

Making Everything Easier!™

2nd Australian & New Zealand Edition

Rugby Union

FOR DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Master the game and play to win
- Follow the laws and understand the ref's calls
- Identify key players at the World Cup
- Appreciate the history of the game

Greg Growden

Chief Rugby Correspondent for
the *Sydney Morning Herald*

Foreword by Robbie Deans

Wallabies coach and former All Blacks champion



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Rugby Union For Dummies[®], 2nd Australian and New Zealand Edition

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by Greg Growden



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About the Author

Greg Growden is one of Australia's best-known sportswriters. He began writing about rugby union in 1981, and since 1987 has been the chief rugby union correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Sun-Herald* newspapers.

Greg has covered all six World Cup tournaments, well over 250 Tests and more than 25 Wallaby overseas tours. He has reported on Tests at every major rugby venue in the world, and has written for numerous international newspapers and

magazines. He is also a regular on New Zealand and Australian television rugby shows.

Greg began his journalistic career with the *Herald* straight from school in 1978 and spent several years chasing fire engines and covering murders, before specialising in sports writing. He won numerous literary awards for his writings on cricket and AFL, before rugby became his number one pursuit.

Greg has written 12 books, including *A Wayward Genius: the Fleetwood Smith Story*, which acclaimed British author Frank Keating ranked as being among the 100 best sporting books of the 20th century. Other titles include *Gold, Mud, and Guts*, *The Incredible Tom Richards: Footballer, War Hero and Olympian*, and *Inside the Wallabies*.

Dedication

To Elizabeth, Anna and Angus, who have to endure the early mornings, late nights and obsessions of a sportswriting life.

Author's Acknowledgements

To the staff at the *Sydney Morning Herald* who have tried to communicate with me when I've had the head down with deadline beckoning trying to make certain that the blindside breakaway in the illustration was actually on the blindside, and wasn't instead seagulling. Only they know what all that means.

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Foreword

The 2011 season is one of the biggest the game has ever seen — with the extension of Super Rugby including an additional Australian team, alongside the seventh Rugby World Cup (in New Zealand).

Such events make 2011 an appropriate juncture for the release of *Rugby Union For Dummies, 2nd Australian & New Zealand Edition* — an excellent publication, and one to help guide you through the complex world that the modern game of rugby union can be.

As a navigator, none has greater qualifications than Greg Growden. Greg has experienced more than most coaches and players do during his lengthy career as the *Sydney Morning Herald's* chief correspondent on the game.

A constant travelling companion for the Qantas Wallabies during my time as national coach, there aren't many ports on the rugby union map that Greg hasn't experienced at some stage.

This exposure has given him a good understanding of rugby union principles and a great background knowledge of both the history of, and the characters that populate this great game.

The year ahead offers an exciting prospect, with the formation of the Melbourne Rebels providing the game with a significant boost in profile through Victoria, while also gaining Australia a valuable fifth Super Rugby outlet in which the country's playing talent can express themselves. So, to those Victorians who have purchased this publication, welcome aboard!

I trust that (armed with the information contained within these pages) you enjoy the maiden voyage of your Super Rugby

representatives along with all of the other attractions the game offers.

Of course, Super Rugby provides the entree — the annual Bledisloe Cup and Tri Nations Tests — to the year's main feast — September's Rugby World Cup.

The 2011 tournament, to be staged on the fields of New Zealand, is the culmination of four years of preparation for the players and coaches of all 20 participating teams, and promises to be the best event yet.

The 2011 World Cup is a competition that all in the host nation of New Zealand are likely to embrace. This event is set to provide an environment and atmosphere that should bring the best out of all participants, and is going to be compulsive viewing for those watching from further afield.

Enjoy the rugby. Enjoy the book.

And, most importantly, thanks for your interest and participation in what is a great game!

Robbie Deans

Qantas Wallabies head coach

Introduction

Congratulations! You have *Rugby Union For Dummies*, 2nd Australian & New Zealand Edition, in your hands, an edition written especially for those either side of the Tasman who are keen to find out all they can about one of the most exciting of sporting codes. With this book, I 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.

Hundreds of thousands of people around the world are passionate about rugby union. For the uninitiated, rugby union may seem like a game from another planet, where the inhabitants speak a strange language and talk about unusual subjects such as 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're supposed to do can easily overwhelm the beginner.

I wrote this book so that rugby union beginners (coaches, parents, players and spectators) can get to know the game quickly and easily, without ever feeling overwhelmed or intimidated. Before long, you're going to find you're an expert on the game; the most innovative and fascinating of football codes — a code forever evolving.

About This Book

My 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 I talk about the bits of the game that you don't quite understand. When you're 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.

The focus is on the male game, but where appropriate, I provide relevant information for those interested in playing or watching women's rugby.

No matter where you sit on the rugby totem pole, whether you're an outright beginner or a self-adjudged expert, *Rugby Union For Dummies* has something you're likely to find interesting.

Conventions Used in This Book

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

I 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 I 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, I refer to another aspect of the game. Whenever that happens, I tell you which chapter to turn to for more information about that other aspect. For example, when I talk about tactics, I mention player positions and tell you which chapter to turn to for more detailed information on positions.

And, to avoid confusion with any other game of footy, this book occasionally refers to the former name of 'soccer' even though the game of soccer has officially changed its name to 'football'.

What You're Not to Read

Here and there throughout this book, you see *sidebars* — text boxes that are separate from the regular content and that feature a grey background. Sidebars include information of interest, but if you choose to skip these your understanding of rugby union isn't going to suffer.

Another item you can safely skip without worrying about it are the occasional paragraphs with a Technical Stuff icon. Tech-minded spectators, for example, may enjoy getting to the nitty gritty, but most beginners aren't going to notice whether a rugby ball is a few grams too heavy or not.

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're a rugby dummy — I certainly don't think you are! Before long, you're 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 do they keep referring to rugby people as 'rah-rahs'?
- ✓ Why is a five-eighth called a five-eighth?
- ✓ What is a ruck and what is a maul?

This book answers these questions, and many, many more. My 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.

Part I: Rugby: Roots, Boots and All

If you're totally new to rugby, this part sets the scene for you. I describe the history of the game, how it all comes together on the field, and how the popularity of rugby circles the planet. I 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. I give you detailed information on the positions the players occupy and their roles. Then I 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. I