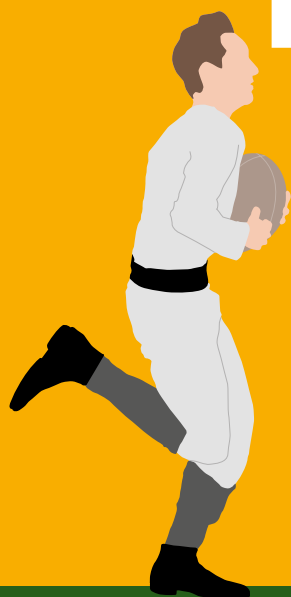


'PASS THE PIG'S BLADDER'



A CELEBRATION
OF **200 YEARS** OF
RUGBY FOOTBALL
1823 - 2023



WITH FOREWORDS BY
HRH The Princess Royal & Sir Gareth Edwards, CBE

'PASS THE
PIG'S
BLADDER'

Copyright ©

Mercer Books & Rugby School have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright owners.

MERCER books

First published in the United Kingdom in 2022 by Mercer Books

www.mercerbooks.co.uk

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from The British Library

ISBN 978-1-7391224-0-9

Editor – Robin Fletcher
Art direction – Tim Mercer
Design – Reuben Wakeman

Printed in the UK by Interprint, Swindon



RUGBY SCHOOL
Birthplace of the Game
— 1823-2023 —

CONTENTS



**FOREWORD
HRH PRINCESS
ANNE
Page 3**



**FOREWORD
SIR GARETH
EDWARDS
Page 5**



**INTRODUCTION
PETER GREEN
Page 8**



**ONE BOY;
ONE SCHOOL
Page 29**



**"HOME FIRES"
Page 61**



**COMMEMORATING
WEBB ELLIS
Page 87**



**THE GLOBAL
SPREAD
OF RUGBY
FOOTBALL
Page 121**



**FROM
FRIENDSHIP
TO FLANDERS
Page 145**



**WHEELCHAIR
WONDERS
Page 171**



**THEY TOO RAN
WITH THE BALL
Page 201**



**RUGBY AND
POLITICS
Page 223**



**WHAT PRICE THE
RUGBY GAME?
Page 253**



**CINDER TRACKS
AND CITADELS
Page 285**



**FOOTBALL
AT RUGBY -
A FUTURE
VISION
Page 311**



**EDITOR'S NOTES
Page 352**

“
WE BREAK BONES AND WE
LOSE TEETH. WE PLAY RUGBY.
”

Martin Johnson



HRH The Princess Royal enjoying herself at Murrayfield



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

I have been Patron of the Scottish Rugby Union since the 1986/7 season and attend as many of their home matches as I can. My son played for the Scottish U18s while still at school and my daughter is married to a former rugby union player. So there is enthusiasm for the game across the family.

I am pleased that, with this volume, as well as with a large number of events, Rugby School is marking the bicentenary of the year that rugby football was created by one of their former schoolboys, a defiant William Webb Ellis. In 1823, the Rugby School boys played a form of football on The Close, regarded as hallowed ground, and still used, with a great deal of kicking and hacking and not many rules. He caught the ball in his arms, which was allowed; then he ran with it, which was not. It took a while for his action to be accepted and for a mix of kicking and handling to become respectable as a new team game. Since then, the game of rugby has been refined, the rules of play are clear, and it is enjoyed across the world. The winners of the Rugby World Cup are presented with the William Webb Ellis Cup, which acknowledges Webb Ellis' gift to the sporting world.

Team sport is an important part of our national life and culture. We play it, and watch it, with fervour; and rugby is one of our favourites. It is a tough game that demands teamwork, personal courage, skill, speed, peak fitness and a keen eye. It also requires discipline. So it gives one pause for thought, and perhaps a modicum of pleasure, to read that, sometime at the end of the 19th Century, when the Old Rugbeian Committee put up a plaque on a wall at one end of The Close to commemorate young William Webb Ellis, they declared that he had behaved 'with a fine disregard for the rules of the game'

I wish Rugby School and the wider Rugby Community every success in their own celebrations for marking the 200th birthday of the game of rugby in 2023.

FOREWORD

Sir Gareth Edwards

“At around six or seven I got a rugby ball as a Christmas present. There was very little traffic so we would kick it on the road. It would wear out in a couple of months but we thought it was fantastic. I had a younger brother and as we got older we used to play against each other. Of course, he had to be England all the time! We local boys would play in the school yard, or on any bit of land, not necessarily a pitch. You would just put your coats down as goalposts. Someone would get a red Welsh jersey for Christmas and then you would gather and pick your team. We would play until dusk until my father used his piercing whistle when it was bed-time. We would cry: “Just let us score the winning try.” And of course, those winning tries took for ever!

“I failed my 11+ exam and went to the local secondary modern in the valley. That’s where we started getting some sort of resemblance of prepared sport. There was a rugby pitch on the school ground and on a couple of occasions we would play another village in the valley. We did not have proper coaching, it was very loose, but we did have a PE teacher who took a deep interest in rugby.

“My father came home from work one day with a pair of boots and a helmet and put them on the kitchen table. I thought they were for me, but he told me that as I was not working at school, I would be going underground at the local pit the next week. That frightened the life out of me, so I started working a lot harder. I had a second chance to take my exams after two years and did well enough to go to Ponyclun Secondary School. There I met my teacher and mentor Bill Samuel who taught me all I know about the game. I wanted to be a centre or fullback but he told me to forget it. Because I was a fairly good gymnast and athlete he said if I wanted to get into the Swansea Valley Under 15 team I would need to be scrum-half, so he taught me the skills I needed. Bill was responsible for getting me into Millfield School in Somerset on a scholarship which was a different world, a great platform. I played rugby for the school in the morning and then soccer for the valley team in the afternoon, even being offered professional terms by Swansea City.

“At Millfield I played for the Welsh Schools side and then after two years I went to college in Cardiff to do teacher training. There I played my first senior games and then my first for Wales before joining the Lions tour to South Africa in 1968. It all

“
ONE THING THAT RUGBY IS
GENERALLY IS INCREDIBLY FAIR,
AND WITH IT BEING A TEAM
SPORT, NO INDIVIDUAL IS BIGGER
THAN THE GAME ITSELF.
”

Jeremy Guscott



WHEELCHAIR WONDERS

By David Pond,
former CEO Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby



AS ALL MEDIA OUTLETS SEEK EXCITING, CREATIVE AND DIFFERENT CONTENT, WHEELCHAIR RUGBY WITH ITS CRUNCH OF METAL, SCREECH OF TYRES, AND COLLISIONS SENDING CHAIRS AND THEIR DISABLED OCCUPANTS SPRAWLING ACROSS THE COURT, IS THE ULTIMATE ADRENALINE EXPERIENCE!

IN THE BEGINNING

February 1976, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. As the winter sun fades, the temperature falls to minus 11 degrees. Duncan Campbell manoeuvres from the car passenger seat into his wheelchair. He has arrived at his local gym for weekly rehabilitation and to meet with Jerry Terwin, Randy Dueck, Paul LeJeune and Chris Sargent. All are quadriplegic and enjoy getting together to lift a few weights with the help of a volunteer. Duncan is 19 and just two years before had broken his neck diving into shallow water, paralysing him from the chest down. Before his accident he had been a pretty reasonable ice hockey and baseball player. Like many young Canadians he is a sports fanatic and had thrived playing team sports. Since his injury he has tried to get back into sport and has participated in the Canadian Games for the Physically Disabled. But these are individual sports, like swimming and wheelchair racing, not the same buzz as being part of the a team.

The five men pushed around the gym in their wheelchairs not particularly noticing the cold, not uncommon for those with spinal injuries who have difficulties in regulating body temperature. As time moved on it became obvious that the volunteer who usually joined them to help lift the weights was clearly not going to turn up. As they pushed around, the men noticed a variety of balls and picked up different ones to throw around. With all experiencing hand and arm dysfunction some balls were more challenging to control than others. But the weight and size of a volleyball worked well and it was not long before they were passing the ball between themselves to score points into a garbage can. Soon they had divided into two versus three and, realising they were spending more time trying to pick up the ball that had missed the can, they dispensed with it and introduced the rule that to score a point a player had to cross the line with ball in hand at the end of the basketball court.

During the weekly gym sessions that followed, the five players continued to develop the simple game they had started. They knew immediately they were on to something that could take off because up until this point the only team sport available to those with a spinal injury was wheelchair basketball and this was beyond the physical functionality of the majority of quadriplegics. Over time more individuals joined the sessions, and although all had some loss of function in all four limbs, not all had spinal injuries and even those who did had different levels of function. So it was soon necessary to come up with a system to ensure teams were equally matched. There was already a classification system used for quadriplegic athletes competing in track and field events. This, therefore, became the early basis for the beginnings of a system for wheelchair rugby where individuals were divided into three categories depending on their physical functionality. The greater the function an individual possessed the higher the category assigned.

All that was needed then was to agree the balance of categories in each team so they could be competitively matched. So it was that wheelchair rugby was born, though it would go through many development phases and take 17 years before being recognised as an official international sport for disabled athletes.

MURDERBALL

Over the next couple of years, the game continued to evolve and physical contact became a key feature as players used their chairs to block and hold opponents to stop them crossing the line and to crash their chairs into one another to dislodge the ball from an opponent's grasp. There was no protection and players, mostly paralysed from the chest down, were often knocked out of their chairs and left sprawling on the floor where able-bodied volunteers, often family members or care staff, came to the rescue and lifted them back into action. At this time, the game was being played in ordinary day wheelchairs and these quickly began to get damaged. So, individuals started to think of ways to protect them, resulting in 'do it yourself fixes' such as steel bars welded to the front of chairs, wearing steel-toed construction boots, and modifications to provide protection to the spoked wheels, which suffered the most damage. For safety, players strapped their legs together in the chair, though all other strapping was prohibited. The physicality of the game was soon to become its most distinctive characteristic, giving rise to its original name of 'Murderball'.

Before long, the Winnipeg group started to give demonstrations of the new game in different parts of Canada, usually at other disability sports events. At these gatherings athletes began to get together and form ad hoc teams for a friendly game of Murderball, and an ever-increasing number of people were being introduced to the game. This resulted in the first organised competition in 1978 as part of the Edmonton National Games for the Disabled, with four teams taking part, which in turn laid the foundations for the first national Murderball championships held a year later as part of the Canadian National Wheelchair Games in St John's, Newfoundland.

That same year the game moved across the border into the USA where the Winnipeg team gave an exhibition game at a regional track and field meet at Southwest Minnesota State University. The event was attended by athletes from the universities

THERE WAS NO PROTECTION AND PLAYERS, MOSTLY PARALYSED FROM THE CHEST DOWN, WERE OFTEN KNOCKED OUT OF THEIR CHAIRS AND LEFT SPRAWLING ON THE FLOOR WHERE ABLE-BODIED VOLUNTEERS, OFTEN FAMILY MEMBERS OR CARE STAFF, CAME TO THE RESCUE AND LIFTED THEM BACK INTO ACTION.



Photos courtesy: Megumi Masuda

of North Dakota, Illinois, Michigan and South Dakota. Everyone joined in the games playing in their track chairs, enjoying the opportunity to play in a physically intense and dynamic team game, alongside friends and colleagues with similar impairments. The thrill, excitement and camaraderie became the catalyst for the game's rapid popularity with the quadriplegic community and it was Brad Mikkelsen who led the USA charge.

1979 was also to be a significant year for the future international recognition of the sport. It was the year Pawel Zbieranowski escaped the increasing repression of his native Poland to settle in Canada. Pawel was qualified in physical education and physiotherapy but initially struggled to find employment in his adopted country until 1980 when he got a volunteer position at Lyndhurst Hospital. This was a spinal cord centre in Toronto, home to the Toronto Bulldogs, one of the first wheelchair rugby teams, and it was not long before Pawel was helping out as a volunteer before becoming the team's coach, a position he held for 12 years. Pawel quickly realised the potential of the game but understood that if it was to become a recognised sport it needed structure – rules and referees to manage play on court, a reliable classification system to ensure teams were evenly matched, and a competition framework. He began to work with volunteers across Canada and with those developing the game in the USA, to lay the foundations for the infrastructure and skills needed to grow and administer the sport.

TAKING ROOT IN AMERICA

Paralysed from the chest down following a motor accident aged 20, Brad Mikkelsen was at the lower end of the functionality spectrum and worked as a student volunteer with the Disabled Student Services at the University of North Dakota where he was a keen wheelchair basketball player. Having seen the Winnipeg exhibition game at Minnesota University and taken part in the 'have a go' sessions that followed, he was an immediate convert. In 1981 he formed the first US team, the North Dakota Wallbangers supported by the university. Around the same time Terry Hanson, who had developed polio when he was just 22 months old and worked at the Courage Rehabilitation Centre in Minnesota, assembled a group of players to learn and practise the sport using the centre's facilities. Whilst the centre was supportive, it was concerned about safety and in particular the frequency players fell out of their chairs when they reached forward for the ball or collided with one another, and so introduced safety strapping to be used above the waist. Terry's group eventually formed the second US team, the Minnesota Rolling Gophers, leading in 1982 to the first US match being held between North Dakota and Minnesota as part of the National Wheelchair Games in Marshall, North Dakota. That same year the University of North Dakota hosted the first north American tournament with teams from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, North Dakota and Minnesota competing. At this tournament there was discussion about the name Murderball with some expressing concern that the name often made it difficult to attract publicity for events and fundraising. Whilst there was agreement that it should change, founding member Duncan Campbell wanted it to be renamed Wheelchair Rugby whilst Brad Mikkelsen proposed Quad Rugby, its double meaning of 'quad' being 4 v 4 players, now established as the rule for the number of players on court at any one time, and 'quad' also being a play on quadriplegic. Today the sport is recognised across the world as wheelchair rugby, though in the USA it is still also referred to as quad rugby.

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC

In 1981 the game crossed the Atlantic when Canadian Barbara Montemurro introduced it at the Stoke Mandeville World Wheelchair Games in England. Barbara was on the staff of the Canadian national team attending the games which had been held annually since 1948 and regarded as the origin of the Paralympic Games. She took copies of the early rules to Stoke and distributed them to quadriplegic athletes from the various countries attending, encouraging them to read the rules and inviting them to take part in a demonstration game the following day. There was immediate interest from many of the athletes who returned to their home nations and began playing. Showcasing wheelchair rugby became a regular item at international disability sporting events and at the annual Stoke Mandeville event where ad hoc games were often played in the car park or on the helicopter pad!

BY THE MID-1980S, THE SPORT WAS GAINING REAL INTEREST IN BRITAIN WHERE ALISON STIRLING, A PHYSIOTHERAPIST AT SHEFFIELD SPINAL INJURIES UNIT, LED ITS DEVELOPMENT AND IT SOON BECAME PART OF THE SPORTS OFFERED DURING REHABILITATION AT MOST OF BRITAIN'S SPINAL UNITS.

By the mid-1980s, the sport was gaining real interest in Britain where Alison Stirling, a physiotherapist at Sheffield Spinal Injuries Unit, led its development and it soon became part of the sports offered during rehabilitation at most of Britain's spinal units. In 1987 the Quebec provincial team travelled to England and held a training camp and coaching clinics to support the game's growth and it was not long before teams formed in most of Britain's spinal units and began playing one another in friendly matches. In 1988 Allan Smith took on the role of GB Rugby Secretary and continued the development. Allan had been a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy and the Royal Navy Hang Gliding Champion. In 1984 he hit a tree while gliding in France, suffering a spinal injury, and was introduced to the sport during rehabilitation at the Pinderfields spinal injury unit in Wakefield. As players left the units having completed this stage of their rehabilitation they often returned to play and to introduce the game to those recently injured and starting their own rehabilitation journeys. As interest grew, clubs started in different parts of the country. The first was the Marauders based in Nottingham and drawing players from the spinal injury units at Oswestry, Pinderfields and from Shropshire and the West Midlands. Clubs in Stoke Mandeville and Lodge Moor, Sheffield, Southport, and Cardiff soon followed.

At the same time as the game was taking root in Britain, growth in the USA was accelerating following its arrival in the south of the country with the first demonstration game staged in Dallas in 1987. A year later the USA National Championships were held at the University of North Dakota with teams now represented from around the country – Minnesota, Chicago, Detroit, Dallas, Los Angeles, and North Dakota. At this tournament the US Quad Rugby Association was formed as the sport's national governing body to promote and regulate the sport in the USA. 1988 was also a big year for the sport in Britain as the first national team was selected with Colin Price appointed as coach. Colin was a national wheelchair basketball player and had also coached Britain's women's basketball team. This experience was invaluable because the evolution of wheelchair rugby saw the adoption of many of the elements and chair skills of wheelchair basketball. Colin remained with the squad for a year passing on his basketball knowledge before handing the coaching role to Brian Worrel who was to revolutionise the sport with his tactical skills. Brian, a former paratrooper in the British Army, had

injured his spinal cord on duty in the jungles of Belize. He was a keen chess player and brought the idea of the tactical board into his coaching and team preparation. It was Brian who in 1996 took the GB team to its first Paralympic Games in Atlanta.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Back in Canada, Pawel Zbieranowski continued his mission to develop and promote the sport. By now his vision was clear: he wanted to see the sport included in the Paralympic Games and the first step toward this was to establish an international tournament with teams from outside Canada and the USA. Pawel organised the first Toronto International Wheelchair Rugby tournament in January 1989 which was to become an annual event. It was the first truly international tournament with 10 teams participating including the national teams of Britain and the USA, and teams from Dallas, Boston, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Ontario

The 1990s was a period of rich growth for wheelchair rugby. The decade began with the sport introduced as an exhibition event at the World Wheelchair Games at Stoke Mandeville and was to end in 2000 as a Paralympic full medal event. The 1990 Toronto International Tournament attracted Volkswagen Canada as a major sponsor which raised the profile of the tournament and further promoted the sport. An International Organising Committee was established on the back of the tournament with Pawel Zbieranowski as Chair, Allan Smith from Britain and Abu Yilla from the USA. This provided the leadership to drive the sport's global development and in 1991 it was recognised as an official international sport for athletes with a disability by the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation (ISMWSF), the governing body for sports which catered for individuals with a physical disability.

In January 1992 at the conclusion of the 3rd Toronto International Tournament, the International Wheelchair Quad Rugby Federation was formed. Pawel Zbieranowski was elected Chair with the USA's Brad Mikkelsen and Britain's Allan Smith as members. Pawel was charged with promoting the game in Eastern Europe and Asia; Brad, Central and South America and Oceania; and Allan, Western Europe. These were to become the three recognised wheelchair rugby zones for international

THE 1990S WAS A PERIOD OF RICH GROWTH FOR WHEELCHAIR RUGBY. THE DECADE BEGAN WITH THE SPORT INTRODUCED AS AN EXHIBITION EVENT AT THE WORLD WHEELCHAIR GAMES AT STOKE MANDEVILLE AND WAS TO END IN 2000 AS A PARALYMPIC FULL MEDAL EVENT.



Photos courtesy: Megumi Masuda

competition and development purposes. By now there were 32 teams established in the USA, 16 across Canada and the game was taking root in northern Europe led by Jan-Owe Mattsson and Peter Andersson in Sweden. Jan-Owe, who had incurred a spinal injury in a diving accident in 1970, was a top international wheelchair racer and took part in some of the exhibition games. At the Barcelona Paralympics in 1992 he and Peter Andersson agreed with their north American racing friends that on their return to Sweden they would get wheelchair rugby started. So it was that in January 1993 they gathered a group of quad friends in their local gym in Stockholm and started playing. Just a year later Sweden had four teams, two in Stockholm, one in Gothenburg and one in the south of the country. Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium also formed teams during this period.

A similar pattern of growth was taking place in the Southern Hemisphere. In 1988 some New Zealand athletes were in Sydney taking part in the Australia all-sports National Championships where they gave a demonstration of wheelchair rugby playing in their day chairs. It was just three years later that Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, the NZ national team and an invitation team, took part in Australia's first national Wheelchair Rugby Championship, held in Melbourne and won by South Australia. A year later the first Australian national team was named with Bruno Morretti as its coach.

By 1993 there were 15 countries actively participating in the game and the same year seven countries met at Stoke Mandeville for the World Wheelchair Games – Australia, Canada, Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. The tournament saw the USA defeat Britain in the final 37-30 with Canada taking third place. Away from the court, on August 1, 1993 the first informal meeting was taking place between the International Wheelchair Quad Rugby Federation, representatives from the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the Atlanta Paralympics Organising Committee and the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation to consider the inclusion of wheelchair rugby in the Paralympic Games. A day later it was agreed that wheelchair rugby should be confirmed as the official name of the sport worldwide and that the new global authority for the sport would be named the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRF). Following the election of its first officers, the IWRF was born on August 6, 1993 with the purpose of establishing an international infrastructure for the sport, providing international championship competition and seeking recognition from the IPC.

The growth in the number of European nations playing the game spawned the first European Championship in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 1995. Seven nations competed, with Britain defeating Sweden in the final to become the winners of the first European gold medal. Bronze went to the Netherlands who pushed Germany into fourth place. The tournament was attended by representatives of the IPC, who were impressed with the sport and saw it as a natural inclusion in the Paralympic Games. In the September 1995 the IPC and the organising committee of the Atlanta Paralympic Games approved wheelchair rugby as a demonstration sport for the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games. In the same year, New Zealand staged its first national tournament which included two teams over from Australia. Significantly, making his debut in one of the Australian teams was a fresh-faced 14-year-old boy, Brad Dubberley. Brad was to go on to become one of the world's top high point players before taking up coaching and becoming one of the most successful national coaches. He continues as Australia's head coach today.

PARALYMPIC GAMES

Autumn 1995 was significant with the inaugural World Wheelchair Rugby Championships staged in Nottwill, Switzerland, home of the Swiss Paraplegic

THE GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF EUROPEAN NATIONS PLAYING THE GAME SPAWNED THE FIRST EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP IN GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN IN 1995. SEVEN NATIONS COMPETED, WITH BRITAIN DEFEATING SWEDEN IN THE FINAL TO BECOME THE WINNERS OF THE FIRST EUROPEAN GOLD MEDAL.

AT THE END OF THE GAMES ON AUGUST 21, 1996, DURING THE IPC PRESS CONFERENCE, HANS LINDSTROM, CHAIRMAN OF THE IPC SPORTS COMMITTEE, ANNOUNCED THAT WHEELCHAIR RUGBY HAD RECEIVED MEDAL SPORT STATUS FOR THE SYDNEY 2000 PARALYMPIC GAMES.

Centre. Eight teams competed with the USA defeating Canada 41-36 in the final to win gold, a prelude to the next seven years of the USA's domination. The tournament was the first international for the New Zealand team, the Wheel Blacks, who took the bronze medal, knocking Britain into fourth place 41-28. The following February, on behalf of the IWRF, Pawel Zbieranowski signed the contract with the organising committee of the Atlanta Paralympics for wheelchair rugby to take part. Its inclusion was a game-changer for the sport and it was appropriate that Pawel Zbieranowski, whose vision, drive and leadership had been instrumental to this achievement, was the person whose signature is recorded on this historic document.

Three years following the establishment of the IWRF, wheelchair rugby players, representing the six countries who had topped the previous year's World Championships, participated in the opening ceremony of the Atlanta Paralympic Games – USA, Canada, New Zealand, Great Britain, Sweden and Australia. The USA dominated the tournament defeating Canada 37-30 in the final to take gold, with the Kiwis beating Great Britain 46-34 to take bronze. Sweden and Australia finished fifth and sixth respectively, both showing strong performances. Australia, despite finishing in bottom position, gained a great deal of experience which would benefit them four years later in Sydney. At the end of the games on August 21, 1996, during the IPC press conference, Hans Lindstrom, Chairman of the IPC Sports Committee, announced that wheelchair rugby had received medal sport status for the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games.

The first Paralympic Games of the new millennium was also the first where wheelchair rugby was included as a full medal sport. The USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Sweden, Great Britain, Germany and Switzerland all qualified for the tournament which took Sydney by storm and wheelchair rugby became one of the most watched and exciting events. More than 10,000 fans saw the gold medal game between hosts Australia and the USA who went into the final undefeated in their three-game preliminary rounds. The crowd was treated to one of the most exciting and closest finishes with the USA defeating Australia by one point to take gold. The Sydney Games was a turning point for the Paralympic movement and left a legacy of increasing professionalism for Paralympic sport. For the first time, the

venues used for the Olympics were the same used for the Paralympics and many of the Olympic event staff and volunteers stayed on to manage the Paralympics. This all made for the same high-quality sports presentation and lifted the experience from a disability event to an elite sporting spectacle.

CLASSIFICATION OF ATHLETES

With wheelchair rugby as one of the spectator highlights of the Sydney games, the stage was set for further global expansion and a shift towards a more professional approach to its development at international level. The USA, Canada, Australia, and Britain led the way in creating high-performance systems. In parallel, the IWRF continued to drive the evolution of the world game, building on the early work of individuals like Terry Vinyard from the USA, who had created an early rule book, and Tony Lapolla and Gilles Brière of Canada, who would lead on the creation of an international set of rules. John Bishop from the USA founded Quadrugby.com which enabled athletes and coaches around the world to network and share ideas. John was to go on to become the President of the international federation.

Meanwhile, Dr Anne-Marie Glenn of the USA, Claire Hart and Alison Sterling from Britain, and various physiotherapists from different nations, led the early work to create a functionally based classification system. Its purpose is to provide for a fair and equitable competition at all levels of Paralympic sport, allowing athletes to compete at the highest level, regardless of individual differences in physical function. It enables athletes with different levels of function to compete side by side giving them a pivotal role in the tactical execution of the game, style of play and athlete and spectator experience. Although the origins of the game lay in those with a spinal injury, its growing popularity soon attracted more disabled athletes with impairments such as polio, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and amputations. Those with spinal injuries had either no, or very limited, trunk function. Other disability athletes, while still having some loss of function in all four limbs, often had full trunk function which provided the power to propel their chair at speed and create big hits to opponents' chairs.

Based on the track and field system, the first wheelchair rugby classification was medically based with three classes, largely determined by medical diagnosis and level of spinal cord injury. This changed in 1991, when a functional system unique to the sport was introduced. Functional classification systems ensure athletes with a combination of impaired or absent upper and lower limb movement have an opportunity to play the sport. And the strategies and skills of competing teams and athletes, rather than the amount of movement of the athletes, are the factors determining success in competition. Today there are seven classes ranging from 0.5 to 3.5 with functional characteristics identified for each athlete class.

HIGH-FUNCTIONING ATHLETES, THOSE WITH A CLASS 3.0 OR 3.5, ARE IN PARTICULAR DEMAND BECAUSE THEIR UPPER BODY STRENGTH AND MOBILITY ALONGSIDE THEIR RELATIVELY GREATER ARM AND HAND FUNCTION ALLOW THEM TO GENERATE CHAIR POWER AND SPEED WHILST MAINTAINING HIGH LEVELS OF BALL CONTROL. THEY CAN TRULY BE GAME CHANGERS.

In general, the 0.5 class includes those athletes with the most impairment and the 3.5 class includes those with the least impairment eligible for the sport. In international wheelchair rugby the total number of points of all four athletes actually playing cannot exceed 8.0. A team may play with a line-up that totals less than 8.0 points, but not more. Performance staff and coaches scour their respective countries seeking out individuals with the functionality at the top end of each of the respective classes to maximise a team's overall court functionality. High-functioning athletes, those with a class 3.0 or 3.5, are in particular demand because their upper body strength and mobility alongside their relatively greater arm and hand function allow them to generate chair power and speed whilst maintaining high levels of ball control. They can truly be game changers.

MURDERBALL, THE FILM

The Sydney spectacle of athletes smashing into one another with chairs flying around the arena was a film-maker's dream. Add to that some incredible human stories of hope, fear, resilience and courage, and you have the making of a great movie! So it was that following the Sydney Paralympics, film directors Henry Alex Rubin and Dana Adam Shapiro, along with producer Jeffrey Mandel, set about following the USA team as it prepared for the 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens. The result was the Academy Award-nominated film documentary *Murderball*, which at one level centred on the rivalry between the Canadian and USA teams but also examined the lives of those who have experienced life-changing injuries. It was a powerful expression of the triumph of the human spirit, shining a spotlight on the personal lives and challenges of quadriplegics, while also showcasing the

THE SYDNEY SPECTACLE OF ATHLETES SMASHING INTO ONE ANOTHER WITH CHAIRS FLYING AROUND THE ARENA WAS A FILM-MAKER'S DREAM. ADD TO THAT SOME INCREDIBLE HUMAN STORIES OF HOPE, FEAR, RESILIENCE AND COURAGE, AND YOU HAVE THE MAKING OF A GREAT MOVIE!

drama and excitement of the sport for athletes and spectators. The film did much to bring wheelchair rugby to a wider audience.

THE SPORT IN GREAT BRITAIN

Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s wheelchair rugby gained popularity in Britain. Initially it was the spinal injury units which provided the development focus, and most early players were able-bodied people who had incurred life-changing spinal injuries. Whilst motor accidents were a common factor, rugby, diving and water sports featured highly among the causes. There was a strong bond between those who found themselves in similar situations. The slow process of rehabilitation and the often painful mental adjustment to the realities of paralysis were something that could only be truly understood by those who had experienced them. Chances to play the game were also opportunities to come together and share experiences of adjusting to life in a chair, to have fun playing the game and enjoy the all-important, after-game socialising. Often those organising events were the families, friends and support workers. Of these, many learned to become officials and referees, while clinicians, particularly physiotherapists from the hospitals and spinal injury units, came forward to provide medical support and the expertise needed to develop classification.

As the popularity of the sport grew it was recognised there was a need to develop an organisation to promote the game, organise competitions between clubs and, better, create a national team. 1987 saw the start of the first domestic league with teams joining from the spinal units at Oswestry, West Midlands and Stoke Mandeville. This was formalised into a national league a year later with the Pirates, a new team from Cardiff joining. Teams from Southport, Birmingham and Sheffield soon joined, playing in a league structure and the national games at Stoke Mandeville which at that time was a multi-sport competition. Throughout the early 1990s teams also travelled to Europe helping to develop the game there and competing with teams from Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Holland and Germany.

Teams and competitions were all self-funded, including the first national teams. Players and volunteers raised funds from raffles, and collections outside supermarkets. On international rugby weekends, players often came together at motorway service stations where fans going to Twickenham and Cardiff were treated to a demonstration of wheelchair rugby played in the service station car parks and invited to add a donation to the tin. Players like Allan Smith, Brian Worrel, Bob O'Shea, Jon Nutman, Keith Jones, Mike Spence and Rob Tarr were key drivers in creating the organisation necessary for the sport to evolve and by 1990 it was accepted under the governance of the British Wheelchair Sports Federation. By early 1990 the sport was able to operate under its own steam and the Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby Association was formed as a member organisation. Its first Chair was Alison Sterling with Allan Smith as Secretary. This was an

important development as it meant the sport was eligible for charity status and, later, government funding to support the British team as it prepared for the Sydney Paralympic Games. It was also the beginning of Britain developing a professional performance system with Jeremy Moody, a sports scientist at Cardiff Metropolitan University, joining as British coach in 1998 and introducing the first systematic training and conditioning programme. Jeremy took the team, captained by Bob O'Shea, to the Sydney Paralympic Games in 2000 where Britain finished sixth.

The sport grew slowly during the first decade of the new millennium. Led by a strong and committed team of volunteers, the Association organised regional and national competitions and attracted Coloplast, a healthcare provider, to sponsor the national league. By the end of the decade there were seven established clubs: Pirates in Cardiff, Storm and Crusaders in London, Bulls in Sunderland, Gaelic Warriors in Glasgow and Crash in Liverpool. These competed in a league system and an annual national championship. Developing the sport was a continuing challenge. The few widely dispersed clubs meant some players travelled 2-3 hours to play, while for others the distance to the nearest club made it impossible. The costs associated with playing was also a barrier for many who existed on disability benefits. The average chair cost £3000-£5000 and consumables such as tyres racked up another £50 a month. Add to this the high costs of travel, and the sport was inaccessible for many.



Photos courtesy: Megumi Masuda

Those fortunate enough to be part of the GB performance programme were in a more privileged position. Following the UK's worst performance in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, winning just one gold medal, UK Sport was established as a government agency to invest exchequer and National Lottery funding to support athletes to maximise their performance in the Olympics and Paralympics. Wheelchair rugby was an early beneficiary and the sport attracted funding to develop a professional performance programme. In addition to Jeremy Moody joining as a full-time professional coach, other performance support services were commissioned. Funding also enabled a full programme of international training and competition and Britain managed fourth at both the 2004 Athens and the 2008 Beijing Paralympics.

In July 2005, International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge announced that London was to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This heralded the start of an unprecedented investment of government and Lottery funding into British sport. With it came a commitment to use the opportunity to ensure a sporting legacy, to be measured in the growth in numbers participating in sport, and an investment in an elite sporting system to promote lasting medal success. Those on the committee of the GB Wheelchair Rugby Association realised this was an opportunity to access funding alongside the profile the sport would get on the back of a home Paralympic games which they hoped would attract new players and volunteers. It was to be three years later that James Price grabbed Richard Allcroft and took him to the Leeds offices of Sport England. James, a larger-than-life Devonian, had broken his neck in a freak diving accident in 1999. This left him a quadriplegic after which he immersed himself in wheelchair rugby having been introduced to the game during his rehabilitation at Stoke Mandeville. James' exuberance encouraged others to get involved and he was a natural to become the Association's lead for development. Richard Allcroft, who in 1992 had also incurred a spinal injury in a diving accident whilst a serving submariner in the Royal Navy, was the Association's Secretary. James had become aware of the Sport England strategy headlined 'Grow, Sustain, Excel' and saw this as an opportunity to get funding to develop the game. Following their meeting with Sport England, the two wheeled out of the offices to the pavement outside and looked at one another. Sport England had encouraged them to put together a funding submission but how would they even begin? Yet six weeks later the plan was completed and submitted, and soon after, wheelchair rugby was awarded £480,000 of government and Lottery monies with a clear remit to recruit a chief executive and a development director to begin the process of establishing a national governing body for the sport.

The appointment of David Pond as Chief Executive at the end of 2009 began the process of transforming wheelchair rugby from a volunteer-led and managed

ONE OF HIS FIRST ACTIONS WAS TO NEGOTIATE A PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT PACKAGE WITH THE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION WHICH MOST IMPORTANTLY ALLOWED GBWR TO ESTABLISH A HEAD OFFICE WITHIN THE RFU MAIN BUILDING.

sport to Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby (GBWR), the professional national governing body formally recognised by the Sports' Councils in July 2015. One of his first actions was to negotiate a partnership support package with the Rugby Football Union which most importantly allowed GBWR to establish a head office within the RFU main building. This in turn enabled GBWR to access and share several corporate services which quickly helped to establish professional business processes giving confidence to grant providers and partners that they were investing in a going concern. In parallel, the organisation set about strengthening its board of trustees by recruiting new members with legal, finance and governance skills. At this point, London wheelchair rugby player and former GB international, Justin Frishberg stood down as the board chair and handed over to Kevin Aitchison. Kevin, the CEO of a London-based international investment company, had first seen the GB team in action at the 2004 World Championships in Christchurch, New Zealand. A sports fanatic, he was immediately hooked and served 10 years as volunteer board chair, steering the organisation as it grew and evolved. His service was recognised in 2020 when he was made an MBE. In the same vein, the CEO formed his executive team. In the early days he relied heavily on Richard Allcroft who had been one of the key volunteers behind the sport. Richard, with his easy humour, national and international network of contacts and competent administrative skills, was an effective bridge as the sport emerged from its volunteer management structure. Allcroft was to go on to become the first British President of the IWRF, a position he holds today. Pond recruited a sports development professional to be the national development director, and a corporate secretary to manage the office established in the RFU. Along with successful funding bids to Sport England and UK Sport, this provided the financial and human resource necessary to develop and implement a strategy based on growing membership to build wheelchair rugby communities and creating a sustainable performance system to enable a winning national team.

Raising the profile of the sport became a key early objective to attract more players, volunteers and funders. The sport teamed up with Onshore Media, a rising digital communications and PR agency in Plymouth. Onshore was founded by Dawn Bebe, a communications and media professional. Dawn and her partner Simon Whittam, quickly identified the media attractiveness of the sport and set about creating a GBWR brand and digital and social media profile, alongside the positioning of

the sport and its people in a variety of media settings. Results came quickly with Channel 4 recognising that wheelchair rugby could be an exciting element of its London 2012 Paralympic campaign. Channel 4 had been awarded the Paralympics UK TV rights for 2012 Paralympics, over the BBC which had broadcast the games since 1980. The ambitious C4 bid was attractive for its creativity and its aim to use sport as a catalyst for continual change in public attitude towards disability. Rather than just broadcast the 12 days of Paralympic competition, the channel set out on an ambitious two-and-a-half-year programme where the focus of the Paralympic movement was to be at the core of the channel's programming strategy. From the start, wheelchair rugby became a part of this journey and when the broadcaster engaged the award-winning British TV and film director Mike Christie to create a film to launch the channel's campaign, the sport was quick to support it. The result was the acclaimed feature-length documentary *Inside Incredible Athletes* which was to become a BAFTA award-winning production. Wheelchair rugby was one of five sports represented in the film with the game shot being played on a barge transiting the river Thames against a background of iconic London sights. With Onshore's clever positioning, a range of media opportunities came the sport's way with individual athletes and the team appearing in mainstream media rather than being limited to the disability and sports agenda. Wheelchair rugby's profile was riding high by the time of London 2012 and tickets for all games were sold out in three days.

A key aim of Britain's thinking was to form closer links with rugby union. CEO Pond recognised the strength of the union brand and the potential of attracting the support from the rugby community. Following an introduction from Tony Woodcock, the former Nottingham Forest, Arsenal and England footballer, Pond met with England rugby fullback Mike Brown and invited him to the London games to watch Britain in action. Mike arrived with England captain Chris Robshaw and both were immediately captivated by the sport and in particular relished the big hits. Soon after, Mike was to join GBWR as an ambassador, further increasing the sport's recognition, and also helping to raise significant funds. He was later joined in the role by former Llanelli and Wales international Rupert Moon, while the legendary Jason Leonard became a patron in 2016.

The sport flourished after London 2012. By 2020, the seven clubs in 2010 had grown to 30 and the sport was delivering programmes in spinal injury units, military

RAISING THE PROFILE OF THE SPORT BECAME A KEY EARLY OBJECTIVE TO ATTRACT MORE PLAYERS, VOLUNTEERS AND FUNDERS.

rehabilitation centres, schools, universities and in partnership with a number of premiership and championship rugby clubs and their charitable foundations. Investment from Sport England and the Lottery for the grassroots game allowed a small workforce to be employed to support the delivery of the game and provide health and sporting opportunities for an increasing number of disabled individuals. GBWR also began working with several different partners including the charity Help for Heroes, established in 2007 to support service personnel wounded or injured on duty.

Help for Heroes was supporting many personnel returning from action in Afghanistan with life-changing injuries. Many were amputees keen to regain their fitness and mobility. GBWR started providing wheelchair rugby in the four military recovery centres where the physicality and dynamism of the sport made it hugely popular with those trying to rebuild their lives.

In 2014, GBWR was approached by representatives of Prince Harry and invited to develop a new format of the sport to be part of what was to become the 'Invictus Games. Pond and Richard Allcroft worked with the Invictus planning team to create a version which would allow the competition to be played in a day and which was inclusive, enabling those with a broad range of injuries to take part. Mike Spence, a former GB captain and now GBWR board member, and Paul Jenkins, another legendary former player, took on the coaching role for the UK team. When the inaugural Invictus Games opened at the Copper Box in the Olympic Park in September, wheelchair Rugby stole the show. The UK team reached the final with the USA but ahead of the game the crowd was treated to a celebrity match with England Rugby World Cup icons Sir Clive Woodward and Johnny Wilkinson managing teams which included Prince Harry and England international Mike Tindall and his wife, Zara Phillips. In the final, an already excited crowd was brought to its feet when in the last seconds of the game the UK defeated the USA to take the gold medal.

Links with rugby union strengthened further when in 2015 Britain staged the inaugural World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge to sit alongside the Rugby World Cup. Staged in the Copper Box at the Olympic Park in Stratford, it attracted BT as a title sponsor and many of those who had travelled to the UK for the Rugby

IN 2014, GBWR WAS APPROACHED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF PRINCE HARRY AND INVITED TO DEVELOP A NEW FORMAT OF THE SPORT TO BE PART OF WHAT WAS TO BECOME THE INVICTUS GAMES.



Prince Harry watching the final as the UK defeated the USA to take the Gold Medal

World Cup also came to support their national wheelchair team. ITV broadcast live coverage of the event which was presented by former England international Martyn Bayfield. The event's success captured the attention of many in World Rugby and started a conversation about whether there was an opportunity for the Rugby World Cup and its wheelchair rugby equivalent to join together.

UK Sport ceased funding the GB elite programme following the 2016 Rio Paralympics when GB came fifth. There was a public outcry which contributed to a national debate about whether UK Sport's mantra of 'no compromise' and winning medals as the only criteria for success was a true representation of what the general public wanted to see from its public and National Lottery investment. The GBWR board was determined that even without the £3million UK Sport investment it would still find a way to fund training and competition programmes which would enable a competitive team to participate in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics and it launched a major fundraising campaign. First to the rescue was the Lloyd's of London insurance market led by Roger Alwen, a former Lloyd's broker who had also been part of the London 2012 commercial team. LMAX Exchange, a fintech company, and the Thai retail group Kingpower, also came forward with financial backing along with charities, philanthropists,

THE COVID VIRUS WAS POTENTIALLY LIFE-THREATENING TO MANY OF THE ATHLETES, PARTICULARLY QUADRAPLEGICS WHOSE LUNG FUNCTION WAS ALREADY COMPROMISED.

and a host of individuals. This enabled the British team to maintain training and international competition and improve its world ranking to fourth ahead of the Tokyo Paralympic Games, postponed until 2021 as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Covid virus was potentially life-threatening to many of the athletes, particularly quadriplegics whose lung function was already compromised. This risk, along with government restrictions, prevented any team training and so measures were taken to provide personal training equipment for athletes to use in the safety of their homes. The coaches were also supported by video analysis of previous games and the performances of their Tokyo opponents and held daily virtual technical and tactical clinics with the athletes. The team sport psychologist provided individual and team support at what was an uncertain and unnerving time for everyone. The team remained resolute and focused on Tokyo and in January 2021 team training resumed in a strict Covid 'bubble' at the Lilleshall training centre.

Without spectators and with many restrictions in place the Tokyo Paralympic Games went ahead in August 2021. The games opened with the wheelchair rugby tournament played in the Yoyogi National Stadium with GB winning its first pool game against Canada, ranked fifth in the world. Day two saw GB crush the Kiwis 60-37 before facing the USA, world ranked two, in the final pool match. It was a tight game which GB lost 50-48 to end the pool stage as runners-up and qualify for the semi-finals. All eyes were on this match as GB faced Paralympic hosts Japan, ranked third in the world and favourites for the gold having already defeated Australia in the pool stage. It was a nail-biting encounter which GB won 54-49, defeating Japan for the first time in six years. GB was now sure of its first Paralympic medal, but the team was clear that a silver was not enough with star player Jim Roberts declaring in a BBC interview, 'We didn't come here for second'.

Paralympic broadcaster Channel 4 reported over 1.2million viewers tuning in to watch GB play the USA in the final which the broadcaster had moved to its main channel. They were not to be disappointed. In a thrilling contest, GB led throughout. The score was always tight and it was a brilliant performance in the final quarter – key to achieving gold. The USA seemed to have no answer to the impact of RAF and Afghanistan veteran Stuart Robinson or the speed and skill of Jim Roberts who consistently burst through a tight USA defence. Having learned

the lessons of their pool game defeat, GB overpowered the Americans to win 55-49, the first wheelchair rugby medal for any European team and the first gold medal for any GB team sport in the history of the Paralympic Games. It was a remarkable triumph for a remarkable bunch of athletes all of whom had met head on the challenges presented by their disability, by Covid and by a lack of funding. All believed in one another and never doubted that they could create history and return from Tokyo with a gold.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Forty-five years on from that first gym session in Winnipeg and wheelchair rugby is a global sport played in 31 countries. A further 21 are developing the game, from Bangladesh to Ecuador and Ukraine. The challenges are different in all countries, but they share common elements – availability and cost of chairs, travel to train and play, funding to compete, and sufficient volunteers to organise and support players with high-level physical impairment. Yet the sport and those who play have a life and an energy which inspire and capture those who touch it. Increasingly, there are those who want to play but whose impairments do not meet the strict classification criteria because they have too much function. New disciplines of the sport are evolving to offer a form of the game for them. There are also programmes for children and young people, which in Britain are being delivered in partnership with the Lord's Taverners charity and several premiership rugby club charitable foundations. At international level the sport is becoming increasingly professionalised with all the top world-ranking teams employing coaching staffs and a full suite of performance science and medicine professionals. This is enhancing the quality of the game and the spectator experience. With sport making up a large proportion of global media consumption, whether television, the 'red button' podcasts, sports apps, websites or social media, there are opportunities to grow a global audience. As all media outlets seek exciting, creative and different content, wheelchair rugby with its crunch of metal, screech of tyres, and collisions sending chairs and their disabled occupants sprawling across the court, is the ultimate adrenaline experience!

THERE ARE ALSO PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, WHICH IN BRITAIN ARE BEING DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LORD'S TAVERNERS CHARITY AND SEVERAL PREMIERSHIP RUGBY CLUB CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS.





19
36

On January 4, the Prince of Wales watched Russian Prince Alexander Oblensky play for England at Twickenham.

19
41

Coventry won the first of 72 consecutive matches over four years.



19
41

Vice Admiral and former England 1913 Grand Slam captain Norman Wodehouse was killed when his ship was torpedoed.

19
45

A schools rugby match was played in Kyoto on September 23, only a month after Japan's surrender ended the Second World War.

19
45

Jacques Chaban-Delmas played for the French national team. He became Prime Minister 24 years later and was awarded the Légion d'honneur to honour his work for the Resistance during the war.



19
52

In August, before a crowd of 42,000, Fiji won their first test match, beating Australia 17-12 at Sydney Cricket Ground.

19
55

Non-white spectators were banned by South Africa's Orange Free State Union from watching matches against the British and Irish Lions in Bloemfontein.



19
55

Tony O'Reilly won his first cap for Ireland. His last came in 1970, after a gap of seven years, before his subsequent business career saw him become President of Heinz.

19
56

National teams from West Germany, Romania and Italy toured Britain.



19
57

The Barbarians went on their first overseas tour, to Canada.





STUART ROBINSON

I came into the game whilst I was in rehab following the loss of my limbs in an Afghanistan IED incident whilst serving with the RAF regiment. From the start I always had this goal of being able to play at a Paralympic Games, an opportunity to perform, and a new focus for me. The team environment is important to me and being part of this amazing sport reminds me of the camaraderie and single purpose I thrived on when serving in the military.



Born in 1982, 2021 Paralympics gold medallist Stuart Robinson was on his fourth tour of Afghanistan in 2013 when he incurred life-changing injuries following an IED explosion. He was introduced to wheelchair rugby in 2014 during rehabilitation and became part of the first Invictus wheelchair rugby team. From here he was selected for the GB talent squad before making the full GB team for the Tokyo cycle.

SOURCES

Principal sources used for this book are shown below. Where possible print sources are listed alphabetically by author's name, title, publisher and year of publication. The surname and first name of people who have contributed directly to a chapter or section, and online sources, are also listed alphabetically. The editor apologises for any sources which have been inadvertently omitted.

Acton.org/research/lord-acton-quote-archive
 Alaskarugby.org/facility/the-dream/
 Allblacks.com/news/eden-park-winning-streak-on-the-line-2/
 Allcroft, Richard
 Anon, *Meteor*, rugbyschoolarchives.co.uk, 2015
 Anon, *News from Rugby School*, (NFRS), Rugby School Archives
 Anon, *Rugby is the secret of 106-year-old's longevity*, Penarth Times, www.penarthtimes.co.uk/news/6658453.rugby-is-the-secret-of-106-year-olds-longevity, 23 January 2006
 Anon, *Old Rugbeian Society Football Records of Rugby School 1823-1929*, George Over, 1930
 Anon, 'The Centenary Match', in *The Rugbeian* November 23, 1923
 Anon, *The Rugbeian* (Rugby School student publication), Rugby School Archives
 Anon, *The Rugby Football Annual 1929-30*, Sporting Handbooks, 1930
 Anon, *A timeline for women's rugby*, www.angelfire.com/pa3/esurugby/rugbyhistory.html, retrieved 2021
 Balaam, L, *125 years of Manchester Football Club*, 1985
 Bathrugby.com
 Bathrugby.com/club-news/bath-rugbys-201920-financial-results/
 Bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-33239560
 Bbc.co.uk/sport/rugby-union/45342130
 Bbc.co.uk/sport/rugby-union/46736372
 Beach-rugby.eu/
 Beachrugby.nl
 Birch, J, *Letchworth Girls' Rugby: Women's rugby in 1928*. <http://letchworthgirls.blogspot.com/2008/03/womens-rugby-in-1928.html>, retrieved 2021
 Birch, J, *New Zealand women's rugby 100 years ago*, www.scrumqueens.com/news/new-zealand-womens-rugby-100-years-ago, 2018
 Birch, J, www.rugbyrelics.com/Museum/topics/womens-rugby-history.htm, 2021
 Bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-01/all-blacks-players-fret-over-team-s-fate-if-silver-lake-buys-in
 Bourke, B, *The Laurels 1872-1972*, 1972
 Bowker, Barry, *England Rugby*, Cassell and Co. Ltd, 1976
 Bradby, H.C., *Rugby*, George Bell and Sons, 1900
 Brennan, P, Donmouth.co.uk *England v Scotland – 1881*, 2016
 Brown, Mike
 Burns, Gill
 Campbell, Duncan
 Campbell, Joseph, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Fontana, 1993
 Campese, David
 Cbsports.com/soccer/news/lionel-messi-tops-forbes-list-of-worlds-highest-paid-soccer-players/
 Chubilleau, B, *The great history of women's rugby*, 2007
 Clearwater, Ken
 Cliftoncollege.com/the-schools/upper-school/co-curricular/rugby/
 Cobarweekly.com.au/cobar-rugby-owes-a-lot-to-foundress-ailsa-fitzsimmons/
 Collins, Tony, *The Oval World – A global history of rugby*, Bloomsbury, 2015
 Collins, T, *Hidden history of women's rugby to be revealed for first time by DMU researchers*, <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/research-news/2017/june/hidden-history-of-womens-rugby-to-be-revealed-by-dmu-researchers.aspx>, 2017

Cooper, Ian, *Immortal Harlequin*, Tempus Publishing, 2004
 Corden, James, *For Poulton and England*, Matador, 2009
 Cortie, J and Pinilla, Y, *Girls in ovalie: 40 years of history*, 2005
 Crewdson, K, *BBC Sport – Rugby Union – Valentine was first lady of rugby*, 2016
 Dailymail.co.uk/home/you/article-492708/Maxine-Peake-From-rugby-league-starring-actress.html
 Dailymail.co.uk/sport/rugbyunion/article-3231983/MARTIN-JOHNSON-Sacrifice-Shut-it.htmlHolt,
 Oliver, Mail on Sunday, 2015
 Dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-7056553/Rugby-star-George-Burgess-shows-new-headshots-prepares-pursue-career-actor.html
 Dailymail.co.uk/sport/rugbyleague/article-9813367/Australia-New-Zealand-WITHDRAW-Rugby-League-World-Cup-England-amid-coronavirus-fears.html
 Dailymail.co.uk/sport/rugbyunion/article-6951995/SIR-CLIVE-WOODWARD-Jonny-Wilkinson-set-benchmark-No-10.html
 Dallaglio, Lawrence
 Davies, D.E, *Cardiff Rugby Club, History and Statistics 1876–1975*, 1975
 Dcl.co.uk/property/oceanic-house-1-cockspur-street-london-sw1y-5dl/
 Deserter.co.uk/2019/05/drinking-with-dylan/
 Dmu.ac.uk/research/research-news/2017/june/hidden-history-of-womens-rugby-to-be-revealed-by-dmu-researchers
 Discover.agl.com.au/community/grassroots-rugby-remote/
 Dubberley, Brad
 Dwyer, T, *History of Women's Rugby*, <https://rugbyreader.com/womens-rugby/>, 2020
 Edwards, Gareth
 Englandrugby.com/news/article/rfu-to-mark-150th-anniversary
 Englandrugby.com/news/article/rfu-council-vote-in-favour-of-covid-recovery-plan
 Enquoted.com/jonny-wilkinson-quotes.html
 Espn.co.uk/newzealand/rugby/player/10091.html
 Espn.co.uk/scrum/rugby/player/7225.html
 Expedia.co.uk/Lignano-Sabbiadoro.dx6046836
 Facebook.com/27958657562/posts/richard-burton-from-planet-rugbycom-rugby-is-a-wonderful-show-dance-opera-and-su
 Fitzpatrick, Sean
 Frost, Albert, *Meteor Magazines, 1895-1900*
 Ft.com/content/c8cb003d-e81f-422c-b410-8797a9d700eb
 Furse, L, Barette: Le Rugby Féminin in 1920s France, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 2019
 Furse, L, *Women in Rugby Union: A Social and Cultural History, c. 1880-2016*, 2021
 gbwr.org.uk/team_member/stuart-robinson/
 Gallagher, B, *The history of women's rugby: Growth in wartime years*
 www.therugbypaper.co.uk/features/329408/history-of-womens-rugby-growth-in-wartime, 2021
 Gloucestershirelive.co.uk/sport/rugby/rugby-news/the-shed-ruthless-bath-wales-2054526
 Goodreads.com/quotes/756045-money-equals-power-power-makes-the-law-and-law-makes
 Goulburn, Edward, *The Book of Rugby School (1856)*, Kessinger, 2010
 Grimes, Kylie
 Griffiths, John, *The Book of English International Rugby 1871-1982*, Willow Books, 1982
 Griffiths, John, *The Phoenix Book of International Rugby Records*, J.M. Dent and Sons, 1987
 Griffiths, John, *Rugby's Strangest Matches*, Portico, 2020
 Guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/79729-most-northerly-rugby-match
 Guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/largest-rugby-ball
 Gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0608221h
 Hartmann-Tews,I & Pfister, G, *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective*, 2003
 Hope Simpson J.B, *Rugby Since Arnold*, Macmillan, 1967
 Howley, Rob
 Hughes, Thomas, *Tom Brown's School Days*, Macmillan, 1894
 Humbert, F, www.dailymotion.com/embed/video/x2l6os, retrieved 2021
 Imdb.com/list/ls008221494/
 Independent.co.uk/sport/sport-book-of-the-week-gareth-edwards-the-autobiography
 Insidethegames.biz/articles/1110815/world-rugby-revenues-crash
 Irishexaminer.com/sport/rugby/arid-40343342.html
 Irishmirror.ie/sport/rugby-union/men-you-never-knew-played-5564488

[Irishtimes.com/life-and-style/motors/arctic-circling](https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/motors/arctic-circling)
[Irishtimes.com/sport/rugby/international/rwc-moments](https://www.irishtimes.com/sport/rugby/international/rwc-moments)
[Japantimes.co.jp/sports/2020/11/03/rugby/world-rugby-finances-coronavirus/](https://www.japantimes.co.jp/sports/2020/11/03/rugby/world-rugby-finances-coronavirus/)
 Jones, Keith
[Keithprowse.co.uk/twickenham-stadium/](https://www.keithprowse.co.uk/twickenham-stadium/)
[Lionsrugby.com/2022/03/08/feature-martin-johnsons-rise-to-lions-captain/](https://www.lionsrugby.com/2022/03/08/feature-martin-johnsons-rise-to-lions-captain/)
[Linkedin.com/jobs/search/rugbyunion](https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/search/rugbyunion)
[Liveabout.com/top-celebrities-who-played-rugby](https://www.liveabout.com/top-celebrities-who-played-rugby)
 Lynagh, Michael
 Macrory, Jenny, *Running With The Ball*, Collins Willow, 1991
[Majorcabeachrugby.co.uk/](https://www.majorcabeachrugby.co.uk/)
 Marshall, F and Tosswill, LR, Football, *The Rugby Union Game*, Cassell, 1925
 Marshall, Howard, *Oxford versus Cambridge: The Story of the University Rugby Match*, Clerke and Cockeran, 1951
 Mattsson, Jan-Owe
 Mikkelsen, Brad
Meteor (Rugby School record) in: [rugbyschoolarchives.co.uk](https://www.rugbyschoolarchives.co.uk)
[Mirror.co.uk/sport/rugby-union/toulon-toulouse-france-rugby-kolbe](https://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/rugby-union/toulon-toulouse-france-rugby-kolbe)
[Myactivesg.com/read/2018/3/8-famous-people-that-you-didnt-know-played-rugby](https://www.myactivesg.com/read/2018/3/8-famous-people-that-you-didnt-know-played-rugby)
[Moneyweek.com/405912/27-august-1995-rugby-union-turns-professional](https://www.moneyweek.com/405912/27-august-1995-rugby-union-turns-professional)
[Mullrugby.co.uk/](https://www.mullrugby.co.uk/)
[Nation.africa/kenya/sports/rugby/crotty-scores-all-blacks-2-000th-try-in-france-romp](https://www.nation.africa/kenya/sports/rugby/crotty-scores-all-blacks-2-000th-try-in-france-romp)
[Nationalarchives.gov.uk/titanic/stories/ned-parfett.htm](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/titanic/stories/ned-parfett.htm)
News from Rugby School (NFRS), Rugby School Archives
 Norster, Bob
 Nutman, Jon
[Nzherald.co.nz/sport/introducing-the-top-celebrity-rugby-fans/](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/sport/introducing-the-top-celebrity-rugby-fans/)
[Ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/catalogue_her/rugby-school-the-close-rugby](https://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/catalogue_her/rugby-school-the-close-rugby)
 Owen, O.L., *The History of the RFU*, Playfair Books Ltd, 1955
 Parliament.nz
 Peerdeman, P, The real issues facing Women's Rugby, <https://lastwordonsports.com/rugby/2020/08/30/issues-facing-womens-rugby/>, 2020
 Pickering, David
[Pinterest.co.uk/pin/541346817708708033/](https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/541346817708708033/)
[Poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/i_keep_six_honest.html](https://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/i_keep_six_honest.html)
 Portora Royal School/Robert Northridge/Emily Valentine
 Michael Raw, *Thread of Gold*, Stramongate, 2012
 Rea, Chris, *Rugby, A history of Rugby Union football*, Hamlyn, 1977
 Reason J and James C, *The World of Rugby*, BBC, 1979
 Richards, Huw, *A game for hooligans, The history of rugby union*, Mainstream Publishing, 2007
 Robertson, Stuart
 Ruddock, Mike
[Ruck.co.uk/he-really-was-the-complete-player-sir-ian-mcgeechan-ranks-his-top-5-rugby-players-of-all-time/3/](https://www.ruck.co.uk/he-really-was-the-complete-player-sir-ian-mcgeechan-ranks-his-top-5-rugby-players-of-all-time/3/)
[Ruck.co.uk/ranked-10-highest-paid-people-in-rugby-union-2021/3/](https://www.ruck.co.uk/ranked-10-highest-paid-people-in-rugby-union-2021/3/)
[Ruck.co.uk/rugby-players-turned-actors-including-a-game-of-thrones-star/](https://www.ruck.co.uk/rugby-players-turned-actors-including-a-game-of-thrones-star/)
[Ruck.co.uk/the-five-smallest-international-rugby-players-ever](https://www.ruck.co.uk/the-five-smallest-international-rugby-players-ever)
[Rugbyfootballhistory.com](https://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com)
[Rugbyfootballhistory.com/referee](https://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com/referee)
[Rugbysinfronteras.org/en/Rugby](https://www.rugbysinfronteras.org/en/Rugby)
[Rugbypass.com/news/rugbys-rich-list-the-worlds-highest-paid-players-in-2020](https://www.rugbypass.com/news/rugbys-rich-list-the-worlds-highest-paid-players-in-2020)
[Rugbyspeakersuk.com/](https://www.rugbyspeakersuk.com/)
[Rugbyspeakersuk.com/news/evolution-womens-rugby](https://www.rugbyspeakersuk.com/news/evolution-womens-rugby)
[Rugbyworld.com/in-the-mag/is-this-the-most-beautiful-rugby-ground-in-the-world-102167](https://www.rugbyworld.com/in-the-mag/is-this-the-most-beautiful-rugby-ground-in-the-world-102167)
[Rugbyworld.com/news/matt-damon-talks-learning-rugby-ivictus-105913](https://www.rugbyworld.com/news/matt-damon-talks-learning-rugby-ivictus-105913)
[Rugbyworld.com/rugby-positions/second-rows/martin-johnson-66332](https://www.rugbyworld.com/rugby-positions/second-rows/martin-johnson-66332)
[Rugbyworld.com/tournaments/rugby-world-cup-2019/highest-ever-score-rugby-world-cup](https://www.rugbyworld.com/tournaments/rugby-world-cup-2019/highest-ever-score-rugby-world-cup)
[Sarugbymag.co.za/lions-coach-players-take-pay-cut-sa-series/](https://www.sarugbymag.co.za/lions-coach-players-take-pay-cut-sa-series/)
 Scales, I, Portora – *The School on the Hill – A Quartercentenary History: 1608-2008*, 2008
[Scottishfield.co.uk/news/isle-of-mull-rfc-to-feature-in-land-rovers-wedealinreal-global-campaign-](https://www.scottishfield.co.uk/news/isle-of-mull-rfc-to-feature-in-land-rovers-wedealinreal-global-campaign-)

[for-rugby-world-cup/](https://www.for-rugby-world-cup/)
[Scottishrugby.org/news/scottish-rugbys-annual-report-for-covid-19-affected-2020/21-season-published](https://www.scottishrugby.org/news/scottish-rugbys-annual-report-for-covid-19-affected-2020/21-season-published)
 Senior women's rugby history, <https://www.armyrugbyunion.org.uk/aru-info/history/womens-rugby-history/>, 2021
 Sewell, E.H.D., *Rugby Football Up To Date*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1923
 Simpson-Daniel, James
[Skysports.com/rugby-union/news/12380/7526904/against-the-enemy](https://www.skysports.com/rugby-union/news/12380/7526904/against-the-enemy)
 Smith, Allan
 Smith, Tom
 Spence, Mike
[Sportingnews.com/au/rugby/news/bledisloe-cup-why-playing-the-all-blacks-at-eden-park-is-so-intimidating/](https://www.sportingnews.com/au/rugby/news/bledisloe-cup-why-playing-the-all-blacks-at-eden-park-is-so-intimidating/)
[Statista.com/statistics/193534/franchise-value-of-national-football-league-teams-in-2010/](https://www.statista.com/statistics/193534/franchise-value-of-national-football-league-teams-in-2010/)
 Tarr, Rob
[Theculturetrip.com/europe/united-kingdom/articles/the-oldest-rugby-clubs-in-the-world/](https://www.theculturetrip.com/europe/united-kingdom/articles/the-oldest-rugby-clubs-in-the-world/)
[Theguardian.com/sport/2005/may/15/rugbyunion.comment](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2005/may/15/rugbyunion.comment)
[Theguardian.com/sport/2006/apr/02/rugbyunion.features](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2006/apr/02/rugbyunion.features)
[Theguardian.com/sport/2020/jan/22/saracens-keen-publication-salary-cap-report-rugby-union](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/jan/22/saracens-keen-publication-salary-cap-report-rugby-union)
[Theguardian.com/sport/2015/aug/25/rob-andrew-wild-west-rugby-union-professional](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2015/aug/25/rob-andrew-wild-west-rugby-union-professional)
[Theguardian.com/sport/2020/nov/17/exploitation-pacific-islands-rugby-gone-on-long-enough](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/nov/17/exploitation-pacific-islands-rugby-gone-on-long-enough)
[Thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/17868742.hollyoaks-actor-owes-remarkable-bradford-teacher/](https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/17868742.hollyoaks-actor-owes-remarkable-bradford-teacher/)
[Thetimes.co.uk/article/from-vibrant-clermont-to-the-southern-tip-of-new-zealand-rugbys-greatest-stadiums-ranked](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/from-vibrant-clermont-to-the-southern-tip-of-new-zealand-rugbys-greatest-stadiums-ranked)
[Thetimes.co.uk/article/money-not-morality-will-ensure-that-british-amp-irish-lions-tour-reaches-the-tests-against-south-africa-fm](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/money-not-morality-will-ensure-that-british-amp-irish-lions-tour-reaches-the-tests-against-south-africa-fm)
[Thetimes.co.uk/article/my-career-high-watching-jonny-wilkinson-conquer-his-demons-at-the-world-cup-dq9nj02tz](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/my-career-high-watching-jonny-wilkinson-conquer-his-demons-at-the-world-cup-dq9nj02tz)
[Thevarsitymatch.com/history](https://www.thevarsitymatch.com/history)
The Rugbeian (Rugby School student publication), Rugby School Archives
 Thomas, C and Thomas, G, *The History of the British Lions*, Mainstream Publishing, 1998
 Thorburn, Paul
[Totalrl.com/forums/index.php?/topic/329828-celebritiesfamous-people-that-like-rl/](https://www.totalrl.com/forums/index.php?/topic/329828-celebritiesfamous-people-that-like-rl/)
 Turley, Alan, *Rugby: The Pioneer Years*, Harper Collins, 2008
 Venables, Cedric, *Instructions to Young Rugger Players*, Museum Press Ltd, 1960
 Vinyard, Terry
[Walesonline.co.uk/business/business-news/wru-aiming-raise-12m-tranche](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/business/business-news/wru-aiming-raise-12m-tranche)
[Walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/adidas-used-pay-bungs-welsh-1820555](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/adidas-used-pay-bungs-welsh-1820555)
[Walesonline.co.uk/sport/rugby/rugby-news/23-best-rugby-stadiums-world-11366548](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/sport/rugby/rugby-news/23-best-rugby-stadiums-world-11366548)
 Walston, Catherine, *with a fine disregard: a portrait of Rugby School*, Third Millennium Publishing Limited, 2006
 Williams, JPR
with a fine disregard..., Third Millennium Publishing Limited, 2006
 Women's 6 Nations, <https://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com/W6Nations.html>, retrieved 2021
[Women.rugby/news/672926/world-rugby-ups-the-pace-of-womens-rugby-with-second-phase-of-womens-strategic-plan](https://www.women.rugby/news/672926/world-rugby-ups-the-pace-of-womens-rugby-with-second-phase-of-womens-strategic-plan), 2021
[Woodenspoon.org.uk](https://www.woodenspoon.org.uk)
[World.rugby/news/593315/hooper-100-caps-record-youngest](https://www.world.rugby/news/593315/hooper-100-caps-record-youngest)
[World.rugby/olympics/history](https://www.world.rugby/olympics/history)
 Zbieranowski, Pawel

EDITOR'S NOTE

Legendary coach Sir Ian McGeechan once urged his team to play for all those who had put the famous British and Irish Lions badge on their shirts.

If these people mattered to a player, he said, then they mattered to the whole team, and if they mattered to the whole team the Lions would surely win. Which on that occasion they did.

In the same spirit, therefore, sincere thanks are owed to the many who have helped to get this book, like William Webb Ellis' ball, into the hands of those who love the rugby game.

In particular:

Executive Head Master of Rugby School Group **Peter Green**.

Chapter authors, namely Rugby School alumni **Simon Penniston** and **Guy Steele-Bodger**; former School archivist **Jonathan Smith**; Director of Sport **Debbie Skene**; Director of Rugby **Mike Bayly**; former staff **David Ray** and **David Hemsall**; and former GB Wheelchair Rugby CEO **David Pond**.

Current or former players and coaches who kindly gave up their time to be interviewed or answer questions by email.

Tim Mercer and **Reuben Wakeman** at Mercer Books.

Many dozens of print and on-line sources, but especially Chris Rea's *A History of Rugby Union Football*, Tony Collins' *The Oval World*, John Griffiths' *Rugby's Strangest Matches* and Huw Richards' *A Game for Hooligans*.

For those inadvertently overlooked for their contribution, thanks too and apologies for this omission.

Finally, apologies also to anyone with an interest in the rugby game for any inevitable errors of fact or judgement. Consistent with the values and tradition of rugby, I will not argue with the referee on these and will accept any penalty awarded against me with good grace.

Robin Fletcher, Editor and Co-author, August 2022