

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL AND
ENGLISH SOCIETY 1871-1914

by

JAMES W. MARTENS

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BY

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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the development of Rugby Union football in England from 1871 to 1914. The thesis is that in those years between the formation of the Rugby Football Union and the suspension of play brought on by the war with Germany the game was confirmed as the most identifiably middle class of all English team sports. This was achieved by the exclusion of all aspects of professionalism at the playing level. While the commercialization of sport facilitated the professionalization of other games, most noticeably soccer, rugby football remained pristine. Its administrators remained dedicated to Victorian middle class attitudes concerning pay for play. The confirmation of rugby's amateur status was not achieved without some difficulty however. The struggle over the issue of professionalization was the most important feature of the game's history up to 1914. Not only did professionalization present internal problems for the Rugby Football Union, it served to be a divisive issue which was only partially related to class.

The split of 1895 between the proponents of pay for play and strict amateurs has made it possible to view the two rugby codes within class terms. The professional code, confined predominantly to the north, had a working class playing membership, while the amateur code remained under the control of the London middle class. This has resulted in some historians advancing a theory that, as in soccer, the battle over

professionalism was an example of class conflict. The predominance of working class players in the professional game, while the amateur code continued to attract middle class players, has resulted in the assumption that professionalization was a working class initiative. A more careful analysis suggests that the conflict over the introduction of professionalization was a matter of intra-class factionalism between the London bourgeoisie and northern entrepreneurs.

This dissertation is predicated upon the belief that no aspect of culture functions independently of the society in which it exists. To accurately assess the development of amateur rugby up to 1914 it is essential to understand England's broader social history. While it is possible to assert that the country moved towards being a more egalitarian and democratic society in this period, it is not possible to say the same was true for the conservative institution of Rugby Union football. By the end of the Edwardian era the rugby code dedicated to strict amateurism was most assuredly a legacy of Victorian middle class values, and was already an anachronism.

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Over the years I have come to owe a great deal of thanks to very many people who have contributed to the completion of this dissertation. I promised myself that I would not be maudlin and excessive so to all those who have given aid and comfort, thanks.

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My original interest in this subject came from my two passions, history and rugby, and as a result I would like to thank all the players and members of the Manitoba Rugby Union. I am especially grateful to the Winnipeg Wasps RFC and the Wasps Old Boys. I would also like to thank all the members of the London Welsh RFC who were so kind and friendly, and who provided me with games and valuable conversation while I was in England researching.

Many of the primary sources used in the dissertation were made available by R.G. Weighill and the staff of the RFU at Twickenham. I am extremely grateful to the museum and publications staff at Twickenham; John Kemp, Len Evans, Alf Wright and especially Rex King who provided me with anything I

asked for without reservation and who became a great friend.

Above all others I owe my deepest thanks to Margaret.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my friend Tom who died the day I left England. He would have liked it.

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INTRODUCTION: NOTES ON SOURCES

Not so long ago the study of sport and leisure was considered "beyond the boundary" of legitimate academic histories. In 1978 Peter Bailey lamented the lack of serious studies of leisure by historians, and three years later Keith Sandiford could report that there were only a small number of works in the area.¹ One such effort was Bailey's Leisure and Class in Victorian England. The book has recently been re-issued in paperback with a revised bibliography and a new introduction. These new features attest to the growth in the historiography of English leisure, especially for the Victorian period.² In the past decade, building on pioneering works, the history of sport and leisure has evolved into a legitimate and vital sub-category of social history.

Nineteenth century England has proven to be an especially attractive period for the practitioners of sport and leisure history. In this time of rapid social readjustment to the demands of a maturing industrial capitalist state and the embourgeoisement of society, leisure of an organized type has shown itself to be a revealing response to social change. This has been the focus of macro-studies of the period. Bailey's 1978 work addressed the "struggle for control of rational recreation" between the middle and working classes. Hugh Cunningham has directed his attentions to the development of leisure in relationship to capitalism and consumerism. James Walvin, the

most prolific historian of leisure, centred his most impressive work on the molding of increasing free time to correspond to the requirements of the society as a whole. Writing on the later years of the century, Stephen Yeo has revealed that leisure was subjected to the commodification process and as a consequence severed its "traditional" relationship to the church and the work place.³

Scholars have also isolated specific types of leisure practices and have attempted to relate their development to the demands of the nineteenth century. It is possible now to claim that in some cases leisure historiography has moved into a second generation. For example, John K. Walton has expanded on the impressionistic works of John Lowerson and John Myerscough and Walvin, by producing a more exacting study of sea side resorts.⁴ Among the most impressive histories of sport is Tony Mason's Association Football and English Society in which the author re-assesses the contentions of Walvin and William Baker that soccer had by 1914 become dominated by the working class as part of a unique culture.⁵ There has yet to be revisionist responses to the studies of horse racing and cricket by Wray Vamplew and Keith Sandiford, but these do not seem too far off.⁶

Bruce Haley's The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture, and the evolution of the cult of games in English education, as examined by James Mangan, extends the study of leisure to that of an idea, while Helen Meller's examination of urbanization and leisure in Bristol is an example of the ever widening focus of

the field.⁷ Those scholars mentioned are only a fragment of those concerned with the history of sport and leisure in the nineteenth century, but it is safe to say that they rank among the best examples of scholarship, and reflect the potential limitlessness of the general topic. Even from this brief sampling it would seem that few aspects of leisure are now without a historian of their own. This is not the case however.

Rugby Union football, the second most popular winter team sport in England, has yet to be closely examined by a historian. This is due, at least in part, to the tendency toward studying aspects of leisure in relationship to the making of a unique working class culture, a trend which was inspired by E.P. Thompson. Rugby Union was, and remains still, the most identifiable middle class of English team sports (this is not the case in Wales).

This is partially the reason for this dissertation. Another important reason for the undertaking from a historical perspective is that in some ways rugby under the amateur code has failed to show the same consistency with broader social trends that are common to many other aspects of leisure. Tendencies to see the evolution of England in the nineteenth century into a democratic, liberal society is reflected in many of the new sports histories, especially those dealing with Association football. Whether this came about as a consequence of an aggressive working class drive for recognition as the Marxists suggest, or as liberal historians argue, it was the logical

conclusion of the slow progress of democratization, soccer's popularity rose to prominence with the emergence of the labouring classes as a political force. This was not so for rugby by 1914. Nor did the game succumb to the trend toward commodification as did many other Victorian sports. Instead the administrators of the handling code fiercely resisted professionalization. Rugby was influenced by the changes in society, but its responses were in many ways not complimentary to these developments.

Historians are not the only scholars who have turned their attentions to the study of sports in recent years, and because of this rugby has not been a completely ignored aspect of Victorian life. In 1979, sociologists Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard produced an in depth study of the game, Barbarians, Players and Gentlemen: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football.⁸ The book, based on modernization theory, offered suggestions as to how the game became consistent with the development of sport in general through the development of professionalization of Rugby League, and the commodification of the RFU after 1945.

This dissertation, rather than attempting to discredit the splendid pioneer work of these authors, hopes to build on their suggestions and fill in the gaps in an effort to relieve some of the confusion left by Barbarians, Players and Gentlemen. Unfortunately Dunning and Sheard wrote their book at a time when the Rugby Football Union was unwilling or unable to provide access to its sizable library, including official documents.

The book's most confusing chapter, "The Democratization of Rugby Football", suggests that in the 1870s the game began to spread down the social scale. By the next decade, in the north, rugby had become a vital part of the local working class sporting life. The fact that there was increasing working class participation in the game, however, did not as the authors argue make rugby democratic. In fact after twenty-two northern clubs split from the Union in 1895 and professionalized, those working class players who accepted pay for play became a leisure proletariat. In its dealings with northern clubs the Rugby Football Union subverted any democratic process by relying on formal and informal practices to ensure that a united northern motion would never upset the authority of the London middle class old boys network which exerted hegemony over the game throughout England.

Chapters 7 through 9 are the most enlightening of the book. In this pivotal section Dunning and Sheard offer two inter-related theories which this dissertation will examine more closely. They contend that the Great Schism was primarily a consequence of intra-class differences, and that the split was in large measure orchestrated by northern middle class club officials for their own gains. This is not consistent with present trends in social history which emphasize the working class experience. These two theories do, however, provide a better explanation for the split than does the standard class expression versus social control argument. Peter Bailey is

correct in asserting that class expression and/or social control theories are not a dead letter, but they are also not always applicable to the history of sport either.⁹

Following a detailed, if somewhat confusing, account of the split, Dunning and Sheard abandon their attention on the amateur code in favour of the new professional league, until it surfaces again after World War II as a part of the commercialization of leisure stimulated by the electronic media. Following the split the RFU was forced to continue without the financial and man power contributions of the most talented and wealthy clubs in the country. Still, by 1914, the amateur code remained the dominant form of rugby throughout the country except for the north west. The question of how the amateur game survived, and how it responded to the existence of a competing and aggressive external threat will be a major part of this dissertation. This allows for the introduction of the rise of rugby in the West Country after 1895, an aspect that Barbarians, Players and Gentlemen never fully develops.

Dunning and Sheard have made a valuable contribution to the history of rugby football by addressing key issues. This dissertation now will test their contentions, build on them and provide a more historical approach. It will employ a greater number of diverse primary sources as well as integrating those secondary sources that have emerged in the past nine years. The sociologists have advanced some important theories, and now it is time to test these ideas, and expand the understanding of the

relationship between rugby and Victorian and Edwardian society.

As is the case with many other histories of sport and leisure, this dissertation employs diverse primary material including diaries, documents, minute books, government papers, printed sources, and technical books. The most commonly used sources for all social histories are newspapers. In a period such as the late Victorian and Edwardian age, described as sports mad by social critics, the popular press proved especially valuable. It provided an abundant wealth of diverse and contradictory opinions, reflecting the widespread interest and attitudes toward Victorian leisure.

Since this dissertation hinges on a geographic element in rugby, every attempt was made to employ a sampling of the sporting press from across England. Although major regional newspapers regularly carried official press releases from the RFU, editorial comment and correspondence revealed different responses to them. Not surprisingly, the Yorkshire (Evening) Post was more sympathetic to the plight of northern clubs and the county unions than was The Times. The Manchester Guardian straddled the increasing polarization of opinion found in the northern and metropolitan press on the issue of professionalization. While it may be a "given" to say that the press forms the solid backbone of leisure history in the nineteenth century, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the Victorian popular press with its "pink pages" is a powerful indication of the importance of games to Englishmen of all

classes and interest.

There is a body of printed sources which address the place of sport and leisure in Victorian England that has been repeatedly mined by historians. This has not diminished their value. The frequently cited works of H.H. Almond, the headmaster of Loretto School in Scotland, and Charles Bright have an important role in placing rugby within the wider social context of nineteenth century sport.¹⁰

Devotees of rugby football have produced a great many works on their game. These have been well used by Dunning and Sheard, but in most cases they are books which glorify the game, detail scores and records, and discuss tactics. The best of these come from ex-international players such as W.J.A. Davies, D.R. Gent, W.W. Wakefield, and the more controversial J.E. Raphael. The more critical and contentious these books are, the more value they have to this study.¹¹

Undoubtedly, the most important of these books is Rev. Francis Marshall's (a Huddersfield club official and RFU committee member) Football: The Rugby Union Game, published first in 1892, and revised and updated in 1925 by L. Tosswill, another international player.¹² The importance of this book lies in the fact that it is an edited piece featuring contributions from RFU committee members and county union administrators who were actively involved in the issues shaping the history of the game. Admittedly, their opinions on important issues such as professionalism, regionalism, and alterations to the Laws of the

Game, are slanted and reflect the most conservative of attitudes, but their direct involvement in the events more than compensates for their bias.

Attempts to pry free, and integrate club and county documents proved rather less fruitful. Rugby clubs concerned themselves with scores and records and offered very little commentary on the role of the game or the club to the community, this was understood by Victorians. Equally useful were the centenary histories and brochures produced by specific clubs. They are impressionistic and biased, but contain endless raw data which can be integrated into a history of the game. Since most of these are available at the RFU museum at Twickenham, or can be obtained by post, they are more convenient than attempting to gain access to individual club records, especially since many of the latter have disappeared or are in complete disarray.

Even more disappointing was the fruitless attempt to secure documents pertaining to rebel clubs in the north. Professional clubs do not see their amateur roots as important and consequently have no interest in maintaining or making available pre-1895 documents. For information on rebel clubs the northern press, especially the Yorkshire Post, proved the most reliable source. Not even K. Macklin's The History of Rugby League supplied more than accounts of games and scores common to popular histories.¹³

By far the most potentially exciting and revealing sources come from the RFU itself. This dissertation makes use of

official Union documents and minute books which had previously been unavailable to the public. Official documents proved discomfoting in that they are positions and attitudes hammered out in the "back rooms", and via personal correspondence. This is especially true of the minute books. They do, none-the-less, detail suspensions, official correspondence to and from clubs, membership, and responses not obtainable elsewhere. In most cases RFU documents served to confirm what logic would suggest. These documents are invaluable for their detail. While the press presented sensational examples, the RFU records painstakingly present all accounts of acts of professionalism and widespread discontent.

Many of the primary sources dealing with rugby are held at the RFU museum, making access more convenient. Newspapers and sporting journals must be examined at Colindale Library, and related published material was found in the British Museum. Private correspondence was obtained through limited contacts with rugby club members, and introductions made possible through the good graces of the RFU staff. There is an argument to be made for a more thorough investigation of rugby at the club level, but this would prove extremely time-consuming even if revealing documents could thus be brought to light. While the tendency of this work tends to rely predominantly upon those sources which are held at Twickenham or made available through the RFU, great care was taken to examine other sources, especially the northern press, for alternative viewpoints. Since this dissertation set

out to provide a panoramic view of the game and its relationship to society, in the final analysis, Twickenham sources, blended judiciously with publications and the sporting press proved adequate within limitations.

It has been suggested by Peter Bailey that what now may be required are a series of micro-studies of specific rugby clubs. These could place the club experience within the context of both the community and the more general framework of rugby's history. The danger of this is that those clubs which will prove the most interesting are the exceptional clubs of the period such as Blackheath, Devonport Albion, the Harlequins, Leicester Tigers, Northampton, Preston Grasshoppers, and any one of the original twenty-two rebel clubs. They were in many ways untypical of most nineteenth century rugby teams. For this reason it is important to have a general framework into which the micro-studies may be fitted. The ultimate hope for this dissertation is that it will supply such a framework, and, as it had its genesis in the work of Dunning and Sheard, so too will future historians of the game be inspired by this effort.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN GAME

By 1871, the year the Rugby Football Union (RFU) was founded, England had experienced a leisure revolution as a direct consequence of the Industrial Revolution. Both were protracted processes spread over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the leisure revolution was an outgrowth of industrialization which was so all pervasive that no aspect of society escaped its demands for conformity. While pre-industrial leisure habits were tied to agriculture and seasonal rhythms, the new leisure came to be separated out from the work experience and was a compartmentalized segment of nineteenth century life. A second, and related factor in the leisure revolution was the benefits brought by industrial technology. Although not designed specifically for leisure, the technical advances of the age came to have a profound effect on Victorian leisure patterns and opportunities.¹

Rather than eradicating the leisure practices of pre-industrial society, the industrial middle class re-modeled them, often beyond recognition, to conform to the new order. Leisure was, according to Peter Bailey, "compressed and concentrated", and "separated out [from the labour process] as a discrete new sector in an increasingly compartmentalized life-space." "Work discipline had to be projected into play and not vice versa."² As a result, pre-industrial leisure, defined by seasonal rhythms, came under the influence of the machine age. In terms of time

and space it became consistent with the pace of production and the urban environment.

Urbanization demanded by factory production contributed to the limiting of leisure in a physical sense. If the increasing emphasis on work-time limited and compartmentalized leisure, the city reduced the space in which leisure could be practiced. The ball games and the fairs of the Georgian period were sprawling affairs, often taking place in fields or villages over extended periods.³ Public order was threatened by these festive occasions, and with the potential for vandalism, violence, and indiscipline, they were inappropriate for the new age. As a consequence, attempts were made to purge ball games of their potential for civil disobedience by limiting where they could be held. In Derby, there was an effort to eradicate ball games played in the streets by offering horse racing at specific locations as an alternative.⁴ By limiting venues for leisure it was again subjecting pre-industrial activities to compartmentalization of life within a well defined time and place for everything.

It was not however enough to limit leisure to specific times and places. It had to be brought in line with the dominant social philosophy of the industrial middle class. That is, leisure had to be "civilized" and subordinated to work. It could not be an end in itself. Hence the emergence of the idea of rational recreation: leisure with purpose. This was not new to the industrial bourgeoisie. John Brand had observed in the

seventeenth century that, in the right hands, leisure functioned as an effective means of social control.⁵ In industrial England, rational recreation was thought to be conducive to educating the masses in the habits of work, as well as functioning as a means of class conciliation and social control. It was hoped that through judicious influence over leisure, the masses could be made more like the middle class, and therefore a better industrial work force.

Peter Bailey argues that the middle class had limited success in instilling its moral values and social attitudes on the masses through leisure. Its greatest success, he contends, occurred at the upper strata of the aspiring working class.⁶ The goal of rational recreation was not however to make the masses middle class, but to educate them in the ways of the middle class. Enough academic work has been done on nineteenth century leisure to suggest that, for the most part, the transfer of middle class leisure while partially successful, also contributed to the development of a unique working class culture. Rather than conforming to the desires of the middle class, it is evident that a significant portion of the working class embraced, and then modified, rational recreation to its own particular circumstances which only served to reinforce class differences.⁷ According to Bailey, aspects of leisure, that is particular games and activities, came to be identified with distinct classes. He argues that while class exclusiveness in sports was often blurred at class junctures, the bourgeoisie used leisure as one method to

"build a new sense of community in a cellular suburban society."⁸

The more concrete aspects of the leisure revolution were the effects of industrialization and technology on leisure habits and opportunities. According to historians of leisure in the nineteenth century, the transportation boom of the period was a major component in changing leisure patterns. Railways, originally designed to transport coal to factories and manufactured goods to markets and ports, were, by mid-century, moving people not only to and from work, but in search of increased leisure opportunities. Fast, inexpensive travel facilitated the growing desire for seaside holidays, as more and socially diversified city dwellers flocked to Blackpool, Brighton, Margate, and Ramsgate. Trains took teams, supporters, punters, and holiday makers ever further afield.⁹

Leisure time increased dramatically due to developments in labour relations brought about by reform agitation. Sebastian de Grazia credits the Ten Hour Movement (1847) for producing a "lump of concentrated nothingness which was leisure."¹⁰ Other labour reforms such as the fifty-six hour work week for textile workers (1874) and the Bank Holiday Act (1871) benefited large segments of the working class, especially those portions which were unionized. Although many workers remained unaffected by reform, James Walvin's assertion that, by 1870, Saturday was becoming a day of leisure holds some credence.¹¹ The English labouring class was at least beginning to experience the leisure revolution in a tangible way. Trade union agitation and conciliatory

labour/management relationships had combined to give an ever increasing segment of the population some leisure time.

Developments in technology also directly and immediately affected Victorian leisure. The cycling boom of the 1880s was a consequence of the development of the pneumatic tube and mass production of strong light-weight frames. Changes in the playing techniques in cricket were due to improvements in the manufacturing of bats and balls and developments in the maintenance of the pitch. Mass production of inexpensive musical instruments facilitated the growth in the brass band movement in the north between 1853 and 1878. The mass production of books reinforced the growth of a literate industrial work force. All manner of leisure paraphernalia became more accessible, thus making available more to do in the growing period "of nothingness."¹²

The changes which occurred in leisure during the Industrial Revolution were, as suggested by rational recreation, part of the domination of society by the industrial middle class. It was the bourgeoisie which orchestrated the direction of the changes throughout the nineteenth century. As the dominant class in the period, it sought to impose upon society the values and beliefs which it felt were consistent with the orderly process of industrialization. In concert with the industrialization of England was the embourgeoisment of society.

II

In the hands of the Victorian bourgeoisie, rugby football was transformed from an idiosyncratic form of folk football into a symbol of middle class hegemony. It was rationalized, codified, civilized, and made ideologically consistent with bourgeois views of sport and leisure. Joseph Strutt's suggestion that some forms of folk football resembled the Roman game of harpastum allowed Francis Marshall to claim in 1892 that rugby had a noble lineage dating back to antiquity. This assertion also served to distance rugby from its folk antecedents.¹³ William Baker has suggested as well that the William Webb Ellis myth provided the Victorian middle class with a history of the game which de-emphasized rugby's pre-industrial working class roots. The myth claims that while attending Rugby School, Ellis picked up the ball during a football match and ran with it, thus initiating the unique feature of the game.¹⁴ From this event the two most obvious differences between soccer and rugby, handling and tackling, could be seen to have originated in the public school. It is, however, more important to establish that rugby had its roots in a variation of folk football and was not unique to class exclusive schools.

Local customs and oral traditions dictated how football would be played in a given area during the Georgian period. Variations were unlimited in pre-industrial England, but dating back to 1314, and probably further, local matches were popular occurrences. The more formal of these games were played on

Shrove Tuesday, and as in the case of Cheshire, where annual matches between cobblers and drapers were played, it was enjoyed primarily by the working class. The games were, by Victorian and present day standards, violent, ritualistic and even savage. During a match between skinners and fishmongers, in London in 1339, a street brawl erupted. In Derby, football was played through the streets which raised concerns from local merchants who feared the inherent vandalism in the local variation of the game.¹⁵ The parochial nature of pre-industrial football meant that variations were played on any type of surface, with any number of participants, and under any local rules.

The generic term "football" did not mean that the ball must be propelled with the feet. In some localities football also involved the hands. The best documented of this type of ball game was Camp-ball common to the eastern counties, and popular from the time of the Restoration. In Camp-ball the ball was thrown from player to players giving it some resemblance to the modern rugby game. In Cornwall and the West Country, an early form of hurling involved some degree of handling, and according to Strutt, was the descendant of harpastum.¹⁶ It is distinctly possible that football as it was played in the town of Rugby involved some degree of handling as well. No matter the form of football, these games were a part of masculine pre-industrial working class culture.

Types of folk football were popular in the pre-reformed public schools as an extra-curricular leisure activity.¹⁷

Because of the cobblestone play area bordered by a brick wall, Eton's version was forced to incorporate these features, earning it the title The Wall Game. The potential for injury was obvious, so the game never included robust tackling. In contrast, the grassy fields surrounding Rugby School were ideally suited to vigorous "collaring". The Rugby game also featured limited handling, and an oval ball made by a family of local shoemakers, the Gilberts.

There were two attempts in the late nineteenth century to trace the evolution of the game at Rugby School. Matthew Bloxam, an Old Rugbeian, published an article in the school journal, The Meteor, in 1880, where he noted that in the early years of the century the teams consisted of unlimited numbers, and prior to 1823, running with the ball was forbidden. Players could catch the ball, but had to kick it without moving. Bloxam's account of the game did much to perpetuate the Ellis myth since it was during Ellis' years at Rugby that running with the ball began.¹⁸

Some time later, a sub-committee of the Old Rugbeians Society published a more accurate account in "The Origin of Rugby Football". Their findings, based on interviews with the organization's senior members, concluded that as late as 1819 it was not "common practice" to tackle or run with the ball, but it was not formally illegal. It was concluded that the early game more resembled soccer than rugby as it was played in the 1890s. Tom Harris who attended Rugby at the same time as Ellis recalled "I remember Mr. William Webb Ellis perfectly. He was an

admirable cricketer, but was generally regarded as taking unfair advantage at Football."¹⁹ Thomas Hughes, the author of Tom Brown's School Days, recalled in 1895, that while "running in" (carrying the ball over the goal line) was never forbidden in his day, it was considered akin to "homicide" to attempt it.²⁰ This would suggest that tackling was considered an acceptable means of retarding the runner's progress. While not denying Ellis' contribution to the game, both the Old Rugbeians sub-committee and Hughes agreed that "running in" was perfected by a lad named Mackie who attended Rugby in 1838-39.²¹ Mackie's strength and pace, as well as his bravado, contributed to his willingness to defy tradition and risk "homicide" to gain victory. According to the Rugby Football Union records, running with the ball was formally recognized in the first written code of laws for Rugby's game in 1841.

In attempting to judge the limited evidence on the development of the game, it is possible to make only tentative conclusions. It would seem that Ellis' action was remembered for its rarity, not because it was illegal. His contribution appears to have been his willingness to run with the ball, rather than catching it, since this was already a common part of the game. Mackie, like Ellis, may not have been the only boy to have run with the ball, but these two were best remembered, one as a rare exception and the other as the most proficient. Between 1823, when Ellis broke with tradition, and 1841, when a formal code of conduct was established, "running in" had become acceptable

rather than a rare occurrence. In 1896, Thomas Hughes complained that to his mind, the game had changed a great deal since he had been a lad and was now "too much of a carrying business- football ought to be football, not arm ball...."²² Tackling and running with the ball which became popular after 1823, indicate that while Rugby School was undergoing reforms, so too was its game.

III

Thomas Arnold's arrival at Rugby School began a change in public schools which radically altered private education in England. In 1828, Arnold, a middle class educator and theologian took over as headmaster of Rugby. He brought with him a popular belief that public schools failed to provide a proper education. He believed that they perpetuated the evils of aristocratic life and that they were "nurseries of vice."²³ Although he enjoyed cricket, and would join the pupils in that game, he was not a devotee of football. He particularly disliked field sports commonly practiced by aristocratic pupils and among his first actions at Rugby was the suppression of hunting and gaming.²⁴ His goal was to bring control to the anarchy associated with public schools and to mould his students into proper Christian gentlemen. He believed the entire school experience, not merely the classroom, was crucial in developing the quality of life acceptable to Christian standards. Arnold wished to instill his students with "simplicity, sobriety and humbleness of mind".²⁵

For Arnold, Rugby School was a micro-societal experiment. Pride in, and loyalty to, Rugby came to underscore all features

of school life. Social conduct, academics, and sport reflected on the school, and the high moral standards introduced into the classroom and the chapel were extended to the fields of play. As a result of his successes, Arnold's reputation spread and over his tenure the school's status was elevated. Rugby under Arnold became the model for other reform-minded educators.

Arnold was a product of his class and reflected its general disapproval of the aristocracy, and fear of the working class.²⁶ He possessed and taught a moral decency defined by the evangelical precepts of the middle class of the early nineteenth century. The emerging middle class was becoming the dominant force in English society and sought to solidify and legitimize its position through traditional institutions such as the public schools.²⁷ Arnold thus provided an acceptable philosophy of education consistent with his class.

In Tom Brown's School Days, Thomas Hughes, a disciple of Arnold, extolled the virtues of the Brown's, a moral, industrious middle class family. Tom, the ideal pupil, was contrasted to the more aristocratic and morally bankrupt Flashman. Middle class morality, taught by Arnold and exemplified by Tom, was becoming the measure of "civilized" life in the industrial age.²⁸ Arnold reinforced this development by providing a legitimate and traditional forum for middle class attitudes through the micro-societal structure of Rugby School. More and more middle class private schools and reformed public schools on the Rugby model began to emerge.²⁹

Harold Perkin has estimated that by 1864, ten thousand private schools existed in Britain. The first Public School Yearbook, published in 1889, listed thirty six institutions as public schools.³⁰ J.R. de Honey has asserted that sixty-four leading public schools were in existence between 1880 and 1902, and has ranked them in four categories based on subjective measures of social status. The new and reformed public schools were attended by the sons of the bourgeoisie: rich merchants, lawyers, untitled property holders, statesmen, and minor aristocrats. To this list, Frank Musgrove has added the sons of clergymen, professionals, and in less exclusive private schools, the sons of superior tradesmen and industrial managers.³¹ With the exception of the two most prestigious public schools, Eton and Harrow, the growing number of private schools were attracting the middle class. As a result of the reformed public schools, and the establishment of so many new ones (the Clarendon Commission considered there to be only seven public schools in the 1860s), middle class education, that is, one consistent, with Victorian middle class values, had become the standard in private education.

IV

In the post-Arnold period the cult of games became a fundamental feature of the reformed public schools and the new private schools. Rather than introducing the cult of games, Arnold laid the groundwork for it by making sport a formal part of education at Rugby. Sports came to fulfill a number of

important functions in the public schools. Games were a practical means of instilling Victorian middle class virtues of loyalty, hard work, and courage. They also became a means of social control over the students.³² J.A. Mangan has taken this analysis a step further by contending that to Muscular Christian educators Edward Thring of Uppingham, and H.H. Almond of Loretto (Scotland), sport was not simply a means of control or socialization, but if practiced correctly, held intrinsic virtues demanded by society. Through athleticism, knowledge and virtue could be achieved. Mangan asserts that public schools grew increasingly anti-intellectual by de-emphasizing scholarship and making it subordinate to sports.³³

Although there was some criticism of the cult of games in the public schools, throughout most of the century, sport and public school education were seen as positive benefits to society and the grooming of the proper English gentleman.³⁴ Almond drew the analogy between Britain of his time and ancient Greece, noting that these two great Empires were both dedicated to the development of proper moral conduct through education which emphasized athletics.³⁵ Thomas Hughes likened the backs on the football teams to the Light Brigade, and marveled at the "charge" of the superior side which reminded him of "the column of the old guard at Waterloo."³⁶ Arnold wrote that "those who served in the Peninsula in the course of the last war must have found his school experience and habits no bad preparation...."³⁷ The connection between the courage of the charge at the Battle of

Balaclava, if not its stupidity, and the cavalry officers' public school education was not lost on the English. They had learned their bravado on the playing fields. Peter Bailey has observed that by mid-century, the Victorians were well aware of the relationship between military preparedness and sports.³⁸

John Myerscough and John Lowerson have observed that "Indeed none of the Victorian virtues were missing from the list of those benefits attributed to sport [by the Victorians themselves]".³⁹ In the public schools these virtues included: courage, independence, quick thinking, loyalty, fair play, honesty, the value of hard work, physical prowess, team play, and group conformity. These may appear to be contradictory, but it was believed that sport was a means to these ends. The cult of games was thought essential to the maturity of the Victorian gentlemen.

The use of sports to achieve this goal resulted in an admiration for manliness defined not simply in terms of physical strength, but in its affinity "with Plato's notion of Hrmos gennaros-spirited nobility- the sublimation of passion and energy in a righteous vehemence directed against wickedness and injustice in the individual and society."⁴⁰ Charles Bright called the public school boy of his time "a Samurai- an elite class of warrior-philosopher", but as Mangan has argued, the philosopher was the neglected half of this dual role.⁴¹

There were, by mid-century, increasing attempts to extend the reformed public school model into schools for less elite members of the middle class. This accounts in part for the

increased number of private schools and the less exclusive grammar schools. For example, Liverpool Institute and Liverpool College in Lancashire, Derby School in Derby, Blackheath Proprietary School in London and many more were founded about mid-century.⁴² Grammar schools came to provide the bulk of the middle class with a type of education modeled on the public school system. Along with the structure of the public schools came the acceptance of, and adherence to, the cult of games.

Those grammar schools dedicated to the games ethic, saw themselves moving closer to their superiors while distancing themselves from the working class.⁴³ By adopting Rugby's game, those grammar schools declared their intention to be lesser versions of the first reformed public school. Rugby's game was, more than any other, easily identified with the middle class. While soccer was played at Harrow and Eton, it was also identified with working class elements. Rugby appeared more socially exclusive although both had evolved from variations of folk football. Even after the 1870 education reforms, government supported day schools did not include a comprehensive physical training program as a formal part of working class education. While the more exclusive educational institutions felt that athletics were essential for a complete education, government reformers saw no need for similar programs for the masses.⁴⁴

In the reformed public schools, under the guidance, and for

the benefit of the middle class, sports came to be used in the same way that it was for the working class. Games were a powerful instrument of instilling and reinforcing values and attitudes consistent with middle class hegemony. Sport, unlike work, was not an end in itself, but a means of socialization. Imagination and individual thought were subsumed by the demands for conformity to Victorian ideals. Sport came to be intellectually numbing. Games "acted as successful agents of socialization, of social control, and social cohesion" and helped build "an institutional value system".⁴⁵

V

Public school variations of football spread throughout Britain as graduates took their games with them after they left school. Three features helped facilitate the diaspora of codified, "civilized", middle class controlled football. The first was the pre-disposition toward and opportunity for leisure by mid-century. Second was the evangelical nature of the middle class in its desire to impose those things consistent with its ideology on society. Lastly was the tradition of folk football common throughout Britain which made the transition to more strict forms of the game easier, although public school variations remained idiosyncratic. As public school boys moved on to Oxbridge, found employment in the growing Civil Service, returned home to work in family businesses, or chose to enter one of the professions, they took their sports out of the insular life of the public schools into the society as a whole.⁴⁶ Public

school men, with their tendency toward leadership and influence, fanned out across the country and the Empire, imposing Victorian culture on their "lessers".⁴⁷

The spread of football to the lower orders was a function of educators, clergymen, factory owners and their educated sons, and others with regular contact with the working class. The game, no matter which variation, was thought to be a means of social control, of instilling proper work habits, teaching loyalty, expending youthful energies, and even of making profit for some.⁴⁸ Soccer was by far the most popular of football games since it was easily understood, the most adaptable, and cheapest to play. Variations of soccer could be played by any number on almost any surface, and required limited supervision. The handling games, with their tendency toward overt violence, demanded a safe playing surface and large numbers of participants. While the dribbling game became popular throughout Britain, rugby's support was concentrated in London, Lancashire, and Yorkshire's West Riding.

London was the logical place for Rugby's game to take hold. It was not only England's largest city, it was the centre of government, law, medicine, education, the military, commerce, and the Empire. Its demands for professional men far exceeded that of provincial cities. The professional middle class, an ever growing segment of society, was centred in the metropolis, making it possible for communities of like minded, public school and university educated men to develop. It was possible to avoid

direct daily contact beyond the superficial level with the masses. This reinforced the social separation learned at public schools, making it possible for Peter Bailey to conclude that London was the place where "the idea of football as a gentlemen's game was the strongest."⁴⁹ The metropolitan middle class maintained a social exclusiveness in their communities and their sports because their numbers made it possible to exclude those who did not fit.

Rugby came to the north in much the same way it did to London. It was brought by public school graduates who either were returning home or taking up employment in the area. It was also introduced into local schools with social aspirations. Both Patrick Joyce and Tony Mason have noted that social separation was more difficult in the small industrial towns of the north.⁵⁰ In one-industry centres, the bourgeoisie found it impossible to retain the same degree of social exclusiveness that was common to the metropolis and the large provincial centres. What developed was the social, cultural and political domination of these small communities by the local middle class. Factory owners, clergymen and teachers functioned as paternalistic socio-political leaders whose influence stemmed from their exalted positions.⁵¹ In order to establish and maintain rugby in these communities it was essential that the working class be included on local clubs, at least as players. This was less true for Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester, where there were sufficient members of the middle class to keep some clubs, if not all rugby in the region, free of

working class participation.

At the universities, public school men trained in various forms of football came together with the resulting confusion over which idiosyncratic rules would be employed. By contrast, cricket did not experience the same confusion because it was more firmly established and consistent in its rules as a result of its pre-industrial tradition. The Football Annual of 1868 noted that "Almost every public school has a marked code [of football] of its own, to which it resolutely clings and which it stubbornly refuses to merge into a general body of laws, for the adaptation of one universally recognized game."⁵² The coming together of lads from various schools emphasized the need for a widely accepted code. A year earlier, in 1867, a group of Oxford University men played at Rugby School under the rules in vogue there at the time, using twenty a side. A similar arrangement was made with Wellington College in the same years, suggesting that some concessions were being made over the various forms of the handling code, and the Rugby version was becoming the standard.⁵³

In 1869, the Oxford Football Club was founded at Balliol college, and chose to play the handling game. A formal rugby club was founded at Cambridge three years later, and the first inter-varsity match was played on 10 February, 1872: a year after the Rugby Football Union was formed.⁵⁴ A steady stream of public school boys into the universities ensured a constant influx of new talent, and after graduation these players joined clubs

throughout Britain, but especially in London. E.D.H. Sewell was correct to conclude that "Public Schools and Varsities are their [rugby club's] solid backbone."⁵⁵

The spread and development of rugby in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales has been a neglected area of academic study and as a result it is difficult to make accurate comparisons with the English experience. Rugby was popular in Scottish public schools, and it would appear that the game was dominated at the highest level of play by the middle class, right up to 1914. According to lists of Scottish internationals from 1871 onward, the country's top players were disproportionately associated with public schools and universities. Ireland, which began international play in 1875, also featured a large number of national team players with educational affiliations, suggesting that its game was middle class dominated as well. Wales was unique in that the game, while in the hands of bourgeois administrators, was that country's working class sport. Rugby in Wales proved to be more socially cohesive than in the other three Home Countries, and its history more closely parallels that of soccer in England. Wales began its international play with England with a humiliating defeat in 1881, and even at the highest level of competition the national team was noticeably more socially diverse than England, Ireland, and especially Scotland.⁵⁶

In 1881 the Football Annual listed twenty-six British schools registered with it who played a version of the two

football codes, either "handling" or "dribbling". Sixteen preferred a variation of the Rugby game.⁵⁷ Not all of the lads who graduated from rugby playing schools went on to university. They fanned out across Britain and took their game with them. The first rugby club to be formed outside the schools is credited to a member of parliament, Albert Pell, an Old Rugbeian, who founded the team in London in 1839.⁵⁸ It was in the north, however, that rugby clubs with enough support to remain in existence for any length of time were first established.

The Liverpool Football Club was founded in 1857 by an Old Rugbeian, William Mather, a son of a local merchant. In the club's first year they played amongst themselves as well as making a visit to play the Rugby School side. Included in the club's membership were members of Liverpool's most prestigious families, such as the Gladstones.⁵⁹ Mather asked a group of cotton merchants in Manchester to provide his club with opposition in a one off match. Richard Sykes, then at Rugby School, brought rugby men from the city and the school, as well as a Gilbert ball to Liverpool, and the first inter-club match was played. The game featured an estimated fifty players a side, in the tradition of the Rugby game rather than the twenty a side game then in vogue. Mather, when asked about the match in 1912, could recall no details of the game. Sykes, who moved to America and introduced the game into the University of California, Santa Barbara, supplied what details he could recall to the Manchester Football Club.⁶⁰

As a result of Sykes' efforts to supply the Liverpool club with opponents, the Manchester Football Club came into existence. It was formally established in 1860, after Sykes had returned from university in Germany. The club played limited fixtures in its early years because of the limited opposition. Sykes noted that the club was dominated by public school old boys in these early years. The team consisted of Sykes as captain and prime mover; Herbert and Walter Gregg, solicitors; A.N. Hornby of Harrow; James McLearn, the sixth president of the Rugby Football Union; William Grave of Cheltenham College; F. Wright a solicitor and graduate of Edinburgh Academy; J.W. Schofield, a stockbroker and Uppingham graduate; E. Storey, son of Sir Thomas Storey (magistrate); and a large number of Old Rugbeians.⁶¹ Both Liverpool and Manchester could establish class exclusive clubs in the north because of the large upper middle class populations in those cities. Later, as the game continued to grow, the smaller single industry towns which came to dominate the northern game seldom had the same luxury.

In London, rugby clubs had been established prior to 1857, and opponents were less difficult to find. The oldest existing club in the metropolis is Blackheath Football Club, founded as a closed club in 1858 by graduates of Blackheath Proprietary School. Four years later it opened up its membership to the general public.⁶² Blackheath was a middle class London suburb, described in the club records as an area of merchants, professional men, military officers with a coach service to the

city.⁶³ The opening up of the club was consistent with the trend toward the relaxation of formal requirements to join voluntary organizations. The sports body came to provide the sense of membership, rather than what the body was associated with. This was part of the process of the "democratization of leisure."⁶⁴ It could also be suggested that the clubs became more open as they became increasingly secure in the fact that they would attract only like minded players.

The other major London club of the pre-1871 period was Richmond. It was formed in 1861 by Old Rugbeians in the exclusive suburb of the same name. By 1864 there were an estimated twenty-six clubs playing variations of the Rugby game in London area.⁶⁵ Of these Richmond and Blackheath were the most influential.

In 1863, London football clubs gathered for a series of meetings to discuss the establishment of a central governing body and a single agreed upon set of rules. For those clubs playing the Rugby game, the most contentious issue was the majority opinion that hacking and running in should be abolished. Hacking was the violent process of freeing the ball from a scrummage by indiscriminate kicking. Blackheath had passed a club rule limiting the practice in certain circumstances, but could not support its abolition.⁶⁶ What was considered acceptable for public school boys in the teaching of pluck was unacceptable to most adult teams in London. Cuts, bruises, and even broken bones may have been badges of honour at school but to the professional

man they were debilitating. F.W. Campbell of the Blackheath F.C. argued that the abolition of hacking and running in would remove essential elements of their game. He warned the meeting that if they were eliminated from the agreed upon rules his club would be forced to withdraw from the association of clubs.⁶⁷ Unable to convince a majority, the Blackheath club backed out of the meetings. The result of these meetings was the formation of the Football Association, and it left the rugby clubs to play their game without the benefit of a central body and agreed upon rules.

The rugby clubs of London remained dedicated to their game, but like the founders of the Football Association, came to realize the dangers of hacking. Richmond led the attack on the practice, and by 1886, with the grudging support of Blackheath, had it removed from games it played.⁶⁸ In 1869, the Preston Grasshoppers in Lancashire, outlawed hacking when its first club rules were drawn up.⁶⁹ The abolishing of hacking was an indication that for sports to be considered suitable as an adult game, fit for society, it must be "civilized". This process was occurring in other sports as well, most noticeably boxing, with the introduction of well defined, socially accepted rules.

The formation of the Football Association may have hurt the number of rugby playing clubs in London and throughout England, but a number of prominent clubs did come into existence prior to 1871. These clubs all displayed the same strong upper middle class composition as the previously mentioned clubs. In 1861, Sale, a northern cotton industry town, formed a rugby club from

members of the local cricket club. Wimbledon was formed in the London suburb in 1865 by Old Rugbeians. Southend (Essex) was founded by Admiral Sir Charles Barstow Theobald, Dr. E.E. Phillips and J.R. Hemmann a local teacher. The club drew its membership from the navy, obviously through the admiral's influence, and the cricket club. The Harlequins were formed in Hampstead in 1866-7. The 'Quins played a nineteen game fixture list in 1870, including matches with Mars, St. Mary's Hospital, Godolphin, Oakfield, Hornsey, Flamingoes, Christ's College, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Cresent, Epsom College, St. Thomas Hospital, Wimbledon, Burlington House, and Clapham Rovers. Another team formed in Hampstead was the Wasps (1867) made up of Merchant Taylor Old Boys, and included rugby writer Montague Shearman. Birkenhead Park (Cheshire) was formed from the amalgamation of two existing clubs in 1871. The Worcester club owes its beginnings to the Rev. F.J. Eld, who had been a curate at Rugby. Preston Grasshoppers drew its membership from "families prominent in the Town", including civil servants and lawyers, as well as Cheltenham College old boys. Ipswich is the only club which suggests a working class presence. It drew its players from the St. Helens and Stoke club and the Orwell Works club.⁷⁰

In addition to these clubs, there were certainly other clubs which came and went prior to the formation of the Rugby Football Union. The twenty-two clubs which eventually united to form the Union, were already in existence in London. Although there were

clubs dotted throughout the country, the London area had the highest concentration of teams.

When the R.F.U. came into existence in 1871, England was a nation dominated by the middle class. It also was a nation dedicated to, and influenced by, industrialization. All aspects of pre-industrial life had been altered to conform to these facts. England enjoyed greater leisure time and opportunities as a result of industrialization, but the nation's leisure was reflective of, and dictated by, the bourgeoisie. Leisure had become "civilized", codified, and rational. By 1871, the sporting heroes were the public school athletes and their old boys. It was their games that were imposed on society, even if they were rejected or readjusted as distinct features of working class culture. Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy titled a chapter in his book on The Public School Phenomenon, "Old Boys - some facets of permanent adolescence." Part of this permanent adolescence was the old boys' snobbery and the tenacious commitment to the cult of games. Rugby football was in 1871 an upper middle class game in every sense.

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55. E.D.H. Sewell, Rugby Football Up-to-Date (London:1921), p. 23.
56. John Griffiths, The Book of English International Rugby, 1871-1982 (London:1982), see selections to the Welsh, Irish and Scottish sides. Marshall (1892) see "Rugby in Scotland". Gareth Williams, "How Amateur Was My Valley: Professional Sport and National Identity in Wales, 1890-1914," British Journal of Sports History, vol. 2, December, 1985, p. 266.

57. Football Annual, 1881: Schools listed as playing rugby football:

Winchester	Dulwich	Leys
Wimbledon	Oxford Military College	Loretto (Scotland)
Christ's College	Marlborough	Wellington
Royal Hospital School	Tonbridge	Haileybury
Epsom	Royal Academy	London International

These are the only schools registered with the Football Annual.

58. C.J.B. Marriott, Modern Rugby Football, p. 2.

59. J.R.A. Daghish, Red Black and Blue: The First 125 Years of Liverpool Football Club, (Manchester: 1983), p. 3.

60. Manchester Football Club Records. W.B. Croxford, Rugby Union in Lancashire and Cheshire, (Liverpool), p. 12.

61. 125 - M.F.C., 1860-1985, (Manchester:1985), pp. 5-9.

62. Titley and McWhirter, p. 59.

63. 100 Years: Blackheath Football Club, (London: 1857), p. 3.

64. P.C. McIntosh, "The History of Sport and Other Disciplines", Proceeding of the Inaugural Conference of the British Society of Sport History, 1982, pp. 4-5.

65. Titley and McWhirter, p. 65.

66. Blackheath Football Club Records. 1862 club rules #VII and VIII.

67. Dunning and Sheard, p. 109. C.J.B. Marriott, p. 2.

68. C.J.B. Marriott, pp. 2-3. Rev. Francis Marshall (1892), pp. 76-78.

69. A. Marsden, Preston Grasshoppers, 1869-1969, (held at the R.F.U. museum, Twickenham), p. 11.

70. A Century of Rugby at Sale, (Manchester, 1961), p. 3. Worcester R.F.C. Centenary History, 1871-1971, p. 2. A Historical Record of the Wimbledon R.F.C., 1865-1965, Wasps Football Club, 1867-1967, J.B.G. Thomas, Great Rugger Clubs, "Wasps". Phillip Blacall, Brikenhead Park: the first hundred years, (Cheshire:1871), p. 11. H.B.T. Wakelam, The Harlequin Story, (London:1954), pp. 15-17. Ipswich RUFC, 1870-1970, p. 6. A. Marsden, p. 9.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FIRST DECADE OF THE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION, 1871-1881

1870 has been employed by many and varied historians to mark the approximate date of England's emergence into "the modern world". Geoffrey Best has stated that by 1875 all the forces of the twentieth century, except Marxist socialism and militant feminism, were in place when the mid-Victorian calm came to an end. Walter Houghton concluded that the final break with "a traditional framework of thought" had occurred by 1870. Donald Read has chosen 1868, one year after the Second Reform Bill, to begin his sweeping panorama of England up to 1914. Read reinforces the claim of Sir Robert Ensor that, after 1867, England was on a path to complete democracy and inevitable bureaucracy. Helen Meller begins her study of the relationship between leisure and the urban environment in Bristol at 1870, while Gareth Stedman Jones begins his work on Outcast London at approximately the same year. Eric Hobsbawm estimates that the "hey day of British capitalism" came to an end in 1875, and W.L. Burn has chosen 1867 to mark the end of The Age of Equipoise with the Tories' "leap into the dark" of parliamentary reform.¹

Writing in 1936, Ensor identified a series of occurrences such as the challenge to English industrial and diplomatic primacy from Germany, the 1867 Reform Bill and the 1872 Ballot

Act, the 1870 Education Act, the early questioning of laissez-faire, and the colonial reforms, beginning in 1867, as indications that 1870 was an approximate watershed in England's changing social and political developments. Social legislation such as the 1870 Education Act, and later the Public Health Act and the Housing Act (1875) indicated the government was willing to accept social responsibility, once thought best left to private initiative, thus embarking on the road to the social welfare state.²

It was partially through the government administration of social welfare that bureaucracies began to develop. Ensor argues too, that in the same period the emergence of joint stock and limited liability companies resulted in the growth of bureaucracies in the private sector. According to him, by 1872 there was a discernible decline in the "human face of industry", and an increase in white collar workers and new professions.³ The creation of both a large urban white collar work force and the new professions created by the changing role of the public and private sectors served to swell the ranks of the middle class at both ends. These two socially ambitious groups served to reinforce middle class hegemony in their attempts to solidify and improve their social position.

The professional middle class experienced rapid expansion from 1841 to 1881; increasing by 250% due to the bureaucratization of both the public and private sectors.⁴ The business professions, law, medicine and education were becoming

increasingly specialized. For example, The Institute of Civil Engineers was the forerunner in planning and incorporating the Institutes and Mechanical Engineers (1847), Naval Architects (1860), and Electrical Engineers (1870).⁵ Dentists, pharmacists, veterinarians, and general practitioners all struggled for social recognition throughout the nineteenth century. As the need arose for more specialization in the legal profession, it experienced a similar splintering of the field into areas of corporate and civil law. The growth of the Civil Service and corporate capitalism after 1870 produced the need for professional administrators. These professionals, in their quest for legitimacy, embarked upon a process of "organization, clarification, discipline and regulation."⁶

II

Although professional men were comparatively well paid for their services, they were never considered among the financial elite of Victorian England. The financial elite were predominantly London based business men whose wealth came from investments both at home and abroad. Only one quarter of those deemed "extremely wealthy" came from the industrial north.⁷ The business elite were educated at the best public schools, came from the best families, and continued their association at work and play through the Old Boys Network which functioned in the

metropolis. Their power was wielded in a closed association causing Harold Perkin to observe that the idea of the self-made man and the doctrine of self help came to be seen as a myth. A myth not only for workers, but for much of the professional class. The inability of professional men to acquire full elite status only served to widen the chasm between the ideals of the professional class and the business elite.⁸

Public school trained men came increasingly to administer the growing welfare state.⁹ The Third Report of the Civil Service Commission (1857-58) indicated that sons of upper middle class parents were holding "clerkships in certain Principal Departments." Even after the introduction of competitive exams, The Select Committee of Civil Service Expenditures (1873) discovered that successful candidates were coming from the same "better classes", because the exams were geared toward public school education.¹⁰

At the other end of the middle class was the army of white collar workers required for the day to day administration of corporate capitalism and the welfare state.¹¹ The largest subgroup of the lower middle class was shop workers, but "the terms 'clerk' and 'white collar worker' mask[ed] a huge range of occupational and status income."¹² It was possible, judging from The Third Report of the Civil Service Commission, that many young men of the "better classes" were beginning their careers as clerks in the Civil Service, but their family background provided motivation and the contacts necessary to rise through the

bureaucracy. Geoffrey Crossick has observed that members of the lower middle class in this period were also from the labour elite.¹³

Crossick's study of The Lower Middle Class in Britain, has concluded that owing to the nature of their work, most white collar workers were concentrated in the large urban centres, and there were fewer in the industrial north than in the metropolis.¹⁴ In a nation as status conscious as Victorian England, the lower middle class was among the most concerned with solidifying and advancing its status. Status anxiety and insecurity caused them to identify more closely with their employers, than with labourers; "an identity often expressed in the emulation of the former's [their employers] dress and manners."¹⁵ This contention is reinforced by historian James Mangan in his work on Victorian education.¹⁶ The lower middle class was extremely conservative, as well as "notorious" for their desire for social mobility.¹⁷

Peter Bailey has asserted that the middle class employed leisure as a means of reinforcing social distance.¹⁸ As Crossick argued, the status conscious lower middle class emulated their betters. One way that distancing could be achieved through imitation of social superiors was the preference for rugby football over soccer as a winter sport. Where the opportunity was present it was likely that the socially aspirant lower middle class would play rugby, and adhere to the dictates of the professional men who came to control the game.

The characterization of England between 1850 and 1875 as the mid-Victorian calm is due in large part to "concession and compromise" between the classes. In the aftermath of the Luddism and the Chartist Movement, a more conciliatory relationship developed between the middle class and the potentially disruptive elements of the working class. The consequence of this relationship was the emergence of the labour aristocracy as a buffer in class conflict.¹⁹

Attempts to accurately define the labour aristocracy has proven to be a difficult task and what has been more difficult is assessing its role in the restabilization of class relations after Chartism. While Eric Hobsbawm relies on subjective measurements of job security and social stability to define this group, Harold Perkin employs exacting monetary qualifications which has allowed him to estimate that the labour aristocracy made up 15% of the labouring class. Perkin claims that this group developed a sense of snobbishness and superiority toward the remaining 85%, while identifying with the lower middle class. Both historians agree that the labour aristocracy acted as a filter to class antagonism.²⁰

In his study of class relations in Oldham, John Foster asserts that the labour aristocracy came about as a deliberately conceived policy of the bourgeoisie in a successful attempt to re-establish political control by breaking mass working class solidarity.²¹ In contrast, Gareth Stedman Jones sees the labour aristocracy emerging out of the successful spread of middle class

hegemony. The labour elite became stable or "respectable" in that their conduct more closely mimicked their betters.²² The responsible behavior of Lancashire cotton operatives during the cotton famine, and the acquiring of middle class affectations of thrift, sobriety, rationality and cooperation were thought to be evidence of a morally and politically mature working class.²³

The focus of the respectable working class in the mid-Victorian period was often the Trade Union Movement. Trade unionism experienced rapid growth and established strong self-interest based on its vital importance to industrial capitalism.²⁴ An indication of the gains made by trade unionism was the series of legislation passed in the 1870s which recognized the workers' right to limited picketing, combined bargaining, and ended the prosecution for the breach of individually negotiated contracts. Formal support for united labour actions, such as The Times' praise for the conduct of Tyneside miners in their struggle for a nine hour day, was indicative of the growing acceptance of organized labour within industrial capitalism.²⁵

The three groups mentioned above, the professional middle class, the lower middle class and what can be best referred to as the "respectable" working class, have one thing in common: the affirmation and perpetuation of their social status. All three groups defined their social position in relationship to the dominant social group, the bourgeoisie. As a direct product of the embourgeoisement of English society, the professional middle

class chose when possible to play the games they had learned in public school. In an attempt to associate themselves with their betters and distance themselves from those below them, the other two groups mimicked the middle class in leisure as well as in dress and other social habits. The lower middle class, concentrated in large urban centres, took up the established middle class forms of leisure. In industrial areas, the respectable working class often became incorporated into the leisure practices of the small but influential middle class. Stedman Jones has observed that the Victorian middle class felt England was on the verge of a liberal, middle class utopia. They did so in light of the fact that class relationships were stable, and the ample evidence of the triumph of middle class hegemony.²⁶

III

When the Rugby Football Union (RFU) came into existence in 1871, it did so in a period of social calm. The early structure of the Union and its member clubs reflected the domination of the game by the London based public school old boys. The first ten years were to be spent streamlining and adjusting the game as a codified and national pastime. It was also in the 1870s that rugby football would experience the early emergence of a working class presence in the north. The national body was the domain of the metropolitan middle class with provincial outposts, but the germs of discontent that would grow until the end of the century

were just as evident in rugby as they were the society as a whole.

Through the 1860s, without the benefit of a single code of laws or a governing body, rugby football grew steadily among the middle class. Association football, considerably more organized than rugby after the unification of 1863, experienced great success in the Home Counties and the Midlands, but rugby clubs in London were more numerous.²⁷ Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle estimated that for every two soccer clubs in the metropolis, there were five playing a variation of the handling code. This was the result of the concentration of middle class, public school old boys in the city, and their inclination to join voluntary organizations.²⁸ In 1869, of the 116 football clubs registered with Football Annual, 62 played a type of rugby. In the following year similar figures confirmed the game's popularity.²⁹ Since clubs voluntarily registered with Football Annual, it is not possible to know exactly how many football clubs were actually in existence at this time. Liverpool FC, for example chose not to register with the publication. Assuming that Football Annual presents a cross section of clubs playing both codes, it is safe to conclude that rugby without the benefit of a single code or a central administration, was more than holding its own against the dribbling game, especially in London.

In the 1868 edition of Football Annual it was observed that "Almost every public school has a marked code [of rugby] of its own to which it resolutely clings, and which it stubbornly

refuses to merge into a general body of laws for the adoption of one universally recognized game".³⁰ This loyalty to an idiosyncratic code contributed to the reluctance of rugby men to establish a central governing body for the sport. By 1869, 17 of the 62 registered clubs had eliminated hacking and other clubs such as Blackheath had strictly limited the practice, while others clung to it as a necessary part of the game.³¹ When clubs playing variations of the handling code would meet, it was common for the captains to agree on a compromise set of rules for each match.³² With an increasing number of clubs the potential for variation could make what was supposed to be a relaxing Saturday outing confusing and difficult for players and spectators. What was needed was a single recognized code of laws administered by a central body. Expressing the widespread dissatisfaction with the endless possibilities for confusion, Bell's Life in January 1871 called on the established clubs in London to provide leadership in the formation of an administrative body.³³

Another pressing matter for the English rugby community which would be best resolved by a united front was the impending international match against the Scots. There appears to have been little organizational difficulty in selecting players to represent England for the match, but the potential for disagreement was obvious. Once selected the players had not only to agree to what rules they as a team would employ, but also had to agree on a compromise set of rules with the Scots. As a result of the selection process for the national team, it could

have been possible to have twenty players educated in twenty different variations of the game.

With the problems of confusion over codes, the need for organizing a national team, and the Football Association as an example, E.H. Ash of the Richmond Club organized a meeting to discuss the formation of a central governing body for rugby. On January 16, 1871 at the Pall Mall restaurant in Charing Cross, twenty-one clubs formed the Rugby Football Union. These clubs were: (A) Belsize Park, Blackheath, Clapham Rovers, Ravenscourt Park, Richmond, West Kent and Wimbledon Hornets; (B) Civil Service, Guy's Hospital, King's College, Law, St. Paul's School and Wellington College; (C) Addison, Flamingoes, Gypsies, Harlequins, Lausanne, Marlborough Nomads, Mohicans and Queen's House. It was agreed that any club wishing to abide by the rules of the RFU be eligible for membership. Algernon Rutter, a lawyer and Old Rugbeian, was elected president and Ash, also an Old Rugbeian, and instructor at Richmond Military College was elected Treasurer-Secretary.³⁴

A thirteen member committee was also struck in order to organize the administration of the Union. Of the fifteen man executive, seven had attended Rugby School, and four more had other public school education. The occupations of the fifteen included six lawyers, a businessman, a doctor, a civil servant, and a lecturer. Only Mr. R. Leigh of the Law Club is unaccountable for by either occupation or education, but by his club affiliation it is safe to assume he was both public school

trained and a lawyer.³⁵

The inaugural meeting of the RFU established beyond any doubt that the Union would be dominated by the London based professional middle class. They would strive to bring "organization, clarification, discipline and regulation" to their leisure as they had to their occupations. Stephen Yeo has shown that in the latter half of the nineteenth century, voluntary organizations were becoming national in scope, and structurally they reflected formal, work related organizations.³⁶ The middle class by habit and design brought the characteristics of their work to their play. Considering the background of the first RFU executive, the Union was destined to be very much a reflection of the professional middle class. In a period which saw the rise of bureaucratic corporate capitalism, the RFU reflected the institutional structure more commonly associated with joint stock companies. Both functioned through a chain of command which left workers, or players, removed from the direct decision making process. The fundamental difference in the early years of the RFU was that the executive was for the most part of the same class as the general membership. This was not so for corporate capitalism. The RFU, originally at least, had no inherent social conflict common to business. As long as the general membership of the Union remained of the same class, or supportive of that class, there was little threat to the Union as a middle class organization.

The RFU executive made two key decisions in its early years

which, with hind sight, contributed greatly to the Union's ability to withstand challenges to its London based professional class domination in later years. The decision that all General Meetings be held in London was made out of convenience since the majority of the membership was in the metropolis and the city was easily accessible by rail. The second action was more formally rooted in the bylaws of the Union. Rule #2 allowed each member club the right to two votes at the General Meetings, but rule #8 stated that a two thirds majority was necessary to alter any RFU legislation. Designed as a means to ensure wide support for alterations to the game, rule #8 came to be a formidable defense against intrusions made by those outside the dominant group.³⁷ It is tempting to suggest that the RFU was making the same inroads toward democracy that Ensor suggests was happening at this time in society as a whole, but the two thirds rules would indicate the contrary. The two thirds majority was a method of keeping power within the Union in the hands of an oligarchy of middle class Londoners even if the general membership was radically altered. As long as there were no pressures from within the Union, rule #8 need not have been used for anything beyond its original intent. With the meetings held only in London, and the two thirds majority rule any challenge to the consensus would be difficult.

At the second General Meeting a sub-committee of three Old Rugbeians was formed to draw up the Laws of the Game, based on those currently in place at Rugby School. The Union membership

was increased by nine when (B) Blackheath Propriety School, London Hospital, Merchant Taylors and St. George's Hospital; (C) Burlington House, Cheshunt, Crescent and Wasps joined.³⁸

The clubs listed above and the original twenty-one (in groups designated A,B, and C) reinforce the strong middle class nature of the executive. In group A, all the clubs with the possible exception of West Kent represent middle class London suburbs of the period. Clubs in group B have an affiliation with middle class occupations and/or education. Since the majority of the clubs in group C have disbanded and their nick names give no hint as to any affiliation, they are more difficult to analyse. However, Wasps were supported by Merchant Taylor Old Boys, Queen's House was founded by Sir G. Rowland Hill and his brother, Gipsies was established by Tonbridge School Old Boys, and Harlequins was formed in the middle class area of Hampstead.³⁹

The election of Rutter as president marked the first in a series of five solicitors/Old Rugbeian presidents for the RFU. Up until 1882 the chief officer of the Union had been trained at Rugby School. The chain was broken when James McLaren, a Lancashire business man from the class exclusive Manchester FC became the first northern and non-Rugby educated president.⁴⁰

England's first international match took place in Edinburgh on March 27, 1871. The Scots were represented by players from clubs with direct academic affiliations, demonstrating that the game north of the border was as class defined as it was in England. The game was marred by English protests over methods of

scoring which they felt had resulted in a Scottish victory.⁴¹ The English team was not limited to RFU members since seven of the English XX were chosen from Manchester and Liverpool.⁴² The dispute over scoring could only have intensified the need for a universal code of laws in the RFU mind.

The first England XX was as middle class as the game's administration. Fourteen had attended public school, while J. Luscombe, later to be knighted, was privately educated. Of the fourteen known occupations, all were middle or upper middle class; five lawyers, three military officers, two business men, two in commerce, and a ship owner.⁴³ By 1871 Association football had a central upper middle class administration in control of a lower middle and working class membership, but rugby remained more homogeneous. Judging from the example of the first English XX, highly developed club rugby was as stridently middle class as the Union executive.

By 1873, there were 59 clubs with membership in the Union including three from Scotland. Two years later the number had almost doubled to 110. By 1879, there were 106 clubs playing rugby union laws registered with Football Annual, compared with 62 playing soccer.⁴⁴ Evidence suggests that there were considerably more clubs playing rugby than were members of the RFU in this period.⁴⁵ Although lesser clubs may have joined the Union to establish a link with social superiors, or to retain contact with members of their own class, there was no practical reason for them to become members of the RFU. Non-membership did

not disqualify clubs from playing fixtures with Union members. Since lesser clubs in London could not attract or keep top quality players, membership qualifications for selection to county and national teams was not an issue. Nomination Forms for Membership to the Rugby Football Union indicate that non-affiliated clubs established prior to 1914 fall into no particular category such as working class, old boys, school or small town clubs, nor is there any geographic trend to be seen.⁴⁶

Up to 1873 the RFU had no northern representation. That year Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Rochdale, and Wigan, the dominant Lancashire and Yorkshire clubs joined the national body. Two years later twenty-one northern clubs held Union memberships, and the RFU saw fit to introduce a North v South game as a method of selection to the national side in 1874.⁴⁷ Rugby in the north gained tremendous support in the first ten years of the Union. By 1879, in Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire alone on one Saturday, 106 matches of major importance were played. Ten years earlier nine had been more typical, and twenty top matches on a given day was exceptional.⁴⁸

In 1874-75 the RFU granted the north a minimum of two seats on the elected eleven man executive.⁴⁹ This was indicative of the limited concessions granted to the north by the southern dominated Union. Without this gesture it is unlikely that the north would have been able to have placed any members on the executive since there was minimal northern attendance at General Meetings. Since the north held almost one quarter of the Union

membership by 1875, the RFU were willing to grant limited concessions.

At the international level, the RFU neglected the north. The seven northerners who represented England against Scotland in 1871 marked a high point for northern representation up to 1877. In that year five northern players contributed to the defeat of Ireland by the English XV. It was more common to see only two or three northern players on the English side, and these tended to be Liverpool and Manchester players. Of the 160 caps awarded to English players up to 1877, only twenty-eight went to the north, and of those, twenty-four were given to Liverpool and Manchester players. Preston Grasshoppers, Hull and Bradford shared the remaining four caps.⁵⁰

The Union functioned efficiently in its early years, but it was not always the case for the game at the club level. Unable to secure a full fixture list, a number of clubs found it necessary to play games under Association rules to give their players a weekly match. The Preston Grasshoppers, a top northern club, played soccer against local cotton mill teams. In 1876, two of London's top clubs, Queen's House and Flamingoes, arrived so late for a game that the match lasted only thirty minutes before darkness halted play.⁵¹ Centenary brochures indicate that many clubs were frustrated in their attempts to find adequate grounds and changing facilities. As late as 1912, disorganization remained so common that the Manchester Guardian announced a series of the previous week's cancelled fixtures

without any comment on the persistent problem.⁵² The Union remained aloof from these nagging difficulties, and instead functioned as an administrative body, arbitrating disputes, determining and interpreting laws, and coordinating the game at the national level. Even when fledgling clubs sought membership in the RFU, they were provided with no assistance in establishing a suitable fixture list.

The practice of establishing a fixture list, while not intended for such a purpose, could be a mechanism by which clubs ensured social distancing. As leagues were considered beyond the pale of the true amateur sporting ethos, clubs established a series of matches which were to be played for the love of the game. Clubs made applications to other teams requesting a fixture. This request could be accepted or denied depending on such things as convenience, quality of opposition, or previous commitments. The process allowed for clubs wishing to play only clubs of a similar social composition to do so without having to justify their decision. Apart from a club's social status, such variables as distance, skill, occupational and/or educational affinity were common determinates for accepting or refusing an application. Later, regional and national ties became a factor. London Welsh, established in 1885--86, played early fixtures with Colwyn Bay, Swansea, Newport, Oxford, London Scottish, and Harlequins. This would indicate that the club, from its inception, was a highly regarded team however, with the exception of Old Leysians, the "Dragons in Exile" found none of the

preponderance of old boys clubs willing to give them a fixture in their early years.⁵³

It may not be possible to accurately document class prejudice in rugby from fixture lists alone because the reasons for accepting or denying an application remain locked away in the minds of club administrators who made such decisions. However, Bailey has stated that sport and leisure were used as a method of social distancing. Through the judicial use of fixture lists, it was possible to ensure that any clubs which were so inclined could play others based on social factors. This was more likely to be possible in London, while provincial clubs could not depend on class exclusive opposition to fill out a full season of matches. Bell's Life commented in 1876 on the metropolitan clubs' tendency not to play against northern clubs when it noted that the London teams were unwilling to play the high quality teams being formed in the area. The publication stated that the Londoners "should be as eager to travel north as they were to play matches as far away as Scotland and Ireland."⁵⁴

IV

The game's popularity in the metropolis during the 1870s is reflected in the number of clubs being founded and joining the Union. The old boys network in London was extended into leisure and it may be assumed that one reason for the growth of the game was the desire to associate with equals by playing rugby. Rather

than being clubs made up of ambitious lower middle class players, the new clubs reflect the same social affiliations common to the Union's founding clubs, although they may have included some lower middle class players. In Kent, Middlesex, and Surrey at least twenty-one clubs still in existence today were founded between 1871 and 1879. The majority of these clubs were middle class teams based on their community, educational and occupational affiliations. Most of the clubs with community affiliation were formed in middle class neighbourhoods south of the Thames, and eleven others had immediately recognizable affiliations with middle class educational and/or occupational institutions.⁵⁵ Rosslyn Park was founded by members of a Hampstead cricket club. The Saracens was established by ex-Philological School students, and Tonbridge had a close connection to the school of the same name in Kent.⁵⁶

There was a close affiliation between the metropolitan clubs and the universities. Graduates made their way to the city in search of work and supplied the clubs with a pool of players trained in the game. The increase in the number of public schools adopting rugby as their sport is reflected in the growing number of them to be represented at the universities. In 1884 Oxford had players from only two public schools, Rugby and Marlborough College, and Cambridge was represented by players who had attended nine public schools, including Harrow, which did not formally have a rugby team. By contrast, in 1891 Oxford drew players from eleven schools and Cambridge from fourteen schools.

By this time rugby was a fifteen a side game.⁵⁷ The various colleges also fielded their own teams as the demand for the game increased. After finishing their schooling, players not only went looking for work, but also for top clubs in London. This not only reinforced the middle class nature of the game in London, it served to maintain the quality of top clubs such as Blackheath, Richmond and Harlequins.⁵⁸

The pattern of rugby in the provinces was not as clear cut as it was in London. The game did, however, flourish in some areas as a result of middle class initiative, but any substantial growth was dependent upon introducing the game to the lower classes. Outside of London the highest concentration of clubs was in Cheshire, Lancashire and the West Riding. Bradford, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds, and York were founded by enthusiastic public school old boys. In Lancashire such major clubs as Birch, Rochdale Hornets, Southport, and Swinton had middle class administration, even if the playing membership was not exclusively of the same social status. Birkenhead Park, Bowden, New Brighton, and Sale were Cheshire clubs which came to draw their membership from the community as a whole, but also administratively remained in the hands of community leaders.⁵⁹

In Yorkshire, clubs sprang up in small villages and industrial towns under the leadership of local dignitaries.⁶⁰ Morley RFC, established in 1878 was comprised of local lads trained by boys at Turton Hall College. Local mill owner, Samuel Rhodes built the club up by recruiting miners and his own

workers.⁶¹ Leeds, as a major centre, was well blessed with clubs. Leeds St. John's and Headingley began as church clubs, while Leeds Medical was comprised of local doctors and medical students. Henry Irwin Jenkinson, a railway clerk, formed Leeds Athletic by advertising in the local press for interested players. Halifax FC was founded in a similar manner, which implies that the lower middle class was willing, when the opportunity was present, to take the initiative, but this type of action was certainly the exception even in the provinces.⁶² As already shown, middle class clubs formed around neighbourhoods, occupations, and educational affiliations. In the north, under the guidance of middle class missionaries of the game this was less possible, and the church became a starting point for a number of clubs dependent upon lower middle and working class membership. In Yorkshire the most famous of these were Headingley, Leeds St. John's, and Wakefield Trinity.

Lancashire's founding clubs, Manchester and Liverpool, gave the game firm middle class roots in the county, but less exclusive clubs sprang up in small towns.⁶³ These clubs would have found it difficult to establish and maintain such a high standard of play had they been dependent only on the local bourgeoisie and professional men. By 1880 small town clubs drawing their membership from across class lines were challenging the primacy of Liverpool and Manchester.

In Cheshire, the pattern of development was the same. Birkenhead Park was able to remain somewhat more class exclusive,

drawing players from lesser public and aspiring grammar schools in the area, as well as local business men and military officers. In contrast, Bowden RUFC (1877) was a community supported club with a chronic problem of poor facilities. Sale was formed by members of the local cricket club and by 1893 the town, dominated by the cotton industry, was drawing players from the working class.⁶⁴ In addition to these clubs, Chester, Congleton, New Brighton and Macclesfield clubs made this small county a stronghold of the game prior to 1880.⁶⁵

As a result of the failure to transfer the game to the lower class under the control of the bourgeoisie, rugby had limited support in the far north of England. William Cail of Newcastle and RFU president in 1893, lamented "all our efforts have been in vain to give the Rugby game a root among the working classes [in the far north]."⁶⁶ Durham College, a bastion of the game, contributed to the stability of local rugby. Durham City RFC (1871) was comprised of local doctors, lawyers and business men. The Scottish players in the area provided added support for the game, but even their input could not save the Darlington club from jumping to the Association code in the 1870s.⁶⁷ In what are now the Durham, Cumberland-Westmoreland, and Northumberland county unions, twenty-one clubs were formed up to 1880. Percy Park RFC was established by a clerk in a North Shields ship building firm and recruited office staff appears to have been the only club that was not predominately middle class.⁶⁸

Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard have conservatively

estimated that in the south, south-west and the Midlands, seventy clubs were formed up to 1880.⁶⁹ Tony Mason's history of Association football has shown that soccer was the sport of choice in the Midlands especially, but, as in the north, what game a club would choose to play was dependent upon which of the two codes the early proponents of the game were educated in.⁷⁰ Bath, Clifton and Gloucester owed their formation to the efforts of local middle class, public school trained rugby men. Clifton rugby club's first president was the town mayor, and the team relied heavily upon Clifton College for its membership. The club grew rapidly as a result of the introduction of less exclusive players to the team and in 1877 the college players split to form their own team. This suggests that there was social tension within the club between the two classes. Clifton's playing membership became more diversified, but the administration remained middle class. In its formative years the Bath club was under the influence of Major General Fitzroy Mundy and Sir Robert Blaine who served as president from 1888 to 1898.⁷¹

Somerset clubs such as Taunton and Wivelscombe achieved stability through the support of players who had attended Rugby, Cheltenham and Marlborough Colleges.⁷² The Newport Athletic Club (1874) was a Welsh team which held membership in both the RFU and the Welsh Rugby Union. The Welsh connection exposed the West Country clubs to the unique and uncompromising style of the Welsh game. Newport became such a prestigious club that a fixture with them was much sought after for even the most insular of London

clubs. Regular rivals for the Welshmen included Blackheath, Harlequins and Wasps, and later the London Welsh.⁷³ Plymouth Albion (originally Devon Albion) was a club which combined both local players and naval officers stationed there. This tradition continued up to and beyond 1914.⁷⁴ Coventry's town mayor and high ranking Free Masons were the prime movers in the formation of a rugby club in that city. The club played both codes in its early years but committed itself exclusively to the handling game in 1874. The club increasingly drew its membership from the local factory workers and flirted briefly with "the business they call a sport" after 1895.⁷⁵

The majority of clubs in this widespread area, like those in the Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire region, were small town teams which would have found it difficult to rely exclusively upon the middle class to field teams. It is ironic that the Midlands, as the birth place of rugby was so strongly dedicated to the competing code. It was not until the split of 1895 that the south, south west, and the Midlands rose to prominence with the emergence of clubs in Leicester and Northampton.⁷⁶

There was only a scattering of rugby clubs throughout the south-east, and these tended to fall under the influence of the metropolis, reflecting the same occupational/educational affinities. Clubs formed prior to 1880 in what is now the Eastern Counties Rugby Union include Cambridge, Ipswich, Leys School, London Hospital, Old Blues, Old Leysians, and Port of London Authority.⁷⁷

There were, by conservative estimates, 183 clubs formed up to 1880 throughout England, with the lion's share in London and the north, but the distribution of international caps up to 1885 shows just how dominant the metropolitan clubs were.⁷⁸ Of a possible 465 caps, London and area clubs received 318. The north was awarded 120, the majority of which came after 1880; the West Country earned 6; the military 21; and the Midlands none. Blackheath alone won 86; Richmond 64; Oxford 54; and Cambridge placed 19 players on the English team. In the north, Manchester players were awarded 43 caps and Liverpool 19.⁷⁹ Even though the prestigious clubs did attract the top quality players, it is hard to imagine that the domination of the game by certain clubs especially in the London area could have been so great. These figures indicate not only a predisposition toward selection of London players, but as a result of the large number of northern caps awarded to Manchester and Liverpool, it can be concluded that there was also a predisposition toward selecting middle class players. This may have been as a result of the lack of exposure to small town clubs, but it also suggests preference for players of the same social position as those Union officials who selected the national side.

In his study of the Victorian north, Patrick Joyce has provided a revealing sketch of culture in small industrial towns. He suggests that these communities were dominated by a small but influential bourgeoisie whose influence was a result of their control of the factories. The bourgeoisie's influence extended

beyond the labour processes and played a vital role in the small towns' social, political and religious lives. What existed, Joyce has shown, was a direct personal paternalism, as opposed to bureaucratically organized charity" which separated the middle class from the lower classes in large urban centres.⁸⁰ The towns in Lancashire and the West Riding examined by Joyce were also enthusiastic rugby supporters. It was most often the bourgeoisie and/or local professional men who first introduced the game into these communities. Mayors, businessmen, the clergy, educators, and factory owners, those most likely to have attended public schools and learned the game there, served as organizers, players and administrators of town rugby. The game became a part of the direct, personal paternalism exercised by the small town dignitaries. Rugby clubs in Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire became extensions of the pervasive middle class influences. In London, clubs were able to exercise social separation in rugby as they were in day to day life, but outside the large northern centres, clubs were most often community teams under the guidance and control of those who held sway over the cultural life of the small towns.

Although there is not the same type of study available for other regions of Victorian England, it can be suggested that there were similar experiences occurring in other parts of the country where small town clubs were forming. It may be unfair without proper documentation to suggest that, for example, Cornishmen were subjected to the same paternalistic control that

Joyce has shown to have existed in the industrial north, but West Country clubs show a tendency to be under the guidance of the local middle class. Where industrialization was less intense, the middle class may not have wielded the same overt power, but influence in small communities can also stem from educational achievement, political and religious authority, as well as tradition. Even where rugby clubs were of obviously lower status than those of the metropolis, they were most often administered by the local middle class. As suggested by William Cail's remarks already quoted, the provincial middle class did attempt to transfer the game to the lower classes, but under their control. For example Brixham RFC in Devon came about as the result of Rev. G.R. Roberts' bringing together of local fishermen to build a community team. It was Rev. F.J. Eld of Worcester Grammar School and former curate at Rugby who established a community team in that town to play against the local Law and Medicine club. The establishment and control of local sporting clubs by the middle class was not unique to rugby, as Stephen Yeo has shown in his study of voluntary organizations in Reading.⁸¹

Even in the early years, rugby was developing differently outside the metropolis. Demographic realities made it impossible for the game to be the homogeneous institution it was in London. Small town clubs in the provinces were a reflection of small town life in Victorian England, dominated by the local bourgeoisie, unable to achieve a class exclusive playing membership.

Following the example of the RFU, counties with sufficient

clubs established administrative bodies to accommodate local affairs. The county unions acted as intermediaries between clubs and the parent body, as well as coordinated local affairs ignored by the Union. Typical of these was the establishment and selection of a county team and the establishment of inter-county fixtures. Cheshire, Cumberland-Westmoreland, Devon, Durham, Middlesex, Somerset, Surrey and Yorkshire found it possible to form county unions in the 1870s. Lancashire was under the control of the Manchester FC, which clung tenaciously to its self appointed control over county matters until the 1880s.

The fledgling Yorkshire Rugby Union came about as a result of the initiative of the county's leading clubs. In Francis Marshall's 1892 history of the game, he states that Bradford, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds and York held the power in the county unopposed as a consequence of their united support for county rugby. These clubs established a self-elected body which oversaw the county team, dictated selection, coordinated county fixtures, and administered to local problems. In 1876, amidst growing dissatisfaction from unrepresented clubs, the Yorkshire Union (YRU) instituted the Yorkshire County Cup, contrary to the prevailing sporting ethos common to metropolitan clubs. The competition was enthusiastically received, but Marshall claims that this "bauble dangled before their eyes" served to only temporarily satisfy the small, less powerful unrepresented clubs. They soon ceased to be pacified by the cup competition, and in 1880 seven clubs including the already represented Huddersfield

team, demanded complete representation for all YRU clubs. In hope of retaining the oligarchy which ran the union, Dewsbury and Leeds St. John's, the most assertive of the omitted clubs, were offered the right to representation. The YRU executive also abandoned self-election in favour of union wide balloting. In 1883, the inclusion of challenge cup winners expanded representation on the county union, but complete representation for all clubs in the YRU was a protracted process.⁸²

The slow process of democratization within the YRU occurred not as a result of the generosity of the powerful clubs. It was the culmination of a series of confrontations between the existing powers and a united campaign by unrepresented clubs. The begrudging acceptance of a few like minded clubs into the privileged circle, or the demand that clubs earn their position on the union executive was not unlike the goals of extended franchise, to increase the size of the oligarchy without conceding control. In order to retain their power, the YRU committee made only limited concessions to the concept of a democratic union.

The Yorkshire Challenge Cup became a major feature of county rugby. Not only did it provide the winner with a tangible reward after 1883, it brought the holder great prestige. This was especially true for small town clubs in which rugby was so closely linked to the community as a whole.

In contrast, London clubs had little interest in such competitions. The middle class sporting ethos, which saw such

inducements to play as an affront to the game, appears to have been pervasive enough to ensure that overt rewards were not offered in metropolitan rugby. County rugby also failed to attract great support because such divisions were irrelevant in London.⁸³ The possible gains from winning a challenge cup or a county championship were fewer in the south. The strong interest in the metropolitan game shown by national team selectors ensured that top London clubs would already be well known, and the middle class teams were less likely to seek the recognition brought by these events. In keeping with the occupational/educational nature of the game in London, spectacles such as the Hospital Cup matches and the Oxford v Cambridge games were more important.

The early years of the RFU gave every indication that the differences between the metropolitan clubs and the north would lead to increasing difficulties. As mentioned above there was little contact between the two at the club level because of the refusal to include northern teams in fixture lists. Even the class exclusive clubs such as Manchester and Liverpool seem to have been ignored. It may be possible to attribute this solely to the large number of high quality teams in the London area making travel unnecessary, but it can also be attributed to the "snobbishness" of London clubs even towards clubs of similar social composition in the north. The London clubs seemed willing to travel to Ireland and Scotland and include Newport in their fixtures, but there was a habit of bypassing teams from the industrial regions of England.

Commenting on the style of rugby played in the capital, "A Londoner" observed that Middlesex and Surrey rugby matches were "garden party" affairs. In contrast he stated that the local pride, hard work and dedication displayed in the northern game was more admirable. He concluded that those who organized the Yorkshire clubs had converted "indigenous talent into an enthusiastic machine."⁸⁴ In the Football Annual of 1880 the community teams of the north were criticized for their ignorance of the laws and for an undue emphasis on brute force at the expense of skill.⁸⁵ Arthur Guillemard also thought that northerners of the 1870s had the admirable qualities of being "very keen and full of pluck, but ignorant not only of the laws, but of the leading principles of the game."⁸⁶

The suggestion that the northerners were ignorant of the laws has some truth, but more accurately, they were less likely to adhere to the sporting ethos upon which the laws were predicated. As the number of community based clubs grew beyond the direct influence of the London middle class, the greater the number of players not trained in the public school/middle class sporting ethos. There may have been a tendency on the part of the socially ambitious to mimic their "betters" by playing rugby, but what was instilled in public school boys through rugby was not easily transferred into the consciousness of the lower orders

each Saturday on the pitch. K.A.P. Sandiford has argued that working class cricketers of the period exhibited the same lack of commitment to the middle class sporting ethos in their game and placed a high value on success and rewards.⁸⁷ Public school life was an intense socialization process and the values inculcated were not easily achieved by playing occasional matches. The "leading principles" of rugby, and other sports were the Victorian virtues of loyalty and fair play, and especially adherence to a code of laws.

In August 1871, Bell's Life called the abolition of hacking (freeing the ball from a scrummage by indiscriminate kicking) the best of the RFU laws.⁸⁸ Hacking was not, however, formally outlawed in the first draft of the laws; it was simply omitted. Only in 1874 was it officially banned in Law XXXIV (Foul Play, Misconduct) which stated "No hacking or hacking over or tripping up shall be allowed under any circumstances."⁸⁹ In the same year, a death attributed to the practice occurred, reinforcing the attacks on hacking from the medical profession and the satirical criticisms of the violence in rugby found in Punch.⁹⁰ There was a realization that the degree of violence common to the school game was inappropriate for young adults. The Union made an honest effort to control the violence without emasculating rugby.⁹¹

In a continuing attack on the game as it was played in Lancashire and Yorkshire, Football Annual in 1877 stated that northerners were losing sight of the "true science" of the game.

The following year it continued its attack on northern clubs for their frequent abuse of Law XXV concerning off-side.⁹² By purposely being in an off-side position, the player would gain an unfair advantage, and since the penalty was minimal, the risk of detection was well worth taking. The blatant disregard for the "spirit of the game", while not in keeping with the middle class sporting ethos, was calculated to aid in the securing of a victory. In response to the protest over the abuse of Law XXV, a report of the Special Committee to the Rugby Football Union stated that the practice was common to the north. It concluded that the intentional breach of the law was "a misapprehension of the spirit in which the Rugby game should be played."⁹³ Since the penalty for such violation was minor and the referees powerless to act without appeal from the offended side's captain, the RFU could do nothing to stop it short of rewriting the laws. The only apparent "justice" to be exacted was to not give the offending side another fixture. This may account in part for northern clubs being ignored by the metropolis.

It was becoming evident that it was necessary to eradicate flagrant abuse of the laws through the introduction of more extreme penalties and methods of enforcement. By doing this, the rugby fraternity was confessing that their game was no longer being played in the proper spirit, if in fact it had ever been. The northern clubs received the bulk of the criticism, but the laws were sufficiently vague to make abuses possible throughout the country. Since the metropolitan clubs already found the non-

public school trained northerners' attraction to the game disconcerting, it is easy to understand that they would be singled out for criticism.⁹⁴

Each successive amendment to the laws moved closer to eradicating flagrant violations, especially concerning foul play. They also slowly took the game out of the hands of the players and placed it under the control of an impartial official. Up to 1874, captains were the sole arbitrators of the game. In 1875 referees appointed by the home team became optional. In 1881 they were made compulsory, but could not rule on a point of law unless appealed to. It was only in 1885 that officials were allowed to halt play for an infraction. It was not until much later, however, that referees were given full power to penalize by banishment.⁹⁵

It is unfair to attribute the need for the "civilizing" process common to all Victorian sport to the introduction of the lower orders to organized games. There is however ample evidence to confirm that the northern rugby clubs made up of players from across class lines were responsible for the RFU decisions to "civilize" their game by amending the laws to the point that the underlying values of the middle class no longer dictated how the game should be played. This is not to imply that northerners were "cheaters", but to recognize that they had less commitment to the Victorian sporting ethos. Some northern players were willing to submit to the actual laws of rugby and suffer the consequences of breaking them, but they either did not know or

care about the unwritten code of ethics which determined the "spirit of the game".

Having said this, there is every indication that the top metropolitan clubs were guilty of acting outside the spirit of the game as well. In 1874 a letter to Bell's Life from a player calling himself "RFC" revealed that it was an "unfair and growing practice" for London clubs with important fixtures to borrow players from other teams. He demanded that this abuse of fair play be stopped as it had been done in rowing.⁹⁶ The northern and working class athletes may have over-emphasized winning, but entire clubs in London were equally willing to forsake Victorian sporting values to enhance their reputation.

Another criticism of the northern players was their love of brute force. The twenty-a-side teams common to RFU games featured an undue emphasis on forward play which resulted in a series of shoving matches by each team's thirteen big men. The Football Annual suggested that the backs be deployed in a semi-circle twenty-five to thirty yards in arrears of the half backs, making any link in an attacking movement almost impossible. The backs almost certainly would have been merely spectators to the shoving matches (mauls or loose scrummages) and their primary job would have been in defense when the ball eventually came free of the forwards.⁹⁷ "Old Player" was one critic of this style of play. He rightly observed that the game was monotonous: "Are we to have football or a succession of shoving matches, a contest where skill will be displayed, or an exhibition of muscle?" "An

Irish Forward" agreed, and stated that in mauls forwards shoved for the joy of it, not caring where the ball was.⁹⁸ Guillemard wrote that "Many of the spectators of the rougher classes consider, judging from their excited shouting, that this feature of the game was more attractive than the most brilliant of runs, the cleverest of dribbling, or the prettiest drop at goal."⁹⁹ Northern forwards of the 1870s were especially adept at this style of play, and therefore content to participate in the laborious affairs.

Metropolitan clubs soon became dissatisfied with the endless displays of strength and introduced a system of close-in passing to free the ball more quickly.¹⁰⁰ An impetus to the development of this strategy was the northern forwards' superiority of strength displayed in the North v South matches. Northern selection to the English team in the 1870s was predominantly at the forward position, because they were admired for their power more so than for skill or wits.¹⁰¹ The implication of this is that skill positions were the prerogative of the Londoners, and the power positions the place for the northerners, not unlike the situation which exists currently in professional football in North America in regard to white and black players.

The feature of the RFU game which resulted in the long mauling was thought to be the number of players. The Laws of the Game never dictated the number of players per side until 1892, but twenty-a-side developed out of tradition. In the 1875 universities match the number was reduced to fifteen and the

Union experimented with that number in the North v South game. The Scots at this time were pressing for a reduction in the number of players for international matches in hope of limiting the shoving marathons and as a result with no formal legislation the RFU and affiliated clubs dropped the twenty-a-side game in favour of fifteen.¹⁰²

VI.

Throughout the first decade of the RFU there was a justifiable sense of optimism among the middle class. The liberal utopia must have seemed close at hand: the nation was the most influential force in Europe and the guardian of a vast and culturally diverse empire. At home, the proof of the triumph of middle class hegemony could find no better example than the spread of Victorian middle class sport. Not only were the virtues inherent in sport being delivered by missionaries of the games ethic to the lower classes, they were spreading throughout the Empire and beyond.¹⁰³

As an example of a middle class leisure institution, the RFU was justifiably confident, and secure in its right to oversee the game. It made no attempt to exclude any club or player from the Union as long as they complied with the dictates of the parent body. Socially less exclusive members were welcome additions in light of the fact that one function of Victorian sport was the transfer of middle class values to the lower classes, but at the club level in the metropolis, social interaction between classes

was not a fact. Social and economic changes delivered a willing group of ambitious devotees to both codes of football. The results of the embourgeoisement of nineteenth century England made rugby a symbol of social achievement. As willing and "rightful" leaders, the middle class encouraged the playing of the game, but appear to have been less than willing to engage in direct contact with their "inferiors" at least in London.¹⁰⁴ In the provinces, leadership, both in leisure and in every day life, was a more direct responsibility.

Although there were hints of trouble, the RFU could only have been encouraged by the positive developments in the game. At the international level, England rebounded from its initial loss to Scotland to post twelve wins and five draws to only two defeats up to 1882.¹⁰⁵ In spite of the increase in the growing number of non-middle class players in the game, clubs remained under the control of middle class administrators, as did the county unions, and the general membership appear to have been supportive of the Union. There was no threat to the old boys network in London which determined the direction of the game. At RFU General Meetings the north was consistently under-represented, probably because club executives felt their best interests were being attended to without having to make the journey south.¹⁰⁶

Charles Marriott, secretary of the RFU (1907-1924) and member of the Tonbridge School, Cambridge, Blackheath and Gipsies clubs, wrote "Though the Rugby Union was founded by old public

school men, there has never been any desire [or need in the 1870s] to make it a class game provided those who play it adhere to the amateur principles."¹⁰⁷ In the first decade of the Union these "amateur principles" could more accurately be described as Victorian middle class (sporting) values. Inherent in the game, it was believed, were the qualities necessary for the proper development of young men: loyalty, fair play, hard work, and discipline. Under the direction of the bourgeoisie, others could only benefit from playing the game.¹⁰⁸

The difficulties which would later come to plague the RFU did have their roots in the 1870s. The snobbishness of London rugby even toward those of a similar class in the provinces was a fact of Victorian life. As the centre of finance, politics, education, and the Empire, as well as the hub of Society, Londoners viewed their city as the apex of English life. Coupled with the growing lower class elements in the northern game, the sense of superiority felt by Londoners would come to intensify the separation between the north and the metropolis. In the north, the traditional domination of the game by socially exclusive clubs was becoming increasingly unacceptable. By 1885, public school old boys had ceased to dominate the game on the pitch. At the highest levels of play northerners from small town clubs had come to replace players from clubs synonymous with London rugby. In 1879, seven northerners were part of the English XV which defeated Ireland. Broughton, Manchester Rangers and Birkenhead Park players had replaced those from Law,

Marlborough Nomads and Wimbledon Hornets.¹⁰⁹ The trend toward selecting non-public school educated players to represent the country became the only way of ensuring victory and was not an acceptance of them as a class. In the north, removed from the constant pressures for conformity and the old boys network, even the bourgeoisie became less committed to the public school ethos which underscored London rugby.

It was perhaps the confidence of the RFU which kept it from exerting undue direct pressure on member clubs. The Union's response to changes to the game were often taken as a fait accompli. There was every indication that the game at the club level was in the hands of like minded administrators and, as a consequence, there was no need to rule over the constituent bodies. The game, the Union and the society would soon be shaken out of its confidence as class conciliation and the dream of a liberal utopia would crumble to be replaced by divisive developments even within the middle class itself.

ENDNOTES

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2. Ensor, introduction and pp. 35-36; see also Read, pp. 4, 94, 150-151.
3. Ibid., pp. 113-114.
4. Read, p. 31.
5. Burn, p. 285.
6. Ibid.
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8. Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880, (London: 1969), pp. 226, 425, 429-437.
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10. W.L. Guttsman (ed.), The English Ruling Class, (London: 1969), pp. 237-238, 249-250.
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13. Ibid., pp. 36-37.
14. Ibid., p. 19.
15. Crossick, p. 25. Best, p. 272.

16. James Mangan "Imitating Their Betters and Disassociating From Their Inferiors: Grammar Schools and the Games Ethic", delivered at the History of Education Society Annual Conference, Dec. 12, 1982.
17. Crossick, p. 39. (see also p. 21).
18. Peter Bailey, "A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures", p. 26.
19. Eric Hobsbawm, "The Labour Aristocracy", Labouring Men, pp. 387-389.
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21. John Foster, Class Struggle in the Industrial Revolution, (London: 1974).
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23. Stedman Jones, Outcast London, pp. 8-10.
24. Henry Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party, (Oxford: 1965), pp. 4-5 on the triumph of Trade Unionism, Perkin, pp. 402-404.
25. Read, p. 185.
26. Stedman Jones, Outcast London, p. 16.
27. Tony Mason, pp. 59-68.
28. Bell's Life In London and Sporting Chronicle, October, 28, 1871.
29. Football Annual, 1869, pp. 53-63 and 1870, pp. 49-61.
30. Ibid., 1861, p. 1.
31. Ibid., 1869, pp. 53-63.
32. Ibid., 1871, p. 45.
33. Bell's Life., Jan, 1871.
34. Rugby Football Union Minute Book: 26 Jan., 1871- 4 Oct., 1872.
35. Dunning and Sheard, p. 123. V.A. Titley and R. McWhirter, Centenary History of the Rugby Football Union, (Tweckenham: 1971), p. 78.

36. Stephen Yeo, Religion and Voluntary Organizations in Crisis, (London: 1976), introduction and Chpt. VII, pp. 185-209.
37. RFU Minute Book: 26 Jan., 1871 - 4 Oct., 1872.
38. Ibid., see General Meeting July 24, 1871.
39. Middle class neighbourhoods are those designated by income in B.S. Rowntree's maps of London. (The National Museum of Labour, Lime St. Town Hall, London). Rev. F. Marshall, Football: The Rugby Union Game, (London: 1892), p. 345. Titley and McWhirter, pink pages, see "G. Rowland Hill".
40. Rutter. (1871-74), F. Stokes (1874-75), L.J. Maton (1875-76), C.D. Heatley (1876-78) and A.G. Guillemard (1878-1882) were all solicitors, Old Rugbeians and RFU presidents.
41. Titley and McWhirter, pp. 81-82. Scottish players represented Glasgow Academicals, St. Andrew's University, Edinburgh Academicals, and Edinburgh University and attests to the contribution to the game of Loretto and Fettes, public schools in Scotland.
42. Blackheath (4), Clapham Rovers, Gypsies (2), Marlborough Nomads, Ravenscourt Park (2), Richmond, and West Kent (2), contributed the remaining thirteen players.
43. John Griffiths (ed.), The Book of English International Rugby, 1871-1982, (London: 1983). International North vs. South, and Inter-University Matches: Teams, Scores and Results, 1870-1912, (no author:RFU Museum and Library, Twickenham). Titley and McWhirter pink pages.
44. Football Annual, 1873, p. 54, 1875, pp. 48-49, 1879, pp. 20-30. Marshall, pp. 85-86.
45. There were at least 134 clubs a century or older in existance in 1975. This does not account for clubs which folded or joined the new union after 1895. Prior to the introduction of insurance schemes for RFU clubs after W.W. II junior clubs had no overt practical reasons to join the RFU. Titley and McWhirter, pp. 188-205 and RFU records concerning club membership, held at the RFU Museum and Library, Twickenham.
46. Nomination Forms for Membership to the RFU (RFU Museum and Library, Twickenham). A new member must be nominated by a RFU club.
47. Marshall, p. 83-86.
48. Football Annual, 1880, p. 63. Marshall, p. 83.

49. Marriott, pp. 4-5.
50. Giffiths, see matches up to 1877.
51. A. Marsden, Preston Grasshoppers 1869-1969, (Centenary History). Bell's Life, Jan. 8, 1876.
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53. Stephen Jones and Paul Beken, Dragon in Exile: The Centenary History of the London Welsh RFC, (London: 1985), pp. 280-290. The practice of establishing fixture lists remains the method of working out a schedule of play for a season even today, inspite of the Cup Competitions and a system of national ranking brought about after W.W. II. For details see Dunning and Sheard, Chapter XI.
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57. A.C.M. Croome, p. 46.
58. Marshall, p. 329.
59. Marshall, pp. 373-477. Phillip Beacall, Birkenhead Park: the first hundred years, (Centenary History), pp. 1-17. Bowden RUFC, (Centenary Brochure). A Century of Rugby at Sale, (Centenary Brochure).
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61. G. Atkinson, Morley RFC: The Early Years, (Centenary Brochure).
62. Marshall, pp. 417-446. Headingley FC, (Centenary Brochure).
63. Titley and McWhirter, pp. 188-205. Southport RFC, (Centenary Brochure). Marshall pp. 393-396. For example Oldham, Rochdale Hornets, St. Helens, Southport, Widnes, and Wigan.
64. Beacall, pp. 1-17. Bowden RUFC 1877-1977.

65. A Century of Rugby at Sale, pp. 3, 24-25. Titley and McWhirter, pp. 188-205.
66. Marshall, p. 453.
67. C. Berkeley Cowell and E. Watts Moses, Durham County Rugby Union 1876-1936, (Newcastle: 1936), p. 14. Marshall, pp. 447-457. Northumberland Rugby Union 1880-1980, (Centenary Brochure).
68. Titley and McWhirter, pp. 188-205. Percy Park Rugby Football Club: A History, 1872-1972, (Centenary Brochure). For a study of the area around South Shields see John Foster.
69. Dunning and Sheard, p. 236.
70. Mason, pp. 60-68.
71. E. Seymore Bell and F.C. Hawking, 50 With Clifton RFC 1872-1965, (Bristol: 1922), pp. 4-13. Bath Football Club 1865-1965, (Centenary Brochure).
72. One Hundred Years of Taunton Rugby, (Centenary Brochure). Wivelscombe RFC, 1872-1972, (Centenary Brochure).
73. Newport Athletic Club, 1875-1975, (Newport: 1975), pp. 47, 60-61.
74. J.B.G. Thomas, Great Rugger Clubs, (London: 1962), pp. 70-71.
75. Marshall, p. 477. Coventry Football Club, (Centenary Brochure). Rugby Football, March 22, 1924.
76. Titley and McWhirter, pp. 188-205. J.B.G. Thomas, pp. 72-74. Some clubs formed in these three areas prior to 1880 include Bream, Baxham, Burton, Barnstaple, Hansworth, Hayle, Mosely, Old Edwardians, Painswick, Redruth, South Motton and Wolverhampton.
77. Titley and McWhirter, pp. 188-205.
78. Dunning and Sheard, p. 236.
79. Griffiths.
80. Patrick Joyce, Work, Society and Politics: The Culture of the factory in later Victorian England, (London:1982), p. 70.
81. Stephen Yeo, pp. 190-199. Brixham RFC (Centenary Brochure). Worcester RFC Centenary History, 1871-1971, p. 2.

82. Marshall, pp. 408-415. The Clubs calling for representation were Bradford Rangers, Dewsbury, Halifax, Huddersfield, Kirkstall, Leeds St. John's and Wakefield Trinity.
83. John Reed (ed.), Surrey Rugby, 100 Years, (London:1978), pp. 68-69.
84. Marshall, pp. 323, 329.
85. Football Annual, 1880, p. 64.
86. Marshall, p. 92.
87. Keith Sandiford, "Cricket and Victorian Society", Journal of Social History, vol. XXVII, no. 2, 1983, pp. 310-312.
88. Bell's Life, Aug. 12, 1871.
89. Admiral Sir Percy Royds (ed.), The History of the Laws of Rugby Football, (Twickenham:1948), p. 232.
90. Ibid., p. 321. Punch, Dec. 10, 1870. Football Annual, 1875, pp. 25-26.
91. Compare the development of the laws in Royds, especially Laws X, XX, XXIV, XXV and XXXIV.
92. Football Annual, 1877, p. 21 and 1878, p. 33.
93. RFU Minute-book, 18 October, 1877-31 March, 1880, see June 17, 1878.
94. The "north" tended to mean the area including Cheshire, Lancashire and the West Riding and seldom included the class exclusive clubs in the extreme north.
95. Royds, Laws VI, X, V, LIX, XV, XXVII and XXXIV. Football Annual, 1875, p. 87.
96. Bell's Life, Oct. 10, 1874.
97. Football Annual, 1873, p. 11.
98. Bell's Life, Sept. 18, 23, 30, 1876.
99. Marshall, p. 74.
100. Ibid., p. 120.
101. Titley and McWhirter, pink pages.

102. Royds, p. 60, Law XII. Bell's Life, Dec. 9, 1876. A.C.M. Croome, p. 25.

103. James Mangan, The Games Ethic and Imperialism (Middlesex: 1986), especially pp. 17-21. Keith Sandiford "Cricket and the Barbadian Society" Canadian Journal of History, vol. XXI, 1986, p. 355.

104. Helen Meller, p. 96-121. Tony Mason, pp. 21-49.

105. Griffiths.

106. RFU Minute Books, up to 1881. For example March 31, 1879 General Meeting only one northern club was present and October, 1879, only two northern clubs were present.

107. C.J.B. Marriott, Modern Rugby Football, (London:1924), p. 16.

108. Rugby was not the only sport thought to teach these values. See Sandiford, "Cricket and Victorian Society", and Mangan The Games Ethic and Imperialism, and Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public Schools.

109. Griffiths.

NOTE: All Centenary Histories and brochures are held in the RFU Museum and Library, Twickenham. John Griffiths' lists of international games are in Chronological order. The pink pages of Titley and McWhirter are not numbered.

CHAPTER III

THE BREAKDOWN OF CONSENSUS

Benjamin Disraeli's well worn observation that Victorian England was two nations could apply as well to the contrasts between the metropolis and the provinces as it could to the differences between rich and poor. Victorian London has been called "a world city" whose "heartbeats could be felt in the remotest corners of the world."¹ By 1881 two fifths of the country's population was concentrated in Lancashire, London, Tyneside, the West Midlands, and Yorkshire's West Riding, and of those regions, only London was not primarily an industrial region.² It was the hub of political, imperial, and financial power; it was the centre of English "Culture"; the departure point for an increasingly influential national communications network; and it was the magnet for the ambitious and successful. London produced no large quantities of coal or manufactured goods. It was a city with the "most glaring contrasts of wealth and poverty."³ While London suburbs such as Richmond and others south of the Thames typified upper middle class life, Bethnal Green, Mile End, West Ham and Whitechapel were examples of the poverty and under-employment which plagued the metropolis's East End.

Ever increasing conflict within the middle class itself came to end any dream of England of the 1880s being united under a middle class consensus. Among the first to question the

continuing validity of the ideological props of the Victorian middle class, laissez-faire and self help, was the academic community. In an atmosphere of anti-intellectualism, so well depicted by James Mangan, academics became alienated and frustrated in their attempts for status recognition. Their criticism of the middle class focused on the failures of self help and laissez-faire in a period of widespread depression which had begun in the late 1870s.⁴ In 1881 A.N. Cumming was awarded the Cobden Oxford Essay Prize for "On the Value of Political Economy to Mankind" in which he cited the inabilities of laissez faire to cope with the realities of declining employment and urban degeneracy, and demanded state intervention to solve the problems of the urban poor.⁵

The economic problems facing England in the 1880s were due in part to the tenacious support for free trade. While the country remained the dominant industrial power, a policy of free trade was beneficial to all, but Germany and the United States were now aggressively competing for the same markets once monopolized by England. Austria, Germany, Italy, and Russia had imposed restrictive tariffs on British goods in order to stimulate their own industries. The result was a loss of profits, and unemployment, as industrial workers became the victims of attempts to maximize efficiency. This contributed to the breakdown of mid-Victorian "consensus and compromise" between organized labour and management. It also resulted in the demands of those most dramatically affected by growing international

competition to end free trade as a national policy, while others clung resolutely to the practice.⁶

Social reformers and radicals, many influenced by Marx, increased in number in the 1880s. Although Gareth Stedman Jones says that middle class radicals had little real influence on the working class, they came to symbolize the growing divisions within their own class.⁷ In 1881 the Social Democratic Federation was founded, and three years later William Morris's Social League and the Fabians. While perhaps not immediately influential, as socialist organizations, they were vocal and persistent critics of self help. Although less radical, reformers such as the Settlement House Movement and the Salvation Army symbolized dissatisfaction with ideas of leading by example, as London's working class problems were coming to be seen as the failure to inculcate the principles of self help in the lower orders.⁸ The writings of Charles Booth, Henry Mayhew and B.S. Rowntree highlighted the problems of the urban working classes and the failure of a social policy of self help. While England embraced an imperial policy of beneficence, conditions in its own capital were appalling.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the bourgeoisie was seen to be the pillars of morality, thrift and hard work: they toiled long hours and built their fortunes, and were directly involved in the process of production. By the 1880s, corporate capitalism, concentrated in the metropolis, had produced a business elite removed from the everyday workings of

their "empires". No better example of this can be found than in the brewing industry. According to Perry Anderson "the bourgeoisie of London was commercial and financial in character, clustered round brewing, stock-jobbing, merchanting, warehousing, retailing, and shipping as opposed to the manufacturing and mining that dominated the North."⁹ In London by the 1880s there was a new sort of middle class, quite different from the industrial bourgeoisie more closely associated with early industrialization.

The middle class flight to the suburbs created a city centre which was the home of the city's less fortunate and a place of business. Although social reformers did attempt to redress the plight of the urban poor, much of the middle class felt more secure in distancing itself from the problems of inner city life. The exodus from the city not only physically separated the classes of the metropolis, but as Asa Briggs has observed, established a psychological barrier between the extremes of London society.¹⁰

Social distancing and matters of degree within the same social class are difficult for historians to cope with, but do exist, and are important to understanding social relationships within a class. Such subtle intra-class distinctions as they relate to the Victorian bourgeoisie are perhaps best treated by Leonore Davidoff in her study of the role of upper middle class women. She has shown that the distinctions which separated the London middle class into a hierarchy were clearly important in

establishing and maintaining social status.¹¹ French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu asserts that similar subtle distinctions exist within the Parisian middle class.¹² According to Perry Anderson what motivated the London bourgeoisie was an attempt to establish a "traditional" lifestyle patterned on a romanticized view of landed aristocracy. Geoffrey Crossick has shown that the lower middle class mimicked their superiors, and therefore it is understandable that the upper middle class did the same. Anderson claims that in doing so the London bourgeoisie became "a deeply conformist and conservative cult of the country side...repudiating bourgeois origins and miming seigneurial postures." He notes too that this "villa Toryism" was concentrated in "the suburbs and the Home Counties centred on London."¹³

Outside the metropolis there was less of a tendency for the industrial bourgeoisie to be as snobbish within their own class, and they had less opportunity for social isolation from the working class. Victor Kiernan has observed that "The new species of entrepreneur, hard bitten northerners often raised from the ranks, felt the kind of antipathy to London's polished pretentiousness as Americans felt to England."¹⁴ Perhaps the parable of "The Country Mouse and The City Mouse" best exemplifies the differences between the London middle class and that of the provinces, especially the industrial north. As Patrick Joyce has pointed out, in the small industrial towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire social contact was a more common

occurrence, at work, at leisure, and in everyday comings and goings. M.J. Wiener in his work on The English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit has stated that the northern bourgeoisie believed in the values of hard work, enterprise, and struggle, while their southern counterparts had come to resemble an effete aristocracy committed to a romantic idealization of tradition and a belief in order and degree: a point also made by Harold Perkin when he observed that the new business elite absorbed traditional aristocratic institutions and ideals. Perkin maintains that the true entrepreneur was the "owner-manager", a species more common to the north than to London.¹⁵

Perkin has stated that by the 1880s while the middle classes were "outwardly stable and triumphant and in complete moral and ideological control of their society, inwardly they were divided and confused and crumbling in their conviction of moral superiority and their faith in their class ideal."¹⁶ The mid-Victorian dream of a middle class utopia was over as the bourgeoisie was divided ideologically: laissez-faire and self help v. collectivism, and metropolitan v. provincial. Professionals in the academic community had abandoned the bourgeoisie, and social reformers and radicals presented ample evidence of, and solutions for, the failures of mid-Victorian ideologies. To compound the insecurities and anxieties of the middle class, by the 1880s, the masses had come again to pose a perceived threat to social stability, especially in London.

Stedman Jones has argued that the London middle class of

this time came to fear the city's poor and the underemployed. Middle class radicals, it was thought, could provide leadership to the dissatisfied masses in hard economic times.¹⁷ Much of the anxiety about the working class was a result of the isolation of classes into specific areas of the city. The inner city, asserts Stedman Jones, became a place to be feared, a place of mystery, the home of the city's poor and potentially dangerous citizens. Unlike the small northern towns where social contact was more common, the metropolis was separated into communities along class lines, the most "dangerous" of which was the East End.¹⁸ The army of unorganized labour was not under the influence of a "respectable" working class. In the later years of this decade, the paranoia was heightened by the increasing politicization of the upper echelons of the working class: Bloody Monday of 1886 was followed by Bloody Sunday a year later and the London Dock Strike of 1889. It was also in the later years of the decade that James Keir Hardie first sought a seat in parliament. The goals of these actions may have been practical considerations demanded by the working class in a period of high unemployment, and not revolutionary in intent, but it was not the facts which concerned the middle class, it was the perceived potential for social upheaval.¹⁹

The commitment to "tradition" and degree common to the London middle class was fostered in the public schools, described by Perry Anderson as anti-industrial in nature and directed toward "training for rule not trade."²⁰ The metropolitan

bourgeoisie lived a more uniquely middle class life than did its northern industrial counterparts, often at least one step removed from the everyday world of industrial production. What had occurred by the 1880s was a fragmentation of the middle class into at least two very different groups that are best identified as metropolitan and provincial. These two groups had distinct ambitions and conflicting attitudes, and nowhere else were these differences any more obvious than in rugby football.²¹

II

The work of historian Charles Korr on West Ham United FC (The Hammers) provides some evidence of the pattern of formation of football clubs in London. The concentration of classes into specific neighbourhoods and the resulting physical and psychological separation served to make London's East End an isolated community. The study of the area by Michael Young and Peter Wilmott has shown that not only was there an external fear and misunderstanding about the East End, there was a sense of isolation within the community.²² Within this isolated area, both Stedman Jones and Victor Kiernan agree, was a strong but "elementary" working class culture, as well as a powerful sense of community.²³ By viewing West Ham, not as a fragment of the larger metropolis, but as a community not unlike the industrial towns and villages of the north, it is easier to understand the

relationship between The Hammers and the community. The development of the club more accurately reflected the development of rugby clubs in the class exclusive suburbs of London.

Historian John Hargreaves has observed that sports clubs were "sponsored by local employers and business interests, not only out of genuine interest, but also as a way of acquiring prestige and of consolidating their power...".²⁴ Arthur Hill, a Muscular Christian, and owner of the Thames Iron Works set about establishing a soccer club for his employees. He placed the company's white collar workers in positions of influence, and the teams playing membership consisted of the labourers. From its inception, the West Ham team reflect traditional work place social relationships. The Hammers became a popular feature of the community and were supported by both the working class and local businessmen. Typical of northern rugby (and soccer) clubs the community team had a close association with a dominant employer and its appeal extended for what ever reasons across class lines.²⁵ Hargreaves states that players and working class supporters found their own benefits in supporting a middle class controlled organization, such as prestige and community solidarity, but the relationship between players and management remained that of employer and employee, especially after professionalization of the club.²⁶ Players' skills may have afforded them some degree of status and exceptional treatment but with the advent of professionalization working class players had their status as a proletariat confirmed.

Although professionalism was not a part of rugby football (at least not openly), in the north there were similarities between community based teams and West Ham United. Control and administration of the club was a middle class prerogative and there was the same relationship between the players and the local employer. In an isolated community, The Hammers became an important part of the local culture. The club provided a sense of community pride and identification, and as a result, a vehicle for some degree of cross class contact. According to Tony Mason the local football club "was as much a part of local life as the church or chapel, factory or political party." "Merely watching its matches brought a new kind of solidarity and sociability."²⁷

In contrast to this, London rugby clubs were uniquely middle class endeavors. They were the products of public schools and occupational connections or represented exclusive middle class neighbourhoods. There was not the same type of hierarchy within the club structure and as a result the game never became the vehicle for cross class contact; in fact it reinforced the isolated middle class lifestyle which was common to London. Association football became identified with the urban working class while rugby remained a feature of middle class identification. Rugby in London continued to function independent of a working class contribution. By the end of the 1880s, the fundamental differences between rugby in the north and south, like those differences between the metropolitan and provincial middle classes would come to be a source of growing

dissatisfaction as the RFU faced demands from the north for a greater say in the direction that rugby would take.

III

Although professionalism was an accepted and recognized part of certain sports, especially those with strong pre-industrial antecedents, it was only in the 1880s that pay for play became an important issue in football. Cricket was the first English team game to openly recognize the professional athlete. According to Keith Sandiford, the game's professionalism was a "Georgian legacy" based on a master-servant relationship, which survived industrialization.²⁸ The relationship between amateurs and professionals was well understood and the role of both, even on the same club, was clearly established and maintained. In sports such as athletics, rowing and cycling, professionals were excluded from participation with amateurs, as were non-professionals who as a result of their occupations had an unfair advantage, such as mechanics, labourers, and artisans.²⁹ In football under both codes, professionalism was considered totally unacceptable in the game's early years. By the 1880s, Association football was forced to respond to the reality that players were being compensated for their abilities, and workers were being lured to towns with offers of work in exchange for play.

The first clubs to use professionals were in the north. These clubs attracted Scottish players to their teams with promises of work, direct payments, and testimonials at a time when employment opportunities were at a premium. Professionalism was a reality of life in soccer in Lancashire by 1880. In an attempt to curb illegal transfers and the practice of "borrowing" players for cup tie matches, the Football Association (F.A.) insisted on a two year residency qualification for players taking part in the games. In 1884, Preston North End was disqualified from the F.A. Cup because of violations of the game's professional code. Continued attempts to stifle the practice of paying players resulted in thirty-six crack northern clubs threatening to break from the F.A. Following a protracted debate, limited professionalism was introduced into the game in 1885. Aware that the practice of pay for play could not be stopped, the F.A. determined that it should be controlled. Any attempts to purge the game of professionalism would have resulted in the bifurcation of soccer to the detriment of the amateur. The professional clubs would find far greater support for their game than would the amateur.³⁰

Tony Mason correctly argues that rather than being an issue of class conflict, the attitudes toward professionalism in soccer were the result of differences in the game between the north and south.³¹ William Baker states that in the 1880s soccer became a working man's game, but implicit in this seemingly factual statement is the potential for difficulty.³² Mason is less

inclined to see the game as completely taken over by the working class through professionalism. The masses may have been the game's most devoted supporters and they did make up the professional clubs' playing membership, but there is no evidence to suggest that they introduced professionalism into the game, or administered clubs, either before or after 1885. In fact the game was administered by local business men in the north and the Midlands, according to John Clarke and Chas Critcher.³³ It is for this reason that Mason states that the debates over professionalism in soccer were as regionally inspired as they were class inspired.³⁴

This regional difference in attitudes towards professionalism was an example of the growing factionalism in the Victorian middle class. In broadly defined terms, all business men may have been of the same class, but as noted above, there were discernible differences between the London bourgeoisie and the provincial middle class. While London and southern middle class members of the F.A. strongly supported the "traditional" amateurism of soccer, the more adventurous, northern and Midlands administrators supported professionalism as a measure which would improve their game, and not coincidentally their profits. These regional differences may not have been absolute, but Mason's work shows clearly that support for professionalism came predominately from the provinces while opposition came overwhelmingly from the London area. The belief that professionalism could be controlled came from that section of the middle class which did exercise a

direct control over its working class on a daily basis. Nestled safely in the suburbs, growing increasingly paranoid of the working class, was the portion of the middle class which opposed professionalism.

Throughout the 1880s, the growth of northern rugby also led to the question of professionalism. The emergence of the practice of financial inducements in rugby tended to mirror that of soccer in that it was the same area in which abuses to the principles of amateurism first occurred. The consequences of the acceptance of professionalism did not go unnoticed by the leading figures in soccer's sister sport. It has been widely held that with the success of the Blackburn Olympics over the amateur Old Etonians in the F.A. Cup final of 1883 and the acceptance of professionalism, soccer ceased to be a middle class sport, at least a London middle class dominated sport.³⁵

IV

As it had throughout the first decade, rugby football continued to grow in the 1880s. In 1880, the Football Annual had fifty soccer clubs each in the metropolis and the provinces registered with it. One hundred and eight rugby clubs were registered in the same year. The following year it reported that of twenty-six major public schools in England and Scotland, ten

played soccer and sixteen played rugby. Fifty-four London soccer clubs, and sixty-seven in the provinces were registered in that year, while there were one hundred and seventeen rugby clubs including a German and a New Zealand team. In 1886 the Football Annual announced that there were sixty-seven London and area rugby clubs, fifteen southern clubs, and eighty-nine northern clubs registered with it. The Football Handbook for 1888-89 reported that the RFU membership had reached two hundred and seventy-one clubs.³⁶

The number of clubs registered with Football Annual would suggest that the number of northern clubs was somewhat greater than southern clubs, but attendance at RFU meetings remained dominated by the south. For example, at the October 25, 1880 meeting, of the forty-one clubs present, only seven were from the north. The following meeting of March 30, 1881 was attended by forty clubs of which thirteen were northern.³⁷ In spite of the popularity of the game in parts of the north, the administration and voting power in the Union remained in the hands of the metropolis.

According to Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, the total number of rugby clubs in the country founded between 1880 and 1889 which were still in existence in 1970, and playing the Rugby Union code, was seventy-two, almost half of the total number of clubs founded in the 1870s.³⁸ In the London area, clubs founded between 1880 and 1889 still in existence in 1970 included The Bank of England, The Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, London Welsh,

Sidcup, and The Westminster Bank. Clubs joining the Kent, Middlesex, and Surrey Unions in this period included five still existing clubs not in the immediate London area.³⁹ The tendency of London clubs to be founded on occupational/educational lines continued during the 1880s.

Not only were the clubs often immediately identified with certain occupations, they also attracted a great deal of attention. The Athletic Review of March 29, 1882 called the Stock Exchange vs Commerce fixture London's "most important Rugby Union match" of the week. Continuing the tradition begun in the previous decade, these clubs "borrowed" liberally from Blackheath, Clapham Rovers, London Scottish, Queens House, the 'Quins, and Walthamstow to fill out their XV's for the game.⁴⁰

The strength of the hospital sides was dependent upon players who were not always permanent residents of the city. Pastime observed that in 1884 the top London clubs, especially the hospital teams, benefited from the large number of Welsh medical students and doctors in the metropolis.⁴¹ The obvious result of this was the formation of an exile team. London Welsh was formed in 1885 by Dr. Pryce-Jenkins and Dr. R.L. Thomas, and recruited lawyers, doctors, students and business men living in London. A testament to the abilities of the Welsh exiles was the selection of six London Welsh to their national team in 1886. It was common for Welshmen in London over the rugby season to play on both the London Welsh and a Welsh club side in the same year.⁴² The formation of the London Scottish, Welsh and later

the Irish, did not drastically reduce the level of play of the top London clubs which had employed their skills before the advent of the exile teams. Pastime lamented in 1888 that the return home for Christmas holidays of non-resident players had left all the top clubs in reduced circumstances as to the quality of play.⁴³

The home counties, outside the metropolis, were not as successful as the London clubs in establishing and maintaining a thriving rugby program. This was in part due to the fact that teams in and near London did not have the same county loyalties as provincial clubs. Although playing in Kent, Middlesex, and Surrey, many of these clubs were more London clubs than any county club. Surrey struggled desperately in its first sixty years, and although its county union records indicate that they had as many as thirteen big clubs, in the 1880s, London Scottish, London Welsh, Old Merchant Taylors, Richmond and the Royal Military College (Richmond) were not members.⁴⁴ In an attempt to stimulate interest in the game in Kent, the county union instituted a challenge cup competition in the 1880s. The idea was borrowed from Yorkshire, and not thought by metropolitan rugby clubs to be "in the spirit of the game". But Sir G. Rowland Hill of the RFU begrudgingly applauded the action of the Kent RFU because it infused new life into the game in the south and east of the county and resulted in the formation of the Thanet Wanderers.⁴⁵

While the game received support and attention from the

London middle class, the inner city produced no rugby clubs with a community identification. Not only did those who played the game live in the suburbs, the game was played predominantly in the suburbs as well. The inner city lacked the space necessary to establish suitable grounds. The Pall Mall Gazette deplored the insufficient space for play and leisure, and suggested that the crowded conditions were the cause of the outbreak and spread of the typhoid epidemic of 1883 in Camdem Town and Chalk Farm.⁴⁶ Pick up soccer could be played on most surfaces and by any numbers, but rugby was, and still is, a game that required a large grassy playing surface and its structure demands a large number of participants even for "fun games".

Rugby in the north, that is Lancashire and Yorkshire, and to a lesser degree Cheshire, continued to grow across class boundaries in the 1880s. The north appears to have been the most "football mad" area of the country. Rugby and soccer competed, often head to head, for supporters in places such as Preston, where the Grasshoppers and North End were both nationally recognized teams. Blackburn, Bolton, and Darwin produced great Association football teams, but nearby, Bingley, Bury, Preston, Keighley, Rochdale, and Skipton supported strong, well known rugby clubs. The introduction of soccer as an ancillary to state supported schools reinforced the working class interest in soccer throughout the country, but in this area of the north, rugby too was a working class game.⁴⁷ In the north, between 1880 and 1889, twenty-eight new teams were founded that were able to withstand

the ravages of the split of 1895 or were reformed and were still playing Rugby Union in 1970.⁴⁸

Unlike London, rugby in Yorkshire was a feature of the working class culture, and it was the industrial towns which developed the most powerful clubs. The Football Annual of 1881 observed that "every village [in Yorkshire]- at least in the West Riding- possesses its club; and players have increased from a few dozen to several hundreds, and probably thousands in number. Public interest in the game have [sic] also spread to a corresponding extent."⁴⁹ The Athletic Review wrote a year later "we hear the members of the strongest Yorkshire clubs are mill hands, and we hear the same of most of the strongest Lancashire Association [football] clubs." In spite of this, it noted that the Yorkshire men were under represented on the national team.⁵⁰ The extent of small town domination of the game in Yorkshire can be seen in the teams competing for the Yorkshire Challenge Cup up to 1890:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Won</u>	<u>Lost</u>
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1878	Halifax*	York
1879	Wakefield Trinity*	Kirkstall
1880	Wakefield Trinity*	Heckmondwike
1881	Dewsbury	Wakefield Trinity
1882	Thornes	Wakefield Trinity
1883	Wakefield Trinity	Halifax
1884	Bradford*	Hull*
1885	Batley	Manningham*
1886	Halifax	Bradford
1887	Wakefield Trinity	Leeds St. John's
1888	Halifax	Wakefield Trinity
1889	Otley	Liveredge*
1890	Huddersfield*	Wakefield Trinity

* These clubs led the split of 1895 from the RFU⁵¹

Typical of Yorkshire players was Charles Mather, a Bramley currier. As a lad he joined other local boys playing with a football made from a pig bladder supplied by a local butcher. Mr. Mather's son, Charles jr., a lawyer and devotee of the Rugby Union game, compared the boys of Bramley and other Yorkshire towns to young West Indian cricketers. Boys in his father's time would play any type or variation of the game on any surface, simply for the love of playing. As a result, they developed their skills at an early age and often in less than ideal circumstances. The boys were unsupervised, and the games unencumbered by adherence to strict modes of conduct and play. Mather senior went on to represent Yorkshire in the 1880s and was

selected to travel with the 1888 Shaw, Shrewsbury, Lillywhite tour of the colonies. Mather loved the game and the circumstances surrounding his retirement shows how dedicated he was to rugby. Upon being sent off for foul play, Mather was so shamed that he never again played rugby.⁵² This episode brings into question the middle class attitude displayed by J.R. Fleming when he wrote in 1896 "In Yorkshire, football is played almost entirely by artisans...and consequently the game developed "new elements" because artisans differ from public school men in that winning is everything...the artisans' desire to win results in "dodges and trickery" which public school men consider dishonourable. Artisans cannot understand that you can win with honour...".⁵³ Mather exhibited a great deal of honour in leaving a game he so dearly loved after a referee ruled that he had overstepped its acceptable limits.

Fan support in the north resulted in large profits for small town clubs playing either code. Sporting Life observed that soccer and rugby had become more than a game as a result of money taken weekly at the gates in the north. As an example of the money that could be made from an important fixture, in 1889 the Huddersfield vs Halifax cup tie match produced a "profit" of £510.⁵⁴ The profits made by the YRU through subscriptions and gate receipts from county matches in 1886 allowed the union to donate £1,000 to various charities and hospitals, after all its yearly expenses had been met.⁵⁵

Yorkshire rugby continued to mirror northern society in the

small industrial towns. Many clubs were administered by the middle class and the majority of players were working men, and often employees of the club administrators. The strong relationship which developed between the towns' major employers and the game in Victorian England continued into the present century, and is best portrayed in David Storey's novel This Sporting Life. Storey tells of a fictitious northern industrial town and its Rugby League team where both the club and the factory are operated by the same group of middle class "owner-managers".⁵⁶ The potential for profits, or even reinforced social influence, could not have escaped the Victorian club managers. Without putting too fine a point on it, the game in the north, and especially Yorkshire, had all the potential to be a mirror image of town life. When Stephen Yeo asserted that voluntary organizations in the late nineteenth century came to reflect the structure of business organizations, northern rugby clubs were no exception. Already in the habit of making money through the efforts of their employees, those who administered the rugby clubs must have seen that the game could be used the same way, especially when gates as large as £510 could be realized from an afternoon's outing. If it is accepted that these middle class employers were less likely to adhere to the London middle class "traditions" as were their metropolitan counterparts, it is easy to understand why they were more willing to abuse the "traditions" of rugby football for the prestige of winning. Their habit of making profit from their employees, was

easily transferred to leisure, sport, and recreation. The class exclusiveness of London rugby could not allow for club officials to see the playing membership as potential "employees" in the same way as Yorkshire rugby club officials might.

Lancashire continued to have class related difficulties within the county union. In the early years of the decade Manchester feared that they would lose absolute control over county matters, and attempted to block the efforts of less class exclusive clubs to share in the administration of the game at the county level. Only after it was evident that Birch, Broughton, Cheetham, Chorley, Free Wanderers, Manchester Athletic, Manchester Rangers, Oldham, Rochdale Hornets, Rossendale, Swinton, and Walton were willing to exclude Manchester completely from the formation of a county union did the club resign itself to accepting only a shared role in the control of Lancashire rugby. No longer were less exclusive clubs willing to submit to the dictates of the Manchester/Liverpool domination of the game, and as a result the Lancashire Union was formed in 1881.⁵⁷

Five years later another difficulty arose concerning the "lesser" clubs and Manchester and Liverpool. The county union instituted a cup competition similar to that in Yorkshire to compete for interest with soccer. The two older clubs refused to be a party to such an affront to the "spirit of the game", and would not compete. Never the less, the competition was an immediate success and, as in Yorkshire, provided the winter's most important fixtures.⁵⁸

Cheshire county union abandoned cup ties on the request of the RFU. It was felt that they had proven to "promote bad feelings" and were generally detrimental to "the best interests of the game."⁵⁹ This attitude shown to contests which offered something more than the satisfaction of playing differed greatly throughout the north, but it was accepted that cup competitions were popular with both fans and players. In spite of this, Cheshire clubs were willing to honour the traditions of public school rugby and abandon them: perhaps because the RFU influence was still very strong in the county.

Elsewhere in the north, rugby fared little better in the 1880s than in the previous decade. A complaint of the Newcastle publication, The Northern Athlete, was the lack of growth of rugby in the area. It remained for the most part limited to the urban middle class, while soccer had taken a strong foothold in the working class. Only the Hartlepool Rovers, near the Yorkshire border, appeared to have labouring men interested in rugby. Other clubs were dominated by business men, teachers, lawyers, military officers and university men from England and Scotland.⁶⁰

The inability to attract working class players to the game was not the result of neglect in Durham. In the 1880s, efforts were made to start clubs in such towns as Crook, Gateshead, Humbledon, and Seaham Harbour with no success. In the case of Crook, soccer was a well established part of the community culture. In this small coal mining village there were too few

professional/middle class men to adopt and develop rugby, especially after soccer had become so important to the village's social life.⁶¹ By contrast, West Hartlepool had established a strong interest in the handling game and was able to invest £600 in the construction of a new playing and changing facility in 1884; presumably this money came from gate receipts and/or subscription fees.⁶²

Although Durham players were considered middle class, the difference between themselves and the London middle class players was highlighted in 1887 when the Durham XV travelled south to play a county match against Middlesex. Following the game played at Athletic Grounds at Richmond, the teams prepared for their post game meal. The Durham side was "less than well turned out", while "the gentlemen of Middlesex sauntered in as perfect Sartorial Exquisite, complete with immaculate frock coats and well starched dickies". After the meal a Durham player went to the piano and led his club in the singing of what the southerners considered unacceptably crude songs. No amount of protests could silence the Durham side and as a result of this, the Durham vs Middlesex fixture was cancelled and was not re-instituted until after World War I.⁶³

In the Midlands rugby continued to hold a distant second place to soccer. It was in the 1880s however that two of the area's best known clubs were formed. Rev. S. Wathen Wiggs of St. James Church, Northampton, founded a rugby club from members of the church's improvement classes. Northampton residents embraced

the team as part of the community, and over the decade its players became local heroes and the club developed the same social significance as community teams did in Yorkshire. Perhaps as a result of the professionalization of soccer, Northampton, as well as King Henry VIII RFC (formerly Coventry Grammar School) and Lutterworth, developed rugby clubs in the soccer strong Midlands.⁶⁴

The most famous of all Midlands clubs was the Leicester (Tigers) F.C., formed in 1880 through the amalgamation of two failing rugby clubs. Unable to secure adequate fixtures in the immediate area, the team ventured as far off as Wales to fill their fixture list which included games with northern clubs as well. From its inception, the club drew its membership from diverse social backgrounds. An important step taken by the Tigers to ensure a consistently high level of play, and no doubt to attract fan interest, was the involvement in establishing rugby at state supported schools in Leicester. This proved so successful that schools' old boy clubs were formed and acted as a junior club feeding system to the Tigers. By 1898, thirty school teams competed each Saturday in age groups ranging from nine to nineteen. In comparison, Halifax had no school sports league program, and in Leeds, state schools played soccer because of the organizational difficulties in administering and coaching school rugby. In London soccer was the preferred sport for organizers of games at state schools there.⁶⁵ Even though individual Midlands teams did gain some recognition, they remained in an

ambiguous position between the north and the metropolis and as late as 1888 they were not able to achieve selection to either the North or South teams.⁶⁶

In the West Country, clubs made up of working class players administered by the bourgeoisie increased. In Cornwall, St. Ives's playing membership was predominantly fishermen and the club's senior official after 1885 was the town mayor and shipping tycoon, R.S. Read. The Cornwall RFU, founded in 1884, elected Lord Robarts, Arthur Strauss, M.P., and Dr. W. Hichens as its first three presidents, up to 1905.⁶⁷ The Devon RFU was formed in 1889 and immediately established a cup competition. As early as 1881, Clifton, in an attempt to increase community interest in the game, played Weston-super-Mare under electric lights, and attracted over half of the towns population of 7,000.⁶⁸ West Country clubs continued their play against Welsh opposition, and even Cheltenham College came to be influenced by their neighbours' unique approach to tactics and robust style of forward play which they considered "rather rough".⁶⁹

The fortunes of the English national team up to 1890 continued positive. Between 1880 and 1891, England won eighteen international matches, drew four and lost once each to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Included in their triumphs was the defeat of the Maori team from New Zealand. International star J.E. Raphael credits much of this success to the "Big, powerful, brawny and heavy" northern forwards, whom he concluded were "as fast as they were heavy."⁷⁰ Of the 465 caps available between

1877 and 1890, the metropolitan and area clubs, including the two universities, received 289; the north 159; the military seven; the Midlands seven; and the West Country five. Of the London clubs, selection was dominated by Blackheath (104), Richmond (64), Oxford (45), and Cambridge (36). In the north, selection was more widely distributed among the various clubs, but Bradford received thirty-one caps between 1877 and 1890. Manchester was also awarded thirty-one (thirty of which came between 1877 and 1885.), and Liverpool ten. Twenty-six clubs throughout the entire north had players selected for England from 1877 to 1890. In London, by comparison, caps in this period were divided between only fourteen clubs, and after 1885, up to 1891, only five clubs in the metropolis shared English caps. The exile teams in London fared well in the years between 1883 and 1890; the Scots earning at least nine caps for their country, and from 1885, nineteen Welsh caps went to London Welsh, including five to Newport star A.J. Gould.⁷¹ The first England vs Wales match played in 1881 was so decidedly one sided that the victorious English did not bother to secure a fixture in the following year.⁷²

V

The major feature of international rugby in this decade was the establishment of the International Rugby Football Board. The

IRFB came about through the realization that the game varied from country to country concerning interpretation of the Laws of the Game, and general conduct. The international body was designed to standardize the game and make the playing and refereeing more consistent at the top level. In the 1883-84 England vs Scotland game a dispute arose over the question of whether or not an offending team could profit from its infringement. The Scots contended that just such a thing had occurred and England was the benefactor. After a lengthy dispute involving an impartial arbitrator, the fixture was cancelled for 1885, as England remained unwilling to compromise. They were eventually declared the winners of the match, but it was clear that to avoid such problems in the future standardization was necessary. The national unions of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales proposed an international body, in which the four home countries would have equal representation, to administer and arbitrate further difficulties. England would have none of it. In 1887 they refused to join the other national unions in the IRFB, and proposed that the other unions join the RFU and bring the game throughout the British Isles under their control. Pastime presented the RFU argument succinctly: having more members than the other three unions combined, why should the RFU allow itself to be dictated to by the minority? The Union felt that with equal representation the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh unions would "gang up" on it and force through legislation which would be detrimental to English rugby. Some northern clubs, however,

supported the idea of the IRFB, but the RFU refused to be influenced. In 1888 and 1889, international matches were suspended. Finally, after two seasons of inactivity and pressure from the north, the RFU conceded to a compromise which gave them three votes to the others' two each at all meetings of the IRFB.⁷³

The conduct of the RFU in this matter reflected its strong sense of superiority. While not especially considerate of the north in Union matters, the RFU was more than willing to use it to support an argument. The way the Union dealt with unions of supposed equals indicated that the sense of superiority felt by Londoners extended beyond their view of the north to include national unions. What is important here is the re-affirming of the inflexibility of the RFU concerning matters relating to their right to dictate the direction of the game.

In 1888 a New Zealand team calling itself the Maoris arrived in England looking for matches. The Union was unprepared for the visitors but secured a fixture list for them which included seventy-three games, sixty-five of which were against English teams. The visitors, in spite of the gruelling schedule, won forty-four, drew four and lost seventeen, including a defeat by the English XV.⁷⁴ The colonials' success was well noted in the press. T.R. Ellison of the Maoris stated that they found English club rugby to be limited in scope and over dependent upon northern forwards for ball control. He maintained that the opposition lacked technique, specialization, and imaginative

tactics, and were also too dependent upon an outdated system of nine forwards.⁷⁵ The RFU must have been less than pleased with these comments as well as the overall poor showing of their teams, but made little effort, if any, to institute innovations brought by the visitors.

Another tour began in the same year as the Maori visit, going in the other direction. Cricketers Shaw, Shrewsbury, and Lillywhite organized a tour of New Zealand and Australia. The RFU refused to sanction the tour, claiming that it was tainted by professionalism. It was likely however that what was of more concern to the Union was that the tour was conceived and arranged independent of the RFU, and was made up of predominantly northern players. Thirteen of the twenty members were from Bramley, Broughton, Dewsbury, Durham, Halifax, Rochdale Hornets, Runcorn, Salford, and Swinton. The team also included two Welsh internationals, and A.E. Stoddart of the Harlequins and Blackheath was the only Londoner to be selected. At least three of the touring party came to be implicated in accusations of professionalism; J.P. Clowes of Halifax was dropped before the trip began, H. Eagles of Salford turned pro seven years later, and there were suggestions that Welsh and Dewsbury star A.J. Stuart was induced to remain in New Zealand. Four members of the team had been university educated, but by contrast, Charles Mather, the carrier, and T. Kent of Salford were working class players. Even without the blessing of the Union the tour was a success, and yet another example of the growing independence from

Union domination.⁷⁶

Between 1882 and 1890, the RFU had five presidents, and although two were northerners, there was no change in the class composition of the Union at the highest level. James MacLaren (1882-84) a Manchester FC representative and business man, and H.W. Garnett (1889-90), were clearly as middle class as their predecessors. MacLaren was a leading opponent of the expansion of the Lancashire union beyond the traditional control of his own club. Although Yorkshire born, Garnett was educated and lived in London. As a graduate of Blackheath Proprietary School, he was closely associated with London's most influential and powerful club. Sandwiched between the two northerners were F.I. Currey (1884-86), a solicitor educated at Malborough College, L. Stokes (1886-88), a doctor educated at Sidney College (Bath), and Dr. Arthur Budd (1888-89) of Clifton College and Cambridge.⁷⁷

Throughout the 1880s the RFU made a series of adjustments as a realization that the game had grown to become a major sporting institution. In 1880 it agreed to cover "traveling expenses" for players competing in Union (not club) matches. In 1884, the Union agreed to pay the traveling costs of committee members. This decision came about only after the RFU refused to even address the proposal made by northern clubs that general meetings be held alternately in the north and south. Sir G. Rowland Hill stated that such an idea was not even worthy of a vote by the RFU executive.⁷⁸ In 1886-87 an insurance plan was introduced for players injured in Union sanctioned matches. The abuses of

"traveling expenses" resulted in stricter controls coming into effect in 1889. Clubs could compensate their players for traveling expenses, but the new regulations allowed for only third class fares, "reasonable" hotel costs, and very limited cab fare. The 1889 regulations clearly stated that no cash was to be given players as it was already suspected that traveling expenses had been used to illegally pay northern players for their services.⁷⁹

Two decisions made by the Union in the 1880s proved to be very important. Aware that professionalism had crept into their game, the national Union gave county unions the authority to investigate accusations made against local clubs. This action would come to be extremely important in the 1890s, in the attack on professionalism in the north. The other RFU decision had more immediate consequences. A formal statement by then secretary G. Rowland Hill asserted that the RFU considered challenge cup competitions and other inducements contrary to the spirit of the game, as they encouraged betting and overly rough play. It was the decision not to ban the practice, but to state disapproval in the strongest possible words, that proved to be important in that the RFU did not openly challenge the might of the YRU to hold such events.⁸⁰

Well before the statement of disapproval was made by Rowland Hill concerning challenge cups, the Union's position on the matter was well known, but they were also a major feature of Yorkshire rugby. There was no chance that the Yorkshire

Challenge Cup would be abandoned. The decisions of Devon, Kent, and Lancashire to institute the practice, shows the inability of the RFU to influence its constituent members. Formally outlawing challenge cups would have led to a confrontation, but the strongly worded disapproval had little affect. Only Cheshire among the county Unions complied by suspending its challenge cup. In Lancashire, only Manchester and Liverpool were willing to not participate in that county union's challenge cup. It appears that "tradition" and "the spirit of the game" were more of a concern to the metropolitan clubs, while survival was the motivating factor for provincial teams forced to compete with the growing popularity of soccer, and the prestige that winning ensured for community based teams in Yorkshire held more attraction than adherence to any distant public school boy sporting ethos.

It is interesting to test the commonly held middle class London contention that attitudes toward rugby were different between themselves and the north. To summarize, the London consensus was that they played and enjoyed the game for its own sake, and that it must remain pristine on matters of partisanship, manipulation of the Laws and spirit of the game, and most certainly professionalism of any type. The northerners were seen as deceptive, unsophisticated, too overly partisan, disrespectful of the laws and spirit of the game, and too often even willing to indulge in acts of clandestine professionalism.

Although the RFU was willing to accept as member clubs all

who would abide by its dictates, regardless of class, it was the London clubs which refused to travel north in the 1870s. It was Middlesex that cancelled a county fixture with Durham out of snobbery, not misconduct on the pitch. The Athletic Review of May 3, 1882 stated that southern clubs (meaning London clubs) "must be prepared to face all comers, and not a restricted circle of rivals whose manners and dress are of a superior kind."⁸¹ The RFU may have been willing to accept the less socially exclusive clubs as members, and rely on their players to anchor the national side, but the teams outside the metropolis were partially excluded, not for their play, but because it was felt that they could not function in a world of well maintained distinctions.

Throughout the period under study there is no other case which compares with Charles Mather's decision to leave rugby after being sent off for misconduct. Yorkshire men may have played close to the edge in regard to the Laws of the Game, but Mather's decision, taken on his own initiative, to abandon his hero status in Bramley because of the shame he brought to himself, his club, and his town shows that in one instance at least a Yorkshire working man was as committed to the higher principles of rugby than was any middle class player. Mather's noble gesture casts serious doubts on Col. Phillip Trevor's contention "If from childhood the working man's self training makes him deal only with the letter of the criminal law, why should you expect him to read into the laws of Rugby Football

more than the letter of them would contain."⁸²

The conduct of the London middle class rugby men, and the RFU executive left much to be desired in the 1880s. London clubs regularly "borrowed" players for important fixtures, a practice which was tainted with accusations of professionalism in the north. In 1883, both Cooper's Hill FC and Clapham Rovers attempted to have other clubs boycott fixtures with Blackheath because of its rough play, citing a Mr. Standing and Mr. Budd as the most flagrant violators of the foul play laws. The following year, the Rovers invited both men to join them for an important match.⁸³ It cannot be conclusively proven, but the Mr. Budd in question may well have been Arthur Budd, RFU president (1888-89), and Blackheath player in 1884. Ironically, it was during Budd's administration that the Union attempted again to curb the violence in the game.⁸⁴

In the North vs South game of 1889, after the North had kicked its third successive goal in a runaway victory over the South, southern supporters filed out of the exits. Included in the disgruntled pack of supporters was Frederick Innes Currey, seventh president of the Rugby Football Union.⁸⁵

These actions bring into doubt the RFU commitment to the game for its own sake to which the London middle class paid such constant lip service. The partisanship displayed by Currey was hardly in keeping with the attitudes expressed about the love of the game, to say nothing of the inappropriateness of such an action by a Union official. Budd, an upholder of "tradition",

may not have been beyond a little "argie bargie" when he deemed it necessary. For the most part, however, it seems that the London middle class was as loyal as possible to the public school ethos.

This is not to imply that the Yorkshire players and administrators were committed to challenging the "traditions" of the game, but they were more honest about their conduct. They were willing to play, and conduct themselves within the limits of the laws, but not necessarily to adhere to some imaginary ideals. Players were accustomed to preferential treatment because of their sporting talents, and were critical of those who did not recognize them. The Yorkshire XV on a tour of the Midlands in 1882 did not hide their displeasure at the small crowds and having to pay for their own post game lunches.⁸⁶ Rugby was more than a healthy outing for the northern stars, it brought perks that they quickly came to expect.

VI

In spite of what the Maoris said about English rugby in 1888, the game had undergone some major innovations since 1880. The English may have employed a nine forward formation against their guests, but in 1882, the standard system throughout the country was ten forwards (no specialty positions), two half backs, two three quarter backs, and full back.⁸⁷ Changes to this unimaginative system came from the Welsh, although there is some

dispute. The Welsh eliminated a forward position, conceding that they would lose the majority of struggles for the ball, but when they did gain possession in the pack, there was a natural overlap in the backs by placing the tenth forward in the back line. This idea can be traced back to the Swansea teams of the early 1880s, and West Hartlepool claim to have been the first to use the four three quarter back system in order to defense their Welsh opposition. Oldham asserts that it was the first to experiment with the formation when Swansea players D. Gwynn and W.M. McCutcheon arrived there in search of work, and introduced it to the club. According to J.E. Raphael, Bradford's R. Robertshaw brought the idea of dropping a forward from Wales.⁸⁸

As the Welsh well knew, it was not enough to simply re-deploy the tenth forward. To realize the potential of the natural overlap, the Welsh formulated a system of short sharp passes, designed to be executed in full stride to get the ball to the outside as quickly as possible and avoid the defensive cover. In England, the first to truly master the whole system was Oxford, under H.H. Vassell. Budd states that the most effective of the Oxford backs in this attack was A. Rotherham.⁸⁹ Ignoring all that had been written on this issue, B. Fletcher Robinson credits the Oxford men for developing the whole system. Of the Welsh he has written "unlike the Irishmen, [they] noticed and assimilated any of the improvements the English originated."⁹⁰

The English national side did try the system in the 1880s, but with limited success. The defeat of the Welsh by England did

little to advance their style of play except with a few clubs. In 1883, seven Oxford players were chosen as a unit to play against the four three quarter back system used by Wales. England won the game and shortly after returned to their more "traditional" style, although they had switched completely to the three quarter back system by 1889.

There are two possible reasons why the entire Welsh system failed to catch hold in England, and especially in London. It was necessary to understand the objectives of an attacking unit, and to do so it was essential that considerable time be spent training. A writer in the 1884 Football Annual stated that passing should be done with a purpose, and not just to toss the ball about for no reason. The same criticism appeared in Pastime "The club passing gets worse and worse every Saturday" in the metropolis. In the same issue it was noted that the Bradford XV, on tour, exhibit "a theory of passing and realize that it means something more than tossing the ball about[.] They have been willing to give their brains as well as their limbs to the game."⁹¹

The ability to pass on the run and with a purpose requires a great deal of skill and thought, and this is achieved through training as a unit. Both Pastime, and G. Rowland Hill observed that training and commitment to learning the new system did not exist in London. Rowland Hill remarked that "Training for Football should be regarded as a necessity: it is greatly in vogue in the North. Very few men in the south think it

necessary, more especially around the metropolis."⁹² Among the other factors that made the northern game superior was the willingness to train and adapt. Metropolitan rugby, loyal to the tradition of the game as a Saturday outing, was not so inclined.

One feature of northern rugby in the 1870s which declined in the '80s was the practice of obstruction. With the laws becoming increasingly more severe, it was no longer a chance worth taking. Budd claims that the wing forward was effectively legislated out of existence.⁹³

As early as 1883, during the controversy surrounding professionalism in Association football, The Northern Athlete suggested that some form of pay was being made to rugby players in Durham and Yorkshire.⁹⁴ As noted, when discussing the four three quarter back system, Welsh players were making their way to north and were appearing on rugby teams there. Durham and Northumberland teams were also attracting players from Scotland who came looking for work. As Pastime declared "There has been a large number of players imported [sic] from Scotland into the district this season, and even now they continue to cross the border. Whether this is due to the slackness of work in Scotland, as locally explained, or the bribes and payments made to Scotch [sic] amateurs as asserted in Scotland, one must leave to the powers to decide."⁹⁵ Poor economic times may have been a motivation for working class players to migrate to more prosperous areas, but their skills on the pitch gave them added marketability as employees in the north. Team officials who were

also major employers could take advantage of this by hiring men skilled at rugby to help their town club in a time of increasing competitiveness. At no time in the 1880s was professionalism openly practiced in rugby, even in Yorkshire. Inducements to play were strictly illegal, and were kept secret. Agreements of employment in exchange for services on the pitch were hard to prove even within a club. This also presents a problem in ascertaining how pervasive the practice was throughout the 1880s.

In 1884, London based Pastime called northern rugby shamateur, and noted that although it was "a duty" for English men to be "skilled in a sport", professionalism was "selfish and warped".⁹⁶ Much of the early problem surrounding what was considered professionalism was the lack of an adequate definition by the RFU. In 1871, the question of rewards for services on the field was not a major consideration for the RFU committee, but by the 1880s, with the growth of non-London middle class elements in the game, the limited definition of professionalism came to be challenged. As with the unwritten code that the game should be predicated upon, what constituted a professional was a matter of interpretation. In 1885, following the Yorkshire vs Lancashire county match, the former Yorkshire captain was honoured for his efforts with a testimonial, a silver cigar case, and £70. In the same year, G. Rowland Hill accused Yorkshire teams of professionalism because clubs and employers compensated top players for time lost from work due to rugby. Although there was not specific legislation concerning "lost time" and testimonials,

they were widely considered to be acts of professionalism. The practice of hiring a player at a factory in exchange for his rugby skills obviously was considered illegal, because it was so closely guarded. Certainly any exchange of money for services had always been totally unacceptable. The YRU immediately passed bylaws to ban testimonials and "lost time."⁹⁷

Within six months of the Football Association accepting limited professionalism, Arthur Budd claimed that the amateur element had been destroyed. As an RFU official, Budd echoed the fears of the Union concerning the loss of control of soccer by the London middle class and vowed that "The Rugby Union finding themselves face to face with the hydra have determined to throttle it before he is strong enough to throttle them." Budd singled out cup ties and other such artificial inducements as the foundation for the spread of professionalism.⁹⁸ His comments indicate the conservative nature of the RFU administration and its fear of losing control. This fear was as much based on the perceived fear of the working class held by the London middle class, as it was on the happenings in rugby's sister sport.

In 1886 the RFU re-defined its bylaws concerning what constituted professionalism. The new guide lines were specific and were made well known through the sporting press. A professional was designated as any player who had made a financial agreement "actual or prospective" concerning money, including employment; any player who received compensation for lost time or who is trained at a club's expense; or any player

who transfers from club to club for financial consideration. The Union reserved the right to suspend clubs and/or players who played with or against any player or club under suspension for acts of professionalism.⁹⁹ In addition, the Union gave county unions the authority to investigate any accusations of the breach of the professional code. The revised bylaws eliminated the practice of testimonials and made any club transfers the object of suspicion.

The tone of the bylaws, no matter how threatening, could not stop what was already common practice in the north. The hydra, unknown to Budd and his associates, had already become too large. The importance of a successful club in northern towns was so great that there was no apparent large scale abandonment of shamateurism. Players, it was noted, were supplied with food, playing expenses, and free medical attention, paid out of gate receipts or supplied by agents of clubs or fans, which would distance the practice from the club.¹⁰⁰

Among the first instance of professionalism to reach national prominence was the disclosure by the Dewsbury club that Halifax had used a player in a match against them who had been given £15 toward his expenses for the upcoming Shaw, Shrewsbury, Lillywhite tour to Australia. Clowes, the player in question, was dropped from the tour, but the event was immediately tainted.¹⁰¹ It appears that money came from the Halifax team, but neither the club nor club officials, nor the tour organizers were formally accused of making the payment. The decision to

exclude Clowes from the tour does not necessarily mean that the other people involved were opposed to the payment having been made. It indicates that the RFU stance was made in earnest and any player associated with Clowes could be suspended as well as they played with him on the tour.

By 1889, professionalism seems to have been quite pervasive in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Leeds St. John's was found guilty of inducements to transfer. The investigation was spearheaded by Rev. Francis Marshall of the YRU executive, and the Huddersfield FC. Pastime noted the irony in this and hinted that Huddersfield itself was not pristine. Huddersfield attracted a suspiciously large number of transfer players for no apparent reason despite the fact that the town "is not considered attractive either from a residential or social point of view."¹⁰² In the same year Wakefield Trinity was accused by the YRU committee of paying some players, but the Union could find no conclusive proof against the club. Clubs having fixtures with Southport were so tainted that the Merseyside club was forced to cancel half of their games for 1889-90. Brighouse Rangers' star Mr. Hatley was found guilty of accepting inducements and was suspended for life by the RFU after he accepted a testimonial. This decision placed the onus on the player, and not the person or group responsible for making the offer. It was rather unfair to ask a working man who had given so much to the game to shoulder the responsibility for breaches of the RFU bylaws while those who made the offers went unpunished.¹⁰³

These are only a few examples of the widespread professionalism in rugby. No evidence beyond innuendo occurred outside Lancashire and Yorkshire in the 1880s. There was too strong a "traditional" middle class element in Durham and Northumberland rugby for acts of professionalism to be practiced openly. In Yorkshire, Brighouse, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds St. John's, and Wakefield Trinity as well as other clubs implicated in professionalism were top clubs. It is unlikely that junior clubs would have much need to practice sub rosa professionalism, since they did not at this time compete in the Yorkshire Challenge Cup. Rather, the junior sides were more likely the victims of the top teams who coveted their better players. A local lad who reached a position of distinction on a junior club would likely become the object of illegal transfers. This kept the junior sides, with no direct YRU representation, weak, and ensured that the top clubs remained powerful. In the 1890s when a level two challenge cup was introduced in Yorkshire, stress developed between the top teams and junior sides which resulted in even more accusations of professionalism.

VII

For rugby, the 1880s proved to be not unlike the society in general. The middle class consensus which had typified the early years of the game was eroding as the middle class, especially in the north and London, displayed opposing attitudes toward sport

in general and in professionalism. Pay for play would become a class defined issue in the 1890s; an example of widespread class conflict in society. This was not necessarily true, as rugby's history in the 1880s indicates. It was not so much an issue of middle class vs working class as an intra-class, London vs the north, problem highlighted by the conservatism of the metropolis and the adventurism of the north.

The London middle class, which until the 1880s exercised total domination of the Union, found itself faced with a series of actions from provincial unions, clubs, and other national unions which openly challenged metropolitan hegemony and exhibited growing independence from the Union. These actions not only challenged the actual authority of the RFU, but the public school sporting ethos upon which rugby, and many other Victorian sports were predicated. Challenge cups may not have been in the "spirit of the game", but they proved to be essential for the continuation of the game in areas outside the metropolis, as they had for cricket and soccer as well. The decisions of Devon and Kent to institute such practices as challenge cups was an open rejection even in the south of the "spirit of the game" as understood by the London middle class rugby fraternity. Gate receipts gave northern clubs the opportunity for illegal inducements, but also gave the northern clubs some degree of independence from the RFU and facilitated competition with clubs further afield, but not in London. The result was a cross fertilization of tactics and styles of play in which the insular

London clubs seldom shared. The decision of some northern clubs to support the IRFB, again reflected the growing independence from the London domination of the game, and the Shaw, Shrewsbury, Lillywhite tour was yet another example of northern independence.

The sense of social superiority of the London middle class was very evident in rugby in the 1880s. The decision not to continue the Durham-Middlesex fixture was based solely upon snobbishness. Present day historians have tended to view the middle class as a monolithic entity which included people of similar occupations, incomes and tastes, but it is more appropriate to speak of Victorian middle classes by this period as they were so sharply divided on social/political issues, as well as geographically. The regional element in the fragmented bourgeoisie was manifested as snobbery by the metropolitan middle class toward their provincial counterparts. Although the game was controlled in the north at the club and county level by the middle class, their metropolitan counterparts saw them as less sophisticated, and socially inferior.

By taking the view that the northern game was a working class type of rugby, it became alien to the Londoners, as all things working class had at this time. The growth of the working class element in the northern game occurred simultaneously with the increased separation of the classes in the metropolis, and the corresponding fear and uneasiness about social inferiors. Reinforced by the emergence of professionalism in soccer, the RFU's stance against pay for play can be understood in terms of

the increasing fear of that social element most closely associated with professionalism.

By contrast, in the north the entrepreneurial middle class was more adventurous and less committed to "tradition". Its attitude toward the labouring class tended to be more progressive. The daily contact and the social relationships are somewhat reflected in rugby. Class separation was not possible, and therefore social influence, and direct involvement in the lives of the working class, even in their leisure, became the standard for the northern bourgeoisie. In rugby, as in everyday life, the bourgeoisie played a direct role in the lives of their working class; a role of social influence made necessary by more intimate social contact. On the Shaw, Shrewsbury, Lillywhite tour players of various social status, predominantly northerners, lived and played together in apparent harmony, a situation that would not have ever arisen in London rugby.

There was an important relationship between professionalism and its association with the working class, and the fortunes of metropolitan rugby. Shamateurism provided a built in excuse for the failing fortunes of metropolitan rugby. The ability of northern working class men to dominate the game could be seen as their disregard for amateur principles. They took money; they trained; and they had to win. This perhaps was the perception rather than the reality, but it was a convenient excuse for the poor showing of London's "garden party" rugby.

In the 1880s there was a pattern of negative responses by

the London middle class dominated RFU towards developments in the game occurring outside its sphere of influence. More inclined toward the maintenance of tradition, even if that tradition was not long standing, the RFU, and London rugby found the "spirit of the game" offended by outsiders.¹⁰⁴ Attitudes fostered in the public schools became excuses for the London clubs and the Union to oppose leagues, rewards, cups, shields, changes in techniques and tactics, the IRFB, training and developing skills, and most certainly any type of pay for play.

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CHAPTER IV

THE SPLIT

Although the period between 1890 and 1895 in English rugby was dominated by events leading to the secession of twenty-two northern clubs from the RFU, other events contributed to the growing sense of uneasiness within the rugby fraternity, especially for London rugby clubs. H.H. Almond, Headmaster of Loretto School in Scotland, continued his unwavering support for the inherently positive qualities to be found in the playing of football when he asserted that it contributed to Britain's military preparedness by fostering the virtues of courage, and loyalty to God, friends and country. Football also was a panacea against urban degeneracy.¹ Almond's optimism failed however to take into account the growing problems facing the game and the RFU. Superficially, with the exception of the incidents of veiled professionalism in the north, it appeared that rugby football was in a healthy state in 1890.

In 1892 the membership in the parent body was 388, spread increasingly more evenly throughout the country. Of this total membership, 150 clubs were in Yorkshire, approximately 3/7 of the total Union membership. The following year, 481 clubs and unions were affiliated with the RFU. In 1893-94, the Union boasted 665 members, both national and international.² Beneath this seemingly positive growth was the ever present problem of play

for pay.

The RFU leadership remained solidly middle class, while appearing to reflect the growth in the northern game. The three presidents between 1890 and 1895 were E.T. Gurdon, a Cambridge educated solicitor from Richmond FC; William Cail, the Newcastle manufacturer and J.P.; and Roger Walker, of Manchester FC, who served as president of both the Bury and Stockport clubs. The two northern presidents were vehemently opposed to any hint of professionalism. H.H. Vassall, the school headmaster, and innovative tactician from Oxford and Blackheath, served as treasurer for nine years up to 1894. At the committee level in 1894, three major sub-committees were dominated by the same small group of men. The professional sub-committee was made up of Cail, R.S. Whalley (RFU president 1896-98) of Cambridge University, J.H. Payne the Lancashire representative, J.A. Miller, president of the Yorkshire Union, G.F. Berney, and G. Rowland Hill. The International selection committee included Walker, Cail, Miller, Gurdon, Whalley, and Hill. The International Rugby Football Board representatives for England were Mark Newsome, Cail, Whalley, Gurdon, Walker, and Hill.³

The few northerners on the Union executive could not alter the domination of the RFU by public school men. Cail and Walker proved to be staunchly supportive of the London power base which controlled the Union. J.A. Miller and M. Newsome were middle class businessmen faced with the futile task of balancing the demands of their county union with the staunch conservatism of

the RFU. Two factors appear to have dictated the London based clubs' acceptance of northern officials on the Union committee: the degree of commitment shown to the public school sporting ethos and the grudging acceptance of representation from the numerically large Lancashire and Yorkshire unions. James Mangan contends that the public school experience stayed with its students into adult life. He also asserts that public schools were the last bastion of class separation in this period of increasing class tensions. Thus making it safe to conclude that the RFU executive was, as much as possible, a class-exclusive body.⁴

The Union displayed its typical paternalism in regard to the introduction of an insurance scheme for its players. In the early 1890s it allowed a player, injured during a Union sanctioned game, to collect 10 shillings per day while off work due to injury provided that this did not exceed his wages. It was feared that less than honest players (presumably those found in the north) might take unfair advantage of the Union's generosity.⁵

While the game was prospering in the north, and the Midlands and West Counties showed signs of growth, rugby was faltering in the Home Counties. The universities and the military remained a strong element in the game, but even clubs once thought to be the foundation of southern rugby were having difficulties.

The outstanding exception to this was the Harlequins. The 'Quins were a stable, but undistinguished London club that by

1892 was fielding up to four sides each Saturday. They also expanded their fixture list to include games with top clubs including Newport with their star A.J. Gould.⁶ H.B.T. Wakelam, the club's historian, offers no explanation for this turn of fortune, but it could have been the club's change of venue to south of the Thames, as well as the saturation point achieved in playing membership by Blackheath and Richmond. Young players may have found that the 'Quins were an alternative to cracking more difficult line-ups of teams such as Blackheath which drew on the services of Gould and other top players when they were available.

Other top London clubs were not enjoying the same fortunes as the Harlequins. In 1892-93, London Scottish were forced to relocate to Old Deer Park in Richmond. This put them in direct competition for supporters with the established Richmond club. In 1893, the other exile team, the London Welsh suspended play for a season because they could not rely on fielding a full side each week. It appears that eligible players were choosing to play for clubs with which they were associated through occupation and/or education. When the Welsh resumed play a year later it was the only club with a north London field and the working class locals provided no community support. In the Rugby Union Football Handbook of 1895-96, it was announced that Clapham Rovers and Middlesex Wanderers had ceased operation.⁷

In 1890, Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk amalgamated to form the Eastern Counties Rugby Union. The decision was based on the need to generate interest in the game. The three counties had few

clubs, and had experienced difficulty in attracting quality players. Top London clubs offered more prestige than did local affiliations, and the large number of Old Boys clubs had established prior loyalties. London and area clubs had no strong county loyalties and as a result these small county unions found it difficult to survive.⁸ In order to provide acceptable opposition for northern county XV's in the County Championships, it was essential to amalgamate. Alone against Yorkshire, the small depleted unions would have been humiliated and local support further diminished.

Sussex and Surrey found themselves in a similar dilemma but rather than seek amalgamation they decided to go it alone even though Old Boys clubs and occupation/educational loyalties attracted many top players and administrators.⁹ Clubs outside London were either unwilling or unable to attract sufficient lower middle and working class players who did not have prior loyalties. These players would have been less likely to seek their fortunes with the more class-exclusive London clubs.

More removed from the influence of London rugby, West County rugby was flourishing, according to the editor of Pastime.¹⁰ In 1891, 3,000 supporters watched Devonport Albion host the 'Quins, and 480 faithful journeyed to London to see their club play Blackheath. In 1895, Pastime diagnosed Devon supporters as having "football mania" after they regularly greeted their clubs with torchlight processions upon their return from away fixtures.¹¹ Eleven top quality teams were playing regularly in

the Bristol-Clifton area in 1891. Tom Salmon has stated that in Cornwall rugby was not merely a game, but "a practical exercise in county pride."¹²

The strength of the West Country clubs was due to their continuing contact with Welsh rugby. As in Cornwall, rugby in Wales was more than a game, especially since the success of the Welsh teams coincided with a period of national pride. The 1891-92 season saw Newport play thirty-three fixtures in claiming its fifth undefeated season. The link with Welsh rugby produced a hardbitten, but skillful style of rugby in the west.¹³ As in the north, rugby was associated closely with the community, and was a source of intense local pride.

The Midlands too displayed a noticeable increase in interest in rugby. More and more the Leicester Tigers were finding adequate opposition closer to home.¹⁴ Included in the better clubs were Burton and Moseley RFC which both placed players on the English XV between 1890 and 1895.¹⁵

At the turn of the decade a touring club, the Barbarians, was formed dedicated to upholding "The spirit of the [public] Schools and the services." This elite club of socially superior players would exist independent from any club or union. The "Bar-bars" restricted membership to a select sixty-five players chosen by nomination. Players were not expected to abandon their club affiliations since the team would only play exhibition fixtures and have no home pitch.¹⁶ The RFU made no criticism of a team wishing to play outside its jurisdiction. The Bar-bars

were a perfect example of the desire to keep rugby socially divided. It was not coincidental that the club was founded on such avowedly middle class principles at a time when rugby's middle class London hegemony was thought to be under siege from the masses.

In Lancashire and Yorkshire rugby continued to be a major feature of the local culture. Two hundred and seventy-four clubs were founded in the two counties up to 1894. These are only clubs which had RFU membership, and do not include informal Wednesday teams or touring teams which were a major feature of northern rugby.¹⁷ In Lancashire there were a large number of junior clubs that chose not to hold membership in the county union. The LRU was dominated by the top clubs that had forced Manchester and Liverpool to open the administration to a wider constituency a decade earlier. Once in a position of power these clubs exercised the same right of exclusiveness that had kept them unrepresented up to the 1880s.¹⁸ Because the top Lancashire clubs were administered by local middle class entrepreneurs, keeping the game pristine was not the motivation for exclusion of the junior clubs. It was the potential benefits of having a strong top class club; large gate receipts, personal and community prestige, and the ability to exploit the junior clubs. Field Sport was not the only one aware that the smaller clubs were producing top quality players.¹⁹ The oligarchy which controlled the LRU, by keeping the junior sides unrepresented, could more easily recruit their better players. This served to

keep the junior clubs weaker on the pitch and they often unwillingly functioned as a feeder system to the top teams.

While Pastime lamented the lack of public school old boys and university men playing in Yorkshire, rugby suffered little from their absence.²⁰ Both in sheer numbers, and quality of play Yorkshire dominated English rugby in the 1890s. England's 1890 team included five Yorkshire men, and in the 1892 international against Scotland eight won caps for England. In the same year England employed four Yorkshire men to defeat Ireland while on the same day the county XV also defeated Cheshire in a County Cup match. The north was so dominant that in the 1892 match pitting Yorkshire, the county champion, against The Rest of England, not a single native born southerner was selected to either side.²¹

Yorkshire's successes resulted in ever increasing support, and consequently larger gate receipts. "Touch-Down", writing in the Yorkshire (Evening) Post, questioned London's claim to be the hub of rugby football when only 7,000 supporters turned out to watch the English v Wales match at Blackheath's Rectory Field, and one metropolitan newspaper chose a local Association match as its feature game of the weekend.²² In 1893, 9,000 northerners watched A.J. Gould play with the Middlesex XV in Yorkshire. 10,000 fans turned out to watch a club fixture between Salford and Swinton, and in Lancashire the same number watched a Bradford v Hunslet match in Yorkshire in 1893. The same weekend in London 4,000 watched Blackheath play a combined hospitals XV.²³

The dispute between the RFU and the other national unions

over the structure of the International Rugby Football Board threatened English rugby in two important ways. First, it was thought that the lack of high level competition would result in widespread fan disinterest, and secondly, the cancelled international fixtures hurt the pocket book of the Union. In an attempt to keep fan interest and feed the coffers, the Union instituted the County Championship. Although the format was modified a number of times, county clubs would play a series of fixtures and, based on the results, a winner would be declared. To raise more money, the winner would then play The Rest of England, a XV selected from the other counties. This format proved to be very successful in the north due in large part to the fact that from 1889 Yorkshire won seven of the first eight championships and from 1889 to 1895-96 defeated The Rest of England five times. The only other county XV to be declared county champion prior to 1895 was Lancashire, in 1891.²⁴

To be fair to the metropolitan clubs, it was not just their unimaginative style of play that hindered their performance in the County Championship. Their dedication to club rugby based on occupational and educational ties did not emphasize strong county loyalty. As with the problems facing the small Home County unions, County Championships were subordinate to London rugby and previous loyalties. This attitude however only served to reinforce the sense of superiority that was developing in Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Gate receipts, already thought to go hand in hand with

professionalism, made it increasingly obvious that rugby was becoming more than a game for its own sake. Rugby too, was responding to the social problems of the day. The metropolitan assertion that northern rugby was a working class affair was reinforced by games such as that played between Manningham and Cleckheaton for the Tradesmen's Charity Cup in 1890. Crediton played a fixture with local shoemakers to raise money for striking workers in their region.²⁵ The Union was not pleased about these fund-raising matches, especially those which offered a cup, or other reward, but the County Championship which they themselves instituted, was not unlike a cup competition.

By raising money for charity local club officials strengthened the bond between club and community. In doing so they ensured community support for regular fixtures. For every charity match that raised money for good causes, there were more games which translated community support into club and union profits.

The Yorkshire Cup final of 1891 drew 18,000 spectators, and generated a profit of £ 900. Bradford alone made a net profit of 14,000 in 1892-93. By contrast, Coventry FC had total gates in 1899-90 and 1901 of £39 and £113, respectively. In London, a charity match between the Wasps and Upper Clapton in 1890 could generate only £ 10.²⁶ In Yorkshire, rugby was becoming a business as much as a game. The large profits to be realized demanded more than the attentions of an amateur administration.

The Rugby Football Union, and rugby in general, were also experiencing another problem, more immediate and easily identifiable. Violence and disrespect for authority, common to present day English soccer, are not new features in sport, and they were not confined to the dribbling code or any particular region of the country. The partisanship of the supporters, and club disrespect for RFU and county union officials in the 1890s produced endless difficulties. Pastime reported on October 18, 1891 that there were crowd disturbances at the Depthford v Woolwich match, and the Cambridge v Blackheath match. A month later Whitehaven's grounds were suspended by the Cumberland union following threats against the referee, G. Rowland Hill, and in early 1892 Devon RFU suspended the Tiverton grounds after supporters attacked a referee. Pastime noted that "The crowds at London Rugby grounds are now as badly behaved as anywhere in England. Shutting up grounds is impracticable [sic] for the reason that this means we should not have a single ground left open."²⁷

The violence in nineteenth century rugby was not confined to the rougher elements in the RFU. Crowd violence appears to have been present at all levels and types of matches. In the midst of this epidemic, Pastime congratulated Huddersfield for the model behavior of the 23,000 who watched the Yorkshire v Lancashire County Championship match in 1891.²⁸ There does not seem to be a single identifiable reason for the violence in the stands: it cannot be attributed only to extreme partisanship, the working class, or the bad behavior of a particular group of fans.

Disrespect for the "spirit of the game" displayed by players was one reason for increased violence. A riot in the stands at Castleford began on the field when a fight erupted between the home side and the visitors from Hull. Following a disturbance in a 1893 Paignton v Brixham fixture, the club officials and team captain refused to give the names of the Brixham pugilists to the referee. The referee working the Wimbledon v Sutton match in the same year sent off the entire Wimbledon XV for misconduct and the players each received a month suspension. A full blown riot occurred after a fight on the field spread to the stands at a Rockcliff v South Shields YMCA match in the same period. The Yorkshire union meted out twelve suspensions for rough play during the 1893-94 season, but misconduct continued the next year when three Oslette players were charged with disorderly behavior in a municipal court.²⁹

The love and respect for the game displayed by C.W. Mathers a decade earlier appears to have disappeared from rugby in the 1890s. Blackheath, a club with a reputation for vigorous play itself, became so frustrated with the violence of the Bradford club that it simply cancelled the fixture. Stratford sent the team's second XV to play its Birmingham counterparts, but when they arrived, Birmingham elected to play their first XV against them. C.R. Holt of Headingley managed to keep his sense of humour in a particularly violent match with Leeds when he reported afterwards that "all the scoring was done going down hill."³⁰

These examples of violence preceded the decision to remove the officiating of the game from the hands of the players. In 1893 referees were given absolute control of matches and were made the sole arbitrators on matters related to foul play. Twenty years earlier when rugby was a middle class Saturday outing and the RFU committee members of the 1890s were active players, the need for a referee would have been an insult to the integrity of the players. In 1893 the referees were given the authority to call penalties without appeal, and offences such as obstruction and charging could result in being sent off.³¹ It may be tempting to blame the introduction of the lower social elements into rugby for all the problems, but it would be too simple an explanation. In areas such as London and the extreme north where the working class presence was often negligible there was the same violence as in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Any "spirit of the game" that may have existed in 1871 was by 1895 a figment of the collective RFU imagination. It had become a catchall to explain the woes of the Union, and was employed most often by the metropolitan clubs as a convenient excuse which implicitly condemned the game in the north. The borrowing of players for important fixtures, violence and disrespect on the pitch, the formation of a money making County Championship, and the exclusion of opposition because of social incompatibility were not in the spirit of the game, but were accepted and encouraged by the RFU. Metropolitan rugby clubs however were willing to overlook the inconsistencies of these practices while

blaming the northern working class elements for all the problems that the Union faced.

Rugby had become something more than a public school outing. Like other sports it was the measure of England's national superiority. It was also a feature of London class exclusiveness, while at the same time rugby was part of local community culture in the provinces. Rugby was the focus of community, class, regional, and national loyalties (as were other sports), and as a result the Saturday outings had ceased to be pleasant, congenial affairs. They were instead battles for prestige and power. Superiority on the pitch had shifted from London to Lancashire and Yorkshire, but the southern power base would prove less willing to relinquish administrative control. Through the partisanship of the London based national press, it was southern attitudes and complaints which were most often and most widely heard, and as a result the north was commonly portrayed as a band of working class villains.

II

The superiority of the northern clubs, differences with other national unions, and the violence in the game by the 1890s would have been a tall order for the RFU to deal with alone, but these problems held second place to the matters immediately related to professionalism. The delicate threads that held the Union together in 1890 were in serious jeopardy and the

developments up to 1895 ensured that the north and the metropolis could not co-exist under a single overall authority. There is no simple explanation for what finally drove the Union to a bifurcation in 1895. Much of the debate and consequent attention given the split has hinged on the working class and professionalism. Generally insecure about social relations anyway, the London power base in rugby reduced the complex problems between the game north and south to a convenient struggle between working class and middle class attitudes. This thesis will attempt to redress this, but ultimately must agree that what drove the twenty-two northern clubs from the RFU was the issue of professionalism as defined by the Union.

English rugby was becoming synonymous with northern rugby. The County Championship only served to confirm that the heart of rugby was in Lancashire and Yorkshire industrial centres. From 1891 to 1895 the north won 106 caps for England, eclipsing the metropolitan area by twenty-two. Blackheath, Richmond and the universities dominated London and area selection with 74 caps. The 'Quins won five; Burton/Blackheath and St. Thomas' Hospital one each; and the Middlesex Wanderers, which folded in 1895, won three. Northern caps were more evenly distributed among twenty-four clubs. Bradford (21), Heckmondwike (14), Hartlepool Rovers (11), and Rockcliff (11) dominated northern selection to the English XV.³²

It was not only on the pitch that the north dominated. With 3/7 of the Union membership concentrated in and around the West

Riding, the north had a powerful voting block in the Union. Northern gate taking clubs had become the most financially powerful members of the RFU, and could, with the profits, organize large scale tours, build quality facilities, and offer illegal inducements to potential star players. The Yorkshire industrial towns not only enjoyed rugby, but had turned it into a passion unmatched anywhere except in South Wales.

By 1890 rugby was becoming two games played under the same code and the same parent body. The greatest potential for conflict was present not on the pitch, but in the very different social circumstances in which the game was played. John Hargreaves has observed, almost from the moment that professionalism was a fact in Association football, the London middle class began to emphasize the amateur nature of sport as being fundamental to the public school sporting ethos.³³ Amateurism in leisure was seen as part of the "traditional" middle class London lifestyle, while in the north the entrepreneurial middle class which administered many of the clubs were unconcerned about paying the working class players for their services on the field in the same way they were paid for their services on the shop floor, or on the cricket field.

It was not professionalism alone which faced the RFU in the 1890s, it was also a matter of control of the game. The northerners' demands for a greater degree of administrative control over the Union was based on their numerical superiority, their financial strength, and the power of northern clubs on the

field. This was a direct challenge to the traditional hegemony which had ruled the game from London. Professionalism was a perceived consequence of this loss of control. The struggle which occurred between 1890 and 1895 which culminated in "The Great Schism" was as much a struggle between competing intra-class attitudes towards leisure as it was a matter of professionalism alone. In Association football play for pay under limited circumstances was introduced to control professionalism, but the battle to "throttle the hydra" in rugby was an attempt to retain the London middle class domination of the game.

Eileen and Stephen Yeo have maintained that by the last years of the nineteenth century "full fledged capitalist forms" had come to dominate aspects of leisure.³⁴ With the potential for large gate receipts to be made from spectator sport, it is no wonder that individuals and groups would seek to profit from such spectacles. In spite of the obvious importance of both money and results to the RFU and its members, Arthur Budd stated emphatically that "Scores and gates are not, thank goodness, the Alpha and Omega of our game."³⁵ It was actually scores and gates which forced the introduction of a County Championship, and clubs like Hull St. Marys to withdraw from the Yorkshire cup competition.³⁶ No matter what Budd and other RFU officials may have stated, especially outside the metropolis, success at the gate and on the paddock was paramount.

Charles Edwards, commenting on "The New Football Mania"

recognized that there were positive financial results to be realized from winning.³⁷ In a competitive market, those who sought to profit from the business of sport were not always willing to rely on the caprice of indigenous talent to ensure victory. Rugby clubs in Yorkshire not only had to compete with other rugby clubs for available athletes within the recruiting practices of the RFU, they were also forced to compete with local soccer clubs which had the added advantage of sanctioned financial inducements. No matter if a rugby club existed to make money, as a source of community solidarity, a means of social influence for the local bourgeoisie, an escape from a life of working class drudgery for young men, or some combination of these, success on the pitch was essential. As early as the 1880s, to ensure this success, shamateurism in the form of illegal inducements had come to plague Yorkshire rugby. At the senior level, rugby in that county was becoming very much a business in form and structure.

Those commenting on the rise of professionalism could not escape the link between illegal inducements and gate taking. H.H. Almond blamed cup ties for the increased emphasis on winning and thought that large gates allowed clubs to make illegal offers. Pastime commented that a tour by the Yorkshire XV which included £320 for "luxury coaches" was little more than a paid vacation financed from gate receipts. J.E. Raphael, an English international, reasoned that the blame for broken time payments lay not with the working class players "who could ill afford to

lose the money that getting off for football entailed" but with those who administered clubs and gates who offered the compensation. B. Fletcher Robinson stated that gate money had made rugby a business and the RFU was under threat from those clubs who operated as such.³⁸

While there was some willingness to see the connection between professionalism and the entrepreneurial spirit common to the northern middle class, the Rugby Football Union saw professionalism as the consequence of working class demands for rewards for their services. They made no mention of the northern middle class club administrators' attitudes toward rugby as a business. In 1896, J.R. Fleming flatly stated that professionalism was an issue based on class prejudice.³⁹ Almond argued that with the advent of professionalism, amateurs would be driven from the game by working men. G.F. Berney of the RFU executive and president of the Surrey Rugby Football Union believed that northern players "were chiefly of the type...accustomed to value its activities of whatever kind in terms of cash when there is any about." Arthur Budd, and the Rugby Union Football Handbook of 1894-95 both suggested that if the working class player could not afford to play rugby he should do without.⁴⁰ Obviously professionalism was perceived to be the fault of the working class.

There seems to have been no evil that could not have resulted from professionalism. C.J.B. Marriott claimed it would result in gambling and the fixing of matches. Almond predicted

that with the amateurs driven from the game, the middle class would fall victim to widespread physical degeneracy. The bourgeoisie in London could not have failed to see that while they would become weak and vulnerable, those still playing the game would remain strong. In this period of class uneasiness the thought that the working class would be more physically powerful was a terrifying possibility. J.R. Fleming and G. Rowland Hill voiced paternalistic concerns that if a young man pursued a career in sport he would miss the opportunity to learn a trade which would last a life time, while rugby provided only a short career.⁴¹

This concern was unfounded since there was never a suggestion that players be employed simply as players. Up to 1895, players were compensated for broken time; they were given employment as an inducement to transfer; they were provided with medical services, testimonials, help in starting homes, businesses, and were even provided with legs of mutton, but there is no evidence to suggest that players were paid only for playing rugby. At best, players had their income from legitimate sources supplemented.

While professionalism was the banner around which the RFU and the London clubs rallied their forces against the intrusion of Lancashire and Yorkshire, the north did not feel that it was the reason for the eventual split. J.A. Miller, president of the YRU in 1895 stated that "the snubs and unfairness meted out to Northerners generally by the Rugby Union" had frustrated those

who chose to split. Francis Marshall, another YRU president, as well as the leading northern opponent of broken time payment and league structures, stated that "Yorkshiresmen feel they do not have what is rightfully theirs" based on their voting power within the Union.⁴²

The situation by which the middle class London/traditional power base within the RFU reduced all the difficulties to a northern professional/working class issue has resulted in a somewhat confusing problem for present day scholars. The strong tendency in post 1960s British history to emphasize working class culture has produced valuable work. However those very few scholars who have studied rugby football from a working class perspective have relied heavily upon nineteenth century middle class sources with their peculiar metropolitan and RFU biases. They have not ignored the fact that those clubs which did split were administered by the northern middle class, making the question of the working class contribution to the division somewhat ambiguous. David Smith has noted that the split was the result of both an assertive working class, and a "self confident [northern] middle class". John Bales concurs and adds that London snobbishness resulted in the opinion that "northern gentlemen" who ran the senior clubs were of a lower status within the social hierarchy common to the Victorian middle class.⁴³

Both these views owe a great deal to the efforts of Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard who have attempted to provide an understanding of rugby up to the 1960s. Perhaps the greatest

confusion stemming from their work has been the attempt to establish a link between the working class assertiveness of the 1890s and the split. This has led William Baker to conclude from their work that "working class players and organizers from twenty-two industrial towns" engineered the division "for the express purpose of promoting the game along professional lines."⁴⁴ This statement tends to ignore the often obscured fact in Dunning and Sheard's work that the split was engineered by the northern middle class club officials for the expressed purpose of retaining their control over the business of rugby. Professionalism was an outgrowth of these men's desire to produce a top quality product on the field.⁴⁵

While it is necessary to recognize the contribution of the masses to the development of rugby football, they cannot be blamed for the "Great Schism". This appears to have been the result of the contest for control waged by competing factions in the late Victorian middle class. John Hargreaves has stated "The more thrusting capitalist elements, which favoured a more business form of organization, moved into the domains of amateur sport to gain prestige and exert social influence at the local level, or simply as a business venture...."⁴⁶ In the north, according to Harold Perkin (see Chapter III), the owner-manager was the true entrepreneur, while Perry Anderson recognized the tendency of the London middle class to embrace "villa Toryism", a romanticized social outlook which included leisure as necessarily separate from work. G.F. Berney, in stating that northerners

value all things in terms of cash, inadvertently recognized one major problem at the root of the split. While the southern, London-dominated, middle class was embracing an ethos of the romanticized amateurism fostered in the public schools, northern club officials, true to their entrepreneurial tendencies, were moving their game toward that of a business. Along with rugby as a business came professionalism, the feature of the internal class antagonisms isolated by the RFU to be the focus of the struggle. By singling out professionalism as the central issue, control of the game became viewed in class terms.

III

In late 1890 and early 1891, the editor of Field Sport, a Liverpool publication, established the tone of the impending struggle between the top northern clubs and the RFU up to 1895. In belligerent terms, he declared that the county unions' accepted definition of professional was unfair to top level working class players, and called for northerners to support a motion for the introduction of legitimate broken time payments. The publication further demanded the establishment of a league structure for northern clubs beyond the control of the RFU and the county unions similar to that in existence in the Football Association. In January 1891, Field Sport reported that there was a ground swell of support for a league system for the north.⁴⁷ This blatant rejection of the public school sporting ethos could only have served to increase the anxiety of the RFU

which was already faced with defiance of its professional by-laws. Against the wishes of the Union, the YRU shortly after voted narrowly to support broken time, a policy which, if it had been instituted, would immediately have split the largest county union from the parent body.⁴⁸

At an RFU meeting early in 1891 Rev. Francis Marshall of Huddersfield, and president of the YRU, debated the threat of professionalism with J.H. Payne of Lancashire. Payne dismissed Marshall's fears as unfounded, but rumours of leagues, support for broken time, illegal transfers, alternative venues for RFU general meetings, and clandestine payments to players all added up to the thin edge of the professional wedge. The Yorkshire (Evening) Post reported that while the YRU did support the broken time motion, it was very much against any payments to players for their services on the field. It also suggested that the London power base of the RFU would employ the 2/3 majority clause in the constitution to frustrate the wishes of the approximately 150 Yorkshire clubs.⁴⁹

At the September, 1891 meeting of the RFU two issues directly related to professionalism were addressed. The first was the re-introduction of the 1882 motion to have the venue for general meetings alternated between the north and south. The second was the problem of transfers, a method used to illegally lure top players to senior clubs. Pastime attempted to rally the conservative elements within the Union to defeat the alternative venue motion by suggesting that if the motion passed the north

would soon drive the southerners from control of the RFU. This position was also taken by George F. Berney who feared that "If the proposers had prevailed it would have placed Yorkshire and Lancashire in a dominant position from a political point of view, for a large number of Southern clubs would have found it impossible to provide funds for securing full representation at General Meetings held in the North of England."⁵⁰ Yorkshire could push through a motion for broken time if the meetings were held outside the metropolis. Berney established that a real threat to London control was being felt as early as 1891, and that the goals of London and Yorkshire were at cross purposes. He failed to concede, however, that the exclusive southern venue presented the north with the same problem he feared would be the south's undoing. Not all northern clubs were able to have representation at London meetings.

The motion passed 134 to 113, well short of the 2/3 majority necessary to alter the existing by-law. In 1882 the motion had not even been worthy of consideration, but a decade later it had enough support to have made it a reality had not the oligarchy which administered the RFU imposed its restrictive legislation.

G. Rowland Hill wrote in 1891-92 that the question of professionalism hinged on illegal transfers. In order to curtail such practices and prevent players under suspension from joining clubs unaware of their status, the RFU debated the introduction of stricter controls on player movement between clubs. The impetus for such a proposal came from the Lancashire union which

had in 1890, required that all local transfers be submitted to the county union for approval in an attempt to stop illegal inducements to transfer. "White Rose" of the Yorkshire Post noted that such legislation might pass because the junior clubs in Yorkshire would be supportive of any measure to prevent the depletion of their teams through unfair offers made by the senior clubs. He continued that any attempt to stop illegal transfers would be ignored by the senior clubs who might even choose to leave the RFU.⁵¹ While supportive of such things as broken time, most Lancashire and Yorkshire clubs were not willing to support illegal transfers. Only the top clubs with the financial wherewithal to make the offers and the need to recruit players were willing to support inducements to transfer.

Welsh immigration to the north of England was a common feature of late nineteenth century labour patterns.⁵² Among the young men seeking employment in the north were those skilled in the game of rugby, making them ideal employment prospects in industrial communities with senior rugby clubs. W.H. McCutcheon, a Welsh international, had played for some years prior to 1895 as a veiled professional in Oldham. He claimed that the financial incentive to join Oldham had been considerably better than the illegal income offered him in Wales. It was not uncommon for northern clubs such as Bradford to include Welsh stars such as W. Cooper of Newport in their XV. Even top west country players such as Jackson of Gloucester found their way on to the Halifax team.⁵³ Already the backbone of the English XV at the forward

positions, Lancashire and Yorkshire were bringing exciting and aggressive back play to their game by actively recruiting Welsh players.

The most celebrated recruitment of Welsh players was the acquisition of David and Evan James, Welsh internationals from Swansea, by the Broughton Rangers. The brothers went briefly to West Hartlepool and then to the Rangers. The James boys were given £200 to join Broughton and employed as warehouse workers for £2 per week in exchange for their services on the pitch.⁵⁴ The Welsh Union petitioned the RFU with overwhelming evidence of the illegal transfer and demanded that the brothers be suspended. Through the efforts of Arthur Budd, this was done in early 1893. No action was taken against West Hartlepool or the Broughton Rangers for their part in the action.⁵⁵ As was most often the case, especially before the more intensive efforts to stamp out professionalism in 1894, the player and not the club was made to shoulder the responsibility for the illegal action. Pastime noted that the RFU based its decision to suspend the James boys on their inability to prove their innocence.⁵⁶

The James boys' case was not a unique occurrence but became the example of the way in which northern clubs and working class players willingly violated the spirit of the game. Broughton Rangers must have been aware that they could not have made an acquisition that was so newsworthy without suspicion and an investigation. For this reason perhaps West Hartlepool quickly abandoned the boys. Durham county union officials never showed

the same sympathy toward constituent members involved in questionable conduct in the same way that Yorkshire and Lancashire unions did. It also could be that West Hartlepool could not compete with the Broughton offer. The willingness of the Rangers to acquire David and Evan under such suspicious circumstances indicates that top clubs would defy the RFU if the benefits were worth the chance. These star players would not only improve the product on the field but also attract greater fan interest.

Ironically, David and Evan James were reinstated as amateurs in 1896 after a series of failed appeals. As late as December, 1895 the RFU rejected an appeal but early the next year with the help of the Welsh RFU, the boys were declared amateur again. The reinstatement could also possibly have been a reward for not joining the northern rebellion.⁵⁷

Illegal inducements, although concentrated in Lancashire and Yorkshire, were not unique to the area. In Coventry, a club was suspended when it was proven that players were offered jobs at a local bicycle factory in exchange for playing rugby. Nor was Wales the only area to fall victim to illegal offers. Junior teams within the country were the prime targets for senior club recruitment. Aspatria Rugby Union Club, then a small Cumberland team, complained in 1893 that six of their players had been lost to illegal inducements.⁵⁸ Curiously, the Coventry club, playing in a less influential county union was suspended, while Broughton Rangers escaped with no punishment. If the club had been part of

a more powerful alliance such as the YRU senior clubs, it may not have received such a comparatively stiff sentence.

While discussing the James brothers' case, Pastime noted the difficulty in prosecuting the Broughton club. It was common practice for clubs to employ an agent, or third party, not directly connected to the club, to make the illegal offer. By doing so the clubs distanced themselves from the negotiations. Local supporters often acted as the procurer. Pastime openly accused Oldham of such a system in attracting Welsh players to the club.⁵⁹

Informal and "roving clubs", as well as workshop teams provided another method of circumventing RFU professional by-laws. Workshop teams played informal Wednesday matches, such as Leeds Half Holiday v Leeds Steelworkers, Leeds Postal v Heckmondwike Tradesmen, or Leeds Postal v Bradford Postal. These matches provided an opportunity to increase weekly gate receipts, the opportunity to improve skills and experiment with tactics, and a chance for supporters to see top players playing in various combinations. These games took place outside the jurisdiction of the RFU, allowing for league structures, cup prizes, and the payments for broken time in the guise of expenses. Roving teams similar in structure to the Barbarians, were another means of paying expenses above those sanctioned by the RFU as well as providing mid-week training and giving supporters a chance to see teams composed of top players.⁶⁰

The instances of professionalism between 1890 and 1895 were

legion. Accusations and secret investigations attempted to expose the practice and up to 1894 the players were most often held responsible for breaking the Union rules. Oldham was apparently adept at distancing itself from detection. After a long secret investigation the club was declared pristine by the RFU in 1891, even though McCutcheon was at least one shamateur on the team. Castleford was one club which was punished for illegal inducements. Normanton RFC requested that they be allowed to use the Castleford players since the club and not its members were under suspension. The RFU denied this request but the temptation was too great, and in 1892 Normanton was found guilty of inducing the suspended Castleford players. Pastime's featured star player for the week of April 13, 1892 was the Heckmondwike "tradesman" and international, R.E. (Dickie) Lockwood, a 5'4", 11 stone player who had twice been cleared of accusations that he had solicited wage supplements. Lockwood, a working class player, appears to have been willing to offer his services to the highest bidder. Unlike Oldham, Elland RC (Yorkshire) could not distance itself from clandestine payments. The club was accused of making payments to players and then clumsily falsifying its books. The RFU acted on evidence supplied by the club's ex-secretary F.D. Hopkin, himself under suspension for recruiting an Elland player for the Brighouse Rangers. Elland players testified that they were never given any consideration in exchange for their services and the RFU dropped its investigation. Two years later Elland brought a charge against Halifax for "kidnapping" its best

player.⁶¹

A common problem for the RFU was the question of testimonials and benefit matches. While technically illegal, a retiring or severely injured player could look forward to some type of reward for his services in the form of a benefit match in his honour. Since the player's career was over, suspensions for accepting the proceeds were irrelevant. A Paignton player who decided to make a comeback after he was given a benefit match was forbidden to return by the RFU. Clubs who held such events for their players were immune from severe punishments. Kendal RFC (Westmoreland) was given a one day suspension for defying a directive from the Union when it gave a Mr. Fawcett a benefit match. Fawcett was suspended for life for accepting the proceeds.⁶²

G.F. Berney's contention that Yorkshire Rugby Union committee members were themselves tainted suggests one reason why clubs could feel secure in defying the RFU.⁶³ Since the RFU had initially given the county unions authority to investigate accusations of professionalism, clubs were protected from the intense Union attacks on professionalism by men who represented the senior clubs on the county union committee. Certainly not all the Yorkshire or Lancashire committee men sanctioned illegal conduct. Marshall, for example, represented Huddersfield, a club later found guilty of a series of payments to players. Some clubs must have been represented at the country level by men who did actively participate in sub rosa pay for play. This, coupled

with the RFU's initial reluctance to aggressively prosecute senior clubs, permitted thinly veiled professionalism to flourish. The potential for profits from illegal conduct made the chance of detection well worth taking especially since it was most often the player and not the club who suffered when professionalism was exposed.

IV

As early as 1890 there were rumours that the north would press the Union for the introduction of legitimate broken time. At a dinner for the presentation of the Yorkshire Cup, the speaker demanded that broken time, already favoured by the YRU, be implemented in the Yorkshire game. Pastime called such a development yet another attempt by the north to force their will on the RFU.⁶⁴ The YRU obviously did not feel that compensation for broken time constituted professionalism.

J.A. Miller, the new YRU president, was a leading advocate of the idea, in contrast to his predecessor Marshall who saw it as the thin edge of the professional wedge. Miller was a Leeds businessman who had served the Yorkshire union as secretary from 1884 to 1891 before being elected president. In 1879 he had represented his county on the field. L. Tosswill recognized that although an advocate of broken time, Miller was a supporter of "the strict letter of amateurism".⁶⁵ Miller never suggested that the YRU defy the Union, but work to alter the game through logic

and within the system.

Miller was typical of northern middle class rugby officials. He understood the problems of working men who played the game at the highest levels. He was not however, always sympathetic to the causes of the working class and in 1893 reflected the middle class distaste for the growing power of organized labour. The 1890s had been a time of intense labour unrest in the north. Along with the growing strains within the rugby world, the press carried details of strikes and labour unrest occurring throughout the area. The summer riots in the West Riding in 1893, the colliers' strike at St. Helens, and the prolonged strike coupled with violence at Featherstone were symptomatic of labour problems in the early 1890s. In November 1893, the YRU entertained a motion that it donate £ 50 to striking Castleford coal miners. Miller led the defeat of this motion arguing that it was the mine owners who were suffering from the irresponsible behaviour of the miners.⁶⁶ This defeat of support for the families of working men was indicative of the strong middle class industrialist/entrepreneurial attitude which prevailed in the upper echelons of the Yorkshire union. In spite of the working class presence within the YRU, the administrators of the game were not always influenced by the needs of the players and supporters. The election of Miller as president confirmed that the YRU was decidedly middle class at the top at the time when the competing forces within English rugby were on a seemingly inevitable collision course.

Miller's support for broken time may have been sincere, but it was also a pragmatic attempt to reach a compromise between the senior clubs and the RFU. Miller officially proposed a motion to introduce legitimate broken time into the RFU at the August 31 committee meeting. The committee, dominated by conservative elements within the RFU, chose to hold the motion over for a vote of the Union membership at the up coming September general meeting to be held in London.⁶⁷ The London sporting press and the southern power base within the RFU saw this as the final showdown between the forces of middle class/amateurism and working class/northern/professionalism, and began to rally their forces for the impending struggle.

The Times was among the many newspapers which anticipated the magnitude of the general meeting in announcing that the motion would be put to a vote of the entire membership.⁶⁸ Budd launched an attack on what he saw as the illogicality of the broken time motion when he asked whether professional and businessmen should be compensated for the time they miss from work to play rugby? F.I. Currey, a past president of the RFU and H.E. Steed of Lennox FC organized a "private committee" designed to engineer the defeat of the motion. Steed gathered 120 proxy votes for the committee to use against the north.⁶⁹ Even with the 2/3 majority clause at their disposal, the RFU was concerned that Miller's measured logic could convince a sufficient number to make the proxies a final defense.

The month between the committee meeting and the general

meeting produced accusations of misdeeds on both sides. "Old Ebor" of the Yorkshire Post accused the RFU of lowering membership subscriptions to attract southern non-gate taking clubs into the Union. On the other side, Berney claimed that the north intentionally created shadow teams to pad their voting power in order not to just pass the broken time motion, but to force through other matters considered professional.⁷⁰ The Rugby Football Union list of clubs holding membership indicates that there was a rise in new members in 1893, but not enough, either north or south, to radically alter the outcome of the vote, and certainly not as many as claimed by either protagonist. The best news for Miller and Yorkshire came a week prior to the vote when Lancashire clubs voted at the county level to support the motion.⁷¹

The Times report of the general meeting summed up the proceedings. Miller made a passionate appeal to the members in which he claimed that the success of Yorkshire rugby was the result of a middle class campaign to spread interest in the game. Since it was successful "a new and entirely different type of man must be considered - the young working man of the industrial class...". This was an attempt to show the RFU that they were in some way responsible for the spread of the gospel of athleticism and must take responsibility for the consequences. He concluded that to defeat the motion would be a social "injustice." Mr. Thorpe of Cheshire did Miller no favours when he stated that his working class players neither required nor wished for

compensation. William Cail heard the motion from Miller, and offered an amended version to the membership which stated that the RFU held that the practice of broken time was an act of professionalism. The Cail motion carried with the support of the Midlands, the West Country, and the extreme north by 282 to 136.⁷²

The RFU and the southern power base saw the defeat of the broken time motion as a final victory over working class intrusions into the control of their game. This attitude, however, was premature and erroneous. Although it was the northern working man that would suffer the most from the RFU action, it was the middle class that pushed for broken time, in order to compete with soccer clubs for top athletes, if for no other reason. The defeat of the Miller motion was not the end of any problems, but instead it only served to compound the isolation felt by the north. It further frustrated county and senior club officials in their attempts to have their status and needs considered by the RFU. C.J.B. Marriott however, displayed the assurance felt by the RFU, when he suggested that had the motion passed the London clubs would have seceded from the RFU. The crushing of the initiative had preserved the Union.⁷³

V

With the issue of broken time apparently behind them the amateur/public school element launched a more aggressive attack

on the cells of professionalism thought to be operating within the Lancashire and Yorkshire unions.⁷⁴ The post 1893 assault on professionalism was noticeably more punitive in nature and more directly orchestrated by the RFU professional sub-committee. This was due to the belief that there was a tainted element in the county unions that would work against local attempts to crush the cells. Confident in its victory, the RFU took the initiative in suppressing professionalism.

Only a month after the defeat of the Miller motion Huddersfield fell victim to what "Old Ebor" called the RFU witch hunt. It had been long suspected that Huddersfield was a tainted club. The RFU charged that the club had illegally recruited players from the Cumberland Hornets. In its defense, the Yorkshire Post noted that since the Hornets were not a member of the RFU, Huddersfield had every right to encourage transfers. Senior clubs threatened to ignore sanctions against Huddersfield, but on November 14, 1893 the RFU suspended Huddersfield until the end of the year (not the season). Marshall resigned as a member of the club, and there was no united action to ignore Union directives. Often a six week suspension would have produced considerable financial losses, but all the club's important home fixtures for 1893 had already been fulfilled, and with Christmas holidays not far off the club suffered little at the gate.⁷⁵

The next scandal concerning professionalism was uncovered at the county level when Salford and Leigh were charged with violation of the professional by-laws. While the investigation

was still underway rumours of more clubs involved in a county-wide conspiracy sprang up. Up to ten top Lancashire clubs were implicated. On October 17, 1894, the Yorkshire Post reported that Salford officials had confessed to their part in the conspiracy and accused Broughton Rangers, Rochdale Hornets, Swinton, Tyldesley, and Wigan as being co-conspirators in a plot to practice veiled professionalism. The newspaper also claimed that it was common knowledge that the Lancashire union was purposely dragging its feet in prosecuting all those implicated. In spite of its forthright actions, Salford was given a two and a half month suspension.⁷⁶ Although it was suggested by the Yorkshire Post that Lancashire officials had feared the possibility of a secession if they had attempted to take action against the senior clubs mentioned, it may have been equally true that had an investigation proceeded, some LRU officials were likely to be implicated as well. Not one of the accused clubs suffered from Salford's accusations, but within a year all had joined in the proposed new union.

In November 1894 the RFU committee suggested that a circular be sent to all members demanding compliance with the Union's harsh new by-laws on professionalism.⁷⁷ The "cells" of professionalism had proven too evasive to crush under existing legislation. The conspiracy rumoured in Lancashire suggested that a powerful body of professional clubs were functioning within the RFU that the Union could not touch. Faced with such disturbing possibilities, the Union placed the burden of proof of

innocence on accused clubs and players in their proposed modifications to the by-laws. It was also suggested that those who brought evidence to the RFU be rewarded for their action.⁷⁸

Within a month, the objections raised throughout the entire Union to these amendments suggested that the RFU had over-stepped its authority. The circular and the by-laws were considered not only insulting, but even un-English. At the December 14 committee meeting even some pure clubs announced that they could not support the notion of guilty until proven innocent. The RFU was forced to drop the offending clause at a December 28 special general meeting.⁷⁹

Miller and Marshall debated the Maud proposal which would offer £20 inducements to those who provided evidence against offending clubs. Marshall demanded to know why if the Yorkshire clubs were innocent would Miller object to such an offer. Miller took the morally high ground and added that not only was such a practice offensive and dangerous, it was directed at persecuting only Yorkshire clubs. It was a small victory for Miller, but the general membership supported his argument and defeated the Maud proposal by 258 to 163. The YRU ally in the broken time controversy, Lancashire, had chosen to support the Union circular unaltered, and as a compromise, the RFU granted immunity from prosecution to any club or individual which gave evidence of professionalism leading to a conviction.⁸⁰

The Union was willing to use any means at its disposal to achieve results. A St. Helens player, T. Foulkes, came under

investigation when it was revealed during a divorce hearing that he had been given a wage supplement of 12 shillings over and above the 24s. 6d. a week he earned at legitimate employment. His deserted wife told the court that his football money was paid to him at the local tobacco shop. Again the club employed a third party to distance itself from the illegal payment. Aware of Mrs. Foulkes' testimony, the RFU demanded that the LRU act on the evidence from the hearing.⁸¹

The RFU witch hunt may have caused a great deal of trouble for the senior clubs in Lancashire and Yorkshire. The campaign intensified as the 1895 season approached but the northern clubs displayed no intention of mending their ways. The stakes were too high. Money, prestige, and community influence would have been sacrificed for the sake of an outdated custom. The final formal Union action to crush professionalism was announced in the Manchester Guardian on August 4, 1895.

It was reported that at the September general meeting the RFU would further attempt to close loopholes in their professional by-laws that clubs had taken advantage of. The new legislation would formally make the individual responsible for accepting considerations for play. It too would make administrative professionalism illegal in hopes of ending the practice of players being paid for club functions ranging from president to grounds keeper. This practice was common to professional cricket which employed working class professional players as grounds keepers.⁸² The Rugby Union Football Handbook

of 1894-95 stated that the Union would consider as professional any player who participated in a game between April 30 and the third Saturday in September if admission was charged to see the fixture. It was hoped that this would stop the off season, unsanctioned, touring circuses that earned large gates and paid high expenses to players.⁸³

Even though the increasingly powerful northern unions continued to be frustrated in their attempts to modify the game to please the seniors clubs, neither this, nor the punitive actions by the RFU to curtail professionalism were enough to drive top clubs from the Union. There was too much prestige in being the top of the heap of English rugby, and once disassociated from the parent body, the RFU would have been a formidable foe. The senior northern clubs which did practice sub rosa professionalism may have been inconvenienced by the Union's witch hunt, but it did not severely hamper the profits of powerful clubs while still RFU members. The county unions, made up of largely junior clubs seldom participated in clandestine payments, nor were they supportive of softening transfer laws to allow inducements since they would suffer the most. These clubs were as frustrated with the local senior clubs as the senior clubs were with the county and national unions in attempting to gain consideration based on their superior numbers. The final confrontation between the senior northern clubs and the RFU, which eventually drove the top clubs from the Union, was directly related to the pressure from junior clubs in Yorkshire.

VI

Pastime and Field Sports both reported rumours of the formation of a league of top northern clubs as early as 1890.⁸⁴ Pastime reported again in 1892 that there were "mysterious rumours in the air that a league is being formed in Yorkshire, sub rosa."⁸⁵ The Yorkshire Post sports headline of February 27, 1892 hailed the "Proposed Football League for North Yorkshire" and went on to claim there was a conspiracy of clubs suffering under RFU attempts to "throttle the hydra" of professionalism. The Post also pointed out that these same clubs were being frustrated by the demands of lesser clubs in their county union. Named as conspirators were Bradford and Wakefield Trinity. Two weeks later, the newspapers reported that Bradford, Castleford, Hunslet, and Normanton officials denied any knowledge of such a plan.⁸⁶

Earlier the same year the RFU had made its position on leagues very clear. In January, 1892, independent of any senior club conspiracy, teams in the isolated Calder Valley area petitioned the Union for permission to establish a local league. The petition claimed that Association football was more popular because it was organized around a league format and that to be competitive rugby clubs in the area needed to start a league as well. The YRU and the RFU denied the request on the grounds that this type of precedent was not in the best interests of the

game.⁸⁷ The tentative plans for the senior Lancashire and Yorkshire clubs to play in a league were squashed for the same reason.⁸⁸

With the success of the County Championships and country cup competitions, as well as the high level of interest in Association football, it was obvious that from a business point of view rugby could benefit from a league structure, especially in the north. The close proximity of many of the country's top clubs was ideally suited for such a competition in Lancashire and the West Riding, as were the natural community rivalries. This however was not a consideration for metropolitan rugby, structured more on occupation/educational rivalries than on community rivalries. Any sympathy that the RFU had to the Clader Valley clubs did not exist for senior clubs which had been the source of much of the Union's aggravation. The connection between leagues and professional soccer ensured that any attempts to institute such a blatant threat to amateurism would be stifled by the London middle class element in the Union. On the other hand, northern senior clubs were well aware how beneficial leagues could be to increase gates.

Since the institution of the Yorkshire Cup, those clubs which competed for the honour (Batley, Bradford, Brighouse Rangers, Dewsbury, Halifax, Huddersfield, Hunslet, Liversedge, Manningham, and Wakefield Trinity competed for the cup in 1893) had guarded their position and had functioned almost independently from the YRU on matters related to the competition.

They were also the leading proponents of broken time and focus of the Union's investigations of professionalism. By functioning independently of the junior clubs these teams dictated the structure of the Yorkshire Cup and the county's most important fixtures.⁸⁹

In 1894, junior clubs in the YRU pressed for the introduction of a relegation system for the Yorkshire cup. The successful second level teams would be elevated into the senior competition at the expense of the bottom senior clubs. Not unexpectedly the senior clubs rejected the proposal. Instead the sub-committee governing the senior competition demanded that only the top twelve clubs be allowed to participate. Unable to reach a compromise, the YRU rescinded the County Cup sub-committee's power, and senior clubs threatened the union with a mass withdrawal.⁹⁰

Threats of secession were not new but top Yorkshire clubs were not about to concede any gains to the ambitious junior clubs in the union. Too much rested on competing for the Yorkshire Cup. The rescinding of the sub-committee powers only compounded the frustrations brought by the defeat of broken time, the inability to use the large voting membership to influence the national union and its 2/3 majority clause, and the witch hunt directed at the senior clubs. The Yorkshire clubs were not the only teams which were being subjected to impediments to developing their game. Top Lancashire teams faced similar problems and were equally frustrated.

The Yorkshire Evening Post announced on January 16, 1895 that a meeting between senior clubs of both the large northern unions had taken place. The clubs decided to petition the RFU for permission to unite under a league structure, independent of the LRU and the YRU, but affiliated with the Rugby Football Union. The clubs voiced their dissatisfaction with being dictated to by junior clubs. To reinforce their solidarity they also warned that if any action were taken against any club as a result of this meeting or the professional by-laws, all conspirators would secede immediately.⁹¹

These teams must have been aware that their plan had no chance of success. They had been a constant annoyance for many years as the instigators of the Unions problems. The top northern clubs were associated, sometimes unfairly, with violence, disrespect, professionalism, challenges to traditional authority, and militant working class elements which were seen as a plague to late Victorian society. These clubs were about to make the last bastion of middle class amateurism a business. The offer to remain in the Union may have only been an attempt not to be seen as the instigators of impending split.

William Cail, the RFU president, demanded that the senior clubs present the Union with their objectives and plans for the league format. He stated that they must be made available immediately or the RFU would have no choice but to refuse the proposal. No documents were presented and even if they had been the decision made on May 9 by the Union would likely have been

the same. It declared again that the league or "any such organization would be prejudicial to the best interests of the game."⁹²

The rejection of the senior league proposal was the last straw. Twenty-two northern clubs blessed with talent, money, community support, leadership and ambition made arrangements to split. In spite of his best efforts Miller could no longer hold the YRU together although he continued to press for the institution of legitimate broken time.⁹³ Even if he had miraculously managed to achieve this, the senior clubs could not have turned back.

"REVOLT IN THE FOOTBALL WORLD" was announced in the Manchester Guardian on August 30, 1895. At a meeting held in Huddersfield the conspirators agreed to play as a league and establish the Northern Rugby Football Union. The secessionists were Batley, Bradford, Brighouse Rangers, Broughton Rangers, Halifax, Hunslet, Hull, Huddersfield, Leeds, Leigh, Liversedge, Manningham, Oldham, Rochdale Hornets, St. Helens, Stockport, Tyldesley, Wakefield Trinity, Warrington, Wigan, and Widnes, as well as Runcorn, a Cheshire club. Dewsbury had been involved up to the end but at the eleventh hour chose instead to stay with the RFU.⁹⁴

In an attempt to allow the rebels time to reconsider, the Union gave them one month to change their minds; if not, all would be declared professional and subject to the full force of the Union's by-laws. All players, officials, and clubs were

ordered to suspend play and any other contact with the rebels or face being declared professional themselves. Referees were ordered not to officiate any Northern Union (NU) matches, and the RFU returned all subscription money paid to them by the banned clubs.⁹⁵

The rugby world was not unprepared for the split and many welcomed the move as a means of purging the RFU. G.F. Berney claimed that the amateur London clubs had worked to drive the tainted clubs from the Union. The conspiracy clearly was more widespread than Lancashire and Yorkshire. Some Durham clubs seriously entertained the possibility of joining the rebels before choosing to remain loyal. Teams that choose to stay with the Union may have done so only to give themselves time to assess the chances of the breakaway union. Liverpool FC, which remained supportive of the Union throughout the turmoil, felt that pressure on them was relieved with the split.⁹⁶ No matter what the response, the split which had seemed inevitable had come at last.

Upon hearing that his club was among the rebels, Miller resigned from Leeds FC. He observed that the decision to join the split was made at the administration level only and that the playing membership was not consulted.⁹⁷ This appears to have been the case for all the clubs involved. For the playing membership the opportunity to represent England was gone, but they could now openly be compensated for broken time. Their status as local heroes would not be altered, nor would their

opportunity to translate their talents on the pitch into better employment opportunities. The senior rebel clubs appear to have made no special effort to include the junior clubs as co-conspirators. They were better off having a monopoly on the game and to continue poaching from the excluded clubs.

If there was any doubt that the NU would be anything but a middle class institution, their regulations confirmed that the working class player would be carefully controlled. Rule I declared that professionalism would be considered illegal and that broken time would not exceed 6 shillings per day per player. The Rugby Union Football Annual for 1895-96 scoffed at the suggestion that the NU considered itself an amateur organization, but the new union demanded that all its players must have legitimate full time employment.⁹⁸ Since the players were often employed by the club officials that instituted the split and controlled the new union, club administrators lost no control over the playing membership. It was only when the NU gradually moved toward full professionalism that the players became increasingly proletarianized.

The senior clubs did not lose any support at the gate. Fans clearly welcomed the league structure as shown in the NU opening week of play. Bradford v Wakefield Trinity drew 6,000 spectators and Warrington v Hunslet drew 7,000.⁹⁹ The introduction of new, top quality, opponents from the neighbouring county served to intensify the interest in rugby.

By comparison, although the rebel clubs were few in number,

the RFU would suffer greatly from the split. Many of the best players in Yorkshire had supported their clubs and joined the split. After 1896, Yorkshire never won another county championship for thirty years. The Lancashire county XV lost eight players from its 1894-95 side to the split.¹⁰⁰ Worse yet the Amateur county unions now not only had to compete with soccer for talent, they now were in direct competition with the NU for players and fan support.

Every effort has been made here to identify the various causes which contributed to the split. Underlying the demands for leagues, broken time, a more democratic Union, and professional witch hunts were competing intra-class attitudes. These attitudes within the middle class played a major role in the split. The southern middle class was not willing to adapt to the realities of the changing power base within the RFU. Nor was it able to see that, without compromise, the Union could not survive a united northern action intact. Northern middle class officials were frustrated by the competing attitudes within the Union that they could not influence. Unable to reach a compromise from within, they were forced to disassociate themselves from the parent body. England was becoming a country of nationwide businesses, and this included sports and leisure. On one hand, the RFU struggled to keep rugby a small, class-exclusive, example of an idyllic past. The northern rebels sought to make rugby part of the process of sport as a business. There was too much interest in rugby at all levels of the social

hierarchy for the game to stay a class exclusive Saturday "garden party affair".

The working man played an important role too in the development of the new union. It was the working class which supported the local community teams, and it was their playing skills which brought supporters to the gates. The working man willingly accepted, and often solicited, illegal inducements to play, and were therefore co-conspirators in the split. As J.E. Raphael rhetorically asked, who could blame the working man for taking advantage of the opportunities offered him? But if one considers that the split was an evil occurrence, it is however difficult to blame the working man for it. It was by exploiting the talents of the working man that the entrepreneurial northern middle class sought to advance themselves socially and/or financially. The habit of using the working class for the purposes of industry was easily transferred to sport. The northern professionals of the labouring class stood to gain little from a bifurcation of the RFU, the middle class club officials stood to gain much.

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CHAPTER V

THE BLEAK YEARS, 1896-1905

The ten years following the establishment of the Northern Union in 1895 were bleak times for the amateur code. The purging from the Union of Yorkshire and Lancashire "professionals" proved not to be the final solution to the RFU problems. The departure of the powerful northern clubs brought new and inevitable difficulties for the amateur code. From 1895 to 1905 Rugby Union football faltered and in 1905 reached depths of despair when a colonial touring XV administered a series of humiliating defeats on its host. John Arlott has called the Edwardian era the "Golden Age of [British] Sport", but for those dedicated to the rugby game, the decade following the secession brought little glory.¹ Decline in interest in the amateur code, the flagging fortunes of the national team, and the realization that the split had not ended the problem of those things considered professional were major concerns of the rugby fraternity. These turns in fortune were compounded by a greater sense of anxiety being felt throughout the country on matters more important than scores and fixtures.

It is presumptuous to assume that the fortunes of the RFU were as important as the social, political, and economic developments during the years between 1895 and 1905, but to ignore the relationship between the decline of the RFU and the

growing anxiety in the country would be a mistake. It is impossible to divorce the sporting enthusiasm of the Edwardians from the greater panorama of English life. In the Golden Age of Sports, games, and especially team sports were a reality of life for all classes. So too was the ambiguous attitude toward the future, especially after the death of Victoria in 1901.

For some, the Queen symbolized the security, power, and splendour of the age which bore her name. Others felt stifled by the order and limitations of Victorianism. Samuel Hynes has argued that the Edwardian period was characterized by conflicting perceptions more diametrically opposed than at any other time since industrialization, and not easily explained simply by class analysis. The new century was greeted with trepidation by those who felt that the Queen's demise marked the end of a great era, while others who felt they had suffered under the restraints of Victorianism welcomed the dawn of a new and more open age. Hynes observed that "The New behaved brashly, insolently, or violently and the Old responded with arthritic resistance." As Victoria was the symbol of her era, so her son Edward would come to symbolize the "Garden Party" world of the Edwardian upper classes.²

The anxiety and anticipation of the age was not without foundation. England, especially for those fearful of its future, was perceived to be on the verge of collapse. The failures of the South African War, the rise of independent labour politics, the threat of Germany to British industrialism and the stability

of Europe, the apparent collapse of morality, the assertion for rights of women, and the attacks on imperialism, all suggested the demise of Victorianism. Urban degeneracy had become the plague of the masses. In 1901, The Westminster Review declared "England has grown old, her national vitality is exhausted."³ While some feared the decadence of the new era would continue to contribute to the fall of the nation, others saw the break down of Victorianism as an opportunity to rescue the nation through reform, and/or political readjustment which would end almost a century of stifling conservative middle class domination.

One focus of national fears was the South African War.⁴ The colonial disturbance grew to be a festering sore on the English psyche, as disaster followed disaster, and criticism grew at home. The rescuing of the garrison at Mafeking was greeted at home with great celebration because of "a press desperately anxious to secure incontrovertible evidence of British pluck and valour..." as Richard Price has declared.⁵ It was the same pluck and valour which was in evidence at Balaclava, made necessary by military incompetence. Middle class volunteer officers "seem to have been over eager to prove their military prowess..."⁶ Competent leadership cannot be equated with blind courage or schoolboy enthusiasm. The virtues of leadership believed by men such as H.H. Almond to be inherent in rugby football and other ludic pursuits proved to be absent in the middle class officers serving in the South African War.

One explanation for the military problems in South Africa

was the poor physical condition of the English troops. There was a body of opinion which hoped to foist the blame on the working class. The Interdepartmental Report on Physical Deterioration of 1904 was inspired by the poor general health of army recruits. Urban degeneration was given as a major reason for J.F. Maurice's contention that in 1902, 60% of Englishmen were unfit for war. The solution to "racial decay" was to reverse the erosion of working class health by increased fresh air and more school sports.⁷

The Fabian response to this line of thought was the establishment of a summer school program in rural Wales where mental stimulation and physical exercise were brought together. Holiday makers not only discussed the merits of Fabian socialism, but took part in Swedish Drill, swimming, rambling, climbs, and gymnastics in order to stave off the ravishes of social degeneration.⁸ The Fabians were among the many who had rejected the cult of games, embracing instead individual fitness rather than team sports.

Any attack on the quality of military leadership was an attack on the cult of athleticism and the public school life. James Mangan claims that ironically the first criticism of the cult of games came from within the public schools themselves. G.C. Bell, headmaster of Marlborough College, openly attacked over emphasis on sports at his school at the same time that public school graduates were failing in South Africa. On his retirement in 1903, Bell presented his school with an academic

challenge cup, rather than a trophy to the zealots of sport.⁹ Critics of the public school mania for games, especially after the Boer War, asserted that sport trained boys for competence in sports and nothing else. They argued that any idea that games teach military skill and bravado "is a psychological fallacy disproven in war."¹⁰ In "The Future of Education", J.H. Mahaffy expressed his discontent with the low level of English efficiency, rooted in middle and upper class education.¹¹

The young men who went to South Africa did so with the belief that their abilities on the pitch were preparation enough for military leadership. The Royal Commission on the war held in 1902 was less convinced, and was critical not only of working class unfitness, but of middle class incompetence. Lord Kitchener was openly critical of the officer class. The Quarterly Review rejected the belief that sport built a better man and therefore a better England. Charles Bright wrote that while sport was good preparation for national defense, drilling and military training would be superior. Robert Baden Powell, the hero of Mafeking, concurred and in 1906 began his paramilitary Boy Scouts Movement. Scouting offered middle class boys the rewards once assuredly thought to be inherent in rugby football: manliness, courage, chivalry, leadership, and the "proper moral emphasis".¹²

In spite of the critics of sport and the military, there were others who continued to offer staunch support to the public school cult of games. B. Fletcher Robinson praised it for its

"ability to instil the virtues necessary for the greatness of England." J.E.C. Welldon, in a 1906 speech given in Japan on "The Training of an English Gentleman in the Public Schools", stated that bravery and loyalty were taught the boys, in the tradition of the Light Brigade and Nelson at Trafalgar, through sport more than academics. In spite of Bright's preference for drilling, he too defended the public school system, and claimed that the country's problem was more the fault of the "weltering mass of rubbish" beneath the public school educated middle class. Howard Savage concluded his 1926 study of public school and university sports in England by stating that all things considered, through sport, the public schools instilled proper character and provided a moral education.¹³

Charles Bright was able to make the connection between the failures of the military and English sport only after the New Zealand All Blacks had crushed all English teams on their 1905 tour. Bright echoed the opinions of J.B. Akin (London editor of the Manchester Guardian) in the Interdepartmental Report on Physical Deterioration, when he claimed that England was lagging behind Germany. As a first generation industrial nation, Germany was aggressive and hard working, while England was training its sons for other things. (Presumably a more genteel middle class life.) As evidence of this Bright pointed to the corresponding decline in sport, the military, and industry. E.B. Osborn, writing on the All Blacks' tour, claimed that English sportsmen were losing ground in athletics to Americans, in cricket to

Australia, to Canada in curling, and most assuredly to tiny New Zealand in rugby.¹⁴

For those so inclined, many areas of English life could be linked to sport and public school life. Once the unassailable bastion of middle class hegemony, the public schools and their products now came under increasing criticism. It may be coincidental that the fortunes of English rugby under the amateur code was, at the same time as the nation itself, in decline, but the relationship between the two was obvious. Just how much the country was on the road to disaster remains a great debate in academia, but for some, England's greatness appeared to have passed, and this was clearly reflected in the quality of its rugby football.¹⁵ In a sports crazed nation the results on the pitch could be proof of its greatness or of its decay. For others, dissatisfied with the confines of the establishment, there was hope that the breakdown of the power structure could offer new opportunities.

II

As expected, the departure of the northern rebels allowed the RFU to remain the middle class institution that it always had been. The absence of the disruptive influence to the amateur code did not, however, ensure a return to middle class harmony. Between 1895 and 1905 the same problems which had existed prior to 1895 still persisted - even if in slightly less virulent form. New problems also arose as a result of the loss of Lancashire and

Yorkshire clubs. England lost the services of many of its most talented and innovative players. The Northern Union proved so immediately successful, that it continued to siphon off high quality working class players. The RFU found that, in spite of these difficulties, it could function at a reduced level of membership and quality of play without the professionals. This was due to the continued middle class support for rugby at the public schools and in the metropolis, as well as in the provinces.

The six RFU presidents from 1895 to 1905 continued to reflect middle class control of the game. Roger Walker, the Union's thirteenth president, was a Lancashire opponent of broken time who had served as captain of Manchester FC for seven years, and an English representative on the International Board (1895-99). Robert Whalley followed Walker, serving from 1896 to 1898. Whalley attended Marlborough College and Cambridge before joining Lloyds of London as an underwriter. Lt. Col. J. Walter Thorpe became president in 1898 and served a two year term. Thorpe was a Cheshire squire and officer in the 5th Volunteer Battalion, as well as being a county alderman, a J.P., and mayor of Macclesfield (1897-98). He later served as governor of Victoria University (Manchester). Francis Fox who followed Thorpe, was a Somersetshire manufacturer who had attended Marlborough College. He was also a successful nominee for a place on the class exclusive Barbarians FC. From 1902 to 1904, Mark Newsome, the owner of a Dewsbury blanket manufacturing works, and son of the

town's mayor was elevated to the Union's top post. Newsome had been the seconder to the Miller motion for the introduction of broken time in 1893, but like Miller had remained loyal in 1895. The final man to hold the office in these ten years was G. Rowland Hill, the only man to be knighted (1926) for his services to rugby. A staunch Tory, Hill represented the party on the London County Council, as well as acting as chairman of the Greenwich Conservative Association.¹⁶ Although three of these men were northerners, their social status was considerably more elevated than most northern players. Socially and administratively, these men were supportive of the conservative nature of the RFU administration.

Francis Fox drew the ire of the northern press shortly after his election in 1900 when at a speech given to the Wellington RFC he expressed contempt for any club or player who was not strictly amateur. Fox felt that there was no place for clubs which took gate receipts and applied them to defraying players' travel, medical, and kit expenses. One newspaper suggested that if the whims of Mr. Fox were followed, rugby would become a rich man's game, and exclude working class players. The new president must have been elated when, in 1901, King Edward VII agreed to serve as patron of the game.¹⁷

Although the RFU remained dedicated to crushing any hint of professionalism, it made an important decision in 1904. The role of Union secretary was a demanding administrative position, which required a competent, full time, executive. In order to attract

such a qualified individual, the committee ruled that the income paid to the Rugby Football Union Secretary should not fall within the Union definition of professionalism.¹⁸ From this point, the position began to grow into the most powerful within the RFU. The Union always filled the job from within their ranks, thus ensuring adherence to mainstream RFU attitudes.

As a result of the split, club membership declined noticeably over the next ten years. William Cail documented the drop in membership, noting that in 1893 there were 481 members; in 1896, 383; and by 1903 only 244 clubs held membership in the Union. The Rugby Union Handbook of 1899-1900 recorded that the RFU membership could be broken down as follows: 91 London clubs, 71 south and west clubs, 86 northern clubs, and 10 affiliated clubs and unions outside England.¹⁹ The 86 northern clubs were a far cry from the 150 that Yorkshire alone could claim prior to the split. Before 1895, 274 clubs had been founded in Lancashire and Yorkshire. From 1895 until 1986, only 52 clubs, some reconstructed from the various loyalist teams splintered by the schism, were formed.²⁰ Clubs which were founded between 1895 and 1908 in Cheshire, Lancashire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire unions, and still held RFU membership in 1971, total only a dozen. By contrast, in the Kent and Surrey unions at least 18 clubs were formed between 1896 and 1914 which still held Union membership in 1971, including Lloyd's Bank, Midland Bank, National Provincial Bank, Old Dunstonians, Old Elthamians, and United Services in Kent, and Chartered Banks, Harrodians

(Harrod's Department Store), King's College Old Boys, London School of Economics, London University, Old Alleynians, and Old Emanuel in Surrey.²¹ These clubs not only bolstered the metropolitan membership in number, their obvious education/occupation affiliations were middle class.

At the first Annual General Meeting of the Northern Union it was reported that 59 clubs held membership. New clubs included Morecambe, Salford, and Swinton from Lancashire, and Bramley, Castleford Heckmondwike, Holbeck, and Leeds Parish Church from Yorkshire.²² Unlike the new members of the RFU, Northern Union clubs displayed no overt evidence of class exclusiveness, and certainly there were no public school old boys teams in the new union. The rebel clubs had previously been members of the RFU, suggesting that once it was obvious that the NU would survive, cautious clubs were willing to cast their lot in with the "professionals."

By 1899, the number of Yorkshire clubs in the RFU had dwindled enough for a recommendation to be made that the Union committee be reduced in number by dropping one of the two Yorkshire representatives. Rather than risk alienating further the northerners who had remained loyal, such an obvious action was avoided. Instead the Union redefined those eligible for committee representation. The new structure was passed in September 1901 and gave seats to the unions in Cambridge, Cheshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, Devon, Durham, East Midlands, Gloucestershire, Kent, Lancashire, London District, Middlesex,

Midland Counties, Northumberland, Oxford, Surrey, Somerset and Yorkshire (two).²³ The new format gave the north seven votes, but by including London District and the two universities with southern representation, the south controlled seven votes as well. The RFU could safely assume that at least three of the remaining unions would support the south on any divisive issue based on regional differences.

Standish Meacham wrote of sport in the north after 1895 that "rugby union was almost as remote [to the working class] as lacrosse, and not what was wanted at all."²⁴ This was perhaps an exaggeration. "There are still clubs in the North that include an element of artisan players, but the recruiting grounds [for Rugby Union football] are mainly Public Schools and Grammar Schools and it is probably safe to say that in Yorkshire ninety percent of men playing the Rugby Union game are old boys," observed Leonard Tosswill.²⁵ The growing preference for the new union, because it was local, because the quality of play was better, because the rewards and rankings made the game more interesting, or any combination of these, was whittling away at the amateur code in the north.

By 1904-15, 40 Lancashire clubs had either switched allegiance or folded completely. Of the 13 clubs formed between 1893 and 1914, only three were completely new clubs; the others were formed from the remnants of clubs decimated by Northern Unionism.²⁶ The Lancashire county union felt that many of the defections were the result of the parent body's stringent

application of the professional by-laws and in a confidential letter to the RFU stated that clubs not so inclined were being driven to join the NU in order to ensure a regular fixture list. Those clubs of high calibre which did remain loyal embarked on a series of "slaughters" of weak local opponents for want of better teams to play. By 1902, New Brighton FC, once a powerful side could claim a playing membership of only nineteen. Furness suffered from poaching, while the more exclusive Preston Grasshoppers were able to withstand the pressure better. The continuing defections led the Athletic News and Cyclists' Journal to observe that Rugby Union "is a rather neglected form of football.." in Lancashire.²⁷

Tosswill stated that in 1902 only fourteen clubs were playing the amateur code in Yorkshire.²⁸ This may be another exaggeration, but the collapse of the game in the West Riding was so complete that it made such an estimate seem possible. The quality of play declined so dramatically after 1895 that in a given year the county XV seldom won as many matches as it lost, and Ray Manock, secretary of the YRU (1986) observed that representation on the English team almost disappeared. Yorkshire players who remained loyal to the RFU attempted to regroup and continue playing the amateur code in their towns, but teams such as Wakefield were shadows of their predecessors.²⁹ Northern Unionism not only divided clubs, but Yorkshire families. The sons of Charles Mathers played for both the amateur and professional teams in Bramley. Charles jr. toiled for the same

club as his father, while his younger brother joined Bramley Rugby League (Northern Union).³⁰ The split was proving more divisive than could have been anticipated.

In Cumberland, the NU made inroads as well. In 1899, the county had seven professional teams which regularly raided the amateur clubs to such a degree that Highmore Rovers were forced to fold a year after they had won the amateur county championship.³¹ The RFU continued to misunderstand the realities of rugby in the north, when in 1897 it refused to sanction a benefit match for locked out engineers in Cumberland.³² This refusal not only indicated the class bias of the RFU, it could only have served to alienate local rugby men of the working classes. By doing so the RFU inadvertently encouraged support for the competing code in the area.

The intrusion of the NU into Cumberland caused concern in the small neighbouring unions of Durham and Northumberland. In September, 1900, both counties applied to the Union for permission to establish league play in order to combat interest in the new code. Mr. Henzell, President of the Northumberland Rugby Union, warned that if the request was denied, the professional could take over. Former RFU president, William Cail, was unmoved and the committee chose to deny the request, as well as a similar appeal from junior clubs in the Bristol area.³³ Only five years after the split northern clubs were again requesting league structures and the interest had spread to the west. Prior to the split, leagues were seen as a panacea against

Association football; after 1895 they were seen as a means of warding off the NU. There was no likelihood that a major cause of the split would gain sufficient favour with the Union only five years after 1895.

The success of the Leicester Tigers, based on the establishment of a school feeder system, did not go unnoticed by other clubs in the Midlands. Two school masters playing with Coventry introduced the game into day schools in the area in 1899.³⁴ It was not a matter of channeling interest in the game to the lower orders, as Coventry was already a socially diversified rugby community. What it hopefully would accomplish was an early grounding in the skills of the game for local, recruitable, lads. This was what had made the Tigers so powerful and Coventry hoped to copy the success in an area dominated by Association football.

While the game was on the decline in the north, West Country rugby was enjoying comparative boom years. In search of forwards to replace those lost to the split, the RFU discovered the high quality of play in the west. From 1896 to 1905 the area contributed seventy-four positions to the national XV. By contrast, the Midlands earned only twenty two caps in the thirty-one international matches over the ten years.³⁵ Prior to the South African War, English miners, uneasy about their safety, returned from the colony looking for work in the Cornish tin mines. Educated in the game in the colony, these players gave an added working class influence to the game in Cornwall.³⁶ Fan

support was also strong in the west. An estimated eight thousand took in the South West Championship, held in Exeter between Devon and Somerset, in 1897.³⁷

Not all was well in the west however. Hayle RFC, founded in 1877 by E. Hocking of Cambridge University, fell on hard times in 1902 when the local foundry was closed.³⁸ This suggests that many western clubs were community teams, not unlike those in the north with middle class administration and a socially diverse playing membership.

Of greater concern to the Union were problems with Devonport Albion, a large and influential club which asked for and was denied permission to hold a testimonial for a retiring player. The club then chose to openly defy the Union and held the event anyway. The RFU could do no more than suspend the player who was retiring in any case.³⁹ Those old problems associated with the split were beginning to spread.

In the metropolis the game remained strong and assuredly middle class. "The Spy", a West country journalist, complained in 1897 that London dominated southern rugby, a complaint made often by the northern rebel clubs. This domination continued with the formation of the clubs mentioned above, as well as the establishment of the third exile club, London Irish, in 1898.⁴⁰ The Dulwich College Preparatory School's journal, The Globe, asserted that it was the obligation of public school alumni to keep rugby pristine, a sentiment held by many London rugby men.⁴¹ It was this belief that ensured not only London domination of the

game, but middle class domination throughout the country.

Some metropolitan clubs were facing difficulties. London Welsh's inability to attract enough high quality players drew complaints from those exiles supportive of the club. One club member not only expressed his displeasure with those who chose to join other clubs while The Welsh struggled, he gave an indication of what his club thought of the top London teams when he chided his fellow countrymen for joining "one of the Swagger XVs". Blackheath and Richmond were the preferred clubs for these disloyal Welsh players.⁴² The Cornish clubs may have profited from the South African War, but Maidstone (Kent) was forced to suspend play during 1900-1905, because so many local ex-grammar and public school men who made up the team were lost to the conflict.⁴³ These setbacks to individual clubs were not the same potentially disastrous problems which were threatening the existence of the game in the north, nor were they threats to the authority of the RFU that existed in the west. In London there were no clubs demanding league formats, nor holding testimonials, and there were no examples of shamateurism in the London area.

The type of criticism which appeared in the Manchester Guardian on October 1, 1900 increased. The paper claimed that the metropolitan style of play was extremely dull and ponderous. This criticism may have been the result of England's loss of dominance in international play, but the same complaints had existed prior to the split and the decline. Without the northern alternative, the game seemed to have grown even more staid in

London. Henry Grierson, himself a public school old boy, and rugby devotee, suggested that one reason for the staleness of the metropolitan game was that London clubs were "loath to venture outside the metropolis."⁴⁴

In London the game would appear to have merely been experiencing a down turn in fortunes. This would be possible only if the game had been confined to the capital, but the rise of professionalism in the game, both within and external to the RFU, threatened the continuing existence of the amateur code as a national sport. Those who had believed that the split had ended the threats to rugby from professionalism were proven wrong. Play for pay proved to be a greater hydra than anyone could have imagined. So desperate was the situation that the Guardian predicted the possible demise of the Rugby Union game as the national standard for rugby football.⁴⁵

III

It was not only the reality of the Northern Union which was cause for RFU concern after 1895. The consequences of the split within the amateur code were obvious to the astute devotee of the game. The RFU had to be willing to adjust to the unforeseen calamities which would arise out of the split. On the pitch and off it was revealed that northern rugby had been essential to the rise and popularity of the game. While the southern class exclusive clubs had enjoyed the glory of England's unmatched

success in international play, it was the northern working class players who had toiled to achieve a level of play which ensured positive results. "Garden Party" metropolitan clubs could go merrily along, while Lancashire and Yorkshire teams built the game's reputation. Without the northern players, rugby, like the nation as a whole experienced a sense of anxiety due to degeneration. What had once seemed a proud and courageous stance against professionalism, began to appear as a petty and fruitless rearguard action against the inevitable.

The RFU's realization that the problems of northern professionalism were not over after the first band of rebels left the Union, drove it to drastic measures. In 1897, the professional sub-committee ruled that any player who engaged in conversation concerning the possibility of joining the NU was at that moment a professional. This was the ruling in the case of a Mr. Shutters. The Yorkshire union clubs felt that this extreme stance could only compound their problem of keeping high quality players from defecting, as most good players were given offers to transfer. The YRU asked the parent body to reconsider, and declare a player professional only when he actually received money to play. The Union agreed, and ruled instead that on the exchange of money the player forfeited his amateur status.⁴⁶

In the same round of correspondence the Yorkshire clubs asked that the venue for the Annual General Meetings be alternated north and south. Yet another contributing factor to the split arose again shortly after 1895. The Union did not

consider the request.⁴⁷ If not understanding, the RFU remained consistent. What was it that made Yorkshire clubs, Devonport Albion, and the Bristol and Durham unions all feel the parent body would be willing to reverse its decision on major issues paramount to London, public school old boy domination of the game? There was perhaps a feeling that under the strain of the meteoric rise of the NU, the RFU middle class leadership would be willing to compromise, rather than experience even greater discontent and defections. Strict amateurism was however the basis of middle class control of the game.

Standish Meacham has documented the endless monotony and regularity of the late Victorian labourer's life.⁴⁸ Sport and drink were two forms of escape, and working class punters were not about to abandon their clubs for turning pro, especially out of any loyalty to a London dominated middle class RFU. This is what the organizers of the new union had to bank on. Rugby under any code was an integral part of northern working class life. It was possible for the playwright, Colin Welland, to claim that "In south west Lancashire... Rugby league [Northern Union] provides our cultural adrenalin."⁴⁹ The success of Northern Unionism hinged on the support of the northern working class player and fan.

Gate receipts indicate that the faith in local fan support was not misplaced. In the 1896-97 season, the NU challenge cup between Batley (Gallant Youth) and St. Helen's drew an estimated 14,000 to Headingley and earned a gate of £620. The following

year 27,941 watched Batley defeat Bradford. The gate was £1,506.⁵⁰ This type of support confirmed the stability of the rebel union. In London rugby football was a function of class, but in the north it was more often a function of community. As a result, local support for the break away union remained strong.

The strength of Northern Unionism, and the unconditional community support for teams, brought increasing numbers to the professional game. The RFU Minute Book indicates that by April 23, 1896, Crompton, Hornby, Heckmondwike, and St. Helen's Recreation had left the Union. The 1897 Northern Union AGM reported that Altricham, Barrow, Barton, Birkenhead Wanderers, Fleetwood, Millom, Radcliff, and Ulverton would be competing in the Lancashire (NU) Challenge Cup. In the same year the number of defectors had risen to eighty. By 1900, Headingley was the only RFU club playing in Leeds, Otley turned professional; and a year earlier Sowerby Bridge and Shipley had switched to the NU. By 1903, thirty-six clubs competed in Yorkshire's top two divisions of the Northern Union.⁵¹

The effects of the new union were not confined to Cheshire, Lancashire and the West Riding. W.J. Lias complained that in 1897 the Northern Union was "working havoc among Welsh and English [RFU] clubs."⁵² Beyond the centre of Northern Unionism, Cumberland had become a "hot bed" of professionalism, while in Durham and Northumberland only South Shields and Wallsend had professional XVs. The concern of these two unions was not mass club defections, but individual player transfers to

professionalism.⁵³ The fact that Durham and Northumberland clubs remained loyal to the RFU while individuals did not suggests that clubs in these counties were under the influence of those middle class administrators supportive of the RFU, while working class players on the clubs were not, and sought the benefits offered by professionalism.

London rugby was never subjected to raids by NU recruiters, except on one rare occasion. Two young men from the Southwark Boys Home were lured north to play professionally.⁵⁴ This was possible only because of the lads' social status. Almost all London clubs were sufficiently middle class in their playing membership as to not be induced to turn professional. More than ever RFU devotees in the metropolis could be assumed to be middle class, although not necessarily public school men.

In 1899 there were disturbing rumours that NU recruiters were about to invade Wales with offers of "fabulous sums" to the country's top players. While it is impossible to gauge precisely how successful the endeavour was, it is interesting to note that in the following year's NU Challenge Cup between Swinton and Salford Welsh names such as Davies, Evans, Griffith, Jones, Lewis, Morgan, and Williams appeared on both clubs' playing roster. In 1903, Yorkshire Sports felt obligated to offer its readers a lengthy explanation of the Welsh passing style, as so many Welsh players were joining NU clubs.⁵⁵ Welsh players, like those in the north, were most often working class and were seldom adverse to turning their sporting skills into financial

opportunities. Had shamateurism not existed in Wales, the ravishes of Northern Unionism could have been even worse.

There is limited information concerning the occupations of those players who did turn professional after 1895, but there is enough to suggest that most were likely to be from the category of the labour aristocracy, or lower middle class. Of the seventeen known occupations of ex-internationals who turned professional there were ten who were hotel managers or licensees, presumably as a result of some agreement with club management. Other occupations included assistant manager of a music hall, a civic employee in Bradford, a farm labourer, a collier, two engineer's labourers, a miner, a tobacconist, a carpenter, a fitter, and a general labourer. William McCutcheon, the Oldham shamateur prior to 1895, was employed by the NU as a referee.⁵⁶ The Athletic News and Cyclists' Journal mocked the idea that professional rugby players were forced by the NU to hold a full time job, and at the same time managed to take a well placed shot at the large number of Welsh players in the NU.

Swinton player: "What are you at Llewellyn Jones?"

Salford player: "I have got a job keeping flies of[f] newly painted pubs...".⁵⁷

In an effort to avoid inevitable criticism from the public, the NU discouraged players and clubs administrators from finding employment for themselves and players in pubs, billiard parlours, or as bookie runners.⁵⁸

As many RFU men had predicted, the NU moved toward full

professionalism very quickly. Open payments, not compensation for lost time, became a reality in 1898-99, but players were still required to have fulltime employment. Northern Union clubs paid its players between 30s. and £4 weekly, which were better wages than were earned by professional soccer players. This was the result of top NU clubs ignoring ceilings placed on "expenses". Rather than face an open confrontation, the NU executive grudgingly accepted direct pay for play as a fait accompli.⁵⁹

The conduct of the Northern Union indicates just how middle class the organization was. Wray Vamplew argued that "Power relationships in commercialized sport were skewed against the professional", "any insistence on players' rights was not tolerated."⁶⁰ The few examples of player/worker actions for higher wages were met with stiff opposition. Castleford players, assuming they were in a strong bargaining position, demanded larger payments for their cup tie match with Bramley. If their request was not met, they threatened to withhold their services. The players were suspended, and after they were reinstated only one had his contract renewed. In 1904, Wigan forwards initiated "strike" action over the working clause in the NU constitution. Players were not, they asserted, being placed in jobs related to their training.⁶¹ This difficulty seems to have been resolved without open hostility, but both these actions indicate a typical owner/employee relationship rather than any cooperation in a united cause. Rugby football was finding, as were other sports,

that with professionalism came the proletarianization of the player.

The internal difficulties of the NU did not prevent it from dwarfing the Rugby Union game in Lancashire and Yorkshire. What concerned the punters was the product on the field. Top players from the area and from beyond were hired to ensure that the product would be of the highest quality. Gate receipts were paramount to the entrepreneur/club administrator. Rugby under the NU evolved quickly into a business. It provided the fans with escape, pleasure, local pride, and relaxation in watching good rugby. By 1902, the NU was so successful in northern industrial towns that the RFU game seemed a faded anachronism. (see Table I)

TABLE I

GAMES OF IMPORTANCE (to Lancashire and Yorkshire)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NU</u>	<u>RFU</u>	<u>FA</u>
February 15, 1902	26	8	25
February 22, 1902	27	5	28
September 27, 1902	43	11*	--
January 03, 1903	54	6	78*

*(This includes games played outside the area, including international matches and FA cup tie matches throughout England.)⁶²

IV

It was not only the existence of a rival union which was a

problem for the RFU. As a result of the existence of the Northern Union the amateur body found itself facing internal difficulties which the middle class assuredly believed would have been cured with the split.

The first major internal problem for the RFU and international rugby centered around A.J. Gould, Newport halfback, who divided his time between Wales and London, playing for Blackheath and Newport, as well as London Welsh. He was to rugby football what W.G. Grace was to cricket: the first superstar of his game. David Smith says of him, Gould was "over endowed...with charm and good-looks that put his face on match covers, his caricatured form into countless cartoons, saw his progress down the street followed by men and boys alike, and his entire career turned into a facsimile of a movie star." Gould was, until 1980, the most capped Welsh player of all time.⁶³ In honour of his contribution to rugby, Newport organized a testimonial for him and asked the RFU to take part.

The RFU response could not have pleased the Newport club. In January, 1896, the Union announced it would not take part in any such affair and if the testimonial did proceed and Gould profited from it he would be declared a professional. Undaunted, Newport players and club members honoured their hero with a new house. The RFU, true to their word, ruled that a house was "tantamount to giving him a monetary testimonial." Gould was deemed a professional and was refused the right to compete against England. Newport resigned from the RFU on February 26,

1897. Even with the support of two future presidents, Fox and Hill, the RFU committee denied a request to give Gould a special dispensation. The affair spread to the International Rugby Board, and Wales withdrew from it, forfeiting its matches with Scotland and Ireland in 1897. Finally the issue was raised at the September, 1897 RFU General Meeting, and Gould was given a dispensation by the Union membership "by a large majority." In spite of this, a year later the Union committee advised the Racing Club of France RFC it would be unwise to host a Welsh side which included Gould for fear of becoming tainted.⁶⁴

Gould retired from international play making the solution to the international problem easier to resolve. The issue of testimonials continued to plague RFU, and the Gould affair proved how absurd the situation could become. The RFU's petty attitude in the Gould case was potentially extremely dangerous. Had Gould chosen to join the NU over the issue he would have been an inspiration to other younger Welsh players to the degree that they could seriously have threatened the existence of amateur rugby in Wales. The RFU did not consider this in its dealings with Newport and the Welsh union. If nothing else, the rigidity of the RFU in the whole matter made it look extremely foolish.

Shamateurism was not eradicated after the foundation of an alternative union. Although the west country appears to have been the area where it was most common, incidents also arose in the north and Midlands. The similarity of rugby in the west and in the rebel north may have been one reason why west country

clubs were inclined toward the same interest in shamateurism. While there were more class exclusive clubs in the west, many too were working class clubs with middle class administrations. After Devonport Albion was cleared of luring Welsh players, the RFU demanded that the club be more accurate in its bookkeeping concerning transfers. Welsh clubs were not satisfied with the RFU findings and cancelled fixtures with Albion in 1897. In 1898 Bristol convinced Gould to play with the club despite his tainted status. In 1899, Torquay was suspended by the Cornwall union for paying players. In 1901 it was Bath which came under RFU scrutiny after it was learned that a Mr. Reddick was paid expenses while injured.⁶⁵

In 1903, Yorkshire Sports reported that six Hull players had been members of NU clubs. The Union saw fit to suspend the players, but the club escaped any punishment. The newspaper asked how a club in the heart of the NU could not have known the status of their players. In conclusion, it sarcastically declared the witch hunt for shamateurs over, judging from the clemency extended to Hull.⁶⁶ The RFU ruled that any club "knowingly" using a professional was guilty of the same offense. It was almost impossible to prove knowledge and in the case of Hull it appears that the Union was not willing to dig too deep to prosecute the club. Perhaps it could ill afford to alienate any more good Yorkshire clubs.

Further to the north, in 1905, shamateurism came to light as well. The RFU demanded that both the Yorkshire and Durham unions

suspend W.J. Wilson for professionalism. Wilson had been playing as an amateur in both counties without either being aware or admitting that he was receiving sub rosa payments.⁶⁷

A year earlier, in 1904, the Union instructed the Midlands County Union to investigate accusations that the Handsworth FC (Birmingham) was using a professional player. It transpired that the club had conspired to play A.W. Robinson under an assumed name. Found guilty, the club was fined £ 5 for its transgressions. The fine was another indication that the RFU was not about to levy harsh punishments on clubs which were willing to break the professional by-laws.⁶⁸

The violence and bias which had plagued rugby football during the 1880s had been attributed to the "warped sporting instincts" of northern working class players. If this was correct, after 1895 such actions should have declined considerably. A correspondent to the Manchester Guardian was dismayed when a Liverpool club appointed one of its own members as a referee. Not long before 1904 when the incident occurred, referees were always appointed by the home club without any suggestion of favouritism. Prior to that, in the 1870s, referees had not even been considered necessary in a gentlemen's game. In 1904 however neutral officials were a part of everyday play, leading the reporter in question to conclude that "a club has an awful bally cheek to get one of their own to referee."⁶⁹

Violence in rugby had been considered a consequence of the introduction of the game to the lower orders, especially their

habit of abusing the obstruction laws in the 1880s. The split may have removed a portion of those players accused of extreme violence, but the problem continued. In 1899 the endemic violence in rugby in the west became so disturbing that the four western county unions took a united measure to curb it. They issued a circular to all teams stating that they must end the unruly and dangerous play, or face summary justice. In 1904, in Coventry, J.F. Byrne of Moseley RFC began to exchange insults with the crowd. Fist fights began in the stands and spread to the pitch. The RFU and the Midlands County Union suspended the players involved, and Coventry was fined £15 for the conduct of its supporters. The Union offered Coventry some advice: raise the gate admission to 6d. per person to keep the rabble from the park.⁷⁰ The middle class Union naturally assumed that working class spectators were responsible for the disturbance.

V

The most obvious evidence of the decline of English rugby after 1895 was its poor showing on the international level. Deprived of innovative and talented working class northern players, the English XV were unable to compete on even terms with Ireland, Scotland or Wales. The natural process of decline and advancement of teams competing could explain part of the collapse of the English team, but this fails to account for such a rapid and assured demise. It is obvious from the figures below that English supremacy in international rugby ended at precisely the

same time that the Northern Union siphoned off the country's top working class players.

TABLE 2

THE RECORD OF THE ENGLISH XV, 1871-1905

DATES	WINS	DRAWS	LOSSES
1871-76	5	2	1
1877-85	15	3	2
1886-90	5	3	2
1891-95	9	0	6
1896-1900	4	2	9
1900-05	3	1	12

Between 1891 and 1895 the metropolitan and area clubs contributed 84 caps to the English team, while the north produced 106 caps. The contribution of northern clubs between 1896 and 1900 remained high at 107 caps, but as more and more clubs switched allegiance, the number of northern caps plummeted to only 62 between 1901 and 1905. In the same period, the metropolitan area contributed 89 caps and the west country 53 caps as compared with the Midland's 21. Bristol and Devonport Albion won 34 of the 53 caps for the west between 1901 and 1905.

Previously unheralded clubs such as Aspatria, Birkenhead Park, Castleford, Heckmondwike, Percy Park, Rockcliff, Sowerby Bridge, and West Hartlepool, became major northern contributors to the national XV after 1895. Castleford, Heckmondwike, and

Sowerby Bridge eventually turned professional. Once powerful Manchester and Liverpool provided the English side with a meagre six caps between 1896 and 1905. Cambridge, Oxford, Blackheath and Richmond remained the London and area's largest contributors to the national side in the same period. The Harlequins, the rising star in English rugby by 1905, won seven caps in the same period.⁷¹

TABLE 3

SOME ENGLISH INTERNATIONALS WHO TURNED PROFESSIONAL UP TO 1905⁷²

NAME	RFU CLUB	NU CLUB	CAPS	YR OF LAST CAP
T. Fletcher	Seaton	----	1	1897
J. Jewitt	H'pod Rovers	Broughton	1	1902
E. Knowles	Millom	Millom	2	1897
R. Lockwood	Dewsbury	W. Trinity	14	1894
G. Marsden	Morley	----	3	1900
S. Morfitt	Durham	Hull-Kingston	6	1896
H. Myers	Keighley	Keighley	1	1898
J. Rhodes	Castleford	Hull-Kingston	3	1896
H. Speed	Castleford	----	4	1896
A. Starks	Castleford	Hull-Kingston	2	1896
J. Valentine	Swinton	----	4	1896
H. Varley	Liversedge	Oldham	1	1892
W. Walton	Castleford	W. Trinity	1	1894
H. Ward	Bradford	----	1	1895
J. Ward	Castleford	Bradford	3	1896
W. Whiteley	Bramley	St. Helen's	1	1896

This small sampling of English internationals who, even after attaining national recognition playing the amateur code, joined the Northern Union, shows how great was their loss to the English XV. Dickie Lockwood had represented his country fourteen times and was the only working class captain of the squad. Other players, such as Hartlepool blacksmith Tom Hogarth, found the dribbling code more to their liking and joined the Football Association as professionals.⁷³ In numbers of clubs, in the number of players, but more importantly, in the quality of athletes, the RFU suffered more than they could have imagined from the initial split.

It was a commonly held belief that professionalism siphoned off England's best players and this was the only cause of the national team's demise. Sportsman asked its readers in 1905 how long England could continue to blame its misfortunes on the split.⁷⁴ A decade of recovery time had produced no improvement to the national team. While it struggled, Wales, a team not considered worthy of a regular international fixture with England twenty years earlier, dominated rugby at the international level. Wales too had been hurt by the Northern Union, although not to the same degree, but continued to produce winning XVs. J.E. Raphael was led to conclude that England's "dark period" was due as much to the misapplication of talent as it was to the loss of a large pool of potential players.⁷⁵

It was not only the raw talent of the northern working class

player which made the game so successful in Lancashire and Yorkshire. It was also their willingness and ability to adapt and experiment. Although various styles of back play which had been developed outside the metropolis had been tried, they were considered unacceptable by London and public school educated players. In the north and the west, on the other hand, Welsh tactics and players were incorporated into the game. Arthur Budd concluded in 1899-1900, that experiments with the three three quarter back system had proven a failure.⁷⁶ In spite of this claim, Wales had defeated England four of the preceding six years using the failed system. Raphael claimed that England's failure to adapt was due to its inability to comprehend the goals and objectives of the Welsh system which created open spaces for fleet backs by employing speed and deception.⁷⁷ Deception was contrary to the public school sporting ethos, which emphasised straight forward courage. Even after the split, England continued to employ tired and ineffective forward dominated shoving matches. Budd blamed England's demise on the poor quality of its forwards, rather than on the inability to understand the passing game.⁷⁸

By contrast, in the north before 1895, clubs were not only supplying the powerful forwards which ensured English victories, they were experimenting with Welsh passing tactics, and bringing Welsh players to England. Such players as the James brothers and W. McCutcheon brought not only their skills, but new strategies to the north.

James Mangan has concluded that public school life discouraged imagination, and emphasised conservatism and conformity.⁷⁹ This was evident in the public school old boys' approach to their game. London rugby continued to be for the most part a Garden Party affair, and yet Budd and other RFU executives, as well as the sporting public, expected the English XV to be the standard by which the game could be measured. The Manchester Guardian, commenting on post-1895 County Cup matches wrote that "There [in London] they take football much less seriously than we do in the north."⁸⁰ If, as the Westminster Review had claimed, England had grown old and tired, so too had London rugby. The game had been sapped of its most talented and innovative players in the north, and rugby fell back into the hands of conservative middle class players. The result on the international level was obvious: nine defeats in fifteen games between 1895 and 1900, and a dozen more in sixteen up to 1905.

The boring and stilted style of London rugby was also taking its toll on the London Welsh. Although they did play fellow countrymen on a regular basis, the majority of their fixtures were with London clubs. The exiles had earned seven caps between 1885 and 1890, four between 1891 and 1895, two from 1896 to 1900, and none from 1900 to 1914. This was in spite of the fact that the club did not always attract the best Welsh players living in the metropolis. While playing with the exiles, Hop Maddock was ignored by Welsh selectors. Upon leaving the London Welsh after six seasons, Maddock was selected to the Welsh national team in

1906 and won six caps in the next four years. Stephen Jones has attributed the decline in the selection of London Welsh players to the Welsh XV to the lack of technical advancement in playing styles being developed in Wales.⁸¹

In county rugby, Durham profited from the absence of the top Yorkshire clubs and players. Following the split Durham's county XV, playing a traditional style of rugby, won the Northern Group final eleven times between 1896 and 1914.⁸² Northern county rugby had been completely dominated by Yorkshire from its inception until 1895. Durham, a small union, had no success at all until the split.

In Yorkshire the split had resulted in scores and matches that would have been unthinkable prior to 1895. Wakefield Trinity had been a perennial power in the Yorkshire Rugby Union football. It had contributed three internationals and played regularly for the Yorkshire County Cup. In 1902, a new Wakefield Rugby Union team, made up of amateurs, was administered a crushing defeat by Old Dewsbriars, 15-0.⁸³ This result, and even the fixture itself, would not have been conceivable prior to the split. If local rugby clubs were the focus of community pride and cohesion, the Wakefield club brought shame to the town. Wakefield, however, had the Trinity of the NU, a new focus of pride. The defeat of the Rugby Union team by an unheard of pretentious old boys team mattered very little to the locals.

Not all was stale in London rugby. In 1902 a young, frail lawyer from Rugby school and Oxford joined the Harlequins.

Adrian Stoop should have been another middle class metropolitan who was too small to play rugby at a very competitive level, but he was blessed with unique qualities: great leadership, talent on the pitch, and complete frustration with the English style of rugby. He joined a club which was unable to achieve the prestige of Blackheath and Richmond, providing him with an opportunity to experiment with aspects of the game which may have been suppressed in a top club. In 1904, Stoop played for the Oxford XV against Cambridge with another player of great skill, Raphael who was also frustrated with forward style rugby. Both players, as backs, were enamored with the Welsh passing game. It was Stoop who transformed his club team into a scientific passing machine, due to his determination. His contribution to English rugby came not as a player, but as an innovator. The acquisition of Stoop did not immediately make the Quins a success. Between 1902 and 1905 the club also attracted a number of young backs who formed the nucleus of the Stoop system: Stoop himself, his brother Fred, H.J. Sibree who joined from the defunct Kensington club, and J. Birkett who had arrived from Bristol. What made these players great was their faith in Stoop to transform London rugby from a Victorian Garden Party into a competitive, entertaining, running and passing oriented game. H.B.T. Wakelam credits the Welsh and the New Zealand All Blacks for Stoop's inspiration.⁸⁴ His frailness and size perhaps set him in search of a style of play more suited to himself than the forward style of English play. The results of his desire to change English

rugby did not come until after 1905.

V

Welsh rugby was built around the quick passing style, a willingness to attack from anywhere on the field, a well drilled team concept, and deceptions designed to free the winger. The English played a powerful forward game. In 1905 the New Zealand All Blacks introduced a style of rugby into England that featured the best aspects of both styles, as well as "new" concepts in the linking of backs and forwards.

In September, 1905, the colonials arrived in Devon to play the first of thirty-two matches in the British Isles. Their presence produced little fanfare, and no one could have predicted that by the end of the tour the All Blacks would have contributed to demands for the alteration of English rugby on the pitch. Their first game against the powerful Devon county XV produced a shocking result, 55-4 for the visitors. The All Blacks then proceeded to win all but their final match against Wales. Not only was their success incredible, their victories were decisive.

Bedford 41-0	Ireland 15-0
Blackheath 32-0	Leicester 28-0
Bristol 41-0	Middlesex 34-0
Cambridge 14-0	Midlands County 21-5
Cardiff 10-8	Munster 33-0
Cheltenham 18-0	Newport 6-3
Cheshire 34-0	Northumberland 31-0
Cornwall 41-0	Oxford 47-0
Devon 55-4	Richmond 17-0
D'port Albion 21-3	Scotland 12-7
Durham 16-3	Somerset 23-0
England 15-0	Surrey 11-0
France 38-0	Swansea 4-3
Glamorgan 9-0	Wales 0-3
Glouster 44-0	West of Scotland 22-0
Hartlepool XV 63-0	Yorkshire 40-0

The New Zealanders (27 in all) scored 830 points to the British opponents 39. Within a month of their arrival attendance soared as punters came to witness their style and flair. It was only the Welsh sides which offered any opposition. The tour produced some probing questions. How could these colonials be so superior? What was wrong with English rugby?⁸⁵

The colonials were fit and powerful men. They trained diligently at the basic skills of the game, something foreign to the English middle class player. Among their innovations was the specialization of forward positions, each having a well defined purpose both in a set scrum and in the open field. This

specialization could only be achieved through long hours of training as a team, in the same way that Welsh passing could only be perfected through practice. The Manchester Guardian observed that the All Blacks were a "team working together in one mind."⁸⁶ David Gallaher, the All Blacks captain, explained that the New Zealanders trained a minimum of two nights a week and to be dropped from a squad due to poor fitness was a disgrace.⁸⁷

Gallaher's revealing account of the tour, The Complete Rugby Footballer, was extremely critical of the English game. Not only were the hosts unfit, they were unimaginative and ineffective. Bluff, asserted Gallaher, was essential for the 5/8 (back position), but was absent in the play of the English backs. English scrums packed inefficiently, while the New Zealanders achieved greater push using less men through scientific binding and pushing techniques. Gallaher asserted that his forwards played an aggressive role by linking with the backs in passing combinations, but the English forwards played defensively, and seldom handled the ball in the open field. Only Durham was singled out as a worthy opponent of all the English sides the visitors played.⁸⁸

The particular strategy which proved especially successful for the colonials, was the use of a "wing forward". This was not the same position as it is today, but rather an extra scrum half used to obstruct and disrupt the opposition when they were in possession of the ball. By positioning himself between the scrum half and the pack, the New Zealand wing forward could easily

disrupt the ball carrier, impede, and when the All Blacks had the ball, protect his own scrum half from harassment, as well as act as a link between forwards and backs.⁸⁹ To the English this was clearly unsportsmanlike, and an insult to the Laws of the Game.

The wing forward attracted great criticism from the embarrassed and disgruntled rugby fraternity in England. E.W. Dillon (English international) called the whole concept a farce, and English captain, V.H. Cartwright stated that the use of a wing forward was nothing less than "cheating".⁹⁰ The Times called the visiting forwards' style akin to "India rubber idiots on a spree."⁹¹ Writing over half a century later, retired English captain Roger Utley (23 caps) observed that "like any other endangered species they [the RFU mainstream] will lash out at anything which threatens its survival...".⁹² The wing forward and the success of the visitors was a threat to the survival of the game as it was played in England, especially since there were influential converts to the New Zealand style: Tosswill, for example, demanded that England adopt the colonial innovations.⁹³ Adrian Stoop played against Gallaher in 1905, and later attempted to incorporate much of what he had learned into the Harlequins' style of play.

The use of the wing forward ironically was not an original New Zealand idea, but an English ploy. According to E.B. Osborn the Maoris had learned the use of obstruction while playing in England in the 1880s from Yorkshire and Lancashire clubs.⁹⁴ Obstruction was legislated out of rugby in England prior to 1895,

but it was refined and perfected by the colonials as an exciting element of the game. The NU was less concerned with the spirit of the game and tended to allow limited obstruction, and of course in North America it became a unique feature of grid-iron football.

For rugby to advance, training was essential, as the NU, the Welsh and the colonials knew. It took the amateur English player considerably longer to realize that fact, but the All Blacks tour confirmed the need for team training. Both Dillon and Tosswill called for English clubs to introduce a training regime for their players.⁹⁵ Stoop realized that any change to the way backs played could only be accomplished through increased fitness and a dedication to training. J.E. Raphael's observation that England's problems stemmed from a misapplication of talent, not the lack of it, would appear to be correct. The talent of English players needed to be directed toward more innovative tactics. To achieve this, training was essential.

The thought of such a thing was unacceptable to more than a few. H. Alexander (Uppingham College, Oxford, Birkenhead Park, and Richmond), an assistant school master, expressed an opinion common to the amateur, Victorian, middle class, public school athlete. "We play the game, I take it, for our own amusement, and have no desire to be confused with those who do not; we can get a great deal of pleasure and profit, physical and mental, out of our football, but we are not about to surrender to it a place in our lives for which it was not intended."⁹⁶ The dedication to

training and the mysteries of financing the tour brought accusations of veiled professionalism against the All Blacks, but these were nothing more than excuses for the old and tired style of English rugby.⁹⁷

Underlying the entire tour was the notion of urban degeneracy. Both Gallaher and Richard Seddon the New Zealand Premier, credited at least part of the All Blacks' success to the vibrance of colonial life.⁹⁸ As with the South African War, the All Blacks tour resulted in a small, unsophisticated colony humiliating powerful England, whose reputation was predicated upon an outdated adherence to the belief in middle class Victorian superiority. The physical superiority of the All Blacks, according to Gallaher, was due to the demands of colonial living, while English players lived a sedentary lifestyle.⁹⁹ This was the lifestyle of an urban middle class: from whose ranks the English players had come.

It was only the last game of the tour in which the colonials were defeated, 3-0 by the Welsh national side, on a disputed try. This victory did nothing to save the tattered reputation of the English teams, since the winners were another group of rugby enthusiasts who had little dedication to the underlying middle class Victorian principles which dictated the conservatism of English rugby. The end of the All Blacks' tour marked the low point of rugby's bleak years. The process of rescuing rugby through incorporating new tactics was a slow one, but it was imperative if England was to survive as a rugby nation.

VI

What had developed between 1895 and 1905 was a conflicting desire to keep rugby a Victorian middle class pastime and at the same time retain England's supremacy on the pitch. This was made more difficult with the bifurcation of the game in the north. The conservative nature of amateur rugby resisted change in a manner which retarded the game's development, especially with the loss of Yorkshire and Lancashire players. As debilitating as the split proved to be, it was not the only reason for England's demise. There was no united or concerted effort to develop the game beyond what it had been at Victorian public schools, while the NU, the Welsh and the All Blacks were modifying the game to meet their styles and needs. This contributed to the flagging fortunes of the once powerful English XV. Had the RFU and the amateur enthusiasts accepted this decline, they may have been content to play the game as a strictly middle class Saturday outing. Too many years as the measure of greatness on the pitch and in society as a whole made this unacceptable to the middle class.

In the broader context, the middle class was faced with demands to adjust to the post-Victorian world, or be left behind. The middle class RFU was faced with the same option. Unable and unwilling to respond, the English XV, the most obvious manifestation of rugby to the general public, faltered. Perhaps because in other areas of life the Victorians were forced to adjust, they became recalcitrant in their leisure, especially

when pressured by the working class, crass entrepreneurialism, and the Welsh and the colonials. Whatever the reason, to borrow from Samuel Hynes, "the Old responded with arthritic resistance".

Other sports ceased to have been merely games and had become businesses, through gate receipts and professionalism. Rugby had resisted this trend and was suffering the consequences in terms of support and playing membership. Professional sport, as asserted above, was dependent upon widespread community loyalties, more so than amateur sport. Therefore only in large urban areas could amateur rugby be guaranteed survival under pristine conditions. Nowhere else were there high quality players in sufficient numbers, earning enough money and educated in the public school ethos to sustain the game at a top level. This explains why, even after 1895, the west country and the loyal north continued shamateurism at the club level. With financially rewarding alternatives, those not schooled in the amateur ethos had an alluring outlet for their talents: Northern Unionism, Association football, and even cricket. To retain as strict a code of amateurism as the RFU demanded, the quality of the game had to suffer.

This sacrifice, conscious or not, came about at the same time as the Victorian middle class as a whole was experiencing widespread criticism. The officer class had failed in South Africa; industrialists had lost ground to Germans and Americans; colonialism was under attack from "little Englanders"; eugenicists were predicting racial decline; and neither major

political party seemed able to incorporate the working class and exploit its numerical strength. To compound matters, during England's Golden Age of Sport, the most uniquely middle class game appeared on the verge of collapse. For those who championed the cause of the working man, the NU served as a manifestation of working class assertiveness. For those given to reform, the public school under-pinnings of rugby seemed a logical area of attack. To the preachers of national degeneracy and Social Darwinism, the success of the All Blacks was added proof of the ravishes of urban life. Critics of the failed military could draw on the examples of the officer class in South Africa and on the pitch as Charles Bright had done. Had not sports been so much a part of everyday life, these connections would not have been so damning, but sports and leisure was all-pervasive in Edwardian England.

Samuel Hynes and Donald Read have both emphasized that the period was highlighted by an apparent contradictory social sense of loss by some and anticipation of greatness by others. If rugby was to survive, the brash and insolent New of which Hynes writes, needed to take some control. No time was better suited for the new to assert itself than following the New Zealanders' tour and there seemed to be no better play suited to reform the game than Adrian Stoop. The resurgence of rugby football up to 1914 was neither a capitulation to the New, or a revival of the Old. It was the compromise between the commitment to amateurism and the demands for success. Stoop and the young Turks could

not, nor were they inclined to, take over the RFU as administrative innovators but they did alter those things about playing the game which had insured, over and above the loss of the northern stars, that England would falter.

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CHAPTER VI

ENGLAND'S RESURGENCE: 1910-1914

The historical process which led to the breakdown of Victorianism had seemed, by the late Edwardian period, to have swept aside "the old." "By the Edwardian period", Stedman Jones has written, "it had become inescapably clear that middle class evangelism had failed to recreate a working class in its own image."¹ The reality of this was the election of fifty Labour MPs in 1906, and a series of debilitating labour actions beginning in 1910 with the Newcastle rail strike and the Welsh miners' strike. These examples of labour discontent were so debilitating that a combined effort of all political parties was required to re-establish stability. In 1912, there were 40,890 working days lost to strikes and lock outs. In the following year there were 1,459 work related stoppages.² Peter Bailey has shown that attempts to introduce rational recreation into the working class from above resulted in the masses adopting and modifying it to suit their own unique circumstances.³

Heightened class antagonisms alone, however, were not the only major deviation from Victorianism. Church attendance dropped dramatically in this period, and according to Stephen Yeo this was due in large measure to the rise of secular and commercial alternatives to church sponsored voluntary organizations.⁴ Morality in general had grown less rigid than it had been prior to the turn of the century. This was evident in the widespread middle class support for Oscar Wilde, and the

posthumous interest in the erotic art of Aubrey Beardsley, as well as radical shifts in fashion and courting practices. Women's issues now centred around the struggle to secure the vote. Edward VII came to symbolize much of the demise of repressive morality, and was immensely popular for it.⁵

It is difficult to judge whether England chose, or was forced, to abandon its "splendid isolation". Germany had come to pose a threat not only to English industry, but to European diplomacy. European culture made inroads into insular England with a widespread interest in Russian novels, French philosophies and German educational practices.⁶ The exchange of culture can be seen in France's adoption of rugby to the degree that England and France played its first international in 1906. Even far off Argentina had come to find the handling game to its liking in this period.

Both Robert Ensor and Donald Read have chosen to highlight the optimism and liberalism of Edwardian England as it appeared to surrender to "the new". Samuel Hynes has argued more judiciously that accompanying the breakdown of Victorianism were increased reactionary impulses.⁷ E.B. Iwan-Muller claimed that England, fearing the inevitable ravages of Social Darwinism, was striving for mediocrity as a nation. Socially, physically and politically, he observed the once great nation was now pandering to the dictates of the masses at the expense of those with superior ability.⁸ The labour unrest of the period was often met with united resistance from employers determined to limit

improved working conditions.

Rugby and the RFU were also experiencing radical modifications, and the responses to them were as varied as those which were common throughout society. With the alterations in society the conservative Union's struggle with opposing forces within the game was very much a part of the wider historical process of the breakdown of Victorianism. By the suspension of play in 1914, rugby had changed radically on the pitch from what it had been prior to the 1905 All Blacks' tour. In its attitudes toward the values and ideals upon which the sport had functioned since 1871, the Union remained recalcitrant. For those inclined toward a superficial analysis of the game's history, it would appear that by 1914 the game had surrendered to "the new". Beneath the surface, in the board room, in the locker room, and more importantly in the minds of the London middle class, rugby remained fundamentally unaffected by social changes which reached as far back as the foundation of the Rugby Football Union itself.

II

From 1906 to 1914 the RFU still faced a number of the same problems which had plagued it for years. Shamateurism continued unabated, but was now more common to the West Country, the Midlands, and the extreme north. Violence and unacceptable behavior remained a nagging difficulty. The challenges of the Northern Union cut deeply into club and playing memberships outside the metropolis, although there was a small upswing in Union membership after 1906. The grudging acceptance of new

playing styles and tactics slowly brought the national XV back into favour with the fans. Middle class domination of the game tightened, rather than relaxed in this time of change, but the inherent conflicts between the metropolis and the provinces were not resolved by 1914. Colonial sides continued the domination over England established by the All Blacks in 1905. England continued to find Wales an especially antagonistic opponent. After 1906, crack provincial clubs were exposed as willing participants in Shamateurism and, as a consequence the Union experienced the resignation of its president. The Union presidency continued to be unassailably middle class and strongly supportive of the London consensus. C. Arnold Crane followed G. Rowland Hill, as the nineteenth president. Crane proved to be the most controversial of the Union's top officers. As well as overseeing the purchase of Twickenham as the permanent site of the RFU headquarters and English international matches, he resigned over the professional sub-committee decision to clear the Leicester Tigers of practicing shamateurism. Crane was followed by Thomas Carter Pring, a public school man, and member of Blackheath, Exeter, and Devonshire. In 1911, A.M. Crook, a founding member of the Lancashire County XV, followed Pring. Arthur Hartley of Castleford proved to be typical of northern presidents. He was an architect who had served as the YRU president. He was well educated, politically active, and fiercely loyal during the split of 1895.⁹

The Union gave every indication that it was becoming

increasingly class exclusive between 1906 and 1914. It continued to accept members who were willing to adhere to its dictates, but showed a distinct preference for those who would assure the preservation of the "spirit of the game." In 1906 the RFU committee sent letters to all those public schools which played soccer, encouraging them to adopt the handling code. They stated that rugby at its best was played by Public School men, and that the game offered a close and lasting social relationship beyond school with all others of their own class.¹⁰ This appeal was in no way subtle. There was the suggestion that the Association game outside the public schools was not a middle class pastime. In order to ensure the perpetuation of the game as a middle class institution it was essential that rugby was the sporting preference of all public schools. The more widespread the game was at the public school level, the certain it was to remain conservative and as class-exclusive as possible. No similar letters were sent to government supported day schools encouraging their support for amateur rugby.

Another decision, made in 1907, solidified London's domination at the committee level, and confirmed the decline in the amateur code in Yorkshire. At the May 30 general meeting, committee membership was readjusted by taking one of the Yorkshire seats and transferring it to Middlesex.¹¹ This decision reflected the continuing growth of London rugby, while the north continued to struggle. Ixion claimed that a northern visitor to the metropolis wished to see a boat race, "and

intended to visit Richmond to see what manner of thing this Rugby game was."¹² This suggests that knowledge and interest in rugby in the north was not as pervasive as it once had been.

In London, the game prospered and interest was high among the middle class. In 1906, Bystander featured a series of cartoons titled "The Pre-Occupation of Mr. John Bull". While making his way about the metropolis, Bull encountered various social problems, including unemployment, the Chinese question, police corruption, the London County Council Education Bill, and Suffragettes. Bull was oblivious to these concerns because of the impending international matches. The captions read: Education Bill? Who's he? What's His surname? can he partner Stoop?"

"Chinese are no use to me. What I want is four Englishmen like Kenneth McLeod". (Scottish international)

To a robust woman demonstrating for the franchise: "I was wondering...you haven't a brother or two, I suppose, with your natural aptitude for scrummaging."¹³

The post-1905 growth in RFU membership was concentrated primarily in the south. In 1907 the Union had 272 members of whom 118 had immediately recognizable occupation/education affiliations, none of which were working class. By 1911, membership had grown to 319. At the May general meeting of that year, 154 clubs representing the south were present, as compared to 37 from the north, and 28 clubs and unions which are now unknown or hold membership outside the RFU, including Canadian,

French, Indian, and Welsh clubs and unions.¹⁴ In 1910 a meeting of London clubs reveals that there were at least 50 in Middlesex, of which 33 were occupation/education related teams. Kent was represented by 21 clubs of which 12 had the same affiliations, and of Surrey's 21 clubs, 12 also had education/occupation connections. Also present at this meeting were London representatives of Calcutta RFC, Ceylon RFC, Harve Athletic, Newport RFC, Racing Club of Paris RFC, Sporting Club Universitaire de France, Stanford University (California), Transvaal FRC, and Vancouver RFC. It is possible to estimate that of the approximately 300 clubs holding membership in the Union at any time between 1906 and 1914, at least one third came from the metropolis.¹⁵

Included in the new clubs formed in Surrey in this period and still holding RFU membership in 1971 were Chartered Banks, Emanuel School, University of London, London School of Economics, and Old Emanuel RFC. In Kent, new clubs included Goldsmith College, Lloyds Bank, National Provincial Bank, and Old Elthamians. By contrast, only Sefton was a completely new club formed in Lancashire in this period, which was secure enough to survive until the Union's 100th birthday. In Yorkshire, only Leeds University can boast the same.¹⁶

In London, the suburbs continued to be the breeding ground for a great number of clubs. With the advent of each new middle class suburb, it seems another rugby club developed. By 1914, London had 46 teams with community identification. Only

Southwark House was linked to the inner city. The other 45 represented the middle class flight from the city to the suburbs.¹⁷

Donald Read has indicated that not all suburbs were middle class exclusive enclaves by 1914. As the upper middle class moved increasingly further out, the middle and lower middle classes moved into the communities abandoned by their social superiors. One such example was Brixton. The socially ambitious had by 1914 come to inhabit this south London district. The Brixton RFC, founded earlier by the previous inhabitants of the community continued to prosper with support from the lower middle class.¹⁸ As well as taking over the older suburbs, another means of overt social climbing was choosing rugby over soccer as the preferred winter male pastime. As a consequence, rugby clubs, founded in suburbs which were experiencing a decline in class status, continued to exist with the support of the ambitious middle and lower middle classes who came to the older suburbs as late arrivals and as a means of affirming and maintaining their social position.

Read observed that by 1914, Balham, Barnes, Hampstead, Highgate, Richmond and Sydenham, were upper middle class communities. These areas all boasted at least one top rugby club, and Richmond was home to the team of the same name, London Scottish and London Welsh, as well as having one of the world's most prestigious rugby facilities, the Athletic Grounds. Hampstead had the Wanderers, but was also the area where the

Wasps and the Harlequins were formed. By the beginning of World War I, areas such as Kensington, Clapham, and Wimbledon had at least one local club.¹⁹

By the most conservative estimates, the 46 London clubs with community identifying names, coupled with 93 clubs with education/occupation affiliation gave the RFU 139 member clubs within London alone. This does not include teams such as the Quins and Wasps, as their nicknames do not fit either category.²⁰ With only a few notable exceptions, these clubs were unassailably middle class.

Oxbridge clubs continued their traditional support for the top metropolitan clubs, but they also came increasingly to reflect the growth of the game throughout the British Isles and the colonies. The names of clubs mentioned above present at the 1910 meeting of London clubs is an indication of the spread of rugby. In 1909, Oxford University XV included D.G. Herring of Princeton University, and a New Zealand player. Cambridge countered this with G.M. Chapman of Waitaki Boys' High School (N.Z.). Three years later the Oxford side fielded a XV which included ten non-English players, and in 1912, Cambridge employed four Scots and a Welshman.²¹ Rather than being only a feeder to the metropolitan clubs, Oxbridge had become a symbol of the spread of rugby throughout the colonies and beyond.

Rugby in the colonies remained generally loyal to amateurism, although it is not presently possible to state confidently that shamateurism was not widely practiced outside of

the British Isles. Even in the United States, where many sports at this time, were subsumed under the rapid growth of unbridled consumerism, rugby football remained amateur. This was because the game was, for the most part, concentrated in colleges.²² In 1907, the New Zealand All Blacks, the country's national team, declared its support for the strict precepts of amateurism.²³ Northern Unionism failed to gain a strong foothold in the colonies with the exception of Australia.

There were promising developments in the post 1905 years for Rugby Unionism in the north and other areas hurt by professionalism. Worcester RFC (Somerset), a club founded in 1877 and disbanded in 1896, reformed in 1908, under the direction of Rev. Monahan.²⁴ In Bradford a Rugby Union club was formed from leftovers from two previous clubs which had turned pro. This new club played under the name Henton RFC up to WWI. In Lancashire, after 1905, the quality of play improved considerably in class exclusive clubs. The resurgence was centred in the two oldest clubs in the county, Liverpool and Manchester. In 1906, following a fine showing of the county XV against a touring South African team, the Guardian declared that the play of locals should silence critics who say the RFU game had lost out to the "business having that name [Northern Unionism]". In 1910, W.L.S. wrote in the Athletic News that for the first time since 1895 northern rugby (Lancashire and Yorkshire) had grown powerful enough to challenge for the County Championships. In 1913, Liverpool boasted five internationals, including ex-Harlequin and

Oxford star R.W. Poulton.²⁵

Following the split, some northern clubs were able to prosper due to their ability to continue to attract middle class players. Southport RC (Lancs.), under the direction of local MP Sir George Pilkinton, and town mayor Paul Carter was one such club. Birkenhead Park and Manchester FC remained strong clubs because they drew their membership from public schools and socially ambitious grammar schools. Up to WWI Birkenhead Park recruited local business men, and military officers. The Hartlepool Rovers' star players between 1900 and 1914 included a naval architect, Two business men, three doctors, the chairman of the National Coal Board, and an army captain.²⁶

Even with this small resurgence of Rugby Union in the heart of professional rugby, the game never again came close to matching its pre-1895 status. In the north, and especially Lancashire and Yorkshire, the preference for one code or another was class defined among the playing memberships of various clubs. A naive R.W. Poulton suggested in 1912 that the amateur code in Liverpool could prosper by introducing it into working class schools.²⁷ The working class however had already showed its preference for the NU with mass support for the professional game following the split. As Colin Welland has observed, Rugby League (Northern Union) "provides our cultural adrenalin".²⁸ By 1914 it was possible to state accurately that in Lancashire and Yorkshire Rugby Union was a middle class game and Northern Union was a working class game.

III

The ongoing difficulties of shamateurism, the threat of Northern Unionism, and the endemic violence and ungentlemanly behaviour continued unabated up to 1914. There was however a disturbing new pattern to these problems, especially the two related to professionalism. Once thought to be concentrated in the north, they began, by 1906, to become issues in the Midlands and the West Country, as well as the extreme north. London was free of these difficulties due to the commitment to underlying Victorian middle class values. In Lancashire and Yorkshire, following the split, Rugby Union clubs which survived were also committed to the traditional middle class sporting ethos. Elsewhere however, rugby football was much less class exclusive and consequently more prone to problems relating to professionalism, if not excessive violence.

In Gloucestershire in 1911, 50 clubs held membership in the county union. Of the 34 clubs formed prior to 1914 and still functioning in 1971, eleven had academic affiliation, while 23 were community based clubs. Although some of these may have been class exclusive, not all community clubs were.²⁹ Unlike London and the north, Rugby Union was not class defined in Gloucestershire. This appears to be true also for other West Country and Midlands unions. (see table IV)

Table IV³⁰

<u>UNIONS</u>	<u>COMMUNITY CLUBS</u>	<u>EDUCATION/OCCUPATION CLUBS</u>
Devon	21	5
Leicestershire	12	2
Cornwall	9	1
East Midlands	7	2
Warwickshire	7	2

(these clubs are only those formed prior to 1914 and still existed in 1971, according to the RFU's centenary history)

In the West Country and the Midlands class exclusive clubs played alongside socially heterogeneous community based clubs. It was in these socially diversified clubs that the persistent problem of shamateurism flourished. In the extreme north the situation was the same. Between 1906 and 1914, the RFU and member unions struggled with this problem. The degree of effort directed towards crushing shamateurism was at times considerable, and unlike the pre-1895 period county unions were more inclined to be allied with the parent body. On December 7, 1906, a new professional sub-committee was struck to continue the battle with the hydra. Its most diligent member was the ex-Union president from Newcastle, William Cail.³¹

One of the most difficult problems facing the sub-committee in the north were "workshop competitions" sponsored by the Northern Union. In 1908 the Yorkshire Union expressed deep concern to the RFU about these events. Two years later the YRU noted that the events now involved amateurs playing alongside

professionals. Shortly after, the Union acted and suspended J. Collins of Wakefield's amateur club for taking part in a workshop match.³² Detection remained difficult, but both the county and national unions were not willing to allow amateur working class players to play both sides against the middle. The choice would have to be decisive, amateur or professional.

On May 28, 1908, Moseley FC, Old Edwardians, and the Yorkshire union went on record suggesting that the parent body was not as diligent as it could be in crushing professionalism throughout the entire Union.³³ Six months later Leicester Tigers were implicated in a conspiracy to use professionals and practice shamateurism. In a letter to the Observer, "New Broom" suggested that these shamateurs could soon find their way on to the national XV. In January, 1909 the club was charged with knowingly using three players who had signed letters of intent with the NU (presumably accompanied with some financial consideration), as well as offering illegal inducements to transfer to four players including E.J. Jackett of Falmouth. Jackett, despite the accusations, represented England in all four internationals in 1909. The result of the investigation was the suspension of two Tigers, and a not proven verdict for the club. The hearings concluded that six players had contact with the NU to varying degrees, and that the club never made illegal inducements to Jackett or any other players.³⁴

An Observer article of January 31, 1909 announced that RFU president C.A. Crane had submitted his resignation to the Union

secretary. The decision to clear the Tigers of any responsibilities had made it impossible for Crane to continue as president. The paper reported that he felt the decision encouraged professionalism rather than being an opportunity to send a signal to clubs that any hint of professionalism would be severely dealt with.³⁵ The continuing selection of Jackett could only have been added insult.

Some county unions proved more diligent in their efforts to eliminate shamateurism in 1909. On February 25, Cheshire and Yorkshire announced the suspension of a number of players for acts of professionalism, as did Northumberland and Gloucestershire on March 19. A week later the YRU declared Castleford expelled from the union. Although the RFU Minute Books do not explain the reason for this action, the club turned pro shortly after, suggesting that its problem with the county union may well have been related to professionalism.³⁶

The Athletic News and Cyclists' Journal announced in 1910 that northern county unions may have been involved in a coverup of shamateurism. As a result of evidence supplied by the Northern Union, six clubs in Northumberland were investigated for various acts of deception, including the small but influential Aspatria. The journal suggested that the Northumberland union knowingly selected shamateurs to the county team. There was little followup on these investigations, but Aspatria was cleared of any wrong doing.³⁷ Implications and innuendo did cast doubt on the purity of the county unions in the far north.

In 1911 the Union was extremely critical of the degree of commitment shown by the Cumberland union in attacking play for pay. The RFU announced that Blennerhasset, Cockersmouth, Wigton, and Workington had knowingly played NU players. It recommended 13 players for immediate suspension. At the same meeting the recent diligent display by the YRU was in evidence again as it announced the suspension of six players and a club official.³⁸

The Union decision to take over the investigation of the Cumberland problems was rooted in the earlier accusations made by the Athletic News and Cyclists' Journal. The RFU, in keeping with current practices, had turned over the investigation to the county union as early as 1910. When, by November, the provincials had taken no action, the Union stepped in.³⁹ The parent body seems to have become increasingly more diligent in its attacks following the resignation of Crane. Had the Cumberland union shown the same enthusiasm as Yorkshire for prosecuting offenders the Union would have willingly kept its distance.

In spite of the RFU actions in the suspension of the Cumberland players, the northern county unions' problems persisted and a year later the Union suspended an additional five players as well as issuing a stiff warning to Wigton. Still the players, more than the clubs, were the focus of the Union's punishment. Again, at the same RFU meeting, the YRU declared Leeds Moorland professional, and expelled the club from the YRU.⁴⁰

The relationship between the Midlands and the West Country clubs and professionalism was more directly related to the insurgency of Northern Unionism into these areas. In 1910 Coventry established a NU club which competed with the amateurs for local talent, local support, and gate receipts. Almost immediately, six Coventry Rugby Union players and the club were suspended for their part in establishing the professional game in the town. It was ruled that players from the amateur team as well as the team secretary, A.W. Rose, solicited letters of intent from the professional club.⁴¹ Of greater concern to the parent body, however, were the raids by the NU, and the establishment of professional clubs in the West Country. This coupled with an apparent conspiracy of Devon clubs to practice shamateurism in an area which was increasingly contributing to the English XV was extremely unsettling.

It is tempting to see the conspiracy which was uncovered in Devon as being related to the frequent raid by the Northern Union. One such incursion into the West Country netted the professionals three Gloucester players.⁴² While not a result of any specific raid, the willingness of Rugby Union clubs in the area to offer payments must have been stimulated by the attraction of the professional code to highly skilled working class players. A 1912 inquiry by the RFU into Devon rugby resulted in W.A. Bond, treasurer of Newton Abbott, being suspended for paying for broken time. Mallett, a Newton Abbott and county player, was also suspended along with 26 other players

and administrators throughout the county, including R.A. Jago, an international (England, 1906-1907). Clubs which received punishment included some of the nation's best known teams: Devonport Albion, Plymouth Albion, Teignmouth, and Torquay. Plymouth and Teignmouth both had Northern Union clubs in their towns, suggesting that in order to keep their top working class players, shamateurism was necessary. A year later 14 of the 26 players and clubs were reinstated.⁴³

Teignmouth players and administrators were not among those reinstated. The entire club turned professional in 1913 and remained so until after World War I. Brixham was unable to withstand the aggressive recruiting of its players by the NU, and folded. Paignton joined the Northern Union as the Torquay and District Northern Football Club after fans showed their preference for the professional game. In 1912 Sports Times reported that the threat of large scale defections in the Bristol area had a number of clubs contemplating a switch of codes, but nothing came of this. In Cornwall, rather than make an example of minor offenders, the RFU suggested to Redruth and Camborne that they cease treating their players to summer holiday trips.⁴⁴

One possible solution to the trend toward professionalism, according to clubs in the south west, was the formation of a league structure, and they petitioned the Union for permission to establish one. This solution may have worked against the intrusion of Northern Unionism, but it could only serve to encourage increased shamateurism. The West Country clubs argued

that not only the NU, but also the Football Association was active in the area, and competed favourably for players and fans through the use of league structures. This was the same argument that the Yorkshire clubs had made prior to 1895, and had cropped up sporadically in the extreme north. The RFU took almost eight months to reach a decision but on May 26, 1914, the Union rejected the proposal because of the financial difficulties in modifying the fixture list structure.⁴⁵ This response should not have come as a great surprise, but what was strange was the length of time it took the RFU to reach the decision. The emphasis on financial difficulties was unusual and the Union showed no overt moral objection to leagues as it had in all other cases.

Not unlike the West Country, clubs in Wales were being subjected to the same pressures from the NU. Ebb and Merthyr Tydfil joined Aberdare, Barry, Mid-Rhondda, and Treherbert in the Northern Union in the 1907-08, but the following season Aberdare, Barry, and Mid-Rhondda returned to the amateur code. In 1911, a Newport player named Birt turned down an offer of £200 to join Leeds.⁴⁶

Gareth Williams argues that what made rugby so important in Wales was its development as a democratic social institution in that country.⁴⁷ Perhaps what lured the three Welsh sides back to the amateur code was a sense that democracy was lacking in the structure of the entrepreneurial Northern Union. It may also have been pressure from other Welsh clubs, or simply the failure

to realize the profits anticipated by embracing open professionalism. The handsome offer made to Birt may not have equalled the amount he earned as a shamateur.

Right up to World War I, and even today, the West Country remains a fertile recruiting ground for professional rugby. The NU however was not having the same success outside the country. It announced in 1913 that it would cease mining Welsh and New Zealand clubs for players. At the same time however, it was announced that Oldham was actively pursuing Coventry, Devonport Albion, and Plymouth amateurs.⁴⁸

It is evident that the RFU faced its greatest problems relating to professionalism in areas where there were a large number of less class exclusive clubs. There were still clubs in Yorkshire which attempted to dodge the professional bylaws, but when they were detected by the county union they were summarily dispatched. The greater the dependency clubs and unions had on working class players the more likely they were to be tempted, or the more willing they were to engage in veiled professionalism. The effect of Northern Unionism on the RFU was tremendous; if nothing else, it facilitated the purging of the amateur code of those unwilling to adhere to Victorian middle class sporting values. This aided in re-establishing Rugby Union football as a class exclusive sport. When the Northern Union played an exhibition match in London in 1911, The Times treated the event with confident and self-serving ridicule.⁴⁹ Rugby Union in the metropolis, and to only somewhat lesser degrees in the provinces,

was middle class.

IV

The violence common to rugby throughout the years continued up to 1914 in spite of criticism in the press and attempts to influence school boys on the proper conduct on the pitch. In 1907 a book written for middle class boys advised them never to cheat, tackle late, use unnecessary violence, or strong language. The Observer counselled players to conduct themselves on the pitch with the same restraint taught at school.⁵⁰ This advice came during a tour of England by an Australian XV in 1908 which resulted in a number of unsavory incidents stemming from the tourists' liberal interpretation of the obstruction laws.

H. Vincent Jones reported that in the Australian vs Oxford match a visitor named Middleton was ejected following a fight which was precipitated by his constant use of obstruction. The pass-oriented game favoured by the colonials was more effective when the attacking movement was secure at the point of first possession. The most certain way to ensure a secure possession was to use a forward to isolate the covering back from his own player, obstruction. After being sent off for fighting, Middleton was suspended by the RFU, but as a challenge to the RFU's authority, the Australians ignored the suspension and used the player in the fixture with Yorkshire. This match featured the same disregard for the obstruction laws and was highlighted by undue argie-bargie again.⁵¹ The RFU was unable to enforce its edict, and this type of action was hardly a sterling lesson for

young lads.

In the West Country violence appears to have been more common than elsewhere, but was not confined to the provinces. The rougher nature of the West Country game may have been the result of regular contact with Welsh club sides which were notorious for their physical excesses. J.E. Raphael claimed that "Welshmen in Wales are out for blood with the blowing of the whistle."⁵² Sports Times of Bristol was not only dismayed by the conduct on the pitch, but in 1911 criticized the behaviour of the Bath supporters. One player singled out for misconduct was Jago of Devon who represented his country and was the focus of a number of accusations of professionalism. The paper claimed that for six years running this player was allowed to get away with overly aggressive play.⁵³ Not only it seems was he immune from extreme punishment, his style of play was rewarded with three international selections and 59 county appearances.

The RFU committee meeting of February 9, 1912 addressed the problem of misconduct. Devonport Albion and Camborne were two clubs in question at this meeting, but the provincials did not have a monopoly on improper conduct. At the same meeting it was reported that at a recent Croydon vs Hong Kong Bank match there was an "unfortunate incident", and that violence was on the rise throughout the Union.⁵⁴

The Harlequins under Adrian Stoop seemed unlikely participants in this type of action, but the club was not beyond physical excess. In a 1913 match a player named Holly sought

retribution after a team mate was carried from the pitch as a result of an illegal but undetected blow. Holly quickly dispatched the offender with an equally damaging and illegal blow.⁵⁵

No matter if the club was the Harlequins or the notorious Welsh teams, it seems violence of this nature could not be easily curtailed. Education in the proper conduct of rugby was clearly insufficient to ensure proper play. J.E.C. Welldon told a Japanese audience in 1905 that the "true sportsman was the true gentleman", and that public school games instilled self-sacrifice and subordination to a higher authority.⁵⁶ Judging from the history of violence common to rugby even prior to 1871, the "spirit of the game" and the reality on the pitch were not always the same thing.

V

The style of play was the most noticeable feature of the post-1905 period. It was on the pitch that the "new" exerted its influence in Rugby Union. The revolution in play was not led by those interested in changing the administrative structure of the game, or altering rugby's adherence to the amateur sporting ethos. Those who altered the style of English rugby were those aware that to be successful, tactics and style must be brought up to date and reflect the innovations which had been introduced from the colonies and Wales. The central figure of this revolution was A.D. Stoop, but even with the Harlequins' successes and the resurgence of the national side, the "old"

resisted and criticized the new game.

In the Observer, the "Unionist" voiced his criticism of the new game, claiming it was no longer pleasing to the spectator, and that it subverted the principles of amateur sport. Rugby, he claimed was no longer "chivalry got by heredity", because the new style replaced skill and honesty with deception and trickery. It was in 1905 that All Blacks' captain David Gallaher asserted that deception was paramount for the half back. The "Unionist" placed the blame for the degeneration of the game on the Welsh 4 3/4 back system, and the lack of honourable play. He emphasized his dissatisfaction with a clever pun: England had "stooped to conquer" by mimicking the Welsh. He extolled public school men to redress this situation, and expressed hope for another large exodus to the NU, including the Welsh clubs and "industrial clubs of the Midlands and the West."⁵⁷

The "Unionist", while expressing the view of the "old", was out of step with the realities of English rugby. It was no longer industrial clubs and the Welsh who employed innovative tactics, but public school men who were not willing to return to the past. Even the London middle class devotee would not be willing to see his game remain a poor second to the colonial game as it surely would if the English players did not advance.

In 1910, Phillip Trevor of the Daily Telegram christened the rapid exchange of the ball from player to player, a dozen times or more in a single attacking movement, a Harlequinism. Two years later he wrote "We are at last penetrating the thick hide

of conservatism in our national life; and in cricket and in football in particular are we now giving new men and new ideas more room." In conclusion, he hailed J.G. Birkett the most complete footballer, "combining the speed and cunning of the new with the strength and courage of the old."⁵⁸

The Daily Mail article of September 20, 1910, "Brains As Well As Brawn" praised the arrival of the new techniques, and the resulting English successes. "For years past", he wrote,

trusting to obsolete methods, had vainly struggled to avert defeats inflicted with monotonous regularity by other countries, who were intelligently profiting by past experiences and studying new tactics. The English XV on the contrary rushed bull-like to the fray, with no plan of campaign. It was as though we were engaged in modern warfare having armed our soldiers with weapons of the Crimean period. We fairly courted defeat.⁵⁹

As early as 1907 Sportsman demanded that other English clubs adopt the playing style of the Harlequins' "Brilliant Backs" in order to bring an end to the national XVs' humiliating defeats. The Athletic News published the poem, "En Passant", to Stoop and the Quins' backs:

Well passed, Well run, Well passed again!

That wing three quarter in:

"A rattling try!"

Spectators cry:

Stoop-endous Harlequin.⁶⁰

The success of the Harlequins was not dependent upon Stoop alone. It owed a great deal to his demand for training as a unit, his own skill as a fly half, and the willingness to experiment, but it also owed a great deal to individual star players who were willing to channel their talents to the system and not toward individual glory. Stoop had an eye for talent. He converted D. Lambert, a second team forward, into an international back. He also blended the talents of J.G. Birkett, R.W. Poulton, J. Sibree, Fred Stoop, Henry Brougham, and himself (all were capped for England) into the most famous back unit in the history of the game.⁶¹ Stoop demanded adherence to a single minded approach to the game, and his emphasis was always on attack.

Great innovations in back play were not the only tactical changes in the game after 1905. The need to ensure secure possession to launch attacks resulted in the emphasis on the wing forward and obstruction. West Country clubs borrowed the colonial practice of using the forwards in attack, a strategy developed by Redruth, Cornwall, and English star Bert Solomon. This innovation also emphasized the wing forward position. As a result of this, and borrowing from the 1905 All Blacks, speciality forward positions came about. After 1905 clubs began employing designated hookers, props and second row players, rather than relying on haphazard positioning in the pack.⁶²

For new tactics to succeed there was a need for increased

training, especially as units. While the Quins and Exeter found that players were willing to sacrifice their time in order to improve, other clubs did not take as well to this. Clifton RFC introduced a training program for the 1907-08 season but not all the membership embraced the idea. Training remained a contentious issue for the whole season, but eventually the club gave in to the "new", as did many other successful clubs by 1914.⁶³

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Stoop system was that it did not make the Harlequins dependent upon one or two individuals. As a team concept, the system allowed for easy replacement of an injured player with another versed in the same style of play. While E.B. Iwan-Muller lamented the general decline of the individual in Edwardian society, the Quins were profiting from a de-emphasis on individuality. The Victorian myth of individualism was crumbling under the trend toward collectivism, and rugby's most successful club side was benefitting from its own commitment to the adage that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Despite an injury to the frail Stoop in 1907, the Harlequins continued their winning ways. Three years later a rash of injuries on the club failed to mount a great deal of concern since Stoop always had "ready and capable understudies."⁶⁴

As Samuel Hynes has suggested, there proved to be a great deal of resistance to the new style of play. Those who rejected it called it "hand ball" rather than football. The Times article

of December 21, 1910 called the new style "unsportsmanlike" and claimed that England's international failures were a result of the loss of northern forwards after 1895, and had nothing to do with poor tactics.⁶⁵ The admirers of the old game were quick to criticize the Harlequins, while claiming Northampton, Leicester, and Blackheath, clubs with strong forwards, were the best teams in England. D.R. Gent, an international back, ironically criticized the wing forward position because it disrupted good back play.⁶⁶

The changes which were introduced to the style of play after 1905 may have been centred on the Harlequins, but there were other strong voices which heralded the move to the "new". Solomon, and the Exeter XV were willing to experiment with tactics and training. E. Mobbs of Northampton often partnered the Quin backs on the English XV not only because of his abilities, but because he was committed to the idea of "scientific" back play. The strongest admirer of the Stoop system was international back, and Old Merchant Taylors' player, J.E. Raphael.

In many ways Raphael was the quintessential Edwardian middle class rugby player. He was a Liberal candidate who supported votes for women. The London lawyer and author saw in rugby played in the manner of the Stoop system "attributes which are indispensable to the possession of a proper civic spirit..."; anti-conservatism, co-operation, sacrifice, and collectivism for the greater good.⁶⁷ For Raphael, rugby football embodied the

spirit of the age, in the same way it was thought to by the players of the Victorian period. What had changed was the emphasis on collectivism, rather than on individuality. Raphael's club, O.M.T., took well to his concept of the "new", and like other progressive clubs enjoyed a upswing in success.

As a missionary of the game Raphael took a select side to Argentina in 1910. The visitors won all six of their matches, scoring 213 points to the hosts' 31.⁶⁸ This journey established a tradition of international matches with Argentina which was only put in jeopardy in the present decade by the Falklands' War.

Writing in 1913, Raphael accused London's top clubs of being lethargic and stilted: "many...still see rugby as a game of defense, and attack occurs more by accident than design- only now are clubs finally realizing the advantages of attack oriented rugby and the 4 3/4 back system which is thirty years old." He praised the Harlequins for their frequency of attack, noting that they would mount an offensive movement from well within their own half of the field, and even from behind their own in-goal line.⁶⁹ Although some clubs had made the switch to the "new" from the Victorian game, even after the successes of the All Blacks, the Welsh, Stoop, Raphael, and a handful of clubs had shown the way, many metropolitan teams still respond with what Samuel Hynes calls "arthritic resistance".

Fortunately, there were sufficient opportunities for the more adventurous players throughout the country to play together on the national XV. From 1905 to 1914 England's fortunes took a

decided upswing following the humiliation of the All Blacks' tour.

From 1906 to 1910, England managed ten wins and as many losses, as well as two draws. The metropolitan clubs secured 88 caps, compared to 55 from the north. The West Country however dominated selection with 111 caps, the Midlands took 31, and military 18. In this period, 37 caps were awarded to Quin players, making it the most decorated of London clubs. Blackheath and Oxford won 18 and 13 respectively. An additional three caps were awarded to Oxford/Harlequin players. The West Country dominated selection to the forward positions. Gloucester won 24 caps and Devonport Albion 23. England's respectable record was due in part to the appearance of the French XV on the international scene in 1906, and a draw with the South Africans in the same year.⁷⁰

Between 1911 and 1914 England fully re-established its supremacy in international play. The English XV lost only four of seventeen games, one each to Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, and Wales. Selection to the team was dominated by the Quins and Northampton's E. Mobbs. As meteoric as the rise of the West Country was in the previous five years, their fall from grace was equally rapid as the area contributed only 40 caps up to 1914. London clubs again dominated selection with Blackheath providing a large number of forwards (32 caps), and the Harlequins a disproportionate number of backs (30 caps). Cambridge earned 22 selections, seventeen more than it had in the preceding five

years. In the north, a rejuvenated Headingley club was awarded sixteen of the area's 53 caps. Northern RFC earned fourteen. Thirty-seven caps were earned by the military, including eight by W.J.A. Davies of the United Services who had replaced Stoop as the English fly half.⁷¹

Although the rise of the national side was widely hailed as a triumph for the amateur code, the early period, between 1906 and 1910, was not without its detractors. In 1907, the Observer, which was supportive of innovations, noted that while a renaissance was occurring in English rugby, selectors continued to choose old style players. The paper also accused the selectors of local favouritism, and suggested that Stoop, Makepiece, and Devon forwards be considered.⁷² In October of the following year the Morning Post made a similar criticism, stating that the breakup of the Harlequin backs was the reason for England's loss to the Scots. "English selectors have lamentably erred for years past by ransacking industrial centres for working men players when they have English Schools so full of natural genius in Rugger".⁷³ Not only was the press supportive of the new style of play, it rejected the need for working class players once thought essential for English victories.

In the same year, the Observer displayed the same general disregard for the working class player when it stated "the West Country can be left out of consideration" for selection to forward positions because of the London clubs' fine showing against Australia.⁷⁴ Only a year before, the paper had called on

the Devon forwards to lead the national team, but when the London forwards showed promise, it quickly abandoned the provincials as "the flavour of the month". Judging by the number of West Country selections between 1906 and 1910, the RFU selectors did not heed this advice.

The Harlequin domination of the national side backs up to 1914 was unchallenged. On the eve of the 1909 trial match both Stoops, John Birkett, and E. Mobbs of Northampton were all injured. Following the match it was observed that based on the selection and the injuries, the Quins may have had five of the national team backs. As it turned out, in the January 1910 match with Wales, Birkett, Ronnie Poulton, and Stoop, as well as Mobbs did play. According to Phillip Trevor of the Daily Telegraph, England's draw with Ireland in 1910 was a result of the splitting up of the Quins' combination featured in the Welsh match in January.⁷⁵

A partisan Sports Time expressed some displeasure concerning the domination of the English XV by London backs. It accused the national selectors of having "a Harlequin fetish", but the results of this preference were positive. No matter who the selectors chose, it was certain to displease some. The lack of criticism after 1910 was the consequence of England's success based on progressive back play. In 1914 England achieved ultimate success as a national side by defeating all comers, and winning the Triple Crown, and capturing the Calcutta Cup. Ironically, there were no Harlequins on the national side that

year. Stoop had been replaced by Davies, Ronnie Poulton was playing in Liverpool, and the back line was comprised of players from throughout the country, rather than exhibiting the London strangle hold of the past decade.⁷⁶

VI

In February, 1908, Union president, C.A. Crane, and treasurer, William Cail, sent a circular to the county unions concerning the purchase of a permanent site for all English international matches and a specific site for the RFU administration. It proposed a ten and a quarter acre field in the London suburb of Twickenham, serviced by rail. It was estimated that the grounds could be purchased for £6,000, and readying it for operation would cost another £1,250. Seating and other facilities for fans would cost £9,000. Money was to be raised by selling debentures to county unions and clubs, and as an act of good faith the committee members promised £2,650. The letter asked that all unions petition committees and clubs for support. England's 104th international match was played against Wales on January 15, 1910 on the new grounds. In celebration of the opening of Twickenham, England defeated Wales 11-6, earning its first victory over Wales since 1898.⁷⁷

There had been a pressing need for a permanent facility for a number of years. No grounds in London could properly accommodate more than 12,000 supporters. In 1907, the RFU paid 1,100 to the Crystal Palace Company for ground rentals, and in the previous years it had spent 2,971 for international matches.

The finance committee recommended the purchase of "Billy Williams' Cabbage Patch" to alleviate this situation. Not only would the Union save on the growing expense of ground rentals, it would save on the renting of office space to conduct business, it was also observed that the more than ten acres in a London suburb was a sound investment. The final cost of the purchase was £5,572. When completed in 1909 the facility included two covered stands to hold 3,000 fans each, and with standing room, the capacity was over 30,000. In keeping with the times, Twickenham provided parking for 200 automobiles.⁷⁸

The Observer stated that once in the hands of the sub-committee overseeing the acquisition of a permanent site for internationals, Twickenham was a fait accompli.⁷⁹ Additional financing of the grounds was achieved by sub-leasing the pitch to the Harlequins. It was fitting that the facility would be home of England's most popular team. The RFU's official history recognizes the contribution of the Quins in establishing Twickenham as the mecca of English amateur rugby.⁸⁰

The first match at Twickenham was played between Richmond and the Quins on 2 October 1909 before four to five thousand punters. A mystique grew up around the grounds almost immediately. The defeat of Wales in the first international marked a 33 year run of successes against them at the grounds.⁸¹

The structure in the middle class, south London, suburb was a symbol of what had been a fact since the RFU was formed in 1871. Rugby football under the amateur code was a middle class

game. It was also a London dominated game. Throughout its early history there were threats to this hegemony but with resolve, the RFU resisted almost all attempts to bring the game into the twentieth century. Twickenham may have been a modern facility, but it was a monument to the Victorian ideals that the Rugby Football Union refused to abandon.

Nine days after the declaration of war in 1914, the Union suspended play. It was not resumed until the 1919-20 season. The RFU issued a circular from C.J.B. Marriott on August 13, which stated:

The Rugby Union are glad to know that a large number of their players have already volunteered for service.

They expressed a hope that all Rugby players will join some Force in their own town or country.

On August 31, R.F. Oakes of the YRU announced the suspension of play in the county until the war was won, and encouraged its members to enlist. Throughout the conflict Twickenham, the symbol of the amateur, game was employed as a pasture for sheep, cattle and horses.⁸²

The war took its toll on the playing membership of the RFU. With its conclusion, England emerged into the twentieth century, with all aspects of the modern society in place. Rugby football, however, has struggled throughout this century to remain a part of the Victorian past.

ENDNOTES

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4. Read, pp. 421-423. Stephen Yeo, especially in the introduction.
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17. List of Rugby Clubs with RFU Membership, Formed prior to 1914 (held at the RFU Museum, Twickenham, England).
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28. John Bales, p. 55.
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30. Taken from Titley and McWhirter, pp. 188-205. These numbers represent only those clubs formed between 1871 and 1914 which still existed in 1971 when the Centenary History of the RFU was compiled.
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CONCLUSIONS

In 1985 the Observer quoted Phillip Toynbee as saying "If a bomb was dropped on Twickenham during the Oxford and Cambridge match, all danger of fascism in Britain would be averted."¹ This remark is grounded in the conservative nature of Rugby Union football in England, and its status as the most identifiably middle class of sports. William J. Morgan has expressed doubt concerning the utility of studying the history of sport within the context of what he calls "radical social theory". He states that sport, in and of itself, is transhistorical.² This may be true, but the role of sport in any society is important in so far as it relates to that society. Sport in a metaphysical sense may be a tabula rasa, but to historians of sport it must be seen and treated as something more than an aesthetic reality. Specific sports, in and of themselves, are not always logically the domain or preference of a specific class or social group. They become so only as a result of the process of history. This was the case for rugby football's evolution into a leisure practice of the middle class in England.

If rugby football was by its very nature a bourgeois sport, it would be impossible to explain the passion for the game in South Wales mining communities, or its evolution into the national sport of New Zealand. Cricket, while the most identifiably English of all team sports, and a powerful symbol of British imperialism, has also been shown to have been a vehicle

for anti-colonialism in Barbados and Trinidad.³ Historical studies have shown that horse racing in England had more than one social function. For the owners of the horses it was an opportunity to display their wealth and influence, while the working class punters used the events as an opportunity for social interaction; as well, it was a dream of "hitting it rich". Horse racing in Victorian society was also a means of social control.⁴ More important for historians than seeing sport as a transhistorical phenomenon is the understanding of the function of sport within society.

No better example of this has emerged in the "new social history" than the work of Peter Bailey. His book on the 'contest for control' of rational recreation in Victorian England has shown how malleable aspects of leisure can be. On one hand it served as a means of attempting to mold the industrial work force in the image of a dominant middle class, while on the other, it became one way of establishing a unique working class experience. Bailey is careful, however, to show that certain aspects of leisure, such as football, can serve as a means of class expression for two competing social elements at the same time.⁵ This indicates that leisure's historical significance lies in the role of human agency upon it, not in its existence as an aesthetic reality devoid of "utilitarian consequence and [with] no direct analogue in the social world."⁶

It is only within the context of Victorian leisure that rugby football can be understood to have evolved into a symbol of

the middle class in England. For most of the nineteenth century its history was intertwined with that of soccer. As forms of folk football, both were subjected to the process of conformity to industrial capitalist hegemony. By 1914 soccer and rugby had become quite different examples of class expression. Rugby was the bourgeois form of football, while the popular perception of soccer was that of the people's game. The comparative simplicity of the dribbling code may have contributed to the masses' reclamation of soccer, but if it was the major factor in the historical process which resulted in soccer's status, it should stand to reason that the game would enjoy the same position in Wales. If it is assumed that the "rougner" elements in Wales were attracted to rugby's endemic violence, it should stand to reason that the English working class would have the same passion for the handling code as their neighbours. This was not the case. Far more important to the history of both games was their response to the introduction of professionalization.

A popular explanation for the acceptance of pay for play into soccer hinges on the relatively calm class relations which highlighted the 1880s. As a result, the bourgeoisie felt that it could accommodate, but control, the demands of the working class element for professionalization. Instead, this proved to be the undoing of the middle class domination of soccer. After 1885 Association football evolved into a working class game and a part of its unique culture.⁷

Tony Mason's judicious re-examination of Association

football has brought into doubt a number of assumptions upon which the popularly held view is based. Mason has shown that the struggle for professionalization of soccer was spearheaded by provincial middle class club directors, and was opposed by the metropolitan middle class. Perhaps the stability between the classes more easily facilitated the introduction of pay for play, but more importantly the contest for its introduction was waged within the middle class itself. Although Mason concedes that by 1915, identification with working class professionals and the bringing together of a large group of working class spectators in some ways made soccer the people's game, he observes that emphasis on community loyalty to the team would be counter-productive to a sense of class identification. This point is also made clear in Charles Korr's study of West Ham United. The coming together of the masses to watch a match was not de facto an expression of class solidarity. Mason also points out that while the working class played and watched the game in great numbers, professional clubs remained under the control of the entrepreneurial element of the bourgeoisie.⁸

A decade later, rugby football found itself faced with the same problems as those which eventually resulted in the liberalization of soccer. In contrast, the London middle class successfully triumphed over the forces of professionalism. The engineers of pay for play in rugby proved to be of the same entrepreneurial provincial middle class which had introduced it into soccer. Conveniently, for those inclined to see

professionalization as a flash point of class struggle, the 1890s were a time of more intense class relations. It therefore becomes possible to explain the historical development of the sister codes after 1885 in class terms. Soccer allowed professionalism into the game at a time of social stability: rugby, ten years later, in a period of social upheaval, refused to capitulate to the working class demands. As a result, soccer became the people's game, and rugby remained a middle class dominated sport.⁹

William Baker has been a strong proponent of this theory. Assuming that soccer was reclaimed by the industrial working class after 1885, he wrote that "Rugby too was appealing to the masses who in turn were attempting to transform it into a professional, spectator sport. Faced with the inflexibility of the Rugby Football Union, working class players and organizers from twenty-two industrial towns met...to form the Northern Rugby Football Union..." He claims that by 1900 the NU was so popular that almost half of the amateur clubs had defected to the business they call a sport.¹⁰ Given the tendency of post-Thompsonian historiography to emphasize the class conflict and social control theories as they relate to Victorian leisure, it is possible to make the assumption that since soccer was (to a debatable degree) taken over by the masses, then so too was rugby subjected to the same class conflict. Had Baker made more careful use of Tony Mason's work, and had he been able to unscramble the sociological study of rugby by Dunning and Sheard,

he may have avoided the erroneous assumption that the struggle for professionalization was waged between the classes.

E.P. Thompson's contribution to the history of the English working class has been monumental. No longer satisfied with conventional working class history which emphasized labour relations and Trade Unionism, and related class consciousness to the shop floor experience, he proposed an alternative. A unique working class culture was forged out of the relationship between the classes which extended beyond the factory experience to include aspects of life other than work.¹¹ So popular was this theory that in the years following The Making of the English Working Class, it, or responses to it, have dictated how British historians approach their craft. Thompson's influence was so pervasive that in 1975 Gareth Stedman Jones warned that the history of leisure was studied almost exclusively in terms of class expression and/or social control. Those aspects of leisure which were incompatible with these theories, he observed, were ignored by historians. He stated further, that by implication, class expression was working class expression.¹² The consequence of this has been the inclination to ignore the middle class, or worse yet, treat it as a monolithic entity. It was this tendency on the part of historians which made it possible for Baker to advance his theory on the differences between the two football codes.

More important than the relative stability of class tensions in explaining the different responses to professionalism in the

football codes was the breakdown of the middle class consensus. Examples of this occurred repeatedly after 1850 and by the 1890s, it was difficult to speak in terms of an ideologically united middle class. Among the fragmentation of the bourgeoisie was a discernible difference in attitudes between the provincial industrial/entrepreneurial and the metropolitan professional middle classes. This differentiation has been the central theme of works by conservative historians Harold Perkin and M.J. Weiner, as well as Marxist scholar Perry Anderson. Although they advance diverse conclusions from their studies, all three agree that the professional middle class, more common to the metropolis, embraced a perception of themselves as a new aristocracy. A part of this view was conduct consistent with a romanticization of the pre-industrial past which glorified rural life. This was made possible by suburbanization and limited contact with the masses. The provincial bourgeoisie had neither the opportunity, nor it would appear, the inclination toward such a definition of their social status.¹³ The entrepreneurial spirit and the need for more direct social contact with "inferiors" was greater in the provinces. As a result it is not surprising that it was provincials who encouraged the introduction of professionalization into the football codes. Under their control, pay for play turned working class soccer players into a leisure industry proletariat.¹⁴

A decade later, rugby faced the same showdown between the same two factions of the bourgeoisie. In the intervening years

the London professional middle class came to more fully embrace what Anderson has dubbed villa-Toryism. The rugby fraternity had increased in number after the professionalization of soccer, as those dedicated to amateurism became disgruntled with the rise of the working class in the game after 1885. The Union was very aware of the apparent loss of metropolitan domination of the dribbling code, and as Peter Bailey has shown the bourgeoisie was only marginally successful in the contest for control of leisure. These factors contributed to the RFU resolve to resist the northern demands to emulate the Football Association. In spite of the meteoric growth in voting power in Lancashire and the West Riding, the majority of clubs were either concentrated within the London sphere of influence or supportive of the Union. With nothing to gain, and apparently a great deal to lose, the London power base of the RFU drove the northern entrepreneurs from the Union.

Those clubs which joined the rebel union made it clear that their actions were not taken on behalf of their working class players. The Northern Union became another example of the leisure industry and the working men who transferred their allegiance to the NU found themselves added to the ranks of the leisure industry proletariat. This aspect of Association football and Northern Unionism requires a great deal more academic attention, but that can only come when it is accepted that professionalization is not a guarantee of working class expression.

The academic attention afforded cricket has been spotty considering its pre-eminence as England's summer team sport. The game's most devoted scholar, Keith Sandiford, has produced a series of articles on cricket's Victorian history, including two dealing with the professional issue. These address the tensions which existed between the "players" and the "gentlemen", but there is no mention of internal class factionalism which was so much a part of the debate over professionalism in the football codes.¹⁵ Sandiford, like Baker, appears to see the bourgeoisie as a monolithic entity.

There is ample evidence to suggest that middle class Victorian cricketers were also avid footballers. Ironically, however, there was never the same degree of animosity over play for pay in cricket that plagued rugby and soccer. Sandiford suggests that one reason for this stems from the fact that professionalism in cricket existed in the game prior to industrialization, and was defined by terms of the Georgian master/servant relationship. Carefully observed roles for both were firmly defined well before the Industrial Revolution, and were seen in a division of labour whereby the professional played the game with the ball and the amateur played it with the bat. By habit and tradition professionalism was accepted as part of the game, while at the same time it was the focus of divisive debates within the football codes.¹⁶ The pre-industrial nature of cricket gave the sport a noble lineage, while modern football games were much more a product of industrialization.

This does not necessarily explain the ability to rationalize inconsistencies over the issue of play for pay from cricket season to rugby season (summer to winter) among the same group of athletes. There was a degree of resentment in cricket toward the high expenses paid to W.G. Grace, the game's middle class amateur "super star", but ultimately he solicited, and was paid, large sums for "expenses" without jeopardizing his amateur status.¹⁷ W.J. Gould, by contrast, was banned for accepting a single testimonial from appreciative rugby supporters. It would seem that, based on Sandiford's work, cricket's acceptance of professionalism and amateurism was the result of traditions well established in the game, and that amateur athletes were willing to concede to a degree of ideological inconsistency concerning sport. While this may be rooted in pure pragmatism, it may also have been due to the aristocratic heritage of cricket as opposed to the folk antecedents of football. The humble nature of pre-industrial football may have made it more susceptible to alterations demanded by industrialization.

The embracing of villa-Toryism by the London middle class mitigated against an attack on professionalism in cricket. Since the game underwent comparatively little alteration as a result of the industrializing process it was an ideal form of leisure for those who romanticized England's rural past. The master/servant relationship would have appeared more passive and socially responsible than the industrial manager/employee relationship which was proving so disruptive in the 1890s and beyond. While

there was obvious class conflict in the late Victorian period, there was noticeably little antagonism between cricket's "gentlemen" and "players". The game, with its Georgian legacies, appeared to be more socially stable than soccer which was a product of industrial capitalism.

Those who introduced professionalism into cricket in the pre-industrial period, the aristocracy, found it possible to control it. The introduction of pay for play into soccer proved to be the undoing of the London middle class, as the game became the most obvious example of sport as a leisure industry in the hands of the entrepreneurs. As a consequence, those loyal to amateurism in rugby stiffened their resolve to prevent their loss of domination. There was too much evidence to suggest that any concessions to professionalism would result in rugby mirroring the dribbling code rather than the cricket experience.

While the defeat of professionalization in rugby football facilitated the game's development as a middle class leisure pursuit, limited concessions to what Samuel Hynes calls "the new", ensured the continuing high level of support and interest in the game. The period between 1895 and 1905 reinforced fears that urban living was debilitating even for suburbanites. Failures in international competition compounded the belief that England was in decline. In a sporting nation people on the street may not have been able to explain the subtleties of the labour problems of the times, or fully understand the problems in South Africa, but most would likely offer an opinion on the state

of the English XV. As conservative as the game was in most respects, it was the long delayed acceptance of innovative play which solidified rugby as a middle class preserve. Had England continued to denounce tactical advances it would have become a second rate rugby nation. Eventually defeats by Home Country and colonial teams, as well as French and even Argentinian teams, would have resulted in the abandonment of the game by the bourgeoisie. The tenacity and talents of Stoop, Raphael, Mobbs, and other innovative players brought rugby out of the past, at least on the pitch, and re-affirmed the belief that the English gentlemen could function at a high level of play without the assistance of northern labourers.

By 1914 it was possible to safely conclude that a rugby man was of, or had aspirations to, the middle class. Even though there was a working class element in the amateur game, it existed under the direct influence of the RFU. In towns such as Preston, with a top quality Rugby Union team and a professional soccer club, the decision to support the Grasshoppers RFC was a strong statement of class association and/or social aspiration. If soccer was the people's game, rugby was the bourgeoisie's game. Peter Bailey is correct in asserting that sport was one method of defining social status in pre- World War I England.¹⁸

II

Even today Rugby Union football labours under the legacy of its Victorian past. Writing in 1986, David Henwood of the West London Institute of Higher Education, claimed that "Without a

doubt professionalism has to be considered the greatest threat to the game today."¹⁹ There is a growing frustration at the highest levels of play over the RFU's rigidity on matters considered professional. While amateur Olympic athletes have been granted the right to bank money earned through endorsements, the Union still opposes this on the grounds that it is a threat to amateurism. Union president J.V. Smith complained that endorsements were a common means of skirting the professional by-laws.²⁰ In every sense the RFU is a major leisure industry, but at the playing level the membership is forced to adhere to antiquated traditions. In the 1970s English players who represented their country on television were required to black out the manufacturer's logo on their boots. Nigel Melville, the 1985 captain of England, was severely criticized for displaying the Nike Shoes company's logo on the heel of his boots in international matches.²¹ This attitude has not prevented the RFU themselves from marketing the game and the Twickenham logo for profit.

So rigid are Union attitudes toward individuals earning money from the game that two retired English captains, Bill Beaumont and Roger Uttley, have lost their amateur status as a result of writing books about their rugby years. Beaumont has become a broadcaster and journalist covering rugby, while Uttley was the coach of Harrow School XV in 1986. As a result, these men have been nominally ostracized by the RFU. In 1986 the IRFB conceded the right to earn income from communications for retired

players, but this decision is not retroactive.²²

Defections to the Rugby League (NU) continue, but as in Edwardian times, most defectors are provincials, and the Welsh cases are the most celebrated. In 1986 Llanelli and Welsh national stand-off (fly half) Gary Pearce was reported to have turned professional for £100,000. Terry Holmes of Swansea accepted £80,000 over three years from Bradford Northern.²³ Most League players, however, are not so well paid for their services and their income is dependent upon the frequency of their club's success. This makes the professional game less appealing and accounts in part for the limited number of defections even from areas such as Wales. The adage which is used to explain why defections do not occur on a regular basis is that Rugby League takes care of you while you play and Union takes care of you after you finish playing. This implies that there remains some hints of shamateurism within the amateur game. A player of superior ability can use his talents as a means of securing employment after he has retired. This may come about by a pre-arranged clandestine agreement making it a questionable abuse of professional bylaws.

Perhaps the most disturbing threat to the English game in recent years comes from South Africa. In the early 1980s, as a consequence of the South African racial policies, the International Rugby Football Board voted to boycott all matches with the South African Rugby Board. In order to gain support, the SARB offered under-the-table financial inducements to top

international sides to tour there. The first team to accept was a group of New Zealand players, almost all of whom had played for the All Blacks at one time. The New Zealand Rugby Union would not sanction the trip, but under the leadership of Colin Mead, a national hero, the Cavaliers played a series of matches in South Africa. It has been rumoured that, depending upon the success of the tour, the SARB would contemplate the establishment of a Rugby Circus, a professional league, which would offer inducements to the world's top players, as the Packer Circus had done for cricket during the 1970s. Fortunately, perhaps, the Cavaliers' tour was a disaster. The poor quality of refereeing led to horrific acts of violence by the hosts, and the visitors were forced to send home for more players. It is not possible to guess what action Dannie Cravan, the nabob of South African rugby, has planned, but a professional league would severely hurt rugby in countries which depend on amateur players.²⁴

David Henwood and others have suggested that the demands on the personal finances and valuable free time of players by the Union and individual clubs have become unreasonable. Including club fixtures, county and national team games and show piece matches, amateur rugby men may play as often as 60 times a season. This does not account for training and travel. These matches, according to Welsh star Phil Bennett, are needed to pay the bills of the clubs and unions, but players receive no compensation. Even middle class Victorian cricket star W.G. Grace was handsomely rewarded for participation in exhibition

matches. The Union had a £4.9 million cash flow for the 1985-86 season, earned through the efforts of its playing membership.²⁵ These players, by dedicating themselves to amateurism, put their careers, family life, and physical well being on the line for Victorian middle class ideals which seem anachronistic by any standards.

The Rugby Football Union was founded as a Victorian middle class organization, by and for that class. Its struggle to resist the wider social trends up to 1914, including the advance of an aggressive working class and the rise of sports entrepreneurialism, dictated that the game would remain particularly Victorian in attitude. Although there were limited concessions to the triumph of elements of the new in the Edwardian period, alterations to playing styles ironically served to confirm that the Victorian attitudes upon which the game had been founded could survive. Eileen and Stephen Yeo's observation that in modern England "old, tired and irrelevant" aspects of culture have a tendency to live on in "practices and manners", and thrive "when they have become distinctly less convenient" refers to class relationships.²⁶ Illustrations of this can be found in rugby today as a legacy of its Victorian past. By 1914 amateur rugby was already inconsistent with the advances of society as a whole.

1. Cited in the Observer. This reference was given to me by Professor Jean Friesen, department of history, University of Manitoba, as a press clipping with no exact date. Professor Friesen has been very helpful over the writing of this thesis. Since she is a devotee of the "business they call a sport" she has provided insights from "the other side" for which I am very grateful.
2. William J. Morgan, "'Radical' Social Theory of Sport: A Critical and Conceptual Emendation", Sociology of Sport Journal, no. 2, 1985, pp. 56-63.
3. K.A.P. Sandiford, "Cricket and the Barbadian Society", Canadian Journal of History, December, 21, 1986. C.L.R. James, Beyond A Boundary (London:1963), passim.
4. Wray Vamplew, The Turf: A Social and Economic History of Horse Racing (London:1976), passim, especially his conclusions. Delves in Yeo and Yeo. For a comparison to the American experience in the nineteenth century, see Adelman, Section I, pp. 27-91.
5. Peter Bailey, Leisure and Class in Victorian England, see conclusions.
6. William Morgan, p. 62.
7. James Walvin, The People's Game, pp. 70-79.
8. Tony Mason, pp. 253-257. Charles Korr, "West Ham United Football Club".
9. Dunning and Sheard, pp. 194-195.
10. William Baker, "William Webb Ellis and the Origins of Rugby Football", pp. 122-123 (my emphasis). See also "The Making of a Working-Class Football Culture in Victorian England", pp. 244-245 and pp. 248-249. Not the reference to E.P. Thompson's, The Making of the English Working Class in the latter's title.
11. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London:1963), see "Preface". Harvey J. Kaye, The British Marxist Historians (Cambridge:1984), pp. 167-220.
12. Gareth Stedman Jones, "Class expression versus social control?", Languages of Class (Cambridge:1983), pp. 76-79.
13. This has been fully documented in Chapter 3. See also Raymond Williams, The Country and the City (New York:1973), p. 297.

14. Wray Vamplew, "Not Playing the Game", p. 232. Vamplew points out that after 1885 professional soccer players formed the Association Football Players' Union. This suggests that professionalization was instituted either by or for the working class and instead, resulted in the proletarianization of working class players.

15. Keith A.P. Sandiford, "Amateurs and Professionals in Victorian County Cricket", Albion, Spring, 1983, 15, pp. 32-51. "The Professionalization of Modern Cricket", British Journal of Sports History, December, 1985, vol. 2, pp. 270-289.

16. Keith A.P. Sandiford, "Amateurs and Professionals in Victorian County Cricket", pp. 33-34. "The Professionalization of Modern Cricket", p. 270.

17. Keith A.P. Sandiford, "Amateurs and Professionals in Victorian County Cricket", p. 35.

18. Peter Bailey, Leisure and Class in Victorian England, p. 145.

19. David Henwood, "An Examination as to whether Rugby Union Can Remain a Truly Amateur Sport in an Increasingly Professional Environment", West London Institute of Higher Education, Dept. of Sports Studies, 1986 (unpublished), p. 11.

20. J.V. Smith, 'Good Morning, President': Rugby From the Top (London:1985), pp. 167-173.

21. After a year of working at the RFU offices, museum and library at Twickenham and having the opportunity to discuss the problem of endorsement by Melville with his club team official (Wasps RFC), I, as a Canadian, found the animosity toward him as a player and employee of Nike very surprising.

22. Rugby World and Post, June, 1986.

23. David Henwood, pp. 26-27. Rugby World and Post, August, 1986.

24. Rugby World and Post, all issues between January and August 1986.

25. David Henwood, p. 15, Rugby World and Post, August, 1986, see Phil Bennett's article and "Weighill's High Command". Air Commodore Weighill was the RFU secretary in 1986.

26. Eileen and Stephen Yeo, p. 273.

APPENDIX A

PRESIDENTS OF THE RFU, 1871-1971

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION (First recorded by RFU biographies)	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
solicitor	Rugby School	-----
solicitor	Rugby School	golfer, gentleman cricketer
solicitor	Rugby School	-----
solicitor	Rugby School	Cpt. of Richmond RFC
solicitor	Rugby School	-----
merchant		Sec. of the Lanc. CCC
solicitor	Marlborough Coll.	-----
doctor	Sidney Coll. (Bath)	United Hospital track athlete
doctor	Clifton Coll.	-----
doctor	Blackheath Prop.	-----
solicitor	Hailebury	Cpt. of Richmond Golf Club
mfger.	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
Lloyd's Und.	Marlborough Coll.	-----
politician/ mayor	-----	Milita. Officer, J P, Pres. of the Cheshire Union
mfger.	Marlborough Coll.	J P
mfger.	-----	-----
civil servant	-----	Knighted, politician, Tory
-----	-----	-----
-----	Taunton Coll.	-----
-----	-----	-----
architect	-----	freemason, politician, J P
solicitor	Merchant Taylor	Pres. Cambridge U. Swim Club
business man	-----	Pres. Northumberland Lawn Tennis Club
solicitor	Merchant Taylor	freemason
mfger.	King's School	politician, J P
solicitor	Durham U.	politician, freemason

mfger.	Liverpool Inst.	rower, golfer, milita officer
military officer	RNC	Knighted, Admiral
-----	Rugby School	Mjr., Barbarian
business man	Horfield School	-----
barrister	Rugby/Dover Coll.	Barbarian
merchant	-----	YRU Pres.
mfger.	Marlborough Coll.	LRU Pres., golfer
accountant	Dulwich Coll.	Barbarian, J P
military officer	European educated	Mjr. General, J P, knighted
coal exporter	Dame Allen's School	J P, golfer
school master	Clifton Coll.	-----
stockbroker	Dulwich Coll.	Mjr., sailor
solicitor	-----	writer
business man	Sedburgh	H. of Lords, water skier & scuba diver
manager	Nuneaton	J P, OBE
business man	Blundell's	-----
engineer	-----	milit. officer, W.W.I, DSO and MC
mfger.	Fartown G.S.	Pres. of YRU
-----	Mill Hill	politician
dental surg.	Guy's Hosp.	Admiral
-----	-----	-----
RAF Officer	-----	Wing Comm., politician
school master	Cambridge	Barbarian, OBE
business man	-----	Barbarian, OBE
military officer	Wellington & RMA	Mjr. General
business man	Oxford	MBE
builder/farmer	Royal Henley G.S.	-----
business man	Uppingham	J P, knighted
military officer	St. Bees	Barbarian, knighted, Air Chief Marshall
farmer	Harrow	-----
business man	-----	-----

farmer (1,000 acres)	Eastbourne Coll.	Barbarian
business man	King Edward VI	Barbarian, Cricket for Hampshire
business man	Mill Hill	knighted, Chair of Nat. Council of Coal Traders

4 RFU Secretaries, 1871-1971 (did not become President)

solicitor	Rugby School	Barbarian
school teacher	Blackheath Prop.	Lord of the Manor (Sussex)
military officer	RNEC	Barbarian
-----	Wiggeston Sch.	Barbarian

11 Vice Presidents, 1871-1971 (did not become President)

solicitor	Rugby School	-----
business man	Wellington Coll.	-----
-----	Tonbridge	race horse owner
cotton broker	Marlborough Coll.	Pres. of LRU
-----	-----	-----
-----	Buxdon Coll.	amateur cricketer for 55 seasons
business man	Richmond School	-----
military officer	Clifton	Brigadier, Barbarian
solicitor	Wells House Prop.	Barbarian
physician	Denstone Coll.	-----
solicitor	Cheltenham	-----

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