



# The King's Cup 1919: Rugby's First 'World Cup'

*Howard Evans, Phil Atkinson*

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'An intriguing retelling of a significant but largely forgotten chapter of rugby union history, superbly illustrated.' Huw Richards, author of 'A Game for Hooligans: The History of Rugby Union' 'Howard is an authority on rugby's history and meticulous in his research' Andy Howell, Rugby Correspondent, Western Mail The world of rugby celebrated the 8th Rugby World Cup in 2015, but a tournament held in 1919, The King's Cup, can rightly claim to be rugby's first competitive 'World Cup'. Meticulously compiled by Howard Evans and Phil Atkinson, The King's Cup 1919 is the first book to tell the full story of rugby's first 'World Cup' and is essential reading for all rugby enthusiasts and military historians. With over 140 photos and illustrations, and chapters focusing on the competing teams, the players, and every game in the tournament, the authors have provided a comprehensive and attractive record of a long-forgotten but historically important competition of which most rugby supporters are completely unaware. At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, all rugby was suspended by decree of the individual rugby unions, with only inter-military encounters and fundraising games permitted. After the Armistice in November 1918, with the forces of the world's rugby-playing nations and many of their stars still stationed in Britain, and with the public desperate to see competitive rugby played again, an inter-military tournament was organised. King George V was so enthused by the proposed competition that he agreed to have the tournament named after him, and so The King's Cup was born. The King's Cup 1919: Rugby's First 'World Cup' Explains the British military's decision to create a 'Mother Country' team rather than separate teams for England, Wales, Scotland & Ireland Explains how the Royal Navy were invited to compete but were forced to decline Confirmed the status of New Zealand as the dominant rugby-playing nation Saw the first competitive game between teams representing New Zealand and South Africa Shows the origins of pre-apartheid South Africa's refusal to accept black players in opposing teams Howard Evans is a respected rugby writer, who was for many years a rugby correspondent for the South Wales Echo and Western Mail. Phil Atkinson is a retired headmaster and history teacher, and is Editor of 'Touchlines' the magazine of the Rugby Memorabilia Society.

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