Origin of Rugby

The sport of rugby is named after Rugby School, where the game was first played. The game is said to have been invented in 1823 when William Webb Ellis caught the ball while playing a game of football, and ran to the goal with it.

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Webb Ellis Cup

Webb Ellis is still remembered as the sport's inventor and the winner of the Rugby Union World Cup, held every four years, receives the Webb Ellis Cup.

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The First Rugby Balls

Initially rugby balls were plum-shaped due to the shape of pigs' bladders that they were made from. They became more spherical towards the end of the 19th Century when they began being made using rubber inner tubes.

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Egg Shaped Balls

To distinguish the balls used in rugby from the balls used for football, Rugby School requested that their balls remained slightly egg-shaped. Over time, they have become more and more flattened to the shape that they are now.

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Why are Rugby Balls Oval?

Oval balls are more suited to rugby than spherical balls as they are easier to catch, hold and run with and don't roll as far so don't go out of play as often.

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Olympic Rugby

The game of rugby has only has only been an Olympic sport four times. The first time it was played was in 1900 during the Paris Olympics. It was played again in the London Olympics of 1908, next in the 1920 Antwerp Olympics and finally in the 1924 Paris Olympics.

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National Anthem Tradition

The first time a national anthem was sung before a sporting event happened before a rugby game. On 16th November 1905 New Zealand played Wales at Cardiff Arms Park. After New Zealand danced the Haka before the match, Wales responded by singing the Welsh national anthem. The crowd picked up on this and joined in.

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Rugby World Cup

Rugby Union World Cup tournaments are held every four years. The first tournament took place in 1987. It was hosted by Australia and New Zealand and was won by New Zealand.

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Scoring a Try

Rugby players mostly earn points by scoring tries, achieved by a player crossing the touchline with a ball and touching in to the ground. A try in rugby union is worth 5 points, in rugby league it is worth 4.

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Why's a Try a 'Try'?

A try was once worth nothing, instead it gave the player who achieved it the opportunity to "try" to score a goal. Goals were scored by placing the ball on the ground and kicking it over the crossbar and between the two posts, therefore converting the try into a goal, a goal being worth 1 point.

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scoring in Rugby

Today, an attempt at a conversion still follows a successful try and gives players the opportunity to score an extra 2 points.

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Rugby Marathon

The longest marathon playing rugby union was 24 hr. 30 min and 6 sec by members of the Congleton Rugby Union Football Club on 22-23rd July 2011. The members were divided in two teams, with the "Mali Lions" defeating the "Congleton RUFC Bears" 894-715!

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Gil Evans Whistle

The same whistle is used to kick off the opening game of every Rugby World Cup tournament. It is the Gil Evans whistle and was first blown by Gil Evans, the Welsh referee overseeing a match between England and New Zealand in 1905.

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First International Match

The first international rugby match took place between Scotland and England in 1871 at Raeburn Park in Edinburgh. Scotland won 1-0 by converting a try. The scorer, and therefore the first player to score an international rugby goal, was William Cross.

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