

# WINTER SPORTS GOING OUT WITH A FLOURISH

*Winter sports died with a final hefty kick last week. New Zealand's best footballers played for their All Black places in the Wellington Rugby trials. In Auckland, Prince Bhu Pinder challenged Earl McCready for the British Empire heavyweight wrestling championship; but did not quite make it, although McCready was worried.*

## THEY DIDN'T BHU PINDER

### McCready's Narrow Victory

*Extra-specially written for "The Listener" by our Auckland representative, who knows nothing about wrestling (bad luck!), but who can always appreciate the sight of someone else "on the mat."*

Livelier than his opponent and more slippery, apparently, than a buttered eel, Prince Bhu Pinder gave the British Empire heavyweight champion, Earl McCready, almost as much as he took in the big mat-fest at Auckland Town Hall on September 25, and McCready just managed to keep his hold on the title by one fall, secured in the seventh round following three hearty dumps and a storm of elbow-jolts.

McCready weighed in at 16.12 and Pinder at 16.5.

From the opening gong Pinder had the sympathy of the crowd and went bald-headed for the champion, using his superior speed and agility to offset the disparity in weight and strength. With a series of headlocks and arm-bars Pinder patiently pumped the well of Canadian perspiration until McCready looked like a Mounty that has missed his man. But the champion broke free, and coming round behind, grabbed the Indian's leg, working into a toe-hold which made Bhu look even more sikh than usual. The latter jerked clear, however, and regained the initiative once more with a half-nelson which McCready broke by sheer force of avoirdupois only to fall into a horizontal splits with Pinder seeing how far apart he could get the Canadian legs. The gong interrupted the experiment.

McCready had slightly the better of it in the second round, Pinder at one stage crawling through the ropes, but the latter was as brisk as ever in attack while the Canadian was sweating so profusely that he did not even need a best friend to tell him. Pinder was apparently the more difficult to hold, however, and McCready several times ostentatiously wiped his hands on the ropes, the fans expressing appropriate displeasure. The third round opened with McCready throwing Pinder to the mat, but he just bounced twice and came up again and the pair traded face-bars and leg-scissors in the friendliest fashion. Pinder, apparently as fresh as ever, was busy stretching McCready's arms when the gong went.

The temperature rose noticeably in the fourth and fifth rounds. Pinder opened hostilities in the latter by slinging the champion

out of the ring then, when he got back, punting him across the ring by the judicious use of a bare foot in the vicinity of the Canadian Maginot line. As an indication of his annoyance McCready passed out a convincing line of elbow-jolts, Bhu retorting in kind with a selection of his native punjabes which brought the crowd to its feet, and then buzzed McCready hard against the ropes, avoiding the recoil with a nifty little entrechat which would not have disgraced Nijinsky.

The Spirit of Ottawa was noticeably absent when the sixth round opened. Pinder slammed McCready, McCready tried pulling Bhu's toes off, and to even things the Indian rocked the champion in a standing splits. In the sixth and seventh rounds Pinder had McCready on the defensive when the Indian several times tried to put over his crab specialty, but Pinder never got a proper chance to exploit the hold. The seventh round was noticeably uninhibited.

Pinder began by depositing McCready (none too gently) almost on top of 1YA's Gordon Hutter, who, however, with his customary sangfroid, continued crooning his commentary into the mike. But the champion was no sooner in the ring again than Pinder took another lease of Canadian overhang and repeated the experiment. This was too much.

The McCready patience, worn threadbare, collapsed, and Pinder was chased round the ring with a barrage of elbow-jolts, dumped hard twice in succession and then, somewhat dazed, succumbed to a third dump, giving the title-holder the one fall of the match. Pinder was still lively in the final round, but though he threw McCready twice and worked energetically on toe-holds and wristlocks, he could make no serious impression on McCready, and the final gong went leaving the Canadian the winner by the one fall.

## NORTH-SOUTH RUGBY

### Best Match For Five Years

*Here is a review of what a "Listener" contributor considers the best Rugby match in New Zealand during the last five years. And with it, at the right moment for an interesting comparison, appears, on the preceding page, a resumé of Mark Nicholls's final talk on the selection of a World Rugby team*

THE South Island team which beat North in Wellington on September 23 must have brought a good part of the true flavour of football back to many jaded palates. There has been nothing quite so good in football for anything up to five years.

They discarded most of the habits which have dragged our Rugby into the mud of mediocrity in recent years. They re-established a good many of the abiding principles. They played as if they had been drilled to perfection, but not so much that the fire of individual brilliance had been drilled out of them.

The forwards really were forwards. They did not try, as the North Island forwards tried, to be backs as well. They stayed in place till the ball went one way or the other. Then they followed it, whether Saxton had flashed away behind the effective screen they made for him, or whether Tindill had managed to clear from the screwing and badly managed North Island scrum.

With more spit and polish to them they would have made a really first-class pack. Perhaps to expect them to play as they played in the scrums and rucks, and also to play as Tori Reid played for North in the loose, would have been expecting too much. But an All Black forward must have just a little more than what it takes.

You will have heard some criticism of Reid's forward play. Only because his prominence made him easy to criticise. In point of cold fact he was, in nearly every respect, the ideal All Black forward. His try was a really magnificent example of death-or-glory scoring. He is, in spite of everything said elsewhere about his game, the only forward who gets his name on this page.

Five-eighths would be the selector's greatest worry. Pearman's play was an example. He started really well, but failed almost miserably when inspiration collapsed into anti-climax against South's defence. Hooper, of the 1937 team, and Thompson, a much-fancied Wellington inside back, are in the same class; brilliant in their brilliant moments, but not consistent. Off with their heads!

Grace, on the other hand, was consistently good. He and Saxton played like target and gun. Even without a safe and solicitous pack, Saxton would have outshone Tindill. He had the edge in speed, running, and passing.

This match, and the trials, brought out half-a-dozen first-rate three-quarters. On the first day the play favoured Sutherland, but Morrison seemed at last to have won through into the top class. He has been nursed long enough now. Wesley was always right. Cunningham, a trial player, was next in the competition for a place.

To link Saxton and Grace with the three selected from these four, Crossman seemed to be the man. Behind them, Taylor and Easton would both make good, sound full-backs. Taylor's dropped goal was a memory sustaining his reputation right through the following week, but apart from that Easton was his match.

The excitement of the game, even in retrospect, might blanket impartial criticism; yet it still seems, almost a fortnight later, that at last New Zealand footballers have begun to build a monument this generation will remember—if it gets the chance.