

Maori All Black Paul Quinn retires

Maori All Black captain and Wellington captain, Paul Quinn says he's quit rugby because he wanted to get out while he still enjoyed the game rather than playing for too long. "I'm getting out at the right time, I believe I'm at my pinnacle".

He's had a long career, spanning captaining the 1982 Maori All Blacks

tour to Wales, leading the Wellington provincial side to a national tournament championship victory, as well as carrying off the coveted Ranfurly Shield.

Paul Quinn talked to Rahena Broughton about rugby politics on and off the field as well as the retiring Paul Quinn.

First of all Paul has strong views on the big part maori rugby has to play in keeping rugby alive in New Zealand. He

says Maori All Black tours are essential to this because it gives players, other than the All Blacks, international experience.

And Paul says the All Blacks are under too much pressure to tour and it's affecting some of their families with their men away. He believes a maori side can ease that pressure by taking the short good-will tours that All Blacks have been obliged to take, like the United States tour in 1978 and Fiji in 1980.

Paul says that as a leading rugby nation we owe it to the developing countries to help them improve their game by having longer tours. Places like Spain where the All Blacks would flit through, beat up the national side and be gone again.

"It does nothing for the All Black players and leaves the home side wondering what happened. The maoris can tour there, build up good-will and still promote New Zealand's name because they are a national side.

That's why the Maori tour to Wales was a success says Paul.

Players like Steve Pokere, who was in and out of All Black sides is now the first choice All Black centre. Kevin Boerovich and Scott Creighton also came through to the All Blacks.

And why not Paul Quinn?

Paul admits to a little disappointment at not making the top national team but isn't bitter. He shrugs off the suggestion that lack of height ruled him out, saying he hoped selectors went on rugby ability and not physique. He tried out for the All Blacks only once and says he obviously didn't catch the selectors eye.

Overseas Paul says every New Zealand team is seen as 'The Blacks'. Because of this every game in Wales was tough.

"But you must remember, we lost by only six points to Wales. That same team went on to beat England and Scotland."

People's expectations of the 82 Wales tour were too high says Paul, just because it had been 50 years since a maori team had toured there. And because of this it was hard to live up to that expectation.

"I was pleased with my own form on tour," Paul says, "but another couple of players could have gone. Guys like Canterbury number eight, Dale Atkins, he was unlucky to miss out. And of course Hika was injured and unavailable to tour, while loose forward Colin Cooper was injured in the second week."

