



Theme 4

The Origins of the Clubs

Teacher Answer Sheet

Pupil Activity Sheet 1

Club	Year Founded	Church or Chapel	Sports Club	Ex-Public School-boys	Mill Owners/Business-men	Working Men or Boys
Bradford	1863			/	/	
Huddersfield	1864		/			
Hull	1865	/		/	/	
Swinton	1867		/			
York	1868			/		
Leeds	1870	/				
Rochdale H	1871		/	/	/	/
Wigan	1872		/			
Halifax	1873				/	/
Wakefield T	1873	/				
Widnes	1873		/			/
St Helens	1874			/	/	
Barrow	1875					/
Dewsbury	1875				/	/
Warrington	1875		/		/	
Keighley	1876	/		/	/	
Oldham	1876				/	/
Leigh	1877				/	
Bramley	1879	/				
Salford	1879					/
Batley	1880		/			
Hull Kingston R	1883				/	/
Hunslet	1883		/			
Featherstone R	1902					/

Discussion Point:

We know the details about when and by whom the clubs were founded because it has been researched by sports' historians using:

- first hand sources such as:
 - club minute books and letters (usually kept at the clubs, in local archives, or in the Rugby Football League Archive which is housed at the University of Huddersfield)
 - local newspaper reports (usually found on microfilm in local libraries)
 - the club badge which sometimes includes the year the club was founded
- second hand sources, such as:
 - books about the histories of the individual clubs or of rugby league
 - club match day programmes that include historical accounts.

Pupil Activity Sheet 2

1a. athletics; cricket

1b. These sports were invented before rugby.

Additional Information: Athletics, particularly running and jumping, is the simplest form of sport, requiring no equipment and there is evidence of athletics contests in all civilisations dating from the Ancient Greeks.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that an early form of cricket may have been played as a family or children's game from Saxon times. The earliest official reference to cricket is in court records of 1598. The first laws of cricket were written in 1744 and have been amended numerous times since. Cricket clubs in the north of England date mainly from the 1820s onwards, although there were a few in the Sheffield area in the mid-18th century.

2. b They wanted young men to have a leisure time activity to channel their energy and to keep them out of mischief and trouble.
- c They believed that young men would learn to play fairly to the rules, and would then know how to be fair and obey the rules in everyday life, an idea called 'Muscular Christianity'

Additional information:

The church played a bigger role in people's lives when these rugby clubs were founded. In Victorian England Sunday was sacrosanct as a day of worship. The churches, usually through their Sunday Schools, tried to control/influence many aspects of the lives of their followers. This included organising education classes and leisure activities, such as theatre groups, games, and outings on public holidays. Sports clubs were another arm of this influence, and with most people attending church, there were enough able-bodied and capable men to make up decent teams. The church and mill were at the heart of community life. There were far fewer individual-based and home-based sources of entertainment and fewer opportunities to travel than today, so that the Victorians were more involved in communal activities than most people today, and probably enjoyed a greater sense of community. This was despite longer working hours and fewer labour-saving devices leaving them considerably less leisure time.

In Victorian England people were fined for breaking the Sabbath by playing sport or gambling. The Rugby Football League did not grant permission for its amateur clubs to play on Sundays until 1956, when the use of Sunday for sporting activity began to be accepted. Professional clubs did not play on Sundays until 1968.

3. a They had learned to play rugby football at public school and wanted to carry on playing and watching rugby when they returned to their home towns and cities.

Additional Information:

There were many different forms of football. The public schools all played their own variations of a fairly brutal hybrid games called football.

Until 1863 there were no laws upon which everyone agreed, making it almost impossible to play matches against other teams. In towns, mob football, a violent, virtually rule-free free-for-all was played, although urbanisation and industrialisation led to increasing restrictions. For example, the 1835 Highways Act banned mob football from public roads.

The laws of association football were codified when the Football Association was formed in 1863. Some continued to play the hybrid game which was codified with laws as rugby football after the formation of the Rugby Football Union in 1871.

4. b The mill owners were wealthy enough to help to pay for things that the club needed.

d The mill owners had a large workforce of men whom they could influence to play, work for and support their club.

Additional Information:

Mill workers already worked as a team in the mill. Competition for trade and a livelihood was strong between mills and between the northern towns. The cycle of 'boom and bust' spun quickly. Competition in sport and civic pride in sporting success became an extension of existing competition in industry.

5. Barrow was founded by a shipping clerk.
Hull's founders included the head of a steamship company.

6. c They wanted young men to have a leisure time activity to channel their energy and to keep them out of mischief and trouble.

Additional Information:

Keeping young men out of trouble was one of the motives for teaching rugby football at public school. The public schools promoted the game partly to attract pupils, but also as an aspect of religious training; fair play and teamwork encouraged moral fortitude - 'Muscular Christianity'. More practically, football also helped to control their pupils' more violent tendencies. As one historian put it:

'If you beat hell out of each other on the games field, you weren't quite so predisposed to beating hell out of each other or the local inhabitants off it!'

In Oldham it seems likely that the Chief Constable and Watch Committee regarded playing for and supporting a rugby football team as a form of social control, occupying young men who caused trouble when they were bored.

- 7a. i) 1863 (Bradford)
ii) 1902 (Featherstone Rovers)

- 7b. ii) 39

- 7c. a) similar

- 8a. Pupil's favourite sport

- 8b. open answer, explaining with logical reasons answer to 8a
Suggest references to: excitement; safety; skill; interest; local team/community pride; opportunity; shared interest/friends; sense of achievement; competition

- 8c. open answer, listing ways pupil has learned about their favourite sport
Suggest: listening to friends; playing; being coached; watching live or on television; reading about it in books, newspapers, on the internet

- 8d. open answer, listing ways working men or boys who started up rugby football clubs between the 1860s and early 1900s learnt about the game and how to play it
Suggest: listening to friends; playing; being coached by ex-public schoolboys, or men who had learnt the game from ex-public schoolboys; watching live; reading about it in books or newspapers

- 8e. ii viewing electronic technology