

Theme 5

The Birth of Rugby League

Pupil Resource Sheet 1a

Amateurs, Professionals and Broken Time Pay

Amateurs and Professionals

Amateurs in sport are not paid. Most amateurs are not paid because they play sport as a hobby. In the late 1800s some cricketers were amateurs because they chose not to be paid. This was partly because it showed they were gentlemen who could afford to play for nothing.

Professionals in sport are paid. They have to be good at what they do to be paid. Today nearly all the famous people who play sport are professionals.

In the late 1800s, many thought it was better to be an amateur. Then players would be more likely to play in a sporting manner than try to win at all costs.

Rugby Bans Payments to Players

Cricket allowed players to be paid and so did association football after 1885.

The Rugby Football Union was run by gentlemen amateurs. They banned any payments to players in 1886. Rugby players could not be professionals so, unless they were rich, they had to earn a living by working as well as playing.

Some Huddersfield players had been given testimonials, where they were

given presents or money to recognise their efforts for the club. In October 1886 the Rugby Football Union (RFU) passed rules to suspend a player or club if a player was given anything except the money it cost him to travel to matches (expenses).

The punishments for breaking the rules about rewarding players were tough, as Huddersfield found in 1893.

Broken Time Pay

'Broken time pay' made up the money that players lost if they left work early to get to their match on time. Miners and mill workers worked until 1pm or 2pm on Saturdays.

Huddersfield had paid 'broken time' to their players for away games, but this was also banned in 1886.

This seemed very unfair. If a Huddersfield cricketer left his work early to get to his cricket match, he could be paid some money by his cricket club to make up the wages he lost.

A Huddersfield rugby player who left his mill early to get to his game on time lost part of his wage.

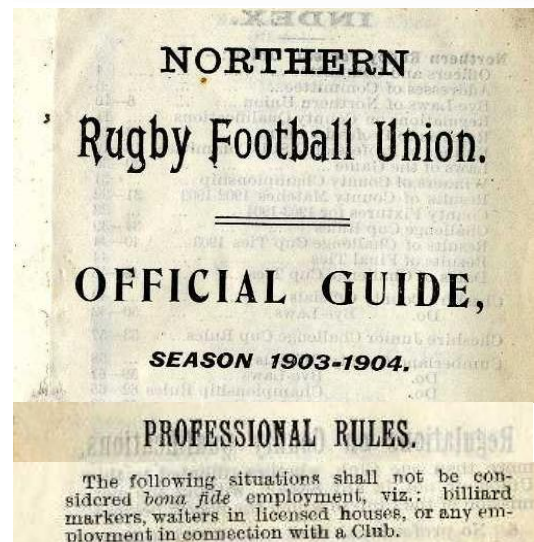
Huddersfield Banned

In 1893 Huddersfield signed two of the best three-quarters in Cumberland, Frank 'Jock' Forsythe and George Boak, from Cummersdale Hornets. They were offered weekly pay and a job at the Read Holliday chemical works in Huddersfield.

One of the fiercest opponents of paying players was the Reverend Frank Marshall, headmaster of King James Grammar School in Almondbury, and a member of the Huddersfield and Yorkshire rugby committees.

Marshall reported the Huddersfield club for breaking the rules in paying and finding jobs for Forsythe and Boak.

Huddersfield were suspended for eight matches. Forsythe and Boak were prosecuted in Cumberland for leaving their jobs without giving due notice to their employer.



Above: George Boak (left) and Frank 'Jock' Forsythe (right)

Below: one of the rules that Huddersfield broke in signing them