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**by Nick Cain
and Greg Growden**



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Dedication

Dedication? Well, one thing's for sure: not everyone who picks up a copy of *Rugby Union For Dummies* is going to have the dedication, in terms of hours of practice and self-analysis, that it takes to become the next Jonny Wilkinson. Hopefully, though, whatever your aspirations as far as this great game is concerned, you will find something in these pages to help you meet them.

As for my own dedication, I would like to thank my better half, Gill. Her patience, sunny disposition and unstinting support, despite the fact that she must sometimes feel like a rugby widow, are priceless. Thanks also to my son, Hugo, and daughters, Ella and Martha, who never complained as their dad yet again disappeared to 'The Shed At The End Of The Garden' to work (at least they didn't jump for joy in front of me). A dedication too to my mother, Marion, and late father, Tony, for their faith in their sometimes wayward offspring.

— Nick Cain

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— Nick Cain

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Introduction



Congratulations! You have *Rugby Union for Dummies* Third Edition in your hands, written specially for people in Britain and Ireland who are keen to find out all they can about one of the most exciting sports there is. With this book, we aim to satisfy your curiosity, fill the gaps in your knowledge and show you that rugby is a whole new exciting world waiting to be explored.

Thousands of people around the world are passionate about rugby union, and nowhere more than in the British Isles, where the game originated. For the uninitiated, rugby union may seem like a game from another planet where the inhabitants speak a strange language and talk about things called scrums, rucks, mauls and lineouts. All these strange words, the laws that govern the game, the positions of the players on the field and what they are supposed to do can easily overwhelm the beginner.

We wrote this book so that rugby union beginners can get to know the game quickly and easily, without ever feeling overwhelmed or intimidated. Before long, you find you are an expert on the game, the most innovative and fascinating of football codes, a code that is forever evolving.

About This Book

Our simple aim in writing this book is to provide you with everything you want to know about rugby. All the information is here. You don't have to read this book right through from page one to the end though in order to make the most of it.

Each chapter covers a rugby topic in itself, so you can easily dip into those chapters where we talk about the bits of the game that you don't quite understand. When you are watching a game on television, for example, and a referee's signal confuses you, just turn to the chapter that explains the referee's signals and the basic laws that govern the game.

If you want to become a player, you can easily navigate your way to the sections of most interest to you, and also take advantage of the handy hints throughout the book. Whether you want to become a referee, a club official, or simply a spectator, a chapter has been written with you in mind.

No matter where you sit on the rugby totem pole, whether you are an outright beginner or a self-adjudged expert, *Rugby Union For Dummies*, Third Edition has something that you find interesting.

How to Use This Book

To make it easier for you, *Rugby Union for Dummies* Third Edition follows certain conventions. For example, to make it easier for you, every time we use a new term or an important phrase, it is in italics and its meaning is explained.

We explain everything very, very clearly, and not in language full of rugby gobbledegook. For a quick reminder of the meanings of certain terms, you can always turn to the glossary at the back of the book.

Don't be restricted by the order in which the contents of this book appear. Flip through it, maybe starting with the chapter on the laws, where we explain the most important rules of the game. Check out the diagrams, drawings and photos, which make it easy for you to immediately understand the most important aspects of the game.

You may find that in a discussion of a particular aspect of rugby in one chapter, we refer to another aspect of the game. Whenever that happens, we tell you which chapter to turn to for more information about that other aspect. For example, when we talk about tactics, we mention player positions and tell you which chapter to turn to for more detailed information on positions.

Foolish Assumptions

Don't feel intimidated if you know nothing about rugby union. Even some players have difficulty remembering things like the laws, so never worry that you are a rugby dummy – we certainly don't think you are! Before long, you are going to feel like an expert.

You may have been watching a game and asked

- ✓ Why are all those players grabbing each other around the waist and then charging at each other like stampeding rhinos?
- ✓ Why does the referee keep waving his arms around?
- ✓ Why are the players standing in a straight line and jumping for the ball?
- ✓ Why is a hooker called a hooker?
- ✓ What is a ruck and what is a maul?

This book answers these questions, and many, many more. Our assumption is that you basically know nothing – and we go from there.

How This Book is Organised

This book is organised into six parts according to the famous *For Dummies* design. Each part focuses on an important part of the world of rugby union.

Part I: Rugby: Roots, Boots and All

If you are totally new to rugby, this part sets the scene for you. We describe the history of the game, how it all comes together on the field and how the popularity of rugby circles the planet. We also explain what all those lines on the pitch mean and how the scoring system works. This part ends with handy hints on how to kit yourself up for a game of rugby and how to take precautions to minimise the risk of injury.

Part II: Getting Down and Dirty

A really important chapter starts this part. We give you detailed information on the positions the players occupy and their roles. Then we introduce you to the most important laws that govern the game as well as to the officials who control the game. This part helps you to improve your skills on the field, and explains rucks, mauls, scrums and lineouts. It then moves on to an explanation of tactics before describing some of the best ways in which to get fit and stay fit for rugby. You can also find out about coaching and how to get involved in it.

Part III: Welcome to Planet Rugby

This part tells you all about the competitions, the tournaments, the teams, the players and the fields on which they play. We describe the World Cup, international rugby competitions like the Six Nations, and the most important national competitions. This part also talks about the rugby scene in the UK and Ireland and tells you how you can get involved in your local club, whether you are interested in coaching, playing, or just soaking up the atmosphere.

Part IV: Following the Game: The Informed Fan

If you are a fan, this part is for you. We guide you to the best sources of rugby information whether they are on the screen, in the newspapers, or on the radio. This part also has some great hints on getting the most out of being a spectator.

Part V: The Part of Tens

The part without which no *For Dummies* book would be complete. This part is packed full of fascinating bits of information that you can store away and draw on whenever you feel like impressing all those around you at the rugby club. It contains our take on the greatest rugby highs, as well as rugby trivia that is funny as well as interesting.

Part VI: Appendixes

This part contains three really useful collections of information – the winners of a whole range of rugby competitions, a glossary of rugby terms and a list of key rugby organisations with contact details.

Icons Used in This Book

To help your navigation through this book, keep an eye out for the icons, the little pictures that sit in the margin. They guide you to particular types of information. This list tells you what the icons in this book mean.



This icon highlights tips and snippets of advice that can help you, whether you aim to become a better player, a better coach, a better spectator – or all three.



Paragraphs with this icon attached contain information that is especially useful to remember.



You won't see this icon very often, but, when you do, take heed, because it indicates areas that may cause concern.



This icon indicates a technical discussion is under way. You can skip this information if you want to, because it isn't necessary for an understanding of the basics. If you do read it, though, your rugby expertise goes up a few notches.



Whenever you see this icon, you find an explanation of rugby terms that helps you understand just what is going on in the game.



Paragraphs that sport this icon contain descriptions of outstanding rugby players, the players who are the big names in the game.

Where to Go from Here

Here you are, ready to go. What direction you go in depends on your needs. Have a good look at the table of contents because it's very detailed and gives you an excellent overview of the book and the way in which it is structured.

For the beginner, the best place to start is at the beginning! But if you want to immerse yourself in the laws of the game, head for that chapter. Perhaps you have a particular interest in the best British and Irish players, in which case, turn to the Part of Tens. Wherever you go – enjoy!

Part I

Rugby: Roots, Boots and All



Evolution of Rugby Man

In this part . . .

To make you feel comfortable about everything rugby union, this part provides an introduction to the game, how it began, and what it is all about. For those new to rugby union, we provide you with a comprehensive run-down of the whys and wherefores of the game.

In this part of the book, we give you an outline of the beginnings of the game of rugby union and describe how it has become one of the most widely played and most loved sports on the globe. We explain the basic aims of the game, what is required to win and the scoring system, the field on which the game is played, and what goes on during a game. And, last but not least, you find out what gear you need to have when you turn up for that first rugby training session.