



## Theme 8

# World War I: To Play or Not to Play?

## Teacher Notes

### Aims

- to reason whether or not professional Northern Union rugby and association football should continue in the 1914-15 season
- to interpret arguments as supporting or opposing the continuation of professional Northern Union rugby and association football in the 1914-15 season
- to learn about the impact of the World War I on Huddersfield's professional and amateur rugby and association football clubs
- to learn how a letter from the captain of Huddersfield Old Boys Rugby Union FC led to the creation of a very effective national recruitment poster
- to imagine thoughts and empathise with feelings of players and male supporters on reading sports- related recruitment posters
- to demonstrate understanding in note-taking and class debate

### Related Knowledge and Skills

group discussion and interaction  
reading comprehension, literal and interpreted  
interpreting recruitment posters  
debating

### Time

3 x 60 mins lessons

### Resources

Pupil Resource Sheet: Roland Hely Owen  
Pupil Activity Sheet 1: Opinions in the *Examiner*  
Pupil Activity Sheet 2: Roland Hely Owen  
Pupil Activity Sheet 3: Recruitment Posters

### Differentiation Strategies

#### Less able children:

pairs/groups should include at least one good reader to ensure access to information

#### More able children:

opportunity to take responsibility and lead pairs and group activities.

## Overview

Activity Number	Class Organisation/Activity	Main Idea	Resource
1.1	Class introduction, individual note-taking	Deciding whether or not the 1914-15 professional football and rugby seasons should go ahead, and why	
1.2	Group discussion and written answers	Compiling group lists of ideas; Deciding group verdict about whether or not 1914-15 professional football and rugby seasons should go ahead	
1.3	Class discussion	Compiling class list of ideas; Class vote	
2.1	Class introduction	Reading contemporary opinions about whether or not 1914-15 professional football and rugby seasons should go ahead; Deciding whether each is for or against; Listing additional arguments read; Deciding whether group verdict has changed	Pupil Activity Sheet 1
2.2	Group discussion and written answers		
2.3	Class discussion		
3.1	Class introduction	Read Pupil Resource Sheet, discussing main issues. Read Pupil Activity Sheet 2	Pupil Resource Sheet Pupil Activity Sheet 2
3.2	Individual or pairs written answers	Written answers to Pupil Activity Sheet 2	
3.3	Class discussion		
4.1	Class introduction	Studying and considering thoughts and feelings invoked by sports-related recruitment posters	Pupil Activity Sheet 3
4.2	Group discussion and written answers		
4.3	Class discussion	Groups reporting back their ideas; Telling the class what actually happened to professional football and rugby during World War I	

## Activities

### 1.1 Class introduction, individual note-taking

Tell children that:

- Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914
- the British armed forces, particularly the army, needed tens of thousands of volunteers
- the 1914-15 association football and Northern Union rugby seasons were about to start
- Huddersfield had professional clubs in both – Huddersfield Town FC and Huddersfield Northern Union Rugby FC (now Huddersfield Giants)
- From September to April, football and rugby attracted and entertained thousands of young men every Saturday and on bank holidays.

Instruct children, individually, to write:

- whether, if they had been alive then, they would **have liked** these seasons to go ahead
- whether or not they think the 1914-15 professional football and rugby seasons **should** go ahead, and predicting whether or not they think they did
- write their reasons for and against these seasons going ahead.

## 1.2 Group discussion and written answers

With children in groups of three or four, instruct groups to:

- write two lists, one of reasons for and one of reasons against these seasons going ahead.
- decide whether or not they think the 1914-15 seasons should go ahead.

## 1.3 Class discussion

Groups reporting back their ideas.

Compilation of class list.

Class vote as to whether the seasons should go ahead.

## 2.1 Class introduction

Instruct groups to:

- read Pupil Activity Sheet 1: Opinions in the *Examiner* (eleven quotes from letters, articles and news items in the *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* from August 1914 to May 1915).
- decide whether each quote is generally for or against the continuation of professional rugby and association football
- make a note of any additional arguments, for or against, that had not previously been considered by the class
- decide whether the opinion of their group remains the same or has changed.

Groups that finish early:

- consider and write a short explanation of why Lord Derby had a conflict of interests.

## 2.2 Group discussion and written answers

## 2.3 Class discussion

Groups reporting back their ideas and answers.

## 3.1 Class introduction

Read the Pupil Resource Sheet round the class.

Discuss:

- how Roland Owen's letter led to the War Office creating a very effective recruitment poster
- the message in the poster and the emotions it is targeting
- the impact of the war on amateur and professional sports clubs and their players
- what happened to the soldiers in the attack on Hill 60
- why quoting an original letter from a soldier who was there is the most effective way of telling the story of the attack
- children's thoughts and feelings about the fate of Roland Hely Owen, considering his age, his talents and accounts of his bravery.

## 3.2 Individual or pairs written answers

## 3.3 Class discussion, children reporting back their answers

## 4.1 Class introduction

Study Pupil Activity Sheet 3: Recruitment Posters, with the class.

- explain the difference between thoughts (ideas) and feelings (emotions).
- for Poster 3, encourage children to make the connection between the question 'Is YOUR trip necessary?' and travel by players and supporters of professional teams to away matches
- for Poster 4, encourage children to consider why it was more straightforward for amateur rugby union footballers to stop playing than it was for professional Northern Union rugby footballer and association footballers who made their living wholly or partly from their sport.

Organise children to work individually or in pairs.

## 4.2 Individual/pairs written answers

### 4.3 Class discussion, children reporting back their answers

Use suggestions on the Teacher Answer Sheet to expand on children's answers.

After children have reported back, tell them what actually happened in relation to professional association and rugby football during World War I.

- the 1914-15 seasons went ahead, minus some players who volunteered for the armed forces
- crowds were generally lower than usual as many were away fighting the war
- during the summer of 1915 both sports banned any payments to players until the war was over and were reorganised into regions to reduce the travelling required
- Huddersfield Town FC was in a league bordered by Leicester Fosse, Grimsby Town and Leeds City and played every season of wartime football
- Huddersfield Northern Union Rugby FC was in the War Emergency League, most of its matches against teams from West Yorkshire and occasionally just into Lancashire
- Northern Union rugby's war leagues continued until 1918-19, but Huddersfield did not play in them after 1916-17. Huddersfield resumed when their sport returned to normal in the 1919-20 season.
- the Football League returned to normal for the 1919-20 season.

Encourage children to see the continuation of:

- professional association and rugby football and their clubs such as Huddersfield Town and Huddersfield Giants
- amateur clubs such as Huddersfield Old Boys Rugby Union FC through to modern times as legacies of the successes of the Allies in World War I and World War II.

N.B. In World War II, the professional football and rugby leagues were abandoned and replaced by regional leagues on the outbreak of war in September 1939. This was because:

- the precedent had been set in World War I
- conscription was enforced from the start of World War II, whereas it was only introduced in January 1916 in World War I.

Professional rugby league returned to normal in 1945-46 and professional football in 1946-47.