

# NEWS of SPORT

## Football Has Been Played From Earliest Times, But Was Codified in Late Years

### Rugby Supplanted Soccer in Fredericton Almost Forty Years Ago—Both Games Developed in the Public Schools of England—Brief History.

The autumn season in these latitudes is dedicated to the game of football which as time goes on takes stronger hold on the affections of the people, both those who watch it and those who play it. Unfortunately the winter in New Brunswick comes on at such a time that the football season is stopped when it should be at its height and the uncertainty of the time of the coming of the first heavy snow leaves the end of the season at a date which no one can foretell.

#### Of Great Antiquity.

Football is a game of greatest antiquity. It probably was played from the time when the first pre-historic man who experimented by blowing up the bladder of an animal with air, discovered that considerable amount of amusement could be obtained by kicking and knocking the distended bladder about. Tubal Cain of whom the Bible speaks as the first worker in metal also by tradition played football. The ancient Greeks and Romans played a game which quite closely resembled rugby football, the ball being carried and tossed about as well as kicked, and the Celtic peoples also had game of football which survives to this day. Through the Middle Ages the game persisted in various forms. In both England and Scotland it was banned by law frequently, it being desired that the time taken up by it be devoted to archery. The game outlived all laws against it.

One curious feature of the game in Great Britain, before it was reduced to codified rules, was the contests annual or otherwise between opposing towns or villages. Some of these matches still are played. The entire population of a place formed a team and no attempt was made to equalize sides. The ball could be played at any place between the two communities which were in the contest usually on the high road and the winning side

usually was that which forced the ball nearest the place of residence of its opponents.

#### Along Two Lines.

Football as recognized today has developed along two lines—Association or "soccer" which is a kicking game and Rugby which is a carrying as well as kicking game. Both took their rise in Great Britain and from there spread over the world. "Soccer" was played here extensively in the Eighties and since that when regular troops were stationed in this city but the rugby game is that played now.

#### Games in English Schools.

The institutions which had the greatest influence in molding the organized games of football were the great public schools of England which are what are called in this country, boarding schools. In the course of time each school developed its own game, conditions of grounds and soil the determined factors. When the former headmaster of Winchester school lectured here he showed pictures of the game of football which that school developed through its history. Other noted schools with their own games are Rugby, Eton, Westminster and Harrow. Today each school maintains its own games although also fielding teams playing under one or the other of the accepted codes and the latter in fact came from the schools. The spherical ball now termed the "soccer" ball was in use at many schools. Rugby developed the egg-shaped ball now known as the rugby ball. Harrow had a curiously shaped ball somewhat like a rugby ball with very blunt ends. Some of these games combined the rules of the two games recognized, today in having a scrummage although not allowing the ball to be carried.

#### Tablet to Boy's Memory.

It was at Rugby that the first carrying game was used. That later be-

came the distinguishing feature of the rugby code and all its offshoots—American football, Canadian Rugby, International Rugby, Northern Union, Rugby League—and to mark the fact a tablet was placed upon the wall of Rugby school grounds in memory of the boy who first noticed that the traditional rules of football did not forbid catching the ball in the hands and carrying it, and who put his discovery into effect and so added tremendously to the possibilities of the game. He was William Webb Ellis and his innovation was made in 1823.

#### Organizations and Rules.

As boys left school they took football with them and played it as men. The organization of clubs followed and soon the need of recognized rules arose. As some players favored the kicking game they organized a Football Association in England which gave its name to the "soccer" game. That was the earliest organization. In 1871 the Rugby Union was formed although such clubs as Blackheath and Richmond in London and several in Yorkshire and Lancashire as well as the universities, had been playing for more than ten years before that. In 1889 the International Board was appointed to govern championship matches among teams representing England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and later France.

#### Professionalism Appeared.

In 1895 the Northern Union was formed. This was as the result of a break between the Rugby Union and certain clubs because the latter wished to pay players for time lost from employment. The Rugby Union, as it has always, placed the game on a strictly amateur basis and forced the dissenting clubs out. In the Association game professionalism had been recognized years before and had been developed to a marked degree.

#### Spread of Rugby.

Football of the rugby code was carried to the United States and the British Colonies long before the Rugby Union was formed. In the States and parts of Canada the form of the game for some time was so like that McGill and Harvard Universities competed against one another. In time the Americans began to change the rules without regard to the code as observed in the Old Country and at the present time have evolved a game which but remotely resembles rugby football. In Ontario and Quebec rugby was played for many years as it was played everywhere else. The accounts of football matches in Ralph Connors' novels describe rugby football, not the so-called Canadian game. About 1890 however the Canadian game began to

## BIG TURNOUT OF RUGBY MEN AT UNIV. OF N. B.

The quantity of would-be rugby players at the University of New Brunswick left little to be desired, at the first turnout of football men Monday afternoon. The quality of the squad will develop later. It now appears as if the famous 1925 squad which captured the Maritime Inter-collegiate title with ease and later won the MacTier Cup and Eastern Canada title at Montreal, is pretty well shot to pieces. Graduation dealt hardly with the team and academic requirements are completing the damage together with withdrawals from college. It will be some days before it is known what players will be available from last season's squad but the expectation is that the greater part of the 1926 team will have to be developed.

#### American Player Outstanding.

In the practice was a player who was outstanding although having no knowledge of rugby football. He is Holmes who registers from Eastport, Me., and who played formerly at Centre College the famous Kentucky institution which with a small student body sent out football teams which beat some of the biggest colleges in the United States. Holmes has weight for his height, is fast and can handle a ball perfectly. He gave many demonstrations of the American forward pass a play of course which is illegal and useless in rugby but which nevertheless showed the distance which can be gained by the method. His passes covered about as great distance as an ordinary punt.

#### Other New Material.

Petrie from Saint John, and Trites, Thompson, Woods, Hewett, Currie and Wishart of Fredericton have had interscholastic experience. Coach C. B. Burden and Capt. W. W. Donohoe expect much hard work will have to be done.

change away from the International code and American influence became strong. At the present time McGill University can and does play against Syracuse University by dropping one player and making slight changes in rules, so closely does the so-called Canadian game approximate the American.

#### In the Maritimes.

In the Maritime Provinces the earliest football played seems to have been Association but rugby soon supplanted it to a great extent. In Fredericton "soccer" was the game at the University of New Brunswick and in the city during the Eighties. About 1888 the University took up rugby and abandoned "soccer". Other colleges were doing the same rugby evidently having been taken up in Nova Scotia before it was in New Brunswick. Since that time the game has flourished in Fredericton to a greater or less degree. The season of 1925 saw it at its best, both Fredericton High School and University of New Brunswick fielding strong teams. The regrettable feature was that Fredericton City which at times was represented by strong teams, has been out of the game for years.

#### Composition of Team.

A rugby football team has had varying numbers of players throughout the history of the game but fifteen is now the recognized number except in the professional game in Britain and Australia where it is thirteen. The entire tendency of the game has been to become more open. Until 1877 twenty men formed a team the most of them playing as forwards. In that year fifteen became the number but the forward game was emphasized still as the backfield positions are given as two half-backs, one three-quarter and two full-backs. It is probable that some of the forwards played out of the scrum. When the game first was introduced into the Maritime Provinces nine men played as forwards. Later the number was reduced to eight and one was added to the three three-quarters. Still later the New Zealand formation increased the back division by taking another forward and converting him into a back under the name of five-eighth, stand-off half, or flying-half. That formation is now in general use in the Maritimes. However years ago there were many teams which if strong in the forward division transferred a man from it to the back division.

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