



# **Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football (Sport in the Global Society)**

*Kenneth Sheard, Eric Dunning*

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First published in 1979, this classic study of the development of rugby from folk game to its modern Union and League forms has become a seminal text in sport history. In a new epilogue the authors provide sociological analysis of the major developments in international rugby that have taken place since 1979, with particular attention to the professionalism that was predicted in the first edition of this text. Sports lovers, rugby fans and students of the history and sociology of sport will find it invaluable.

Rugby football is descended from winter 'folk games' which were a deeply rooted tradition in pre-industrial Britain. This was the first book to study the development of Rugby from this folk tradition to the game in its modern forms. The folk forms of football were extremely violent and serious injuries - even death - were a common feature. The game was refined in the public schools who played a crucial role in formulating the rules which required footballers to exercise greater self-control. With the spread of rugby into the wider society, the Rugby Football Union was founded but class tensions led to the split between Rugby Union and Rugby League.

The authors examine the changes that led to the professionalisation of Rugby Union as well as the alleged resurgence of violence in the modern game.

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