



But kiwis like winners, they expect their teams to win all the time says Paul. He thinks the attitude is unreasonable, because players give up time and money for the game. He says if people want winners, they must expect to pay for them.

"I definitely think there's a place for pro-rugby. Unfortunately there's a 'village common' attitude toward rugby where you're seen to be just going out with a ball and playing a game.

"But players need time to practice and develop these skills, and if people want to watch rugby, then they must pay."

The old times are gone says Paul.

"Take Kiri Te Kanawa for example. She gets paid for what she enjoys doing. Her skill is singing. If people want to hear her sing then they must pay for it.

"It's this way with sport nowadays. Even the Olympics is supposed to be the epitome of amateurism. But some of those athletes are the highest paid sports people in the world.... Why not?"

They should get paid says Paul.

"Rugby is a skill and jokers train hard for it... I used to train three nights a week and all day Saturday was used up. Then you do your own training, if you want to keep up at the top and are trying to give that little bit extra. I left

the office at five o'clock and didn't get home until eight. That's what I mean about putting in the hours."

And has Paul been approached to play pro-rugby.

"I haven't, but I would consider it if the price was right."

At this time of retirement Paul looks back to what got him started in the field of sport.

Born in Wellington, his father Ngati Awa, his mother Irish, Paul moved with the family to a farming life on the Takapau plains.

He reflects that as a boy he enjoyed the life, thriving on the hard work and peaceful surroundings. He attended Waipukurau Primary before moving on to Masterton and the St Joseph Boarding College at the age of twelve.

Here the sporting opportunities were rich. Cricket and tramping were keen pursuits, with junior table tennis and senior swimming championships to his credit. Training with ex-All Black Grant Batty on the school first fifteen was an early indication of a rugby future.

After leaving school Paul gained a degree in Agriculture and Commerce at Lincoln College, drove trucks for a short while and then worked in economic research at the Reserve Bank before moving to the Department of Maori Affairs. For two years he worked as a community officer in the Poneke kokiri unit before taking up the position of Director, Wellington District.

It was on moving to Wellington that Paul began his long and successful association with Wellington rugby.

Paul began with Marist St Pats club and led them to the provincial championships in 1981. That year Wellington also lifted the Ranfurly Shield from Waikato.

Paul doesn't think his retirement will affect the Wellington team as he says there are a lot of good players around to replace him.

But a former team mate, Gerard Wilkinson says, Paul will be missed.

He says, Paul could get the best out of the players, especially when things were tough.

"He would come up and say, come on Gerard you're not pulling your weight, now lets get in there."

That was Pauls way, Gerard says, he didn't give you a blasting in front of the other guys.

"Brian (McGratten) and I respected him a lot and so did the All Blacks that play for Wellington," says Gerard. "Bernie (Fraser) liked to clown around a bit, but when Paul gave the word he would knuckle under."

And even off the field, Paul was popular with his team mates says Gerard. He didn't abuse his captaincy and the boys appreciated that.

But Paul wasn't always easy to get along with he says.

In 1979 Gerard joined the Marist St Pats seniors where Paul was already an established senior player.

"We regarded him as one of the older players and looked up to him, but he was a hard person to speak to."

"Even in the club rooms after a game he'd just keep to himself and wouldn't mix with us younger ones."

He was a difficult man to get along with, Gerard says, but when he became captain he changed and was more sociable.

"Yeah, we're really gonna miss him," says Gerard.

So what's Paul doing with his spare time now?

He's taken to the water.

"I've been yachting for the past three years," he says, it's a great way of relaxing."

Paul crews on a friends yacht as well as owning a small motor sailer.

Paul has no plans on making a comeback, nor does he intend writing a book.

"I will get back into rugby in some form or another, probably coaching."

