

REVIEWS

MAORI RUGBY 1884-1979

Arthur Carman

Sporting Publications/A.H. & A.W.

Reed: \$16.95

Arthur Carman, the doyen of New Zealand rugby historians, presents the rugby public with another essential reference for the New Zealand sports enthusiast through his latest public *Maori Rugby 1884-1979*.

Maori rugby holds a special place in the annals of this country's rugby exploits, with so many Maori people having given, and achieved, so much. In fact the book begins with one of this country's greatest exploits, that most extraordinary 1888-9 Maori tour of the United Kingdom. It lasted six months and consisted of no less than 107 matches, 74 of which were played in Britain. It included 14 games in Australia on the return trip as well as games in New Zealand before and after the team travelled abroad. It has been described as "the most amazing world tour in all history", and seems all the more so in the light of today's desire for short concentrated tours.

Carman has obviously worked extremely hard in ensuring that *Maori Rugby 1884-1979* is complete in every detail. Though the book is statistical by nature, this has not acted to detract from the book's importance in placing on record Maori rugby. The purpose of the book is to record the part played in New Zealand rugby by members of the Maori race, to recall many famous players and their achievements. To this end, the author has chronicled every match played by the New Zealand Maori All Blacks, with names of team members and details of scoring achievements (this is bound to settle many arguments and lost beers). It includes a complete listing of the Tom French Cup winners as well as an appendix and history of the Prince of Wales Cup matches. A listing of all New Zealand Maori Representatives up to 1979 has also been included.

Many of New Zealand's great All Blacks have come from the Maori people and Arthur Carman has paid a special tribute to some of them by recording for posterity biographical notes on over a 100 of the leading Maori players. These are enlightening pages on some of the great men of New Zealand rugby including George Nepia, Lui Paewai, Johnny

Smith, Waka Nathan and Sid Going.

A special feature of *Maori Rugby 1884-1979* is the inclusion of articles written by the author's brother, who toured with the 1926-27 Maori side to France and Britain. The articles were originally written on that tour for several New Zealand papers and have been reproduced exactly as they were published at the time.

The book is enhanced by clear concise writing, easy-to-read type on good quality paper with many first-rate photographs and bound in hard cover.

PAUL QUINN

The author of this review is no stranger to Maori rugby himself, as he is currently Captain of the New Zealand Maori All Blacks. He is also an advisory officer with the Department of Maori Affairs.



LETTERS

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warmth we portray to our Australian neighbours make us unique as a people — for here we are one people with no tribal distinction.

It is true that we are not as well versed in the Maori language and tradition as we should be, but it is heartwarming to see not only the learned few willing to teach but also the many young people here willing to learn. This determination arises from pride in what we are and where we come from. We are determined to retain our identity in this huge metropolis:

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi
Engari taku toa
He Toa Takitini

Our group, He Toa Takitini, was involved in the Sydney Maori Festival to which Tainui refers. It was made up of a number of novices, both Australia-born Maori and migrants from New Zealand. As expected, the group did not figure in the placement results, but the experience gained was to stand us in good stead.

Our promise was recognised, and an invitation was received to compete at the Coronation celebrations in Ngaruawahia last year. Any number of reasons could be found for declining — lack of finance, new costumes, new repertoire — but we decided to accept anyway. Not because we expected to win, but because we would learn from the experience. Here also was an opportunity to give a little of our new country back to our homeland, and in return recapture a little of that spirit which binds our race.

In addition to the championships, the group performed in Auckland, Hamilton, Wairoa and Hastings. The reception to "Ngati Skippies" was of total appreciation, and to the marae where we performed we are truly indebted. Perhaps in some little way we have made a closer bond between our Maori people here in Sydney and those at home.

No, although we have a long road to travel Maori culture is very much alive in Sydney.

Kia ora koutou katoa,

Beverly Moana Hall
He Toa Takitini
Sydney

(Tainui Stephens replies: Of course I recognise that people in Sydney wish to retain their culture and identity, but I feel that emphasis has been put in the wrong place. While catering to entertainment, the culture has suffered to some extent from carelessness and commercial gloss. Money is not as pertinent to our heritage as traditional aspects such as language and waiata tawhito, and all that is needed to hold on to them is effort and an attitude which says "no compromise!"

It should not be too hard to do some "homework" in Sydney. There is no need to wait for a marae to be built before having a hui. The most successful ingredient for any hui is simply people, not a million-dollar complex.

Perhaps the whole situation could be summed up from a TV interview with He Toa Takitini when they visited New Zealand.

Interviewer: What is one of the reasons for your return home?

Reply: To raise money for a marae we want to build in Sydney.

And then, almost in the same breath: Interviewer: Why do you live in Sydney?

Reply: There's more money over there!

We have enough trouble trying to raise money for our own marae.)