

# FOOTBALL.

## SENIOR CUP FIXTURES.

May 20—Grafton v. University, City v. Ponsonby, Marist Bros. v. Newton, Parnell a bye.  
 May 27—Grafton v. City, Parnell v. University, Marist Bros. v. Ponsonby, Newton a bye.  
 June 3—Grafton v. Marist Bros., Parnell v. City, Newton v. Ponsonby, University a bye.  
 June 10—Grafton v. Newton, Parnell v. Marist Bros., University v. City, Ponsonby a bye.  
 June 17—Grafton v. Ponsonby, Parnell v. Newton, University v. Marist Bros., City a bye.  
 June 24—Parnell v. Ponsonby, University v. Newton, City v. Marist Bros., Grafton a bye.

### Opening of the Season.

Fine weather prevailed on Saturday for the opening of the Rugby football season in Auckland, and enthusiasts assembled at Alexandra Park in large numbers, the attendance being estimated at about 2500. For the opening matches, play was of a high order, the University-Ponsonby and Parnell-Grafton games being splendidly contested, the result in each instance being in doubt right up till the time the referee declared no-side. The faultless manner in which many of the players handled the leather was a revelation to the majority of the spectators who were prepared to make allowances for shortcomings in this respect on the opening day's play, while the matches lacked nothing in willingness and strenuousness. In two of the three senior matches the enthusiasm of onlookers was at fever heat, and the wild excitement of supporters of the rival clubs was a sure sign that interest in the Rugby game this season is as

encenced in senior football, and those who were present to witness the match were well rewarded for their trip to Epsom. The game had not been long in progress before the Ponsonby men realised that they were up against a tough proposition, and they threw away as few chances as possible. The swift play of the students kept the blue and blacks extremely busy, and though the Ponsonby players had the best of matters in the earlier stages of the game, the second half resolved itself into a battle royal for supremacy. Both sides had rear divisions of no mean strength, and as the game was fast and open, the backs were thoroughly tested. The work of the Ponsonby backs was not as nippy and certain as that of the Varsity players, who gave a neat and heady exhibition. They made use of every opportunity, and saved their forwards to a considerable extent. A feature of their play was their sound tackling, the students smothering their opponents to great advantage. The Ponsonby rear division got plenty of opportunities, but erratic passing often brought their runs to a halt. With Webb, Morse, O'Leary, Murray, and McGregor great things were expected of the blue and blacks, but they found their equals in the students in Saturday's match, and their repeated attacks met with the most stubborn resistance. In the forwards it was thought Ponsonby would show marked superiority, but the students, despite their lightness, held their own, their clever tactics in the open enabling them to keep the blue and blacks in check. The light blues exerted every ounce of energy, and, with

forward after making a fine dash down the line transferring to Clark, who darted across and scored. Francis was entrusted with the shot at goal, but his attempt proved fruitless. Ponsonby 6, University nil. No further score was obtained in the first half, the bell sounding with the Ponsonby men attacking strongly. The students were not discouraged and on resuming play they put no end of vim into their efforts; with the result that after hard pressing the Ponsonby players in their own 25, Wilkes secured the ball from the scrum and broke through the opposition and scored amid the wildest excitement. Schofield took the kick and landed a certain goal. Ponsonby 6, University 5. University obtained their second try as the result of one of the prettiest pieces of play in the match. Wilkes snapping up the leather in Ponsonby's territory, set the blue rear division in motion by passing to Gray, who transferred to Wilson, and the speedy Varsity three-quarter sprinted for the line. When about to be tackled by McGregor, Wilson passed to Geddes, and keeping parallel with the latter, he took the return pass from Geddes, and sprinted over the line, registering a try in the corner, to the accompaniment of loud cheering. Schofield again took the kick, and succeeded in piloting the ball over the bar amid a scene of enthusiasm. University 10, Ponsonby 6. Ponsonby rallied, and a passing run by their backs, ended in Murray kicking over the line and Webb pouncing on the ball, this being the blue and blacks' third try. O'Leary failed to add the major points. University 10, Ponsonby 9. A great tussle ensued during the remainder of the game, but try as they would the Ponsonby men could not find a weak spot in the defence of the light blues, and the bell rang for no-side with the University team victors by 10 points to 9.

skill, and Lang outpointed him in every round.

A doctor who examined Lester stated that the blow was driven on the circumflex nerve, near the shoulder, against the bone, causing intense pain. Lester protested ignorance of the rule which lost him the fight, and that he was allowed in America to do as he did. He said he was keen for another match.

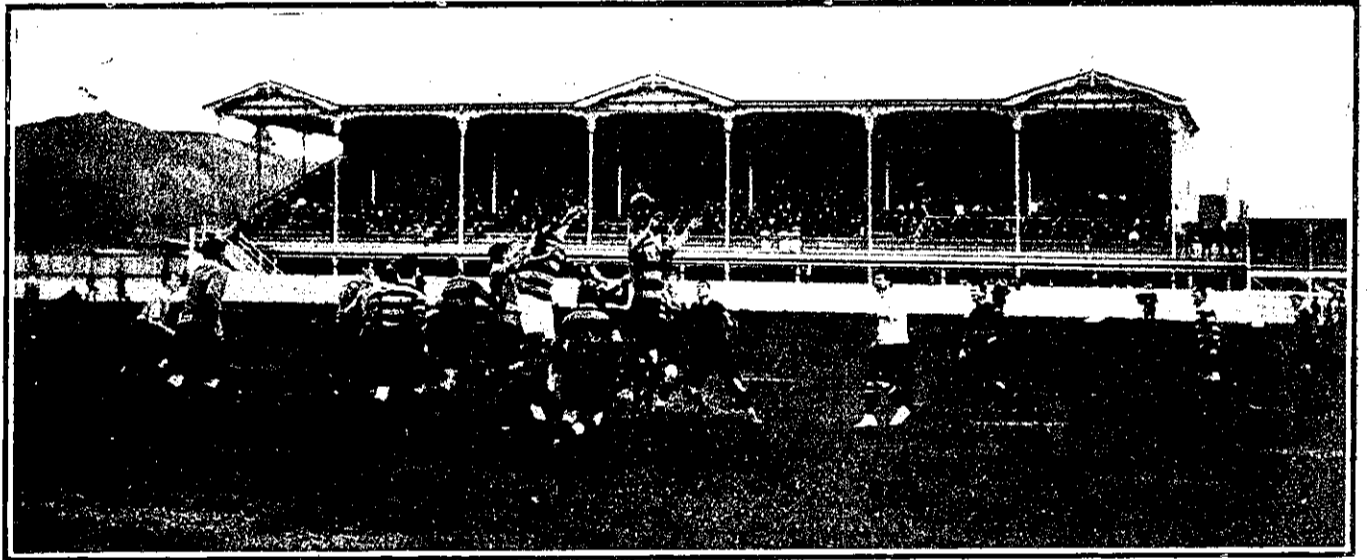
The result of the fight, which shows Lang to be the cleverer boxer, is rather disappointing, as but for sustaining the injury Lester would have been little the worse for whatever punishment he received in the six rounds. Lester has made no secret of the fact that he is a fighter and not a boxer, and he fully expected to win on a knockout, so that it is impossible to say whether the American would have succeeded in giving Lang his coup de grace had he been able to fight on. Lester is a dangerous opponent in the ring, and most of his battles have been won by his terrific knockout blows, and like his tutor, Tommy Burns, he is said to grow stronger each round, while he has a remarkable capacity for taking punishment. The unexpected injury which he sustained would upset his plans, and it is certain that Lester will do his utmost to secure a return match. Nobody will begrudge Bill Lang his victory, as bad luck has dogged the Melbourne pugilist ever since he left on his tour abroad, and as he is regarded as one of the pluckiest men engaged in the profession, no boxer is more deserving of a turn of luck than Australia's champion heavy-weight.

Billy Crawford, of Napier, Hawke's Bay, the well-known professional featherweight boxer, is at present on a visit to Auckland in search of matches. Crawford is desirous of meeting any boxer in New Zealand at 9st., but states that in the event of his opponent being unable to turn the scale at this weight he is not averse to giving away a few pounds up to not more than 9st. 4lb.

Franisch, the Austrian strong man and wrestler, who left Auckland several years ago for Sydney, met the Scottish wrestler, McMurdo, at Warrnambool, Victoria, last week, the latter winning the match in 22 minutes. McMurdo, who was giving away weight to Franisch proved the most experienced wrestler, and though the Austrian when thrown to the floor, defied all the Scotchman's efforts to turn him, McMurdo finally brought his two shoulders to the mat with a half Nelson. Franisch's second, Jack Graham, complained that Mackenzie, McMurdo's second, had rushed round the ring giving instructions to his man, and after an argument the contestants left the ring, not, however, before a further match had been arranged between the pair for £100 aside.

Jimmy Clabby, who in his last contest in Sydney was defeated by Dave Smith, sustained a serious injury in his second contest in England. He met Harry Duncan at Mr. H. D. M'In'osh's Olympia. In the first round of the contest he caught Duncan a terrific punch on the head and smashed the middle knuckle of the right hand. This was the second time the bone had been broken, and, consequently, Clabby's medical adviser states it will be quite three months before he is able to use it again. Clabby is returning to America.

When Bill Rudd, the New Zealand heavyweight boxer, met Jack Blackmore, at Hastings, on January 26 of this year, and lost to the Sydney man on a foul, he was exceedingly angry at the decision being given against him on that occasion, and one of the chief reasons of his journeying to Australia was to have another encounter with Blackmore. The second match between the pair duly came off at the Sydney Stadium the other night, before a very small attendance, and after three uninteresting rounds Rudd knocked his opponent out. Blackmore clearly proved that he is not the boxer of a few years back, and he made a decidedly poor showing against the New Zealander. The punch which broke Blackmore up was a right swing that landed on his right glove, bumping it to the jaw, and he fell back helpless, with his right arm across the top rope, which, being taut, prevented him from falling. Rudd stepped back, and Blackmore, in a dazed manner, swung a wild right and missed, and, although he recovered himself sufficiently to put his right up as a guard, Rudd's right again crashed to the glove, and another right to the side of the head put him out.



A THROW-IN IN THE PONSONBY v. UNIVERSITY MATCH.

great as ever, a fact which augurs well for the success of the A.R.U. competition. The University-Ponsonby match occupied pride of place on No. 1 ground, and though a victory for last year's champions was regarded as a foregone conclusion, the students surprised their most hopeful supporters by triumphing over the blue and black combination by the narrow margin of 10 points to 9 after one of the best spectacular games witnessed at the Park. Grafton and Parnell disputed honours on No. 2 ground, the match ending in a draw, each side scoring 9 points. City and Newton also tried conclusions, but as expected, the game proved of a one-sided character, the Cityites winning easily by 28 points to nil. The other team engaged in the senior competition, Marist Bros. Old Boys, had a bye, and held a useful practice during the afternoon. With the exception of the public school matches, no other games were held under the jurisdiction of the Auckland Rugby Union, the junior grade competitions being fixed to commence on Saturday next.

### University Defeats Ponsonby.

The defeat of the favourites, Ponsonby, was the cause for general rejoicing in most quarters, as the public have become so accustomed to witnessing the blue and black colours in the ascendant that the general opinion is a beating or two would not come out of turn to the Ponsonby men, and further would lend additional interest to the senior competition. That the University fifteen, whom many regarded as a trifle on the weak side, should come out and defeat the Ponsonby team in the opening match of the season, was one of the greatest surprises that Auckland Rigger enthusiasts have experi-

enced in senior football, and those who were present to witness the match were well rewarded for their trip to Epsom. The game had not been long in progress before the Ponsonby men realised that they were up against a tough proposition, and they threw away as few chances as possible. The swift play of the students kept the blue and blacks extremely busy, and though the Ponsonby players had the best of matters in the earlier stages of the game, the second half resolved itself into a battle royal for supremacy. Both sides had rear divisions of no mean strength, and as the game was fast and open, the backs were thoroughly tested. The work of the Ponsonby backs was not as nippy and certain as that of the Varsity players, who gave a neat and heady exhibition. They made use of every opportunity, and saved their forwards to a considerable extent. A feature of their play was their sound tackling, the students smothering their opponents to great advantage. The Ponsonby rear division got plenty of opportunities, but erratic passing often brought their runs to a halt. With Webb, Morse, O'Leary, Murray, and McGregor great things were expected of the blue and blacks, but they found their equals in the students in Saturday's match, and their repeated attacks met with the most stubborn resistance. In the forwards it was thought Ponsonby would show marked superiority, but the students, despite their lightness, held their own, their clever tactics in the open enabling them to keep the blue and blacks in check. The light blues exerted every ounce of energy, and, with

### The Scorers in the Ponsonby-Varsity Match.

In regard to the match itself, it was not until 3.25 that the leather was kicked off. Ponsonby were the aggressors in the early periods, and the first score went down to their credit, a pretty passing run by the backs enabling O'Leary to notch a try in the corner. He took the kick himself, but failed at goal. Ponsonby 3, University nil. Francis was instrumental in the blue and blacks securing their second try, the Ponsonby

### Players in the Limelight.

Wilkes, who was a member of the North Island team last year, played a sterling game for University, distinguishing himself both in attack and defence. His generalship proved most serviceable to the light blue forwards, and he took a hand in everything. Bamford also gave a good account of himself, being of great assistance to his side. Gray was responsible for a highly creditable display in the Varsity backs, his work being of a useful and tricky nature. F. Wilson played at the top of his form, his great pace and clever handling standing him in good stead. Dr. Borrie's showing was watched with no little interest, and the ex-Otago representative acquitted himself well, his tackling particularly being of a very sound order. Of the Ponsonby forwards Francis shone out most prominently, proving a tower of strength to the Ponsonby men. The other forwards were not seen at their best. Webb at half-back, displayed much cleverness, and should he retain his form throughout the season, he is certain to gain representative honours. O'Leary shone out conspicuously at five-eighths, but had an off day with his place kicking. McGregor demonstrated that he is still the cool and heady player of last season by the quickness with which he made use of all openings, and he should take a prominent part in registering tries for the blue and blacks.

### Parnell and Grafton Draw.

The match between Parnell and Grafton attracted a large number of spectators to No. 2 ground, where they witnessed a game, which, though not characterised by exciting incidents, was stubbornly contested. A practice match between these teams on the previous Saturday pointed to