



THE FOOTBALL WORLD



The first series of matches in the second round of the Rugby Union championship, senior division, eventuated on Saturday last at Eden Park, and the results of the games make the position of the teams engaged a particularly interesting one. 'Varsity defeating Marist Bros. by eight points and a drawn game with no score resulting between City and Ponsonby, places City and University at the top with level pegging in championship points. Thus the City-'Varsity fixture on Saturday next should be the star game of the season.

Again, owing to unfavourable weather conditions, spectators were deprived of witnessing really first-class exhibitions of Rugby, and during no period of the games at Eden Park was the big attendance of Rugbyites roused to much enthusiasm. Indeed, play was, on the whole, uninteresting in both senior matches, City and Ponsonby forwards controlling the position on No. 1 ground, while on No. 2 ground, though opposed to a very much weakened "Tykes" fifteen, the students found the light rain, which descended during most of the afternoon, interfering with their usually brilliant back play.

Perhaps the best exhibition of the popular winter game was given at the Agricultural Show Grounds, where a big muster of spectators were treated to a fine display by those old rivals, Grammar and Kings. The match ended in a draw after a very even game.

PONSONBY v. CITY.

The meeting of the blue and blacks and the red and blacks can always be depended upon to draw in large numbers the supporters of either side and Saturday last was no exception to the rule.

Though City had defeated Ponsonby by eight points to nil in the first match of the season, the latter's followers were very hopeful of the tables being turned at the second venture. Had the day been fine and dry, the chances are that such anticipations would have been realised. As it was, on the day, Ponsonby had a little the better of the game, but there was not much to pick between the two teams.

As with University, Ponsonby's playing strength was not interfered with by the North Island v. South Island fixture, which was down for decision on Saturday last, neither Sellars nor D. McGregor journeying to Wellington. Moreover, it is safe to state that Ponsonby placed in the field the best possible team available, for not only did Joe O'Leary resume his accustomed position, but the veteran Cunningham again donned the jersey for his old club. City, on the other hand, were without the services of Bruce, the leader of their forward division, and D. Stewart from the three-quarter line was also missing, both players being at the inter-island match.

With the exception of climatic conditions, circumstances were, therefore, in Ponsonby's favour, but the uncertain going on No. 1 ground, the determined tackling and alertness of City's rear division, and the hard game played by the red and black vanguard were sufficient factors to keep Ponsonby from getting home.

Both teams being strong forward, the playing area heavy and the ball wet and greasy, it soon became apparent that the game was to be a struggle between two sets of forwards evenly matched as regard weight and skill, the rearguard being called upon in turn to stem forward rushes and to find the line as required.

As was to be expected with the forwards possessed by both Ponsonby and City, fortune favoured first one then the other, neither set retaining an advantage for long. In all departments of the forwards' work there was the same evenness noticeable, on the line-out, in the loose and in the tight work; one would find it difficult to bring together two sets of forwards more evenly matched.

The rearguards of either team had few opportunities to display combination and powers of attack, their efforts being confined chiefly to defensive tactics.

Where Ponsonby's backs had the advantage in experience with such players as O'Leary, Murray and McGregor taking part, the younger and less experienced City backs made up by their nippiness, sound kicking and plucky tackling.

To Moffitt, City's full-back, must go the honours of the day, as far as the rear divisions are concerned. His line kicking from opening to close was marked by deadly accuracy, and proved a big set-off to Ponsonby's efforts to invade City territory. Moffitt kicked powerfully and used more judgment than heretofore, while he was safe on the tackle. His display was easily one of the best given in that branch of back play this season.

Of City's remaining backs, Godfrey at half, was again a tower of strength, getting through much solid work in good style, saving cleverly and pluckily, and using his head to advantage. This player continues to give consistently good displays.

Barclay did much skilful saving, and was always dangerous, though he had few chances of getting his colleagues going.

Burns got through much defensive work, his pace and smart line kicking being a big asset to City on more than one occasion.

pace to advantage. O'Leary, his partner, was sound, but the wet and heavy ball made against his goal kicking efforts.

Until injured, Clarke, at half, gave a very pleasing display, getting through his work neatly and pluckily. A dry day would have seen some fine movements originating per medium of Ponsonby's half.

Cunningham surprised the critics by the form displayed in his first match this season, Auckland's rep. lock being in the thick of the game from opening to close and being responsible for more than one of City's tight corners. Sellars, Avery, Hall, Munro, and Francis played great games, Avery, Sellars, and Francis particularly so in the loose.

MARIST BROS. v. UNIVERSITY.

It was certainly unfortunate for the "Tykes" that so many of their team were selected for and accepted positions in the North Island team, while at the same time 'Varsity mustered about their best possible strength.

J. O'Brien and McKenzie were absent from Marist Bros' rearguard, Downing and Barrett from the forward division, while during the last

Gray and Geddes, in the five-eighths line, were noticeable chiefly on the defence, the former saving cleverly, but Geddes spoiled good individual efforts by retaining the ball too long.

Ross, behind the pack, was quite up to form, and did an enormous amount of work in a most creditable manner. It was a treat to see him worm himself through the ruck and clear time and again. His stopping, as usual, was sound.

Inkster, on the wing, was right up to his game, and was not found wanting when the scoring chance came his way. The forwards must have appreciated the absence of Downing and Barrett, for they seemed to find the available "Tykes" forwards sufficient to keep them busy. The students' van has given better displays. On several occasions forwards were slow in packing round in the tight, and on the line-out they were caught napping more than once. Grierson and Muir did fine work in the tight, McLean, Bilkey and Sexton showing up in the loose and on the line-out.

Marist Bros' full-back, Sheahan, was playing a good game until injured until he met with an un-pleasant injury in the final quarter.

The "Tykes" backs were called upon to do much defensive work dur-



THE WANGANUI COLLEGE TEAM, WHICH DEFEATED TE AUTE BY 8 POINTS TO 3 IN THE INTER-COLLEGE MATCH, PLAYED BEFORE 10,000 SPECTATORS AT PALMERSTON NORTH ON JUNE 17.—Back Row (from left): T. Lupton, A. G. Campbell, H. E. Cross, C. T. Bone, S. H. Stewart, K. C. Caldwell, P. E. Jobbling. Middle Row: R. C. Abraham, C. B. Wake, C. B. Pearce, H. M. Price, W. C. Caldwell, M. B. Beattie. Front Row: J. V. Lowes, L. R. Nelson.

Magee found Munro a worthy opponent as wing forward, and honours were about even, both working strenuously. As with Ponsonby's vanguard it would be difficult to make any distinction between City's forwards, all working solidly throughout. French was again to the fore on the line-out and broke away dangerously on several occasions. He was well supported by Walters and McNab, while Rasmussen was at home in the tight work.

Sutton, at full for Ponsonby, was a success, playing a cool game, and found the line safely. He saved in a particularly clever manner on one occasion during the last quarter.

The three-quarter line for Ponsonby was a very solid combination, and on a fine day would have given much trouble. Murray, at centre, as usual, did many good things, his saving tactics being very helpful. During the second half he played in Clarke's place behind the pack, Clarke having been injured towards the end of the first spell.

Stewart and D. McGregor gave sound displays of defensive play, as did J. McGregor, who took Stewart's place on the left wing when that player moved in to Murray's position.

Candy did not have a great many chances for initiating attack, but did his good saving, and used his

quarter Sheahan, full-back for Marists was carried off injured.

University were happy with the diminutive Ross behind the pack and McKenzie (of Wellington) replaced F. Shepherd in the forward line.

Under the unfavourable circumstances, Marist Bros. made a more than good showing, though had the day been to the students' liking the score would probably have been rather greater. As it was, the game early resolved itself into a display of defensive tactics, interspersed with occasional break aways by Marist Bros., and in generally ineffective attacks by University. Certain handling of the ball was well nigh impossible, but the students' rearguard essayed such during the whole of the game.

Campbell was again safe at full for 'Varsity, being well supported by Forsdick and Wilson. Forsdick was chiefly noticeable on the defence, doing some good saving with well-judged line kicks. He is still very unconvincing when on the attack. Neither Wilson nor Lambert had many chances, the uncertain foothold preventing the backs from quickly getting up speed, added to which Cornaga, O'Brien and McDonald were quick on the tackle. The day did not suit Lambert's goal kicking powers, though his powerful punts were of great service.

ing a heavy afternoon and accomplished such in a most creditable fashion. B. O'Brien, White and Cornaga worked hard and nipped in the bud many likely chances for 'Varsity.

Early, behind the pack, was kept busy, but did not shirk, though he would have been happier with Downing and Barrett in front of him.

Casey played a hard game as wing forward, Harris making his height and weight felt for a change in the line-out and in the pack. All Marists' forwards put up a good fight, and held 'Varsity in great style during the whole of the second half, no score resulting after half time.

The return match between the Taranaki and Wanganui Rugby Union rep. teams will be played at Hawera next Saturday, when a close and exciting game may be anticipated in view of the evenness of the struggle at Wanganui on the 3rd June, when Taranaki got the verdict by 9 points to 8. Wanganui undoubtedly scored a third try on that occasion, and thus really won by 11 points to 9, but the referee unfortunately did not see the try scored and consequently did not allow it. The Taranaki team will probably be stronger next Saturday, but if Wanganui can get its full strength away the amber and blacks will have their work cut out to win.