

Maxwell L. Howell, Lingyu Xie and Bensley Wilkes, *The Wallabies: A Definitive History of Australian Test Rugby*. GAP Publishing, Brisbane, 2000. Hb, pp. 830, appendices, bibliography. Price \$295 (available from GAP Publishing, 44 Wendell Street, Norman Park, Qld, 4170).

The Wallabies is a massive endeavour. Howell, Xie and Wilkes have covered all test matches by Australian rugby teams starting with the first test against Great Britain on 24 June 1899 at the Sydney Cricket Ground and finishing with the World Cup Final against France on 6 November 1999 at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff. Each test match is afforded two pages of coverage that makes the section on the games of this tome over 760 pages. Taking a chronological approach, a detailed narrative is provided of all the test matches which explains weather conditions, venues, referees, players and replacements. The test matches are described from contemporary newspaper sources and complimented by sources from players and coaches. For instance, the Australian/Welsh 1913 test match was compiled by newspaper reports, H.H. (Paddy) Moran's *Viewless Winds* and J.B.G. Thomas's *The Illustrated History of Welsh Rugby*. Accompanying details of test matches, there is a compilation of illustrations that range from newspaper photographs, cartoons, postcards, posters to programs.

In addition to the chronological narrative of test matches there are a series of very comprehensive appendices. These appendices are comprised of all Australian test results from 1899 as well as details of Australian test aggregates and Australian test team records (points, winning margins, losing margins, most tries, most conversions, most penalty goals, most dropped goals, consecutive test wins and losses and most points conceded). Matching this statistical detail are the tables that summarise Australia's winning percentages, highest scores, individual records, father and son players, players from other nationalities, and the number of test matches per year. Finally there is the playing records of each test player which runs to almost 20 pages of the book. It is very difficult to think of a category of playing details that is not covered in these appendices.

For academics, *The Wallabies* is an important source because unlike Australian football, rugby league and cricket there are no books that accurately provide the empirical detail of rugby football. Those writing in rugby history will be able to use the information provided as a springboard for their work. In essence, this tome is clearly written for the rugby community including followers, aficionados and players. The meticulous attention to every aspect of the century of test matches will be a magnet for all those who wish to follow their own careers or the playing careers of relatives or for club, state and national officials to add information to their honour boards.

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