

Tom Hickie, *The Game for the Game Itself!: the Development of Sub-District Rugby in Sydney*. St. Ives, NSW, The Sydney Sub-District Rugby Union, 1983. pp.234. \$10 paper,

The three-fold aim of this book is to give a year-by-year account of sub-district Rugby in Sydney; to present statistical summaries; and to analyse how sub-district Rugby developed and its relationship to the senior Rugby bodies,

Tom Hickie has accomplished his aims and has written a scholarly and well-referenced work, rare for a book on rugby. AS a participant in sub-district rugby and President of the Old Waverlians Rugby Football Club, Hickie has a strong commitment to his subject.

The author establishes that sub-district rugby caters for a different type of player than district football. Sub-district teams do not affiliate with district teams - they are simply not composed of young players on the way up or older players on the way down. Sub-district teams espouse an amateur philosophy which results in a lack of tenseness and animosity between teams, and a community atmosphere. 'The Game for the Game Itself' could be its motto, and hence the title of the book.

Here Hickie relies heavily on the Dunning and Sheard developmental model in his tracing of the growth of Sydney and NSW Rugby Union. The weakest section of the book has to do with 'the split', when Rugby League had its beginnings. Hickie has too

uncritically accepted the part-legendary story put forward by Dally R, Messenger in *The Master*. It is true that he utilised relevant *N.S.W. R.U. Annuals* and issues of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, but he has not realised the league experiment was a near-failure, It only succeeded because of (for capitalistic reasons) the intervention of James Joynton Smith and the defection of fourteen Wallabies in 1909.

Overall this is a most valuable history of the development of sub-district Rugby Union. It is a pity that the proofing of the work was inadequate. Victor Trumper is at one stage Trupper, and Harry Hoyle is Hole. There are other minor errors. Peter Mullins did not go to Springfield but to Washington State University and alas never did become director of Physical Education at the University of British Columbia. There is no University of Vancouver, either, But these are minor quibbles The contribution is a fine one.

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