

Sports and Pastimes.

FOOTBALL.

RUGBY.

BEAUTIFUL weather favoured the opening of the Rugby season in Auckland on Saturday. The game does not seem so popular this year, and seldom has it been ushered in so quietly. Among the more important games the results were:—University defeated Newton by 10 points to nil; Ponsonby, last year's champions, beat Grafton by 29 points to nil; and North Shore suffered defeat by City, the latter scoring 32 points to the Shoreites' nil. In the second grade the results were: Ponsonby 15 v. North Shore nil; City 23 v. University nil; Parnell 23 v. Grafton 8; Marist Brothers 9 v. Newton nil.

Whangarei.

The Rugby season opened on Saturday at Kensington Park, with a match between Kiripaka and Middle Harbour. The latter team lacked combination, and were easily outplayed by Kiripaka, who won by 14 points to nil.

Paeoa.

The football competitions under the auspices of the Paeoa Rugby Union were continued on Saturday afternoon, when East and Suburbs tried conclusions, the latter winning by 3 points to penalty goal to nil. E. Rukit kicked the goal for Suburbs. Mr W. Moore gave every satisfaction as referee.

Thames.

The Thames football season opened on Saturday, when County and Suburbs met, the game resulting in a win for the former by 8 points to 3, the winners having the best of the game throughout. In the junior division, the game between County and Suburbs was also won by County by 3 points to nil.

Coromandel.

The first football match of the season, Coromandel v. Old Coromandel Boys, from Auckland, was played on Saturday afternoon in the Kaitiaki paddock, Coromandel, and after a very interesting and fast game, resulted in a victory for the local team by 23 points to 8.

Waik.

City (3) beat Suburbs (nil). Jonghin scored a try for the winners.

Hawke's Bay.

Rovers (8) beat Old Boys (3).
Athletic (24) beat Napier (0).
Athletic (5) beat Pirates (0).
Pakipaki (0) beat Kia Ora (nil).

Manawatu.

Felting (15) beat Old Boys (3).
Mataia (7) beat Palmerston (2).

Wellington.

Athletic (5) beat Wellington (nil).
Ponake (0) beat Petone (3).
Victoria College (nil) drew with Southern (nil).
Oriental (6) beat St. James (3).
Metrae (21) beat Old Boys (8).

Christchurch.

Merivale (15) beat Christchurch (3).
Sydenham (6) beat Linwood (nil); Old Boys (3) beat Canterbury College (8); Albion a bye.

Otago.

Southern, 17, beat University, 6.
Dunedin, 11, beat Talbot Rovers, 3.
Port Chalmers, 14, beat Union, 3.
Albion, 19, beat Zingari Richmond, 8.
Pirates, 6, beat Kalkora, 2.

Learned Something.

The Kangaroos (the professional Rugby team which recently toured England) defeated a New South Wales team by 34 points to 8 last week. The returned team were cleverer in all departments of play, showing that their visit to England had greatly improved them in the finer points of the game.

NORTHERN UNION.

A Press Association cable from Sydney states that the recently returned touring team, "The Kangaroos," defeated the pick of New South Wales by 48 to 10.

ASSOCIATION.

Some interesting games were played on Saturday, when the Auckland championship matches under Association rules were continued. In the first division, Corinthians were victorious over the Caledonians by 3 goals to 1; W.Y.M.F. beat Ponsonby 2 to nil; and Y.M.C.A. (2 goals) were defeated by North Shore (3 goals). Among the second division, wins were recorded by Tabernacle and United, who defeated Carlton and Corinthians respectively.

AUSTRALIAN GAME.

The followers of the Australian game opened the season on Saturday in Auckland. Mount Roskill beat Eden by 61 points to 30 points, and the Newton-Imperial match ended in favour of Newton by 57 points to 15.

CRICKET.

THE AUSTRALIAN XI. IN ENGLAND.

Programme of Matches.

- MAY.
6-v. Nottinghamshire, at Nottingham.
10-v. Northamptonshire, at Northampton.
13-v. Essex, at Leyton.
17-v. Surrey, at the Oval.
20-v. M.C.C., at Lord's.
21-v. Oxford University, at Oxford.
27—FIRST TEST MATCH, at Birmingham.
31-v. Leicestershire, at Leicester.

JUNE.

- 8-v. Cambridge University, at Cambridge.
7-v. Hampshire, at Southampton.
10-v. Somerset, at Bath.
14—SECOND TEST MATCH, at Lord's.
17—Vacant (probably Scotland).
21-v. Yorkshire, at Bradford.
24-v. Lancashire and Yorkshire, at Manchester.
28-v. Scotland (two days), at Edinburgh.

JULY.

- 1—THIRD TEST MATCH, at Leeds.
5-v. Warwickshire, at Birmingham.
8-v. Worcestershire, at Worcester.
12-v. Gloucestershire, at Bristol.
13-v. Surrey, at the Oval.
19-v. Yorkshire, at Sheffeld.
22-v. Derbyshire, at Derby.
27—FOURTH TEST MATCH, at Manchester.
29-v. Yorkshire and Lancashire, at Hull.

AUGUST.

- 2-v. South Wales, at Cardiff.
3-v. Lancashire, at Liverpool.
9—FIFTH TEST MATCH, at the Oval.
13-v. West of England (Devon, Cornwall, etc.), at Exeter.
16-v. Gloucestershire, at Cheltenham.
19-v. Kent, at Canterbury.
23-v. Middlesex, at Lord's.
24-v. Sussex, at Brighton.
30-v. M.C.C., at Lord's.

SEPTEMBER.

- 2-v. Essex, at Leyton.
6-v. An England Eleven (Mr. Bamford's), at Uxoteter.
9—Scarborough Festival, at Scarborough.
29-v. South of England, at Hastings.

The First Win.

The tour of the Australians commenced auspiciously with the defeat of Nottingham by an innings and six runs. Following are the scores:—

NOTTINGHAM.—1st Innings.	
A. O. Jones, not out	125
G. Gunn, b Armstrong	9
J. Hardstaff, b Armstrong	7
J. Gunn, b Cotter	7
W. Payton, b Cotter	37
J. Iremonger, c Carter, b Whitty	7
C. James, c Trumper, b Whitty	0
E. Alletson, b O'Connor	1
T. Oates, c Carter, b Armstrong	5
A. Hallam, b Armstrong	0
T. Wass, b Armstrong	31
Sundries	5
Total	238

Bowling Analysis: Cotter took two wickets for 73 runs; Armstrong, five for 55; Whitty, two for 42; Laver, none for 21; O'Connor, one for 38; Noble, none for 8.

AUSTRALIA.—First Innings.

M. A. Noble, c Jones, b Wass	4
W. Bardsley, c Oates, b Wass	63
H. Carter, lbw, b Hallam	61
H. E. Gregory, c James, b Wass	2
V. Trumper, b Hallam	94
W. Ransford, lbw, b Wass	4
W. W. Armstrong, not out	106
A. Cotter, c Alletson, b Hallam	22
F. Laver, b Hallam	17
J. O'Connor lbw, b Hallam	6
J. Whitty, b Hallam	0
Sundries	10
Total	389

Bowling Analysis: T. Wass, took four wickets for 107; A. Hallam, six for 144; J. Iremonger, none for 75; John Gunn, none for 42; J. Hardstaff, none for 11.

NOTTINGHAM.—Second Innings.

A. O. Jones, c Armstrong, b Whitty	30
Geo. Gunn, c sub., b Noble	22
J. Hardstaff, b Armstrong	25
J. Iremonger, c Whitty, b O'Connor	4
J. Gunn, c sub., b O'Connor	1
W. Payton, c Whitty, b Cotter	6
C. James, lbw, b Armstrong	6
E. Alletson, c Trumper, b Armstrong	31
T. Oates, b Cotter	13
A. Hallam, b Cotter	1
T. Wass, not out	0
Sundries	5
Total	144

Bowling analysis: Cotter took three wickets for 51 runs; O'Connor, two for 35; Whitty, one for 33; Armstrong, three for 27; Noble, one for 3.

Captain of the English Team.

Mr. A. C. MacLaren (Lancashire) has accepted the captaincy of the English team for the test matches against the Australian eleven. Hon. F. S. Jackson was asked, but was unable to accept.

The Demoralisation of Bowlers.

(By G. L. JESSOP
(Of England and Gloucester XI').)

When writing on matters appertaining to cricket, one is rather too prone to treat one's subject entirely from the standpoint of first-class cricket. It is a mistake from which too many of us suffer. At the very lowest computation the humbler followers of the game outnumber their more exalted brethren by the very large proportion of some three or four thousand to one. With such a large subject as the "Demoralisation of Bowlers," it is impossible to ignore what for want of a better term we will call second-class cricket. For it is in this class that bowling is more frequently demoralised. And for this reason. The county bowler is a man of mature experience, ready to cope with anything which may occur a little out of the ordinary. Although at times he may himself experience an occasion or two when his bowling may, to use a colloquialism, get tied in a knot—yet in nine cases out of ten he finds some means by which he can unravel it. With him it is merely temporary. Usually it is not so with local bowling. Exceptions there must be, of course, but the general happening is that once the bowling is collared, it remains so for the rest of the innings.

In Rustic Cricket.

In the days prior to my inclusion in the first-class ranks, my experience was mostly confined to local and village cricket. Of good club cricket I saw little. In this local and village cricket it needed very little to put the bowler out of his stride. The mere standing out of one's crease in order to play fast bowling was quite sufficient to ensure a perfect glutony of long hops. And the most certain way of bringing about complete demoralisation was for one to run out of one's crease to slow or medium pace bowling. Nor is this to be wondered at, for against a resolute, keen-eyed, and quick-footed batter the bowler's task is never a sinecure in any class of cricket. A bowler requires a cool head to deal with such, and it is exceptional to find one of this species outside the ranks of first-class cricket. On occasions even in first-class cricket such methods have been found to pay, but those who do indulge themselves in this manner form a very small minority. Rustic cricket—real rustic cricket—where epikes are unknown, and the only equipment deemed really necessary is either a red belt or cap—is responsible for all sorts of dodges in the direction of putting the bowler off. One batsman, who

should have known better, for he was a parson's son, made a constant practice of drawing back from his wicket as the bowler was on the point of delivery, pleading on each occasion his unreadiness. It used to, as he was careful to explain to me, demoralise the buccic mind. To plead to him that it was not quite cricket was but to involve oneself in endless argument. If these few lines of mine—should they catch his eye—result in his sincere repentance of the error of his ways, they will not have been written in vain. There is also a reverse side of the medal, for the bowler himself is not altogether slow in an endeavour to steal a march on his inveterate foe. Whether it is altogether "according to Cocker" to suddenly change from slow underhand to fast overarm to an unsuspecting batsman, is a question which I will leave to the delinquents themselves to solve. But after all instances where either batsman or bowler resort to practices like, even if they do not exactly break the letter of the law, yet do evade the spirit of the game, are extremely isolated. And the spirit of cricket breathes just as healthily on our village greens as it does in the proud enclosure of the headquarters at Lords. Long may this be so.

Hypnotic Influence in Cricket.

In the demoralising of bowling the personality of the batsman plays no little part. If one looks at the names of the first dozen batsmen at the end of each season, one recognises how very little separates the twelfth from the first in the list. But though in the matter of averages there may not be much to choose, yet a larger gap in actual cricket does exist. To the bowler there is something almost intimidating in the personalities of a Fry—a Ranji—a Hayward—or a Tylesley. He cannot quite explain it, but there it is. Possibly he may be too conscious that those selfsame ruthless ruffians have discovered thoroughly all the secrets of his personal art, leaving him like the "dummy hand" of a bridge player thoroughly exposed. He is not going to bowl any the better for this knowledge. He may bowl with the utmost confidence against some other batsman whose average merely differs from those others by an insignificant fraction. Certainly with a "Hanji" it almost amounts to hypnotic influence. Knowing full well the deadly dispatch of that batsman's "on" stroke, the bowler is fully impressed with the importance of not bowling anything near the leg stump—and yet he finds that ball which he propelled with full intent to the "off" side has been attracted as by a magnet towards the guarded shins of that nonchalant figure. When he finds that he cannot accomplish his aim, he finds himself almost unconsciously doing the very thing he ought not to do. Is it possible for hypnotic influence to play any part in the future of cricket? Perhaps some scientist will relieve the minds of our bowling brethren on this subject. I know personally that I have often wished for a half volley, and have had my wish immediately granted, but that I put down to intelligent anticipation. On another occasion I repeated my wish, and again I got it, and so did my leg stump. As this was my first ball in a Test match, my faith in hypnotic influence received a shock from which it has never fully recovered. It may not be so with others.

Patience and Punishment.

There is one meaning to the word demoralisation which signifies the "throwing into confusion," and it is in this state which the bowler is brought by the association of two fierce hitters, each of whom is imbued with a firm conviction that the bowling can be hit. There comes a day to most hitters when nothing can go wrong, and it is then that the true demoralisation of the attack occurs. It matters little how good the bowling may be, for the better the length the faster do the runs come. Such days as these come few and far between, but when they do arrive it is not a matter for surprise if the bowler's confidence is somewhat shaken. There can be no doubt that hitting is more likely to cause demoralisation than any other cause, but it must not be lost sight of that a steady, stolid defence likewise quells the spirit of the bowler. But bowlers bowl so much better when no runs come. It is then merely a matter of patience. Few bowlers stand punishment really well, and it is the man whose principal aim is the keeping down of runs who is the first to lose confidence when bow-