 players who are given additional playing experience and educational advice. To be contracted to the NZRFU Academy, players are nominated by their provincial unions and selected to the Academy by the NZRFU Academy’s selectors, including the All Black and national age group selectors. Academy players take part in a three-year programme involving courses and training camps (maximum of 20 days in camp per year) at the Academy based, from 1998, at the Massey University’s Palmerston North campus⁸².

Apart from setting a high value on Academy and younger national representative players, the transfer system also included provincial unions’ development players. Development players are generally younger players or ex-A team players acting as

⁸¹ The first selection of a New Zealand Colts team was in 1955 and from 1972 New Zealand Colts sides were chosen annually. From 1995 the Colts have participated in an annual southern hemisphere tournament (Palenski et al., 1998: 281).

⁸² Dr Leberman, a sports management lecturer employed at the Albany campus of Massey University, was involved in expanding the NZRFU’s academy programme. She explained in a conversation in December 2000 that very few provincial unions, including Canterbury, had established their own academies (cf. Gifford, 2000).

reserves for the A-team⁸³. Provincial unions' development squads mirrored the establishment of English, American and Japanese academies as well as the establishment of minor leagues in North American baseball (Leifer, 1995: 91-92). They sought to provide a cheap and reliable source of player talent by attracting, developing and potentially selling 'promising' players. This was highlighted by the coach of the Canterbury Crusaders team who was also manager of the Canterbury NPC team:

The best way is to get young players in initially, set up a development programme, an academy, so that you are self-perpetuating, so you are developing your own players and you are developing assets too, so that if you get too many you can sell them, sell the players and recoup some money (interview with Wayne Smith, Canterbury Crusaders coach 1997-98, Oct. 1997).

The NZRFU's transfer band (\$2,000-5,000) on these development players thus rewarded the larger provincial unions with 'farm systems' for developing local players. At the same time, the band ensured that unions could 'purchase' young talent from other unions at relatively low costs and did not restrict the number of players included on unions' 'rosters'. In so doing, the transfer system encouraged all unions to set up their own 'farm systems' for talent development and sale, thus further decreasing the need for clubs to supply players for unions' representative teams.

In addition to establishing development squads and academies, the wealthier provincial unions (facing the greatest overseas player loss) began investigating possible transnational "horizontal ties" (Wilson, 1994: 140) with clubs in England as a means to expand their financial operations and their 'grip' on players seeking overseas rugby contracts. Both the Auckland and Canterbury provincial unions engaged in discussions with clubs in England (Hunt, 1997a; Hinton, 1997; *Marketing*, 1998). In 1997, it was reported that the Auckland provincial union was looking to invest in the 2nd division English club Blackheath:

In essence Auckland wants to set up Blackheath as a mini version of its own successful operation and will export talent and expertise to get things heading in the right direction. In return, New Zealand's largest union will have a way of controlling its player drain to the northern hemisphere, utilise its existing resources more effectively, extend its already impressive rugby empire and, eventually, make a little cash out of the deal (Hinton, 1997: B2).

⁸³ It was not until 1998, after the initial proposal for a domestic competition was scrapped due to lack of sponsorship, that seven provincial unions agreed to fund and organise a 'B', or 'development' team competition in conjunction with their NPC A team schedule except for play-offs (Hill, 1998).

However, these negotiations did not result in the unions making investments in English clubs. The Auckland union's negotiations fell through in 1998 reportedly because Blackheath could not fulfil its required financial commitment (Hill, 1999: 293).

The 'trading' in players on the *domestic* market (not including 'loaned' players) in the first five years reflected, expectedly, a greater degree of movement in 1st division unions than in 2nd and 3rd division unions (see Appendix 2, table 1). The total number of player transfers over the five years grew from 29 players in 1996 to 45 players in 2000. First division unions 'purchased' a total of 132 players over the five years (or 26 on average per year) compared with 2nd division and 3rd division unions' 53 players (or an average of 8 player 'purchases' per year for the two lower divisions). First division unions 'sold' a total of 109 players between 1997 and 2000 (the 1996 transfer numbers (in and out) are not complete and the 'sale' of eight 1st division players in 1996 is likely to be higher, see Appendix 2, footnote 1). By comparison, 2nd and 3rd division unions 'sold' 47 players in total between 1997 and 2000 (the sale of four 2nd division players in 1996 is also likely to be higher, see Appendix 2, footnote 1).

The wealthier 1st division unions used the maximum transfer of five players per season regularly over the first five years, while the 2nd and 3rd division unions 'purchased' very few players. Second division union Manawatu was the exception to the pattern of relatively few player-transfers to 2nd division unions in 1996. The transfer of three players, requiring a transfer fee of \$87,500, was an attempt to strengthen the player base of the union in anticipation of the merger between the two 2nd division unions, Manawatu and Hawke's Bay (see figure 7.1). The two unions sought to build a strong team, the Central Vikings, in an effort to take the amalgamated unions into the 1st division (Butcher, 1997). The Central Vikings survived for two seasons but, despite coming second in the 2nd division NPC in 1998 the team faltered as a result of falling spectator numbers, rising player salaries and the NZRFU's rejection of its status as an amalgamated *union* (in contrast to an amalgamated team). This blocked the team's opportunity for entry into the 1st division. The Central Vikings incurred a total loss of \$596,000 for the 1997 and the 1998 seasons (Hill, 1999). To prevent the two unions

from going bankrupt, the NZRFU provided a \$100,000 loan in advance of future central handouts to each of the unions in 1998.



Figure 7.1 - Boundaries of provincial unions, colour codes: purple - 1st division; blue - 2nd division; green - 3rd division (ranking 2000, www.nzrugby.com/player/team/npc)

The only provincial union to use its maximum quota of five players in 1996 was Southland which won the 2nd division final that year and thus qualified for 1st division promotion (for the fourth time since its first relegation to the 2nd division in 1981) replacing King Country (Garland, 1997: 297). Together with Taranaki and Hawke's Bay, the Southland union accounted for 57% of the movement between the two top divisions in the period between 1984 and 1996 (Minutes of the Provincial Advisory

Group, Jan. 1999)⁸⁴. Southland's five player-transfers at the end of the 1996 season cost the union \$107,500. The other 1st division unions' transfer fees included \$95,000 for the Canterbury union's two players, \$60,000 for the Wellington union's two players, \$55,000 for the Otago union's four players, \$35,000 for the North Harbour union's four players, \$22,500 for the Waikato union's three players, and \$16,000 for the Taranaki union's three players (Minutes of the Provincial Advisory Group, Jan. 1999).

In 1997, the Canterbury and Wellington provincial unions were the biggest 'spenders' on the transfer market. The Canterbury provincial union recruited five players, paying a total of \$100,000 in transfer fees alone, while Wellington paid \$117,000 in transfer fees for three players. North Harbour's five player-transfers cost the union only \$50,000, Northland's four players cost \$57,000, Auckland's two players cost \$45,000, Counties-Manukau's two players cost \$30,000, Waikato's one player cost \$30,000, Taranaki's one player cost \$20,000 and Otago's one player cost \$12,500 (Minutes of the Provincial Advisory Group, Jan. 1999). By contrast, the seven transfers to 2nd and 3rd division unions in 1997 did not require any transfer fees. In total, provincial unions paid \$528,500 in transfer fees for 29 players in 1996, \$462,000 for 33 players in 1997, \$445,000 for 34 players in 1998, \$370,000 for 44 players in 1999, and \$446,800 for 45 players in 2000. The NZRFU distributed \$450,000 to provincial unions in 1996 to help with the cost of transfer fees and the contracting of players not on NZRFU contracts (Hill, 1997: 284).

Between 1996 and 2000, the Southland provincial union accounted for the second highest number of player transfers (17). Only North Harbour 'bought' more players in total over the five years (21). By comparison, the Auckland and Otago unions each 'sold' more than twice as many players as the other 1st division unions, 27 and 24 players respectively. The three 2nd division unions Hawke's Bay, King Country and

⁸⁴ Between 1984 and 1996 the following movements between provincial unions could be registered: 29% of teams promoted were relegated the following year; 36% of teams relegated were promoted the following year; 39% of the movement between divisions could be accounted for by two unions (Taranaki and Southland); while 57% of the movement between divisions could be accounted for by three unions (Taranaki, Southland and Hawke's Bay) (Minutes of the Provincial Advisory Group, Jan. 1999).

Manawatu, as well as 3rd division union Wanganui, experienced a significant player drain over the five years. Leaving the transfers from 1996 out of the equation because of the discrepancy in the transfer numbers, the 2nd division unions experienced a player loss of five between 1997 and 2000 while the 1st division unions' transfers balanced out and the 3rd division unions gained five players. However, this does not suggest that 2nd division players only moved to 3rd division unions and 1st division players moved to other 1st division unions. When comparing these movements with the provincial unions' number of players on NZRFU contracts over the five-year period (see Appendix 2, table 2) the 'best' player talent from the 2nd division unions increasingly moved to the large city-based 1st division unions which hosted Super 12 teams.

7.4 *Consolidating player strength: Super 12 host unions and player transfers*

The establishment of the Super 12 competition, which involved the five provincial unions Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago 'hosting' the five Super 12 teams, further entrenched the competitive divisions between the 27 provincial unions. These five unions increased their share of NZRFU-contracted players over the five-year period either by purchasing players from other unions or by developing players. Only two overseas based players were contracted by the NZRFU in the five year period, one from Western Samoa and one from France. Both players gained contracts with their Super 12 host union after the completion of their first Super 12 season. This exacerbated the tendency for the large city-based unions, hosting tests and now also hosting Super 12 teams, to act as the 'farm system' for the development of the NZRFU's All Black player pool.

The Super 12 host unions consistently had a large number of affiliated players on NZRFU contracts, which helped to strengthen both 'their' Super 12 teams and their provincial teams in the NPC competition. Table 2 in Appendix 2 shows the number of players on NZRFU contracts (playing in the Super 12 competition) based on player affiliation to a provincial union. The table shows that between 1996 and 2000 the number of NZRFU-contracted players affiliated with 2nd and 3rd division unions dropped dramatically while the 1st division unions increased their number of NZRFU-

contracted players. In 1996, 22 out of 153 players on NZRFU contracts were affiliated to 2nd and 3rd division unions. By 1998, this number had dropped to 10. In both 1999 and 2000, only one NZRFU-contracted player was not affiliated to a 1st division union. Only two 3rd division players obtained NZRFU contracts in the five-year period. This information, combined with the information on the domestic player transfers (see Appendix 2, table 1), shows that the Super 12 host unions' increase in NZRFU-contracted players (apart from their own player development and very few overseas recruits) resulted from their recruitment of the best player talent from four 2nd division unions and the minor 1st division unions.

Over the five-year period the five unions hosting Super 12 teams increased their share of the total group of NZRFU-contracted players from 61 per cent in 1996 to 81 per cent in 2000. The 1st division unions increased their combined share of NZRFU-contracted players from 85 per cent in 1996 to 99 per cent in 1999 and 2000. The number of NZRFU-contracted players affiliated to non-Super 12 host unions therefore dropped from 39 per cent in 1996 to 28 per cent in 1999. In 2000, it had further dropped to 19 per cent (although this percentage may increase when replacement player lists are released in April 2001).

Table 7.1 Super 12 host unions' overall share of NZRFU-contracted players 1996-2000

Super 12 hosting unions' NZRFU affiliated players	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000*
Auckland	25	28	26	26	24
Canterbury	20	23	24	29	24
Otago	20	23	21	22	24
Tairāhiti	14	12	16	21	15
Wellington	14	12	13	10	18
Combined share out of total	93/153 (61%)	103/151 (65%)	100/150 (67%)	108/151 (72%)	105/130 (81%)

* 2000 numbers do not include replacement players

Despite the tendency for players on NZRFU contracts to become concentrated with the large city-based 1st division unions, players affiliated with the Super 12 host unions also transferred to non-Super 12 host unions. Two of the five provincial unions,

Auckland and Otago, acquired fewer players than they ‘sold’ on the transfer market over the four years despite having a stable number of players on NZRFU contracts. The Auckland provincial union ‘sold’ 13 players over and above its player ‘purchases’ over the five years, while the Otago union ‘sold’ nine players more than it acquired, despite both unions maintaining a high number of NZRFU-contracted players (see table 7.1). By contrast, the movement of players to the Waikato and Wellington provincial unions exceeded these unions’ ‘sales’ by four and six players respectively. The Waikato union increased its total number of NZRFU-contracted players from 14 in 1996 to 21 in 1999. But its ‘share’ dropped to 15 in 2000. The Wellington union’s number of NZRFU-contracted players fluctuated from 14 in 1996 to 10 in 1999 rising to 18 in 2000. By contrast, the Canterbury union recruited only two players more than it sold over the five years despite increasing its share of NZRFU-contracted players from 20 in 1996 to 29 in 1999. However, its share of NZRFU-contracted players was 24 in 2000.

7.5 *The ‘franchise’ business: Cultivating new publics for Super 12 teams*

The consolidation of player strength within the Super 12 host unions had both competitive and financial consequences for provincial unions and the NPC competition. The five provincial unions selected to host the Super 12 teams used their allocation of a Super 12 team to generate more income which, in turn, they used to strengthen both their NPC teams and attract more sponsors. This was highlighted in the five Super 12 host unions’ gradual increase in their share of NZRFU-contracted players.

The five provincial unions’ incentive to ‘host’ the Super 12 teams in 1996 included a fixed match fee and a less tangible reward in the form of the Super 12 competition’s global media exposure. The NZRFU retained the gate-income for home matches except play-offs, the television rights income, sponsorship income for the naming rights in New Zealand and for the apparel contract for the five New Zealand teams. Only play-off matches were governed by the SANZAR organisation’s gate-sharing stipulation, which required that a semi-final host pay the ‘travelling’ opponent

\$US25,000 and a finals host pay a 'travelling' opponent \$US100,000 (Hill, 1998). However, in 1997, the NZRFU decided to give the Super 12 host unions the gate-income for the home matches, in return for the fixed match fee, as an added incentive to 'improve' their teams' performance and thus spectator appeal after the first Super 12 season in which the host unions incurred financial losses. Under the new "franchising" system, the host unions were required to share the new reward with their regional partner-unions.

This shift towards a greater degree of decentralised control over the Super 12 teams was referred to by the NZRFU Director of Rugby Services as "franchising":

...we decided that after the first year when we had hospital-like bulk funding to each of the unions who were running those teams, we went to franchising, and it is proper franchising. They are franchises like a McDonald's franchise. They have got a whole lot of disciplines in them and we essentially say to the Canterbury Rugby Union, here is the Crusaders brand. Your job is to build the value of that brand. We will provide you with the players and the coaches paid and all their accommodation, they're in your care and at the end of the period, we want them better than when you got them (interview with Bill Wallace, NZRFU Director of Rugby Services, July 1998).

By 1998, a management board for each Super 12 team was established which included the CEO's of each of the provincial unions in the regions (Hill, 1999). The increased decentralisation of the financial management of the Super 12 teams, typical of franchise operations, was implemented to encourage the host unions to generate profits.

However, the chairman of the NZRFU stated that the Super 12 teams were not, in fact, franchises, which highlights the ambiguity with respect to control and ownership of the new teams. In his argument, the NZRFU maintained centralised ownership of the teams and the players' and coaches' contracts. He argued that the teams were "branch offices" of the NZRFU, which suggested that the provincial unions had minimal control of the teams:

If it was a true franchise we would have sold them instead of costing us a lot of money to set up in the first place, we would have sold them. That would have been interesting because we might have got some very interesting offers from non-traditional rugby unions. We might have had business people say, yes I would like to buy the Auckland Blues and I will pay \$3 million for the franchise and then they would go and lease Eden Park or Ericson. We didn't go down that route. We very much wanted to stay within the traditional rugby set-up. So it is not really accurate to call them franchises. In some ways it is more of a branch office of the

NZRFU because the brands are owned by the NZRFU. The unions that are running them have got a three-year contract and we look at them again. It is unlikely in my view that they will move...so we didn't approach that on strict business lines. If we had I think the NZRFU would have made a lot of money in the short term but I think we would have rather more difficulty in retaining the traditional shape of the competition (interview with Rob Fisher, chairman of the NZRFU 1996-2000, March 1998).

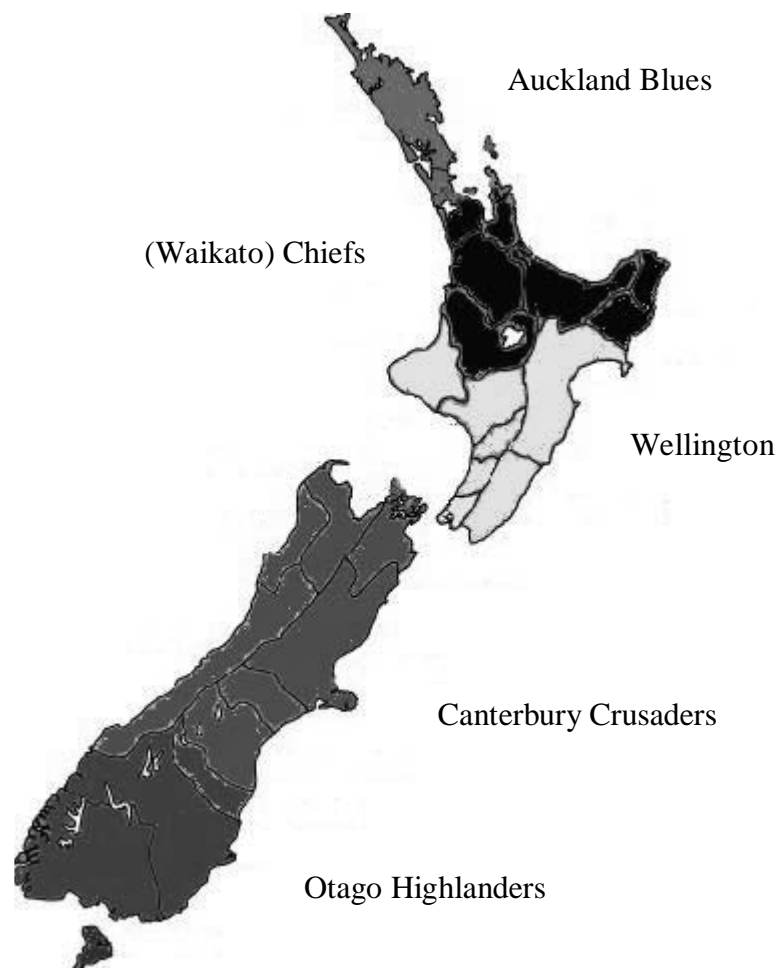
The point here is that remaining in the 'traditional rugby set-up' meant that unions rather than private owners, became 'franchise' holders. Further, that this limit on the form of franchising of the Super 12 teams/franchises enabled the NZRFU to retain a high degree of control. This form of 'franchising' contrasted with the Super League proposal for the expansion of the game in Europe (Denham, 2000). In a report accepted by the English Rugby League, plans to amalgamate English clubs in the same city were revealed. The report also included a new principle for clubs' inclusion in the Super League competition. This included the franchising of existing and new clubs by offering the opportunity for "existing clubs, from any division and any business executives who wished to establish a club in any of the areas favoured in the report...to submit an application for a franchise" (Denham, 2000: 284).

Despite the NZRFU's control over the Super 12 teams, it did encourage the cultivation of *regional* and *national* publics for Super 12 teams by giving the host unions opportunities to generate their own income from home matches. The NZRFU's attachment of Super 12 teams to 'regions' thus presented both opportunities and constraints for the provincial unions hosting them. In contrast to the proposal for a global league of corporate professional teams, as considered by Leifer (1995), the New Zealand teams in the transnational Super 12 competition were promoted as both regionally-affiliated to provincial unions *and* as national teams. The Super 12 teams' continued association with cities and provincial unions therefore made for a different 'global league' than that envisaged by Leifer. The allocation of Super 12 teams to existing, successful provincial unions thus adopted the aspect of the Super League proposal that required clubs to be allocated to different, large European cities.

Leifer's solution to the expansion of leagues to cultivate international publics views the attachment of teams to cities as a limitation. To expand leagues to cultivate regular international publics, Leifer proposes attaching teams to multinational corporations. In

Leifer's global league fans would be encouraged to follow their favourite team and athletes from a range of 'global' teams affiliated to multinational corporations including, for example, Toyota, Nike, IBM, etc. Cities would bid to host games as they would be "freed of seeing a league entirely through the lens of a single team". Additionally, "teams would be freed of home locations", travelling around the globe playing their matches in new locations throughout the year (Leifer, 1995: 300).

Figure 7.2 New Zealand Super 12 regions (1999)



In the Super 12 competition local loyalties became both a solution and a hindrance. Rather than viewing existing local loyalties as a hindrance to cultivating broader publics, the NZRFU's allocation of Super 12 teams to the five provincial unions was meant to encourage the host unions to cultivate and retain existing and new publics for 'their' Super 12 team. In so doing, they helped promote the five teams as *New Zealand's* teams. The host unions' marketing managers were encouraged to redefine existing "local sporting tastes and loyalties" (Whitson, 1998: 65) in order to cultivate new overlapping local and national publics. News Corporation's global media dissemination of the competition ensured that it became broadcast beyond the southern hemisphere.

The job of promoting the five Super 12 teams thus required strategies to retain and cultivate new publics. To promote the new teams, the NZRFU and the host unions' marketing managers appealed to "civic sentiments" to boost their economic goals, straddling "the language of communal traditions and loyalties" with "commercial images and the discourses of consumer choice" (Whitson, 1998: 59-60; Boyle and Haynes, 1996). In addition to including the name of the host union in the name of the Super 12 teams, the colours of the new teams' playing strip were selected on the basis of the colours of the 1st division unions represented within each region. As the only 1st division union in its region, the Canterbury Crusaders team could retain its traditional red and black colours in the design of the new playing strip. The other four Super 12 teams included the colours of the several 1st division unions in their playing strip. This requirement to use a multiple of colours created new NZRFU-owned products but it also made the design of uniforms increasingly difficult for the apparel manufacturer, who faced criticism for producing both unattractive and 'clashing' uniforms (interview with marketing manager, Canterbury Clothing Company, May 1996).

In compensation for the cost of managing the new teams, the NZRFU provided the host unions with an administration and marketing grant in 1996. The Canterbury provincial union received \$130,000 "to off-set the increasing costs resulting from the commencement of the Rugby Super 12" (Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statement, 1996: 31n18). Two Super 12 host unions, the Wellington and

Waikato provincial unions, received additional help from the NZRFU's marketing company, the Baldwin Boyle Group, to promote 'their' Super 12 teams. This company had been appointed as the NZRFU's "public relations council" in 1995 in conjunction with the NZRFU's "battle against the WRC". In 1996, the company was contracted to help promote the "new regional concept of Rugby Super 12" (Baldwin Boyle Group, 1998). According to the Baldwin Boyle Group's media presentation, the company helped develop the Wellington Hurricanes - "the weakest New Zealand team on paper". The media campaign focused on Wellington player "Bull" Allen and the "Hurricane Country" to build 'Super 12 support. This campaign was later adapted to promote the Waikato Chiefs, which was seen by the NZRFU to be struggling to develop an 'identity' as a result of the boundary dispute in establishing the two most northern Super 12 regions.

The NZRFU's allocation of the Super 12 team to the Waikato union and not to the North Harbour union which had lobbied hard to be allocated a Super 12 team had created management disputes between these partner-unions in the same Super 12 team. Additionally, the decision to draw the regional boundaries for the Waikato Chiefs and the Auckland Blues teams in a manner that combined unions which were not geographically connected caused a great deal of criticism. The boundaries of the two most northern Super 12 regions were designed so that the Waikato Chiefs region included the two most northern unions, Northland and North Harbour, with the central North Island unions Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Thames Valley, King Country and East Coast. The Auckland Blues region included the Auckland and Counties-Manukau unions. This constituted the Auckland Blues region as a dividing 'belt' between the unions included in the Waikato Chiefs region.

After the Waikato Chiefs achieved a best performance of only sixth place in the first three Super 12 seasons, the Baldwin Boyle Group became employed to help promote the team. 'Waikato' was dropped from the Waikato Chiefs Super 12 name as a strategy to encourage new 'loyalty bonds' and the Baldwin Boyle Group's media campaign became focused on the Super 12 team's supporters, "the Tribe". This was explained in the Baldwin Boyle Group's media presentation: "The idea of the Tribe

has been to build support for the previously unsuccessful franchise and break down the barriers between the disparate country and North Harbour unions that make up the franchise” (Baldwin Boyle Group, 1998). Despite these marketing campaigns, the NZRFU decided in 1999 to change the boundaries for the Chiefs and the Auckland Blues Super 12 regions so that both regions came to include geographically close and neighbouring provincial unions. The Auckland Blues region became the most northern New Zealand region and consisted of the Northland, North Harbour and Auckland unions (see figure 7.2 on p. 226). 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.

In contrast to the NZRFU’s support of the ‘struggling’ Waikato Chiefs and initially also the Wellington Hurricanes Super 12 teams, the three other Super 12 host unions’ marketing managers did their own “branding”. This branding process involved the marketing managers’ use of cultural and ethnic associations with their cities and regions to promote their new teams, as explained by the Canterbury union’s marketing manager:

...we were trying to think up new brand names. We were determined that we wanted new brand names that would encapsulate the region that we are representing. Auckland had already chosen the ‘Blues’ and Otago, with the Scottish background, came up with the name the Highlanders which really fits and we came up with the Crusaders because we felt we had a lot of emotional linkage that people could actually hang their hat on over time (interview with the marketing manager, Canterbury provincial union, April 1996).

Strategies to attract spectators to the Canterbury Crusaders matches included elaborate pre-match entertainment to enliven the Crusaders ‘brand’ such as rock-bands, fireworks, horsemen and new ticketing systems. To attract ‘family’ spectators, the Canterbury provincial union began a “Take a Kid to Footy” campaign in 1994. A \$20 Take a Kid to Footy ticket included uncovered stand tickets, permitting one adult to take along one child for free (with additional tickets for children priced at \$5). The “Take a Kid to Footy” campaign was so successful that the 2,000-3,000 tickets allocated for this arrangement sold out for many games, despite overall low spectator attendance in the first two seasons (see table 7.2). The union also implemented a new purchasing system using an 0800 phone number to ticketek under the slogan “Jump the

queue” (Marketing, 1998: 6). Prior to this arrangement, tickets were purchased in person and it had been tradition that long queues developed outside the union’s ticket office prior to major matches. Additionally, the union expanded its season ticket options to four different types. These reduced the cost of attending matches and provided flexibility with regard to the mixture of major rugby matches that purchasers were entitled to attend.

Despite these efforts to promote the new Canterbury Crusaders team to local publics, spectator attendance for the first season’s Super 12 home matches averaged only 9000 during a season when the team placed last. The Canterbury marketing manager highlighted the difficulty of promoting a new product and attracting spectators for home matches:

...we needed to get the brand of the Crusaders out there so that people knew of the Super 12 and they knew of the Crusaders brand and then we needed to turn that into a game-day response of people coming, bums on seat. Although I’m disappointed with the end result of bums on seat it is still, I believe, it is a 50-50 judgement call as to whether it has worked or not. Because it is a new brand and it takes time for people to create loyalty to a new brand... (interview with marketing manager, Canterbury provincial union, April 1996).

Despite the disappointing spectator numbers for the Canterbury Crusaders team’s home matches, the marketing manager for the apparel sponsor (until 1999) for the five New Zealand teams, Canterbury Clothing Company suggested that the overall spectator attendance for the first season was good. However, he indicated that the value of the deal with the NZRFU for the apparel company looked initially to be minimal because of the limited broadcasting reach of the competition in New Zealand. This was a result of News Corporation on-selling the broadcasting rights to the competition to the new pay-TV provider in New Zealand, SKY Television:

The gates that they got were extremely good for what was really a pretty ordinary season for the New Zealand teams...the other issue with that is that at the time we entered into negotiations to do the deal [with the NZRFU for the licence to make the five New Zealand Super 12 teams’ uniforms] you couldn’t calculate the benefits you were going to get from visibility because there were no television rights. Subsequent to that they went and put it on pay-TV which dramatically cut down the viewing audience. It has all been delayed and well delayed coverage on free-to-air, and SKY picked up a number of extra subscribers. But I think they [SKY] have under 20 per cent of the market place, it went to 17% or something. So from a visibility aspect, I think we would have been disappointed. But again it balanced out quite nicely (interview with marketing manager, Canterbury Clothing Company, May 1996).

As a result of the first season's low spectator attendance, the Canterbury Crusaders generated a profit of only \$111,000 for the home round-robin Super 12 matches of which \$51,000 was paid to the partner unions within the region (Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statement 1996: 31n18).

This contributed to a drop in gate-takings from 1995 to 1996 of over \$700,000. The combined gate-takings of \$657,000 for the Canterbury union in 1996 was less than half the income of \$1.4 million in 1995 when the union hosted four Ranfurly Shield matches which were attended by up to 39,000 spectators per match. Income from the Super 12 home matches in 1996 thus contributed less than a sixth of the overall gate-takings for that year. In 1997, the average spectator attendance for the Canterbury Crusaders home matches rose slightly to 12,300 following the team's overall sixth placing. By contrast, NPC matches in 1997 were attended by an average of 20,000 spectators following the Canterbury team's successful season and first division victory. This NPC success contributed to the union's combined gate-takings which rose to \$2.2 million. In 1998, following the Super 12 success of the Canterbury Crusaders team, the union profited over \$400,000 from reaching the final. The team's Super 12 victory helped increase spectator attendance to an average of 22,000 (interview with the Canterbury union's accountant, October 1998; Schumacher, 1998).

In contrast to the spectator increase for the Canterbury Crusaders team, spectator attendance for the Canterbury provincial team's NPC matches in 1998 dropped to an average of 13,500 following the Canterbury team's negative win-loss record. However, in 1999 both the Canterbury Crusaders and the Canterbury NPC team won their competitions. This helped consolidate the financial strength of the Canterbury union (see table 7.2).

Table 7.2 Canterbury provincial union - attendance, gate-takings and sponsorship income 1993-1998

Year	\$	Attend. RS	PC Home	ve. attend. PC	per 12 (ome)	ve. attend. per 12	Gate-takings	Sponsors
93							03,000	35,000*
94		,000 ,000	(2=RS)				12,000	60,000
95		,000	(4=RS)				,4 mill.	74,000
96						000	57,000	06,000
97			(semi & al)	,500		,300	,1 mill.	,4 mill
98				,500	(semi & al)	,000	.1 mill.	.6 mill.

(Canterbury Provincial Union, Annual Financial Statement, 1993-98; NPC and Super 12 attendance figures, 1996-98).

* Sponsorship income included interest in 1993.

While the fluctuating spectator attendance reflected the unpredictable appeal of matches (except for the Ranfurly Shield matches as highlighted in chapter four) and the difficulty in cultivating enduring local publics for unsuccessful teams, playing success was not the only factor facilitating the cultivation of enduring regional publics. The Wellington Hurricanes was the only team in the competition with a home “disadvantage” (Schwartz and Barsky, 1977) but high spectator attendance. The team lost more than 50% of its ‘home’ matches in the first three years of the competition, but continued to enjoy a high degree of spectator home support. Curiously, it also had the second highest away-win record (44.44 per cent) of all Super 12 teams (Gibson, 1997).

The Wellington Hurricanes high spectator support in home matches, despite losing, could partly be explained with reference to the staging of the team’s home matches at three different locations within its region. Despite hosting the opening Wellington Hurricanes’ home match in the first two seasons at the Palmerston North venue (home venue of the Manawatu provincial union), the Hurricanes’ board decided not to stage a Super 12 match there in 1998 but to award matches to Napier and New Plymouth (home venues of the Hawke’s Bay and Taranaki provincial unions). This decision encountered significant resistance from the Manawatu union and forced the Hurricanes’ board to reverse its decision. In turn, the board decided in the future to allocate two Hurricanes home matches per season on a roster basis to these unions and

required them to raise a guarantee of \$360,000 (Hill, 1999). This Super 12 team was more effective at cultivating *enduring* regional publics than the other teams and by the end of the 1990s most of the Super 12 host unions staged one or two of the teams' 'home' matches around their regions. Thus, in contrast to Leifer's (1995: chapter 9) proposal for a global league where local attachments are presented as a restriction to cultivating global publics, these regional teams in a transnational league were successful at cultivating regional publics.

7.6 *Summary: Super 12 success, economic divisions and centralised solutions*

As consequence of the introduction of the Super 12 competition, competitive balance increased between the five Super 12 host unions in the NPC 1st division while only two New Zealand teams dominated the Super 12 competition. The Auckland Blues team won the Super 12 competition in 1996 and 1997 and the Canterbury Crusaders team won the competition in 1998, 1999 and 2000. However, coinciding with the Auckland Blues team's Super 12 success, the Auckland NPC team lost its four-year grip on the NPC 1st division championship. The Auckland team won the NPC competition in 1996 after which Canterbury (1997) and Otago (1998) won it, before Auckland (1999) again won the title but could not retain it the following year when Wellington achieved NPC 1st division victory for the fourth time. Out of the five Super 12 host unions, only the Waikato team, which won the NPC 1st division in 1992, did not enjoy NPC success after the introduction of professionalism. However, while the competitive balance between the top provincial teams in the NPC 1st division increased in the new professional era, so did the financial differences between the four large city-based unions, and the remaining 23 unions including Waikato.

Not unlike the NZRFU, which itself incurred losses in the first two years of professional rugby, most of the provincial unions' expenses had increased significantly as a result of contracting provincial players to their unions. The NZRFU incurred a loss of \$3.2 million in 1995, which increased to \$6.2 million in 1996, before it reported a profit of approximately \$2 million in 1997 and 1998 (NZRFU Annual Financial Statements, 1995-1998). After two years of professional rugby union, only four

unions, all Super 12 hosts, generated sizeable profits. The Auckland and the Canterbury provincial unions generated the largest profits within a few years of professionalism. The Auckland union lost \$300,000 in 1995, profited by about \$275,000 in 1996 and was estimated to have made a profit of between \$700,000 and \$1 million in 1997 (Hunt, 1997a). By comparison, the Canterbury provincial union profited by only \$179,000 in 1995 and \$35,000 in 1996. However, by 1998 it increased its gate-takings and sponsorship income to over \$4 million. In total only fourteen unions were in the 'black' by 1997 with profits of between \$9,000 and \$1 million, while twelve provincial unions incurred losses of between \$0 and \$220,000. Five of the six unions in most debt were 1st division unions. Four of these unions were provided with a special NZRFU grant in addition to the \$70,000 NZRFU grant to each provincial union in 1997. In total, NZRFU grants increased from \$1.6 million in 1997 to \$2.1 million in 1998, and nearly doubled to \$4 million in 1999 (Minutes of the Provincial Advisory Group, Jan. 1999; Lilly, 1998).

By 1998 the NZRFU identified that the unions' worst financial difficulties were a result of expensive player 'purchases' especially by those unions on the cusp of promotion and relegation between the top two NPC divisions. This prompted the NZRFU to require unions to disclose their cost of player 'purchases' as a means of ensuring that the NZRFU grants were used, not to 'buy' players, but to develop new talents. This requirement for accountability was justified by an NZRFU administrator:

...what we are saying to the provincial unions is you be careful of your financial stability in your mad passion to get some silverware in your cabinet. And that is the only reward for winning the competition. There is no dollar reward. Just make sure that you don't over-commit yourself. And there has been evidence that some unions have extended themselves partly because of this passion and partly because of a lack of competency and a lack of understanding the financial pressures and the financial risks that exist in running a provincial team... They [players] are worth something to the provincial unions. So we can't inhibit any environment on the provincial unions but what we are doing is talking about good governance and good financial management. And remember that we are making grants and payments to them. So we are now tackling those requirements, in other words 'how many players are you developing, how much money are you putting into school development. If you are not doing that are you salting away this money?' So we have started a standardised set of accounts and there is a line in those that says player payments. And we want you to be up-front about it. Devious unions can still get away with it, by off-balancing items, we understand that but that will last for [only] so long. Eventually you catch up (interview with Bill Wallace, NZRFU Director of Rugby Services, July 1998).

The unions' financial losses came at a time when the All Black team experienced losses against both South Africa and Australia and the NZRFU's SANZAR partners argued for an increase in their number of Super 12 teams. The NZRFU vetoed their request, arguing that an expanded Super 12 competition would exacerbate the problems facing the local NPC competition. In response to the provincial unions' financial troubles, it proposed to restructure the NPC competition by abolishing the automatic promotion-relegation regulation. This concern to protect the viability of the NPC competition was highlighted by the same NZRFU administrator:

Never squeeze the NPC competition because that is our premier competition. Super 12 is not New Zealand's competition. It is an international competition which we participate in. Our premier competition is the NPC 1st division. The day we weaken that is the day we weaken our infrastructure. So we are not going to do that. And we will be announcing in September [1998] the changes to the NPC that are going to take place in the next few years and it will only be designed to strengthen the whole infrastructure, giving people certainty, saying this is going to be the landscape. You will see some interesting changes but they are changes of subtlety and enhancement, they are not revolutionary, just evolutionary (interview with Bill Wallace, NZRFU Director of Rugby Services, July 1998).

Between 1998 and 2000, several NZRFU proposals were presented to the provincial unions but all were rejected. The first rejected proposal included two options for a restructuring of the NPC competition: a one division competition - including the ten largest and most successful unions and six teams made up of an amalgamation of the remaining 17 provincial unions' teams - or a two division competition - retaining the 1st division and amalgamating the existing 2nd and 3rd divisions. The second rejected proposal, created by an NZRFU 'team' headed by former All Black captain and All Black manager Brian Lochore, included one 1st division with no promotion/relegation including 13 teams (covering all 27 provincial unions). This division would be comprised of three teams from each of the three North Island Super 12 regions and two from each of the two South Island Super 12 regions. The 2nd division would be comprised of teams from all 27 unions split into three regional competitions.

In response to the unions' rejection of the proposed changes to the NPC restructure, the NZRFU presented a 'compromise'. This compromise included a retention of the three divisions in the NPC and an increase, to a maximum of 12 teams, in the 1st division with new entrants required to fulfil three new 1st division entry criteria. (Minutes of the Provincial Advisory Group, Jan., 1999). Instead of relying solely on promotion-

relegation as a means of regulating entry to the 1st division, the three entry criteria included competitiveness, financial viability, and population base and number of registered players. These criteria paralleled those included in the Super League franchising requirements (Denham, 2000: 284). The criteria were weighted differently, with competitiveness being the most important (45 per cent) closely followed by financial viability (40 per cent) and player registration and population base (15 per cent)⁸⁵. In total, a provincial union had to achieve a “score” of 70 in order to be considered for promotion to the 1st division (Minutes of the Provincial Advisory Group, Jan., 1999). The implementation of the ‘compromise’ did not result in the inclusion of new 1st division teams in 2000 because neither the 2nd division winner Nelson Bays nor the runner up, Bay of Plenty, was able to fulfil the entry criteria. However, by 2001, the 1st division will expand with the inclusion of 2nd division winner Bay of Plenty after NZRFU grants of \$300,000 and a loan of \$100,000 have enabled the union to achieve the required position of financial ‘viability’ (Hill, 2000).

After five years of professional rugby union, the financial disparities between provincial unions have further increased those divisions created in the ‘amateur’ period when performance inequality between provincial teams was structured according to city-size. The unions hosting Super 12 teams have confirmed their position as ‘super unions’. They act as suppliers of the largest number of Super 12 players through their establishment of their own ‘farm systems’ and their dominant financial position. This enables them to attract the best player talent in the country with the promise of the best sporting opportunities. This shift in the institutional form of player development, from clubs and representative teams in the amateur period to provincial unions’ ‘farms’, the NZRFU’s Academy and the Super 12 teams in the professional era, has effectively ‘disenfranchised’ the clubs as the breeding ground for the development of rugby union players. In the professional era, local and national sponsors have become the financial

⁸⁵ Competitiveness included win/loss record, points for and against, tries for and against, transfer of players in and out of union, loan of players and future composition of team. Financial viability included accumulated funds, liquidity and cash flow, value of sponsorship contracts, manageable marketing plan, sound governance, appropriate structure and human resources, appropriate representative management structure and acceptable stadia. The criteria for registered players and population base included between 5 and 15,000 affiliated players and a population base for the province of between 2.5 and 15% of the total population (Minutes of the Provincial Advisory Group, Jan. 1999).

backers of unions' 'farm systems' for their NPC teams. These teams have been constituted as the feeder teams for the Super 12 competition supplying the NZRFU with an All Black player pool. Additionally, local and national sponsors' representatives have replaced club representatives on the provincial and national unions' decision-making boards further embedding the interdependence of sponsors and professional rugby.

8

CONCLUSION

The explanation I have given for New Zealand's *exceptionalism* focuses on both relations within New Zealand and between New Zealand sporting bodies and the sporting bodies of other countries. This dual focus follows analyses of globalisation in the sociology of sport, which have "moved away from conceiving social change as the internal developments of societies" (Featherstone and Lash, (1995: 2) cited in Maguire, 1999: 3). However, unlike, for example, Maguire's (1999: 5-6) analysis, which is concerned with explaining the "global sportization formation" as linked with "inter-civilizational processes", my focus is institutional and historical. The significance of focusing on the development of institutions over time is that it has enabled me to treat the institutionalisation of rugby union as 'sociologically problematic'. In particular, understanding its institutionalisation in New Zealand required recognising that internal developments were always part of a transnational game.

The dual focus of my argument also situates the work of local authors in a different frame. Fougere's (1989) and Perry's (1989) analyses of rugby union, which predict the decline of its centrality in New Zealand, are internally focused accounts which

emphasise the decline of community identification through rugby. They focus on the national All Black team and its declining ability to foster a sense of national identity. In doing so, they assume or take for granted that the All Black team is the key to understanding the popularity of rugby union in New Zealand. By contrast, I have focused on the organisational structures and relations, which constitute the game as a means to explain the cultivation of popular support for both provincial unions and the All Black team. The significance of this focus on organisational structures is that it provides an explanation for not only how popular support was generated at both provincial and national levels, but also how organisational structures were introduced and modified to shape this support.

My account of local developments borrowed from Leifer's (1995) comparative historical analysis of the four major sports leagues in North America. Leifer (1995) shows how the organisational form of the leagues varied and was shaped by tensions between the interests of team owners and league administrators. I used this comparative organisational focus to show how different organisational strategies for organising rugby in New Zealand and England were also the outcomes of tensions between national and local actors. The institutionalisation of the game in the two countries was characterised by the power of the national union in New Zealand to regulate provincial unions, and the strength of clubs to resist regulation by the national union in England. The establishment of the NZRFU in 1892, as a *national federation* of provincial unions, institutionalised the principle that clubs were to be *subordinated* to provincial unions (Gallaher and Stead, 1906). The game in New Zealand was organised nationally through provincial unions which controlled graded club competitions, players' eligibility to participate in club competitions and gate-takings from club matches. By contrast, in England London-based *clubs* had established the English RFU twenty years earlier (1871) and, in doing so, ensured that clubs retained a significant degree of *autonomy*. Their concern was to protect the game as amateur against the development of exclusive club-based league competitions which relied upon the promotion of a 'spectators' game in the North of England. They viewed league competitions and spectator interest as a precursor to professionalism.

The focus on provincial teams and inter-provincial league and cup competitions in New Zealand enabled me to explain how the popularity of the game in the amateur period was generated through the attachment of provincial teams to large cities. These competitions facilitated the *cultivation* of local publics for these city-based provincial teams (Leifer, 1995), and, in doing so, protected the provincial unions' most significant income source. I argued that it was these organisational forms, rather than an assured identification with the All Black team and the New Zealand game's inclusiveness, that explains the differences between the popularity of the game in New Zealand and England. More significantly, these organisational forms included the adoption of aspects of *professional competitions* within an amateur game.

This analytical focus on 'professional' league and cup competitions also provides an explanation for the dominance of the three large city-based provincial unions in New Zealand, Auckland, Canterbury and Wellington. Popular support for these city-based teams, in turn, created what Leifer (1995) calls "ordered inequality". More significantly, their dominance of the inter-provincial competitions provided them with a position of strength relative to the NZRFU. They have maintained this position of strength in the professional period. The NZRFU's desire to popularise inter-provincial competitions meant that it conceded to their interest in regular competitions, but, not without limiting their ability to dominate these competitions. The dominance of the Ranfurly Shield by the three large city-based provincial unions was limited by the NZRFU's shield regulations, which ensured that provincial unions were allowed to organise only a limited number of annual shield matches. This NZRFU strategy managed the *tensions* between its concern to cultivate publics and the 'Home Unions' concern with organised competitions.

The later introduction of the NPC national divisional competition represented another 'professional solution' promoted by the city-based provincial unions. They identified the lack of *balanced* matches with which to attract and retain local publics as their major problem. Their solution was a national league of graded divisions. However, this competition's ability to cultivate *enduring* publics was limited by the NZRFU's resistance to introduce 'closed circuit' leagues. The NPC established with 'open'

divisions, ensured through promotion-relegation regulations, which did not include play-offs until 1992. The introduction of the latter coincided with increasing competition for national *television publics* from the Australian rugby league Winfield Cup competition.

The organisational structures of the inter-provincial competitions, which ensured the dominance and financial strength of large city-based provincial unions, also created tensions between provincial unions. The financial strength of the city-based teams was furthered by the allocation of national test matches to the three city-based unions and the fourth large city-based union, Otago. Additionally, the competitive dominance of these four unions in the NPC 1st division, coupled with television exposure of the competition, enabled them to generate and increase their income from *commercial sponsors*. The significance of these sponsors was signalled by their replacement of local volunteers on new ‘independent’ boards controlling provincial unions. This change coincided with the appointment of ‘professional’ staff whose job was to attract spectators and sponsors. However, similar moves to control the NZRFU were blocked by smaller provincial unions’ resistance to being de-coupled from the national board.

Following the introduction of professionalism, financial and competitive differences between provincial unions have intensified rather than decreased. Provincial unions’ ability to strengthen their representative teams with ‘imported’ players has enabled the wealthiest provincial unions to dominate the domestic player transfer market. The establishment of the five regional Super 12 teams as *NZRFU franchises* subordinated to the All Black team, and their allocation to the four large city-based unions and Waikato, has formally institutionalised the strength of these unions. Additionally, by establishing ‘farm systems’ that supply player talent, these unions have created a new income source from the new transfer market. This flow to, and development of player talent by, these unions are critical for their maintenance of a Super 12 franchise.

While Leifer’s (1995) organisational and economic focus was useful for my focus on internal organisational relations, I have had to rework his national ‘frame’ to include a focus on external relations. Appadurai’s (1995) cultural analysis of cricket in India

explains how *external* social relations shaped the emergence of cricket as India's national game. Like Fougere (1989) and Perry (1989), Appadurai (1995) focused is on the establishment of a national Indian cricket team. However, unlike the two New Zealand sociologists, Appadurai's (1995) attention to relations between India and England enables him to identify that the establishment of a 'colonial enterprise' was not nationalist inspired. This focus on external relations is a critical component of my analysis of the adoption of the British game of rugby in the colonial context of New Zealand. Not only were relations with England significant for shaping the NZRFU's internal organisational strategies to regulate provincial unions and players, but they were also critical for provoking the rivalry between the professional and amateur rugby codes.

The organisation of the game in New Zealand was dedicated to promoting it as *national* and *popular*. The national administrators and players viewed themselves as 'Britishers' (Gallaher and Stead, 1906), not New Zealand nationalists, and in playing British games within an imperial touring network they desired to become more, not less, British (Appadurai, 1995). However, in their efforts to establish competitive national teams through 'scientifically' developed playing methods and inclusiveness towards men of all social backgrounds they provoked the three 'Home Unions' in England, Scotland and Ireland to view their local organisation of the game as 'veiled' professionalism. The success of the 1905-06 All Black team in the British Isles confirmed this view. Despite this British view, the team's success encouraged the NZRFU to both protect and strengthen the All Black team and maintain the game as amateur. In so doing, the national union sparked the establishment of the professional code of rugby league in the southern hemisphere. This development provoked a *rivalry* between the two codes which has intensified, rather than diminished, over the 20th century.

The NZRFU's interest in protecting the All Black team also had an extremely important *ethnic* dimension represented by a national ethnic team. My comparative historical focus on forms of ethnic exclusion and inclusion in sports has enabled me to interpret the New Zealand Maori team as a form of both ethnic promotion and

marginalisation (Nauright, 1997; Beckles and Stoddart, 1995; James, 1963; Ribowsky, 1995). The New Zealand Maori rugby union team was established in 1910 coinciding with the growing popularity of the professional rugby league code on the Australian East Coast. Copying the establishment of a national Maori rugby league team in 1909, the NZRFU's institutionalisation of *dual national and ethnic* teams promoted Maori players and Maori rugby. In so doing, it halted the exodus of Maori players to the professional rugby league code.

The significance of the institutionalisation of the New Zealand Maori team was not only internal to New Zealand. It also played an important part in promoting an ethnic institutionalisation of the game internationally. The establishment of the New Zealand Maori team coincided with criticism expressed about the exclusion of Maori players from All Black teams and the departure of a number of prominent Maori players to rugby league. Additionally, following the exclusion of Maori players from All Black teams touring South Africa, international contact was established between the New Zealand Maori team and Pacific Island national teams. This contact helped duplicate a dual national and ethnic institutionalisation of teams at the global level. As a result, national Pacific Island rugby teams were marginalised until the establishment of the Rugby World Cup in 1987. The establishment of this *tournament*, provoked by the growing media interest in the game, forced a *realignment* of the colonial relations in the game and the inclusion of 'minor' rugby nations as IRB members.

Television and player mobility between countries represent two central features of recent changes to national and international relations in the sport and to the NZRFU's strategies to protect the game. They are also two critical features identified in the 'globalisation' of sport thesis (Bale and Maguire, 1994; Williams, 1994; Whitson, 1998; Maguire, 1999). The realignment of rugby relations, and the increasing media-generated sponsorship opportunities demonstrated that the securing of television publics was the key to the major shift in the game of rugby union. The three southern hemisphere national rugby unions, the NZRFU, and the national unions in South Africa and Australia (SANZAR), resisted a take-over of the game by a rival professional rugby union organisation, the WRC, in 1995. They did this by accepting

their own global media sponsorship income and the establishment of the ‘closed circuit’ transnational Super 12 ‘television league’. Their victory against an alliance of ‘their’ elite players and the media-backed WRC forced the three national rugby unions to offer players *professional contracts*. This end to the amateur regulations, which had forced the split in the game and the establishment of professional rugby in the North of England 100 years earlier, led to the establishment of two rugby professional codes. Additionally, the new media sponsorship *fragmented* the New Zealand television public by shifting ‘live’ access to the ‘national’ game to pay-TV providers.

The media alliance between the SANZAR organisation and News Corporation established the southern hemisphere as a new power-block in a game previously dominated by the Home Unions. In the New Zealand case, the establishment of the transnational Super 12 competition was followed by an increase, rather than a decrease, in the NZRFU’s control over New Zealand teams and players. The global expansion and promotion of this competition for new regional ‘super’ teams has not provoked a loss of national attachment and identification. This competition, therefore, is not a sign of a “global monoculture, in which European and Commonwealth sports are supplanted by North American ones” (Whitson, 1998: 71). In contrast to Leifer’s (1995: chapter 9) future global ‘prototype’ league, which requires a detachment of teams from cities and nations and their attachment to multinational corporations in order to cultivate global audiences, the Super 12 competition is building renewed and new audiences nationally and globally.

While the success of the new media sponsored professional league provided elite players with local and national careers, it also provided a new arena for players to make global reputations and thereby enhance their mobility to move to the northern hemisphere. To block these moves the NZRFU promoted new centralised solutions. These included the introduction of stricter national eligibility criteria governing players’ international careers and the introduction of national professional Super 12 contracts to protect the All Black team. Its control over the composition of the five New Zealand Super 12 teams represents an exceptional case of centralised control by a

national sports organisation over professional players and professional teams (Wilson, 1994).

The game of rugby union continues to be one played by nations, but its global span now exceeds the former 'orderly' Commonwealth community and New Zealand's place in it has become increasingly uncertain. As New Zealand's exceptionalism is celebrated in the new global game, its dominance is threatened. New Zealand's dominance in the professional era was initially achieved through Super 12 teams but, in the new era the All Black team's advantage is no longer assured, as it was in the amateur period, through the adoption of organisational aspects of professional sports. In the context of a professional game, organisational solutions at club and national level, as Leifer (1995) has pointed out, no longer guarantee success. Success, as the global media companies understand it, is now measured by the success of the global game. The respective positions of nations and clubs within the game are therefore necessarily uncertain. The All Black team is not guaranteed a place among the top three rugby nations and this has increased the pressure on the NZRFU to develop new strategies to further protect the national game and halt the All Black team's loss of ground to opposition in bigger overseas markets. The continued exceptionalism and dominance of New Zealand rugby is therefore threatened in the new global game.

APPENDIX:

Table 1. Provincial unions' player transfers (1996-2000)

1st Division PC unions*	1996 ⁸⁶ In/Out	1997 In/Out	1998 In/Out	1999 In/Out	2000 In/Out	Total In/Out
Auckland	0/3	2/4	5/7	2/8	5/5	14/27
Canterbury	2/1	5/0	2/4	2/5	1/0	12/10
Counties- Manukau	0/0	2/2	3/3	3/5	2/1	10/11
North Harbour	4/0	5/2	2/0	5/2	5/2	21/6
Northland	0/0	4/2	0/2	0/1	0/1	4/6
Otago	4/1	1/5	3/1	4/7	3/10	15/24
Southland	5/0	0/0	3/3	4/2	5/2	17/7
Taranaki	3/2	2/1	0/3	3/1	4/2	12/9
Tairāhema	3/1	2/2	4/1	1/0	1/3	11/7
Wellington	2/0	3/2	4/0	5/6	2/2	16/10
Total in/out)	(23/8) +15	(26/20) +6	(26/24) +2	(29/37) -8	(28/28) 0	(132/117) +15
2nd Division PC unions						
Bay of Plenty	2/1	0/1	1/1	0/0	5/3	8/6
Bay of Plenty	0/1	1/4	0/0	0/1	2/2	3/8
Bay of Plenty	1/2	0/3	0/1	0/0	1/2	2/6
Bay of Plenty	3/0	0/1	0/4	0/3	1/1	4/9
Bay of Plenty	0/0	0/0	3/1	5/1	1/2	9/4
Bay of Plenty	0/0	0/0	2/0	2/0	0/0	4/0
Bay of Plenty	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/1	2/0	3/1
Total in/out)	(6/4) +2	(1/9) -8	(6/7) -1	(8/6) +2	(12/10) +2	(33/36) -3
3rd Division NPC unions						
Bay of Plenty	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/1	1/1
Bay of Plenty	0/0	0/0	0/0	2/0	2/0	4/0
Bay of Plenty	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/1	0/1
Bay of Plenty	0/0	2/0	0/0	2/0	2/0	6/0
Bay of Plenty	0/0	1/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/2
Bay of Plenty	0/0	0/0	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/1
Bay of Plenty	0/0	1/0	2/0	0/0	0/1	3/1
Bay of Plenty	0/0	0/1	0/1	0/0	0/4	0/6
Bay of Plenty	0/0	2/1	0/0	3/0	0/0	5/1
Bay of Plenty	0/0	0/0	0/1	0/1	0/0	0/2
Total in/out)	(0/0) 0	(6/4) +2	(2/3) -1	(7/1) +6	(5/7) -2	(20/15) +5
Totals	29/12	33/33	34/34	44/44	45/45	185/168

(Rugby Almanack of New Zealand 1997-2000, Minutes of the Provincial Advisory Group, Jan. 1999). *Provincial unions' division status based on the 2000 season.

⁸⁶ The SKY Television Rugby Almanack of New Zealand (1998: 91) lists 12 players transferring between provincial unions in 1996 while the NZRFU Provincial Advisory Group (1999) lists a total transfer of 29 players between provincial unions.

Table 2. Distribution of NZRFU-contracted players (1996-2000)

Division PC unions (1999)	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000*	Total
Auckland	25	28	26	26	24	129
Canterbury	20	23	24	29	24	120
Counties- Manukau	10	12	11	10	6	49
North Harbour	14	8	9	10	6	47
Northland	6	3	8	7	4	37
Otago	20	23	21	22	24	110
Southland	5	5	6	9	2	27
Taranaki	3	3	6	6	5	23
Tairāhema	14	12	16	21	15	78
Wellington	14	12	13	10	18	67
Western Tasman/France	0	1 (WS)	0	0	1(F)	2
Total)	(131)	(130)	(140)	(150)	(129)	
Mid Division PC unions						
Bay of Plenty	5	3	0	0	0	8
Bay of Awake's Bay	4	7	2	0	1	14
King Country	6	4	1	0	0	11
Manawatu	5	7	7	1	0	20
Marlborough	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Canterbury	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wellington Bays	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total)	(20)	(21)	(10)	(1)	(1)	
Mid Division NPC Unions						
Fuller	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Coast	0	0	0	0	0	0
Horowhenua	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital						
North Otago	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Otago	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Otago	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Canterbury	1	0	0	0	0	1
St James Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tairāhema	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tairarapa Bush	1	0	0	0	0	1
West Coast	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total)	(2)	(0)	(0)	(0)	0	
Totals	153	151	150	151	130	

(Rugby Almanack of New Zealand 1997-2000) **Bolded** unions are Super 12 hosts.

* 2000 numbers do not include replacement players.

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Canterbury Provincial Union:

Report	Annual Financial Statements	1899-1998
Report	Review Committee (Thomas Report)	1994
Minutes	Annual General Meeting	1995
Minutes	Annual General Meeting	1994
Minutes	Special General Meeting	1995
Minutes	Special General Meeting	1994
Proposal	Marketing & Sponsorship	1996
Attendance figures	NPC	1997-1998
Attendance figures	Super 12	1996-1998

Victory Park Board (for Lancaster Park):

Report	Annual Financial Statements	1881-1998
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NZRFU:

Report	Annual Financial Statements	1976-1998
Report	Boston Consulting Group: (Taking Rugby Unions into the 21st Century: Strategic Choices Facing the New Zealand Rugby Football Union)	1994
Report	Baldwin Boyle Group (The New Zealand All Blacks - Repositioning a national icon)	1998
Minutes	Provincial Advisory Group	1999
Regulations	Handbook	1993
Regulations	Handbook	1994
Regulations	IRB	1993

Contract	Contract for Promotional Services	1998
Contract	Player Contract	2000

MEDIA SOURCES

Magazines general:

Listener & TV Guide (NZ)
Mana (NZ)
Marketing (NZ)
Metro (NZ)
North & South (NZ)
NZ Sport Monthly
Pacific Island Monthly
The Bulletin (AUS)
Time International (NZ)
TVNZ Network

Newspapers:

Daily Telegraph (UK)
Dominion (NZ)
Independent (UK)
National Business Review (NZ)
Sunday Star-Times (NZ)
Sunday Times (UK)
Telegraph (UK)
Times (UK)
The Press (NZ)

Rugby magazines:

Inside Rugby (UK)
NZRugby Monthly/World
Rugby News (AUS)
Rugby Review (UK)
World Cup Preview (NZ)

Electronic:

Electronic Telegraph
Radio Sport
TVNZ
www.haka.co.nz/haka/html
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