



Theme 5

The Birth of Rugby League

Pupil Activity Sheet 2

Professionalism

The following quotes are set in 1895 and give the main reasons for and against paying the players for playing (professionalism) at that time.

Read the quotes and decide whether each person is **for** or **against** paying the rugby players. Show your answer by writing 'for' or 'against' after each quote.

Give a **mark out of 5** for how strong you think the person's reason is, 5 being an excellent reason and 1 being a very weak reason.

When you have finished, decide from the reasons you have read and the marks you have given whether your group is in favour of paying rugby players.

1. "The clubs in the north do not understand the spirit of the game. It is about learning to play fairly, respecting the referee and the other team, winning without boasting, losing without bad temper and playing to get fit. It is not about showing off to people who pay to watch so that the players can earn money.

Playing for money will make players too rough. They will break every rule they can get away with to try to win; winning will be more important than playing fairly and playing for fun. They will set a bad example of how to behave as sportsmen when they should be setting a good example."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

2. "Paying the players would make them less rough, and make them play more fairly because they would not want to lose money by being fined or suspended. They would not play so roughly that they injure the players in the other team because they could not afford to be injured themselves."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

3. "Even the big clubs will not be able to afford to pay their players. They will go bankrupt. Most of the football league clubs owe money to the bank and they only have 11 players to pay – there are 15 in a rugby team."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

4. "The players need to practise during the day, not spend time in the mills or down the mines. Clubs are playing for points to get up the league. They are giving the players harder training and putting them on special diets. The players should be paid for the effort they put in."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

5. "Players should not be paid for training to become skilled and fit. They should enjoy the exercise and the joy of being fit and playing the game."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

6. "Sport is now a public thing and its players are public men. Big crowds pay to watch these matches. The players they come to watch should get some of the gate money."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

7. "If players are paid the clubs with the most supporters will have the most money and get the best players. Then the same teams will win all the time and it will be boring."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

8. "Like actors in the theatres and the comedians and musicians in the music halls, the rugby players should be paid for entertaining people. The rugby pitch is their stage."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

9. "Clubs in the south have crowds too small to pay their players. Most of their players are rich gentlemen. Crowds in the north are big and most of the players are poor working men. The north and south are so different that the clubs in the south should not be able to vote to stop clubs in the north paying their players."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

10. "If players were paid they would give up work to play rugby football. They should be learning a proper job and getting used to getting up and going to work. They will need a proper job and to get up every day to go to work when they can no longer play rugby football."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

11. "The clubs in the north should not forget that the game of rugby came from the public schools. The old public schoolboys who mainly run the game understand how it should be played and that is not for money."

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

12. "Players get paid in all sorts of ways because they have skills that the clubs will pay for. Some leave work early and still get their full pay, some get presents or tips from supporters, some get cloth given for a suit or trousers. There are other secret ways that the clubs sneak things to their players, so why not just pay them the wages they are worth?"

for or against? _____ **marks out of 5?** _____

In the table below, write the marks you have given for arguments **for** and the marks you have given for arguments **against** paying rugby players (only one mark, for or against, for each quote). Add up the marks in each column.

Quote Number	Marks	
	For	Against
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
Total		

Is your group for or against paying rugby players?
