

**WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL SPORT:  
THE RISE AND POPULARITY OF WOMEN'S RUGBY IN  
CANADA**

**by**

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**Canada**

**Dedicated to Walter and Emiline Bailey**  
**who took a wayward lad into their family and home**

## ABSTRACT

Women's rugby is Canada's fastest growing sport. Females in increasing numbers are starting to play, what was until recently, a traditional male sport. The concept of women engaged in full physical contact sport goes against the traditional view of women's participation. This thesis is an attempt to identify the reasons for the tremendous growth in the women's rugby in Canada and to share the experiences of the female rugby player. Participant observation and a survey questionnaire were the methods employed to investigate the women's involvement in rugby. The survey questionnaire allowed the players (162) an opportunity to express their experiences and perceptions of the evolving game of women's rugby.

There has been a major expansion of the game at the high school level and rugby is attracting multi sport athletes who have a desire to participate in physical contact team sport such as rugby. The women wish to play the game using the same laws of the game as men and have no desire to participate in some "*watered-down*" version of the game. They have encountered some barriers to their involvement in what was formerly a male-only sport. These barriers include some negative attitudes pertaining to women in rugby, the unequal allocation of club resources and the lack of quality coaching. The players indicated that they have a major concern regarding injuries in rugby. The women have not had the opportunity to participate in contact sport from an early age and as a result, injury and the prevention of injury are important matters. Despite the obstacles the women have encountered, the game of women's rugby continues to thrive and expand at all levels in Canada. The concluding comments are a series of recommendations based on the research data gathered from the participants.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE PARTICIPANT OBSERVER**

Rugby is the quintessential male sport, physically demanding, hard hitting and aggressive, occurring in a setting that allows men to test their masculinity in mock combat with the opposition. Born and bred on the fields of England's elite private schools in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, rugby was supposed to build Christian character in the gentlemen who played the game. As a sport, rugby, a part of the British imperial package, was carried abroad to distant colonies and became a sporting mainstay throughout the empire. The culture of rugby is dramatically changing and its male only traditions are being challenged by women who are 'crossing the divide' and playing the game in increasing numbers. In Canada, women's rugby is flourishing and the Canadian Rugby Union estimates that eight thousand women are playing the game at all levels. Throughout the country there has been a very rapid rise in the popularity of women's rugby in the last ten years and this has been accentuated by a tremendous expansion in the last five years. What does this mean? What are the various implications of women moving into the male domain of rugby? The research data from this study endeavors to examine the changing face of rugby in Canada. It also articulates the experiences of female rugby players within the game as it continues to develop and grow as a popular sport for women.

The focus of this research is entirely on women's rugby in Canada. I believe it is fortuitous to explain my background and experience in the game because this involvement has contributed to what I have to say. It is through my personal experience in the game that I was

able to establish the rugby contacts which have been very valuable in accumulating my research data.

I have been involved in the sport of rugby for 28 years with a very extensive and varied background. I played the game for more than 20 years in Canada and also played in France and Australia. This overseas exposure allowed me the opportunity to observe the game in countries where it is a major sporting activity and to compare it to the development in Canada. My association with rugby has not been solely as a player, however. Union and club administrative work, club founder, school rugby, fund raiser, television commentator, have all been part of my involvement in the sport; but my greatest commitment has been in the area of coaching. As a high school physical education teacher coaching has always been part of my life and the initial move into the world of rugby coaching followed naturally from this experience.

My coaching background is quite varied and I have been involved with men's and women's rugby, sometimes at the same time. I have coached teams at every level of the game: high school, club (men and women), university (men and women), Union representative (Senior men and U23 men), provincial (men and women), and the Canadian women's national team. I was chairman of selectors for the Canadian junior national men's team, responsible for the selection and preparation of the team. I am a certified Level III rugby coach in the Canadian National Coaches Certificate Program (NCCP) and I also possess a Level II coaching certificate from Australia, which I obtained in 1984 while living in Sydney. I have attended numerous coaching sessions in Canada, Ireland, and France, all of which have allowed me to develop a more global perspective of rugby than many of my contemporary



colleagues.

In short my background in the game is extensive. More importantly, in light of this thesis, my experience is both in men's and women's rugby. I have witnessed the development of the game in Canada from both the male and female perspective. As the subject of this thesis will focus exclusively on women's rugby, some explanation of my connection to the women's game is necessary. Finally, I wish to comment on some specific highlights of women's rugby because they are important and linked to my thesis topic.

### **Women's Club Rugby**

In 1983, a new women's rugby club was formed in Edmonton, Alberta called the Coven. This team was created by a group of players who had decided to form their own club. The women had been previously associated with an earlier established women's club (The Rockers). The nucleus of the Coven team was university students and they had recruited most of the other team members from the University of Alberta. They had a major problem, however. They could not locate a coach. I was approached by the women and asked to coach the team. I was already heavily involved as the club coach for the Nor'Westers men's rugby club and I had no extra time. The only option I could offer was an opportunity to join the Nor'Wester's training sessions and the Coven accepted. The commitment, determination and physical ability of the female players impressed the club members and there were no major problems. The women would participate in most of the rugby drills and then break away to practice team unit work like any other club team. To my knowledge, this combined men and women team training was unique in the history of Canadian rugby. This training situation only

lasted one year. The Coven located a full time coach and the following season and moved to their own practice site. I believe the training sessions with experienced men's teams helped the Coven women develop their skills and gain a better understanding of the game. Three players from the Coven went on to play for Canada and two were named the national team captains.<sup>1</sup>

While this was my first experience with coaching women's rugby, it would not be my last. Most recently (1997), I coached a club side (Druids) in Sherwood Park, Alberta. This team, made up of very young and talented players, went on to win the Alberta Championship in 1997.

### **Women's University Rugby - 1997**

In the fall of 1997 I began my graduate studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario and given my experience in rugby, I was asked to become the head coach of the Queen's varsity women's team. The women participated in the eight-team Ontario University Association, a very competitive and an excellent league for the development of the game. My coaching philosophy while at Queen's was consistent with my past experience at the varsity level. We would train like any other university varsity team; five times a week with a game on Saturday. At the club level men and women normally train only twice a week and therefore, it was an adjustment for some players. But as the women had the commitment and physical fitness to train full time, we had a very high attendance at practice, even for those who saw limited playing time.

## **Provincial Women's Rugby**

I have been involved with the senior women's rugby program at the provincial level on two separate occasions. In 1989, I was named the co-coach of the Alberta women and in 1990, I became the head coach. The first team won the Canadian National Women's Championship in Regina in 1989 and the second team repeated that feat in Toronto in 1990. The latter final against women from British Columbia was a very heated aggressive game. In my opinion, this was an historic '*eye opener*' for many spectators. The women from both teams demonstrated a well executed intense, aggressive, physical style of rugby. The 1990 Alberta team had another first in women's rugby, the selection of a high school player to the provincial senior team. A 15 year-old girl from Jasper Place High School in Edmonton (Jennifer Diachuk) was outstanding in the rugby tryouts and trial match and was selected by the coaching staff. Although this selection was not without controversy (because of her age), it was merited due to her play. Jennifer played two matches in the Championships and the 15 year-old is believed to be the youngest player to participate in the Nationals.<sup>2</sup>

In 1996, I returned as the provincial head coach with the Alberta women and it was another unique experience because the team made a major overseas tour to Australia in the summer. While there were some veteran players, the majority of the team was comprised of younger women. The purpose of the Australian tour was player development, with games scheduled against the state teams of New South Wales and Queensland, Australian Capital Territory. A final game against the Australian women's XV was played at Ballymore in Brisbane, one of the illustrious rugby parks in the world. This game was the '*kick-off*' for the men's international between the Australia and Canada and the Ballymore stadium had over

24,000 people in attendance. The majority of the crowd was there to see the men play, but many of the spectators were in their seats for the last part of the women's game and gave both teams an impressive ovation at the end of the match. Alberta had lost 32-0 against a top ranked international side but the team had played a solid game and the ovation was a very thrilling moment for the team players. The treatment of the Alberta female rugby players in Australia was outstanding. After the game both teams attended the same post game reception as the men and the speeches, exchange of gifts, pins, and plaques were identical for both men and women. A special highlight for me was the accomplishment of the youngest player on tour, a seventeen-year old girl who studied and wrote her provincial high school leaving exams in Australia. As a certified teacher in the province of Alberta, I was authorized to proctor the writing of her final exams. Her final grades averaged 74% which were comparable to her marks during the school year. This effort was an exceptional achievement by this young player and it was attained in the midst of an exciting rugby tour to Australia.

### **International Women's Rugby**

In 1992, I accepted an appointment as assistant coach with the Canadian Women's National team. It was an excellent opportunity to prepare the team for the 1994 World Cup. In reality, I was in a co-coaching situation because the head coach (Dr. Ian Humphries) insisted that we split all responsibilities and that we function as equals. As a national coach, I was not connected with other women's rugby programs, although I remained head coach of the Edmonton Rugby Union's Senior men's representative team. During my tenure with the national team, the women played in the first Canada Cup tournament (1993) in Toronto

in which national teams from Canada, The United States, Wales and England participated. The team also competed in the second Women's World Cup of Rugby held in Edinburgh, Scotland in the spring of 1994, at which Canada finished a disappointing sixth. My international coaching experience totaled ten full international matches and several exhibition games. Besides coaching, selection was another very important aspect of my national team duties. Each year I attended the National Championships and evaluated Canada's top provincial players.<sup>3</sup>

My international experience also included two major women's rugby events which I attended as an interested observer. In 1990, I was able to travel to Cardiff, Wales and spent five days watching the first Women's World Cup of Rugby. The second occasion came with the 1996 Canada Cup held in my hometown of Edmonton, Alberta. This was a significant event in the women's game because of the outstanding style of rugby played by the New Zealand women and the manner in which they dominated some of the world's top teams. In essence, the New Zealand team performed at a higher skill and tactical level from that of the rest of the world.<sup>4</sup> The challenge is now to match "*The Kiwi*" women.

### **What does it mean?**

Why are my background and experience in the game relevant ? Its inclusion here is not meant to be self-serving, rather as important information in the writing of the thesis. I have been an active participant during the steady growth and development in the women's game, especially in the last ten years. As noted above, I have coached teams that have participated in major international competitions. I have witnessed the formation of women's

independent club organizations. I have coached young players whose parents wondered *'where they went wrong'* when their daughters insist that rugby is the sport of choice. I have also witnessed *'old boys'* admit, sometimes reluctantly, that, yes, the women can and do *'play the game'*. In short, very few individuals have had my experiences. I believe this places me in an advantageous position in the writing of this thesis. However in the end, it is the women who have spoken in this study and who trust that the interpretation of what they have said is accurate. The statement of purpose follows.

As noted above, women's rugby in Canada has expanded at an unprecedented rate. In British Columbia, the West Coast Women's Rugby Association has sixteen member clubs and many field more than one team. It is at the high school level where the growth of women's rugby has been truly phenomenal. In 1992, there was no opportunity for girls to play rugby in B.C. high schools. In 1997, 55 different high schools have teams in league competition.<sup>5</sup>

In the last four years, the Edmonton Rugby Union has added seven new women's clubs to meet the demand of girls and women who first played the game in one of the 22 metropolitan high schools. In a five-year period (1992-97) the number of women playing rugby in the Edmonton area has increased from 350 to 1046.<sup>6</sup> Growth has been so rapid and great that there are not enough coaches and officials.

The province of Newfoundland, for the very first time in 1997, sent a young enthusiastic women's team to participate in the national championship in Hamilton, Ontario.

In the province of Ontario, the numbers are staggering: 110 high schools are playing women's rugby. There are 30 women's club teams, and a very competitive eight-team

university league that play in the fall. Hamilton's Monilex Cup rugby tournament for high school girls is no longer able to accommodate more teams. In 1998, the Cup organizers added an additional competition day just to accommodate the 20 new entrants. There are also high school tournaments in Sarnia and Nepean and a seven-a-side tournament that attracted 38 entries in 1998.<sup>7</sup> The Ontario Federation of Secondary School Athletics (OFSSA) has held an *'unofficial provincial championships'* for the last ten years. This year's tournament was held in Whitby, 16 teams challenged for the title in two days of competition. Ontario sports association data has documented that women's team sports have been growing at a double digit rate in the last five years. Rugby has led the way with a 13.7 % increase, greater than even that of ice hockey at 12 %.<sup>8</sup>

Overall, in Canada, there are 8,000 women playing rugby, and another 2,000 girls playing at the U-19 level. The four major areas of expansion and development are the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario.<sup>9</sup>

What has attracted all these women to rugby? What are the reasons behind the expansion of the women's game into this traditionally male domain? Why are women all over the country enjoying a sport whose rules require full physical contact? These are some of the issues I have examined and considered in this research. This thesis discusses women in rugby, the problems they have encountered, and the positive experiences they have enjoyed. This is new research material. To my knowledge, no one in Canada has examined the growth of women's rugby, or the social implications of female involvement in a sport that has been traditionally *'male'* dominated.

## ENDNOTES

1. While female players practicing with male teams has had an established presence in Canadian rugby, the Nor'Westers /Coven affiliation and practice organization was quite innovative at the time.
2. Since there is no validation of player's ages in the National Championship, this assertion cannot be confirmed. Nonetheless, it is an outstanding achievement.
3. As will be noted later in the thesis, under-funding is a major problem in Canadian amateur sport, most notably for women. In my tenure with the national team, under funding was very evident. Members of the 1994 Canadian Women's National Rugby Team had to pay 1200 dollars each to participate in the World Cup in Scotland. The coaching staff did not have funding to travel around the country and observe important club and provincial matches and were later criticized by some people for failing to attend these games.
4. I would like to emphasize that observing rugby tournaments has a different implication to me than the average spectator. I scrutinize and scout teams during competition, but I closely observe training sessions. You can gain more insight into a team's skill, philosophy and tactics by watching them practice.
5. Dick Woldring, British Columbia Rugby Union, personal communication, November 27, 1997.
6. Helen Wright, Alberta Rugby Union, personal communication, May 1. 1998.
7. Ruth Squires, Ontario Rugby Union, personal communication, December 1, 1997.
8. Ontario Rugby On-line, (June 2,1998 ). Available Internet:  
<http://rugbyontario.on.ca/women>
9. Oval World, Spring 1998, p. 4. The official magazine of the International Rugby Board.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The history of women's sport is a checkered past, with significant progress and major setbacks. Many can recall the powerful appeal that the Edmonton Grads basketball team had upon the popular culture of Canada (Howell & Howell, 1969:317-319). But some can also recall the sentiments of A.S. Lamb, the powerful guru of university and Olympic sport who, when witnessing the distress of a female runner at the 1928 Olympic Games, pressured his IOC colleagues to limit the competitive opportunities for women. This, despite the fact, that in the same event, an equal number of men also experienced the physiological stress of their female counterpart (Kidd, 1996:127-129).

This thesis is an attempt to add one further piece to the puzzle of women's sport in Canada. I believe it is an important piece for several reasons. First, it is a story of rugby, a sport that like football and hockey, has until very recently been seen as a male-only activity. Second, like the latter two, it is a contact sport. The rules of the game require participants to tackle one another, and so women who play the game go well beyond the socially sanctioned participation *'for girls'* sports like gymnastics or figure skating. Third, given my extensive experience in the game, I have contacts that are not readily available to other researchers. Simply put, I know many female rugby players ranging from high school participants to those who represent Canada at international competitions. I believe I have their confidence and support for my research. When I asked my respondents to answer my open-ended questionnaire, I expected and got, an enthusiastic response. This thesis is, therefore, their

story. It attempts to uncover what it is about rugby that appeals to these women. I am hopeful that the research, like the Edmonton Grads, will be a positive marker stone for the future development of female sport in this country.

It is important to place the observations and comments of my respondents into a wider context of sport as it impacts upon women. The review of literature is designed to do this. I have organized the chapter in the following manner. Initially, I outline important research which theorizes the gendered nature of Canadian sport. What major ideological and social constraints have been traditionally placed in the path of female participation in sport? This general discussion is followed by one specific to women's participation in 'male-only' sports. Finally, I review the few studies that have looked at female participation in contact sport. Given the very recent involvement of females in such sport, the research is sparse. This suggests that the observations raised by the women in this research, will have important contributions to make to the academic literature.

### **Canadian Scholarship: Women and Sport**

It is recognized that there are notable feminist scholars in many parts of the world: Birrell (1987, 1988), Cole (1993), and Cole and Birrell (1994) from the United States, Hargreaves (1994) from Great Britain, and Pfister (1993) from Germany, to mention a few. Since my research is Canadian-based, I have limited my review to the Canadian literature on women in sport. The two foremost Canadian commentators on women in sport have been Ann Hall from the University of Alberta and Nancy Theberge from the University of Waterloo.

Rather than discuss the countless articles Ann Hall has published, I want to examine her overall research paradigm (Hall, 1996). In the 1970s (Hall, 1972) when Hall began her investigation into the social aspects of women in sport, she made two major insights. The first was that existing research which focused upon sex roles and sex identity had to be replaced by a sport and gender discourse that established gender as an individual research category. Her second realization was that it would be a long arduous task to convince radical theorists that class might not be the primary form of domination and that the theoretical focus would have to shift to gender (Hall, 1996:7). Many of Hall's feminist colleagues tended to ignore sport and they failed to see any link between feminist values and competitive sport. Hall, on the other hand, believed it was her task to advocate the inclusion of sport on the feminist agenda and to ensure that feminism was part of the sports agenda (Hall, 1996:7). In her latest book, Hall asserts that there is a need for theory rooted in practice. This will help women understand the gendering of sport and the complexities to be negotiated within its framework. Sport, she goes on to argue, should serve as a site to resist and change the existing relations and subordination of race, gender, class and sexuality (Hall, 1996:31). Further, according to Hall, there are many competing theoretical positions regarding gender and sport and women are probably confused by the myriad of evolving and shifting debates (Hall, 1996:31).

She believes that there two agendas in sport to which feminist scholars ascribe. The first can be labeled '*liberal reformism*' whose basis is an equal opportunity program designed to increase women's overall participation and grant them equal access to structures initially set up for men. Under the liberal banner, sports feminists have fought for better facilities,

quality coaching, increased funding, equal rights under the law and an equal voice in decision making. While acknowledging the contributions, Hall insists that there is a fundamental problem with the liberal feminist position in sport. It tends to treat all women as a homogeneous group without identifying the vast array of groups of women, and their different experiences and expectations in sport.<sup>1</sup>

The second agenda to which the feminists subscribe is that of '*radical feminism*'. Radical feminists in sport adopt a women-centred perspective that emphasizes and celebrates the differences among women and, at the same time, questions and challenges male dominated and defined sport. In practical terms, radical feminists work toward establishing independent clubs and leagues that are outside mainstream sporting structures and systems. The radical feminists try to transform conventional sport by creating a collective and supportive situation, using feminist principles of play and infusing an ethic of care (Birrell, 1988; Lenskyj, 1991).

Hall believes that feminism has become a dirty word and that feminists are now in a period of backlash fueled by the conservative New Right. After 30 years of scholarship and activism, Hall argues that feminism is not dead. It does have critics and dissenters, some within its own ranks. But Hall, believes that this is a natural evolution for an intellectual and social movement and that significant progress continues to be made. She also recognizes that female athletes and students of physical education are reluctant to identify themselves as feminists because of the fear of being labeled lesbian. Hall agrees with Pat Griffin (1992), who stated that the fear of homosexuality has the power to intimidate and discourage women from participation in sport, especially in those sports considered to be male (Hall, 1993:104).

It is Hall's contention that many young women have little understanding of the

struggles that females have endured. They have even less comprehension of the potential for human agency. There is an urgent need, she believes, to teach students and others the actual practice of feminist social change. Courses should be offered that include a practical component that would provide experience in the praxis of social change (Hall, 1993:104).

In *Feminism and Sporting Bodies* (1996), Hall's final comments focus on the use of computer technology to communicate, discuss, and share information pertaining to feminism on a global scale. Cyberspace could be a future site of a global feminist praxis in sport. She writes, "We can use this technology to communicate with each other, share ideas and good practices, discuss issues, resolve our differences, and evolve our strategies"(Ibid., 1996:105).

Nancy Theberge is another important figure in Canadian sociology of sport and has published over 25 scholarly articles concerning women in sport. Rather than summarizing all these articles, I have decided to concentrate on three, including one on women's ice hockey. I have specifically limited myself to these three articles for, like my analysis of Hall, they illustrate Theberge's research concerns: the unequal dynamics of power brought about by the organized sports system.

In an 1986 *Quest* article, Theberge presented the argument that sport was a male preserve. She cited higher rates of participation by males in competitive sport and statistics which indicate that males dominate the administrative and organizational positions in the sports hierarchy (Theberge, 1985:194). Female athletes, she surmised, have unequal access to valued goods and resources and are under represented in positions of authority. Theberge further noted that media coverage of sport in North America has routinely denigrated and trivialized women's sporting experiences. Consequently, sport does not just represent gender

inequality but contributes to its maintenance in social settings that transcend sport (Theberge, 1985:194). In other words, sport is an agency which has contributed to the oppression of women. But Theberge does not adopt a fatalistic attitude. She believes that women have an opportunity within the sporting framework to change and challenge existing structures. There is potential for sport to act as an agent of women's liberation, rather than oppression. Women can use sporting activity to free themselves from male domination through the realization of, and ability to, experience their bodies as strong and powerful (Theberge, 1985:202). The importance of this observation for this thesis will be more fully developed in subsequent chapters.

Theberge has examined another important aspect of sport (Theberge, 1993): that is, the social perceptions of female coaches in Canada regarding their presence in the sports bureaucracy. She noted that women's exclusion from sport or their admission on a restricted basis has been one way in which the myth of female frailty has been perpetuated (Theberge, 1993:301). Theberge goes on to argue that there is ample evidence to support the contention of male dominance in positions of power in sport. The female coaches interviewed by Theberge indicated that they were aware of their '*token status*' and several respondents spoke of the '*old boys network*' that controlled different sports (Theberge, 1993:304). The women mentioned that because there were so few of them, and their highly visible positions in the bureaucracy, the pressure to perform was high and their actions were closely scrutinized and evaluated. Female coaches used different strategies in reaction to this heightened profile. One strategy was to try to assimilate into the dominant culture and be '*one of the boys*' as much as possible. An alternative strategy was to demonstrate competence and ability in their work

(Theberge, 1993:304-305). As Theberge observed, the female coaches tried to minimize their token status, stressed their ability and performance, and in doing so, tried to claim an identity as competent members of the sports community. Theberge believes that these efforts were continually undermined by the gendering of sport and the nature of the sports hierarchy. The dominant ideology of sport which accepts male superiority is implicit in a rationalized sports structure which privileges strength and size. Men are superior athletes merely because they are generally bigger and stronger. While the majority of women in the Theberge study rejected this interpretation, they did not feel they were in any position to challenge the existing ideologies. Once again the prevailing strategy was to downplay their gender in favour of the demonstration of their personal technical competence. Theberge considers this approach counterproductive because it leaves intact the existing ideology of male superiority (Theberge, 1993:307-308). As Theberge puts it, "the construction of gender ideology in coaching and the location of men's superiority in natural differences are important aspects of the reassertion of men's hegemony" (Theberge, 1993:312).

The final research paper I wish to examine is Theberge's work on women's ice hockey in Canada (Theberge, 1997). Given that my research focuses on women in rugby, it is important to explore Theberge's research in another traditionally male sport. Hockey, rugby and football are quintessential male games that promote and celebrate the direct application of physical force, toughness and face-to-face bodily contact. The increased participation of women in these formerly all-male sports introduces new and interesting challenges.

In *It's Part of The Game* (1997) Theberge focused on two issues related to the physicality of the game: the risk of injury and the debate between full-contact hockey versus

the prohibition of body checking. In open-ended interviews with players and coaches a wide variety of viewpoints were revealed concerning the elimination of body checking in women's hockey. While there was no dominant position: Some women expressed a sense of pleasure and accomplishment at playing the full-contact game. Others indicated that the women's game was superior to the men's due to the speed, play making and the absence of violence (Theberge, 1997:73-74). Theoretically, Theberge believes that the construction of women's hockey as '*different*' is an important aspect of the contemporary ideological struggle surrounding the construction of sport. She writes that the risk of injury and the place of the body check within the sport is one of the contested features of the debate as to what women's hockey will be. Some believe the absence of the body check reduces injury. Others dispute this position, arguing that its absence leads to more illegal contact and stick work (Theberge, 1997:75). While Theberge acknowledges that the absence of the body check clearly defines the women's game, there are troubling similarities to male hockey in terms of pain and injury. The increasing willingness by female athletes to accept violence as part of competition, Theberge argues, suggests an incorporation into the dominant male model of sport which will restrict women's efforts to challenge the existing structures (Ibid., 1997:83).<sup>2</sup> Further, she continues, the transformative possibilities of women's sport are seriously compromised by the adoption of a sport ethic that celebrates toughness and physical violence. As soon as women adopt such an ideology, their challenge to male hegemony is further weakened. Since the use of physical violence implies size and/or strength, women are severely compromised. This leads to an ideological construction of women's hockey in relation to the male game. Women do not play '*real*' hockey, but a watered down version of the authentic game played by men.



This particular issue will be a recurrent theme, Theberge believes, if the women favouring a more physically intense game of hockey increases. Women's hockey does provide the participants with pleasure and a sense of empowerment, but it does so in a context that reproduces the problems of institutional sport (Ibid., 1997:85).

### **Barriers to Participation**

To this point, I have only alluded to the actual and /or ideology barriers which have hindered female participation in sport. It is almost a truism to note that the dominant forms of sport in most cultures are structured and organized to the advantage of most males and to the disadvantage of most women. When women have attempted to reduce this disadvantage, ideological barriers in the form of social myths have been constructed to limit female participation. Notably, these myths focus on the physical and psychological capabilities of girls and women and serve to legitimate unequal opportunities. An in depth discussion of these socially constructed myths would take the research in a direction not intended. Suffice it to say that the following myths have been used to limit women's opportunity in sport and they have all been proven *incorrect or unsubstantiated*:

- Strenuous participation in sport may lead to problems in childbearing.
- The activity in many sports damages a women's reproductive organs or breasts.
- Women have a more fragile bone structure than men, making injuries more likely.
- Intense involvement in sport causes menstrual problems.
- Sport involvement leads to the development of unattractive, bulging muscles.
- Participation in aggressive, body contact sports diminishes femininity.

(Weinberg & Gould, 1984:99)

In their 1983 book, The Sporting Women, Boutiller and SanGiovanni hypothesized that women may participate in their own forms of sport but there is always an inevitable comparison to the strength, speed and power of male sport. The authors point out that men have resisted the presence of women into their games, especially into contact team sports (rugby, hockey ) and that men have provoked women's fear with claims that sport masculinizes women and leads to the loss of their feminine qualities. The authors go on to suggest that men possess a deeper psychological fear that the involvement of women could result in the '*feminization*' of their sport (Boutiller & San Giovanni, 1986:103).

Hargreaves (1994) takes this hypothesis further. Women who play traditional male sport face criticism and ridicule. Female athletes who decide to play a traditional male contact sport will be characterized as pseudo-men, unfeminine, mannish or lesbian. These types of comments put pressure on heterosexual sportswomen and serve to divide all women involved in sport (Ibid., 1994:171).

Like Hargreaves, Louise Bryson also builds upon the Boutiller and SanGiovanni observations. In her article *Challenge to Male Hegemony* (1990), Bryson argues that sport is an ideal medium for communicating messages of gender domination. When women enter

the sporting arena they are discouraged from participating in contact sport and that aggressive behavior and physical strength are de-emphasized (Ibid., 1990:179). But Bryson, like Ann Hall considers sport to be far too important a social institution for women to abandon and those who control sport (men) must be challenged. She sees three interlocking sites where the challenge must take place: at the personal level, within a specific sport and the points where a sport intersects with other institutions. The ongoing challenge for women is to gain access to the decision-making levels of the sports bureaucracy. Women must have a recognized voice in the dispersal and spending of valuable resources (Ibid., 1990:183).

Hargreaves also talks about this male hegemony, emphasizing that the concept is not simply a male versus female situation. Women are not totally manipulated and powerless; there are both males and females who support the existing structures and those who oppose and are willing to work for change (Hargreaves, 1993:179).

In one of the few articles written about female rugby (Feminism and Rugby) Shona Thompson (1993) brings a different perspective on rugby and the involvement of women within the sport. Thompson argues that women are saddled with unpaid domestic responsibilities and it is this women's work that creates the space and freedom which allows men to engage in leisure activities. She acknowledges the tremendous growth of women's rugby and that it is changing the division of labor and leisure for some women. However, given the need for more work on women's participation in rugby, Thompson only speculates whether this involvement will bring changes in rugby's values and practices or whether the women will become incorporated into the male culture (Thompson, 1993:1-2).

## **Scholarship On Women's Rugby**

Despite the tremendous growth of women's rugby in Canada and in many other countries, scholarship on the women's game is virtually nonexistent. A masters thesis, completed by Elizabeth Wheatley in 1988 looks at women's rugby as a subculture. Like the other researchers, noted above, Wheatley believes that women can carve out positions of power and control within the sport. In her thesis data Wheatley also found that females in the rugby subculture reversed typical gender role expectations . Men became the victims of abuse and ridicule. Wheatley wrote that in rejecting the social constraints dictated by the patriarchal structure, the female players have assumed an identity that allows them more freedom and flexibility. They can, and do, challenge existing ideologies.

I concur with Wheatley 's observation that women are capable of achieving positions of power and control in rugby, but there are other observations that my data does not support. For example, Wheatley includes a chapter on singing among rugby players and the negative implications of this behavior. Singing is almost nonexistent in most rugby circles in Canada. In my research data only one player of 162 mentioned singing and she felt that there should be more singing. The singing of rugby songs, is and was, a legacy of British rugby. My experience suggests that the activity is not a part of the Canadian rugby culture. Some teams may still sing, but it is no longer the norm.

The late Laurie O'Reilly from New Zealand authored a very significant and valuable article on women's rugby in the New Zealand Journal of Physical Education (1994). What makes this article significant is the rugby background of the author. O'Reilly had a very extensive background playing and coaching in New Zealand where rugby is the paramount

sport. He coached at all levels of the game, including the New Zealand women's national side. He was in demand to instruct at technical clinics, including ones in Western Samoa, Japan, Netherlands and Spain. In his article O'Reilly gave his personal views on women's rugby and the development of their game. He categorically accepted women's rugby. He believed that women are physically and psychologically suited to rugby and that they find a spirit and freedom in rugby that is absent in other sports. It is O'Reilly's opinion that the game is safe for women and that when good coaching is available, it is relatively injury free. He emphatically stated that the coaching style and process should be the same for men and women. In all levels of rugby from club to the national level, O'Reilly utilized the same training techniques with male and female players. He championed the rights to equal opportunity, and challenged those who would deny women their place in the game. The author lamented that there still is evidence of chauvinistic and patronizing attitudes toward female players between rugby administrators and school personnel, almost all of whom are men. Thankfully O'Reilly observes, the top male players in his region (Christchurch), particularly those who play for the internationally-renowned All Blacks, are enthusiastic and supportive of women's rugby. These players admire the dedication and skill of the serious female players and their commitment to the game. In his concluding remarks O'Reilly urged women to demand the best coaching available and not accept second best. Until his death, Laurie O'Reilly was an advocate to give girls and women the opportunity to participate in rugby. Thus, like Hargreaves has observed(1993), there are men like Laurie O'Reilly, who are working for change in sport.

## **The Game of Rugby**

Despite the barriers that have confronted them, the number of women participating in rugby as a full contact sport continues to expand. To add to those statistics already presented, consider this: in Canada there are 8,000 senior registered players and another 2,000 at the under-nineteen level; in the United States there are 10,000 adult players and 3,000 under-nineteen players; England has 8,500 players and 220 clubs. Perhaps it is not surprising, that given the strong male domination of rugby, the numbers are lower in other countries. Nevertheless, there still has been a substantial increase in the number of women playing rugby in the world (Oval Rugby Magazine, 1998).

In Canada, women have been playing rugby for more than 20 years and the greatest growth has been in the last ten years. The first Canadian Championship for women was in 1987, the first Canada-United States match was in 1987, the first Women's World Cup was in Cardiff in 1991, the first Canada Cup tournament for women was in 1993, and the first Canadian Intercollegiate Championship will take place in 1998 (Canadian Rugby Union ). Overall, this is an unprecedented and impressive growth rate.

Despite the expansion of women's rugby, I have found no academic examination of the game whatsoever in Canada and the only references to women's rugby are historical in nature. In his book *Rugby in Edmonton* (1990), Lamb discusses the start of the Edmonton Rockers women's club in 1977 and the initial games against a women's side from Red Deer, Alberta and an American team from Montana. A second women's team called the Coven was started in Edmonton in 1983 competing in a three-team league with the Edmonton Rockers and the Calgary Renegades. Players from these three teams formed the basis of the Alberta

team that played in the first Western Canadian Women's Rugby Championship that took place in Calgary in 1983. Interestingly, Lamb mentioned that an inter-city women's game was played between Calgary and Edmonton several years prior to the establishment of the first women's rugby club in Alberta. There were several serious injuries in the match and as a result some men believed the game was too rough for women (Lamb, 1990:42-47).

In *Saskatchewan Rugby: A History* (1993), author David Brown briefly describes the formation of the first women's rugby clubs in the wheat province. In 1975, a team with the unfortunate name, the Happy Hookers, was formed in Saskatoon. Despite the name, the team survived and several years later changed their name to the Kin-Rin Women's Rugby Club. In 1978, a second women's team was started in Saskatchewan called the Regina Ravens, also changing their name to the Regina Breakers. There was more player involvement and commitment in Saskatoon and that city's players formed the core of the Saskatchewan team that played in 1983 Western Canadian Women's Rugby Championship.

The final important reference I uncovered is that of a paper presented at the 1993 Pan Pacific Rugby Conference in Calgary by Jami Jordan of the United States Rugby Committee. She discussed the reasons why women play rugby, the success of the United States rugby team and efforts to expand the game in the United States. She identified three areas of need in women's rugby: female referees, more qualified female coaches, female administrators. Jordan concluded her presentation with possible solutions for the further cultivation of women's rugby. This was the only presentation at the conference on women's rugby. The fact that Jordan was invited to speak at an international gathering of rugby personnel is significant, nonetheless.

Despite the barriers placed before the women in sport and especially in rugby, the number of participants continues to grow throughout Canada. In this thesis I explore some of the reasons for this growth and popularity and discuss the experiences some women have had in their quest to play a formerly male-only sport.



## **ENDNOTES**

1. In making this observation, Hall seems to have come full circle in her theoretical position. While her earlier contention was that gender was to replace class as the theoretical focus, her recent pronouncements suggest class should be reintroduced.
2. Some scholars might argue with Theberge on this point since much of male hockey (minor-league under the age of 13, recreational hockey at all levels, old-timers hockey) is also non-body check. It is important that researchers clearly delineate the male hockey being described. There are justifiable differences between the NHL game and that played by most women.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Women's rugby is growing in Canada and there must be an attempt to understand the social implications of this remarkable sporting phenomenon. I wanted to explore the reasons behind the increased participation of women in rugby and to ask the women to share their personal experiences in the sport. Since my potential respondent pool live in various regions of Canada, a survey was considered the most efficient means of conducting my research. A survey was designed to allow players to express their personal opinions and comment on aspects of the game of rugby and its recent development. The questionnaire met the ethical standards set up by the School of Physical and Health Education (Appendix A and B).

My objective was to solicit as broad a base of opinion as possible. Research data was accumulated from players aged 15 to 44 years of age who played on a regular basis. The respondents play at every level available to women in Canada: high school, club, university, provincial rugby. Included in my sample are 15 players who have played at the international level and who collectively have 93 international caps.<sup>1</sup> Among this group was the former captain of Canada who has 17 international caps and is Canada's most '*capped*' player to date. My respondents also include players who have competed in the women's International Rugby Seven-a-Side tournament in Hong Kong and those who have participated in Canadian Rugby Union elite athlete development camps that have taken place in Victoria, B.C. and Calgary, Alberta.

Of the 162 questionnaires returned, there is a regional discrepancy in that the women

live only in the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. In some ways, this is not a serious problem since, with the exception of Saskatchewan, the other provinces are the sites of sustained development in women's rugby. Whenever possible, I personally delivered the survey / questionnaire. This allowed me access to players from clubs and a high school in Alberta, and the Saskatchewan players in attendance at a development camp prior to 1997 National Championships. The provincial teams from British Columbia and Quebec completed the questionnaire at the Championships held in Hamilton. Finally, questionnaires were completed by university players representing Queen's University and the University of Guelph.

My experience and contacts in women's rugby were invaluable in the collection of my data. I erred in not keeping exact statistics on the number of questionnaires distributed, compared to those returned. However, I would conservatively estimate that the return rate was over 80%.

As a participant-observer I enjoyed a privileged position in the data collection. I truly believe I have the confidence of the vast majority of the respondents. They know my background in rugby, my commitment to the sport, and my willingness to work to improve the women's game in Canada. Thus, for example, I received enthusiastic cooperation in British Columbia because the provincial coach had formerly played in Alberta and was with the National Team during my tenure as National Coach. Similarly, in the collection of the Quebec data, I know several players and members of the provincial coaching staff. I am also bilingual so I could converse with both the anglophone and francophone players in their language of choice. To summarize my data collection:

- includes 162 completed questionnaires
- respondents represent participation at all levels of the game in Canada
- age span of respondents ranges from 15 to 44 years of age.
- five provinces in the sample.
- good cross-section of experience, with some respondents having played at several different levels.

Table One and Two provide more detailed information about my sample.

### **Table One**

#### **Participation**

- High school women (Ross Shepard High School, Edmonton, Alberta)
- Women's club rugby (Province of Alberta )
- University women's rugby (Queen's and Guelph Universities, Ontario )
- Provincial women' rugby ( British Columbia, Quebec, Saskatchewan )
- Included in the above groups are 15 players who have played at the international level for Canada and have a combined total of 93 caps.

**Table Two**  
**Age Grouping of Respondents**

<i><b>AGE GROUP</b></i>	<i><b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS IN SAMPLE</b></i>
<b>U15</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>U17</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>U19</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>20-24</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>25-30</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>30-40</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>40+</b>	<b>2</b>

As noted in the Review of Literature chapter, there is a dearth of information available concerning the women's game. This survey data provided a wide-ranging sample of information about Canadian women's rugby.

In developing my research design I utilized two common types of qualitative research techniques: the survey questionnaire and participant observation. I have elaborated on my role as a participant observer in Chapter One and above. Here I wish to make some general comments on the questionnaire per se. Qualitative research data is not converted into numbers. It is concerned with the individual's personal account, perceptions, interpretations, beliefs, views and feelings. Hakim states that qualitative research offers substantively different and complementary information on the way attitudes and experiences cohere into meaningful patterns and perspectives (1987:28).

The survey questions were designed to be opened-ended so that the respondents would have an opportunity to express their personal views to each particular question and respond in their own terms. As British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1993:687) maintains, open-ended questionnaires are more flexible and can provide richer information than a standardized set of questions which do not allow for subtleties of opinion or verbal expression. But as qualitative sociologists will recognize, there are drawbacks. The individual nature and variation of the respondent's comments may make it more difficult to compare and analyze. Certainly, this was the case for this research. For example, In asking the women "what is the difference between rugby and other sports," I received 119 different answers. There are pragmatic drawbacks as well. Asking for thoughtful, introspective responses from players intent on winning a national championship, for example, has its own set of problems. While I did receive some cursory '*spur of the moment*' replies, the majority were detailed responses.

In-depth personal interviews were not practical. The vast geographical size of Canada and the lack of financial resources to travel around the country and conduct interviews made interviews impossible. Instead I relied heavily on my experience in Canadian women's rugby to make personal contact with players and key club officials. My attendance at Graduate School in Kingston, Ontario meant it was possible to attend the Canadian Women's Rugby Championships in 1997. Finally, as all qualitative researchers acknowledge (Hakim, 1987; Giddens 1993), rich data collection only comes about through the co-operation and trust of the respondents. I truly believe this is the case with those who answered my questionnaire, for it is these women who see rugby as valuable and important.

## **ENDNOTES**

1. A cap is a symbolic reward for representing your country at the international level. Each time you play an international rugby game you are granted a cap. At one time players were actually given small peak caps.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SURVEY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As noted in the last chapter, open-ended questions were utilized so the respondents could more fully and freely comment on their personal experiences in rugby. But, as the evidence for qualitative research suggests, the collection of such data may be diverse so that comparison becomes difficult. Certainly this was the challenge of analyzing my data. There was a wide range of commentary from the women. Whenever possible, I combined responses into general categories. For example, of the 46 replies to the question, “Why did you start to play rugby?”, includes comments like: couldn’t play football; interested in a contact sport; play a sport where I could tackle; aggressive sport; physical contact; rough sport. All these could all be combined into the category, *Physical Aspects of Sport*. I recognize the subjectivity in choosing the general categories and the placements of individual responses into a category. However, I made these research decisions based upon my knowledge and experience in the game and the underlying goal to let the women speak for themselves.

Given the exploratory nature of this research and the wide-ranging responses received, I have diverted from the more conventional manner of presenting and discussing the evidence. First, all the ‘raw data’ from the 13 survey questions have been documented in Appendix C. This was considered to be critical so that other researchers might have the opportunity to judge the validity of the general categories chosen. It was also important in that it emphasizes the primacy of human agency (Giddens, 1993) for those women who choose to participate in non-traditional sporting activities.



Second, I have organized the chapter such that data from each question is chronologically presented , along with relevant (and often colourful) comments from the individual respondents. Where the compilation of responses into a general category was not feasible, I present the most frequent comments of the women.

Finally, and this is the greatest diversion from traditional thesis format; after each question, I discuss the wide sociological implications which, I believe are grounded in the women's responses.

**Survey Question #1: *Why did you start to play rugby ?***

Responses: 46 different replies to the open-ended question.

**Most Frequent Replies\***

<i><b>REPLY</b></i>	<i><b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b></i>
Physical aspects of rugby <sup>1</sup>	46
Play something new	45
Friends played	17
Offered at high school	17
Fun to play	15
Family influence	13
Interesting sport	13
Fitness	12
Challenge	7

\*Some replies have been combined into common groups.

See Appendix C for all the replies.

It is apparent that the women are primarily in rugby for two reasons. They wish to play something other than those sports generally offered to them, and they like the physical nature of the game. The survey has produced several interesting quotes regarding aggressive physical contact in rugby:

*"I wanted to hit guys and make them realize we are not cream puffs !"*

*"Finally a sport that give women an aggressive outlet."*

*"Many women have higher levels of aggression or competitive edges than many men. "*

*"After years of someone handing me a doll, I can use my aggressiveness. "*

Research data about in women in full contact sport is limited and has been an under-examined area of interest of the academic community. Traditionally women have been socialized to be passive and have been described as the weaker sex. Lenskyj states that the perception that women cannot participate in aggressive sport because they are weaker, have less strength and endurance, is a false premise (1986:7). The involvement of women in physical combat type sports, such as rugby where physical force and body contact is used to subdue opponents has been considered unacceptable (Cashmore, 1990:122). Contrary to the legacy of Victorian perceptions, women are not fragile, dainty or timid. They can be just as tough, durable, muscular and aggressive as men. Certainly, the data from this research suggests as much.

The female rugby players surveyed have indicated that the physical contact aspect is a definite attraction and that they are not prepared to accept the restrictions that have been placed on previous generations of female athletes. Hargreaves (1994:273) has stated that

women who engage in rough physical sport express a sense of satisfaction and exhilaration and this is similar to the rugby women in the survey. The extraordinary growth of women's rugby, particularly at the high school level in Canada indicates that women are rejecting the traditional attitudes regarding physical, aggressive sport.

Closely linked to the physical aspect of rugby is the large number of respondents that wanted to try a new sport (45). Rugby is a fast paced, physical game that relies on team work. In a world of individual sports like gymnastics, figure skating and swimming, a team game is a significant change of process for many women. Respondents indicated they found the game interesting (13), fun to play (15), and a new and different sporting opportunity.

Some players indicated that they started to play because it was now offered at the high school level (17). The expansion of the rugby at this level has been astounding. Data compiled by the Ontario and British Columbia Rugby Unions have discovered the following one hundred and ten Ontario high schools now have girl's teams. In 1993 there were no B.C. high schools playing rugby, but by 1997, 52 high schools had started teams. As an experienced educator and high school coach, I know the development of the game at the high school level has been the major area of growth. The high school is the grass root level of expansion. The full impact cannot be calculated at this time because expansion continues, there is little evidence it will lessen in the future, and it will take time for the high school player to reach the international level. Obviously, the expansion at the high school is an area of further research and examination.

Several players indicated that they started to play because of a family member (13). In most cases, it was a brother or sister who was involved in the game, but there were players

who said their parents encouraged them to play the game. Another word of mouth process was the initial involvement in rugby due to the influence of friends (17). There is a link to school rugby because on several occasions this friendship influence took place at the school level and resulted in player involvement in rugby. There has been no country wide publicity by Rugby Canada to develop the game, a major portion of the growth in rugby has been due to the efforts of people within the existing rugby community.

**Survey Question # 2: *What are the positive aspects of rugby?***

Responses: 67 different replies. Players had more than one reply.

**Most Frequent Replies**

<b><i>REPLY</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
Team work/play	64
Fitness	47
Friendship	28
Physical Demands	27
Social Aspects	24
Aggression aspect	19
Contact Sport	18
Meet People	17
Position for all body types and shapes	23
Mental Challenge	13

***Team work -64 survey replies:***

The concept of fifteen players ‘pulling together’ and working toward a common goal is apparently very appealing to the women. There is no other women’s sport to compare to women’s rugby: the number of players on the field, the heavy physical contact and the unselfish nature of the game are all paramount in the rules of the game. It is a sport that relies heavily on teamwork and co-operation, hence, its long-standing appeal as ‘the game’ to train young men to be leaders of tomorrow. The winger or fullback could score, but only because the players in the forward pack have done their job and have secured quality possession of the ball and allowed the other players to initiate an attack.

Respondents have recognized the importance of team work on the field and that a cooperative effort is critical for success of the team. One provincial player said, “rugby is a game where you have to trust and cooperate with your team mates.” Blinde, Taub, and Han (1994:54) in their study of collegiate athletes, pointed out that there are extremely positive comments concerning contacts with team mates and other women participating in sport. Athletes frequently described their team mates as ‘best friends’, ‘close knit’, and ‘family.’ Overall rugby has given women an opportunity to work together toward a common goal and at the same time has provided a positive support group within the framework of the team on and off the field. Given the camaraderie associated with men’s rugby, this begs the question: Are women being incorporated into the male nature of the sport or is their camaraderie different? While beyond the scope of this dissertation, this again, is an interesting future research question.

***Social aspects - 24 survey replies / friendship - 28 survey replies:***

When players note that they enjoy the social aspects of the game, there are really several inter-related reasons that might be cited. Rugby was seen as great opportunity to meet many new people (male and female). Many respondents developed new friendships and some players indicated that they enjoyed the fact that they could play a game and then socialize with the opposition after the game. There is not the 'hate the opposition' attitude that exists in some sports. It is tradition that the game be left on the field which is a unique aspect of all rugby competition.

Given the internationalization of the game, it is not surprising that the opportunity to travel was mentioned. Teams travel throughout Canada during the rugby season and this allows new friendships to develop nationally and internationally. For example, as already noted, in the summer of 1996 I coached the Alberta provincial women's team that travelled to Australia to play a series of state teams and the Australian national side. The trip to Australia and the reception the team received came about because of the long-standing tradition of rugby touring.

There is no doubt that the rugby social parties attract some players. The beer, the music, the chance to meet members of the opposite sex certainly appeal to some and the party component has a certain attractiveness. Wheatley (1994:209) takes an arguably different position. She argues that social activities connected with women's rugby may be seen as violations of common conventions for appropriate feminine behavior. She further observes that the party aspect is less popular than it once was and continues to decline in popularity with the increasingly competitive and serious attitudes of women toward the game (Ibid.,

1994:211). The party element is a traditional aspect of rugby, but as rugby becomes steadily more popular and mainstream, the greater emphasis is on playing the game.

Have women developed their own distinctive indioculture? As Coakley notes, (1998, p.52) indioculture is a system of distinct meaning and understanding. It is logical to surmise that female rugby players are developing their own idioculture. Though there is no substantive evidence which would allow definitive observation to be made. Girls develop different patterns of norms, orientations and behavior than boys because girl's lives are significantly different and often more restricted than boys. The evidence from my data is that this coming together of large groups of women to play rugby, to socialize and to work together toward a common objective is a new and very positive experience for the women.

***Aggression (19), Physical Contact (18), Physical Demands (27) - Total 64 replies:***

I have combined together three physical categories because of their similarities. It will amaze some people to learn that many female players enjoy the robust, aggressive side of rugby. I have witnessed many a parent at high school girl's rugby games flinching with every tackle. The enjoyment of physical contact and aggression goes against the perceived image of women's capabilities. As noted, women have had to overcome socially constructed myths designed to hinder and block their participation in sport. Statements that imply that women have a include fragile bone structure, that excessive bodily contact will interfere with future child bearing capability, damage the reproductive organs, or that aggressive body contact sports diminishes ones femininity (Weinburg and Gould, 1995:499), are all meant to deter women from participating in sport. The women who step onto the rugby pitch

understand and accept the physicality of the game. They can, and do, handle the physical contact and clearly recognize that most women involved are of comparable strength and body size.

Ideologically, it is a different story. These women are *'told'* in countless ways not to do this. In this sense, the female rugby player is charting unknown cultural territory. The presumed connection between aggression and masculinity runs deep in many cultures. Thus, for the women who play rugby, the argument goes, they are symbolically learning to be more masculine.

Given my longstanding experience in both male and female rugby, I would argue that the women's game is different. You do not see fighting nor the *'macho'* aspects of some male rugby. Seldom does a female player *'lose her cool'* on the field. But, once again there is no detailed research data on the aggression of women who play rugby and certainly the game is new enough that there is no longitudinal data. What is clear from my survey is that the women want to play officially-recognized rugby and not some *'watered down'* version of the game. They have made a commitment to the game as it is played internationally. This includes physical contact, aggressive running and tackling, and the necessary fitness to function at the highest cardio-vascular level.

The very fact that women openly state that they enjoy the aggressive aspects of rugby confounds some people. Frances Johnson (cited in Nelson, 1994:34) interviewed female hockey and rugby players and found that *'physicality'* was one of the most appealing aspects for the players. The women enjoyed tackling, checking, and the euphoric discovery that as players, they could survive the hard hits or rough games. Given the media bias surrounding



the production of televised sport, most people have not seen the caliber of play in women's rugby, nor observed the players and the enjoyment they derive from playing the game.

***Position for all Body Types and Shapes - 23 replies:***

The game of rugby requires fifteen starting players and six reserves. No other popular team sport requires this many participants who play continuously. The team is sub-divided into two units: the forwards who must attempt to win possession of the ball; and the speedier backs who are responsible for initiating and launching the attack to score. The women have discovered that the various positions in rugby will accommodate different body types and this also has attracted women to the game. The smaller player can utilize her speed and elusiveness; the taller player who may feel a little awkward will find a position perhaps as a second row; and the larger player who may lack speed and quickness will be required in the forward pack. This diversity and opportunity to play are not available in other team sports and several respondents indicated that the chance for all types of players to be involved is a positive aspect of women's rugby.

It would go beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the sociological and psychological influence that sport participation has upon body image. Suffice to say, that given the concerns about bulimia and anorexia among young girls, the opportunity for women of diverse body types to come together, to be critical to the success of the team, and to be acknowledged as such, is a positive development.

**Survey Question # 3: *What obstacles did you encounter when you first started to play rugby?***

Responses: 78 different replies. Most players had more than one reply.

**Most Frequent Replies**

<b><i>REPLY</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
Attitudes toward women playing rugby (grouped comments)	86
Understanding the Laws (rules) of the game	36
Learning the game	22
Lack of coaching	15
Physicality of the game	13
Lack of fitness	10
Size	9

One must not confuse Question Number Three, dealing with obstacles players encountered when they first started to play and Question Number Four dealing with the negative aspects of rugby. While there are similarities, I believe there are subtle differences between the terms obstacles and negative aspects. Replies such as ‘lack of coaching’, ‘learning the game’, ‘lack of fitness’, ‘referees’ and ‘confusion with the Laws of Rugby’ are not necessarily negative situations, but represent organizational obstacles and a lack of resources to coach, instruct, teach and administer the game properly to new players. For the purposes of this thesis, I have defined negative aspects as primarily the attitudes toward

women who participate in rugby. Negativity will be discussed in Survey Question Number Four.

As for replies concerning obstacles , the responses represent the type of data from which feminist theory debates emerge. For the liberal feminist, organizational change to increase opportunities for the female rugby player will suffice. The radical feminist school believe the systematic nature of patriarchy, makes such changes more problematic.

**Survey Question # 4: *What are the negative aspects of rugby?***

Responses: Over 60 different replies.

**Most Frequent Replies**

<b><i>REPLY</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
Injuries	55
Attitude towards women's rugby	47 (combination of several replies)
Drinking	16
Lack of quality/skilled coaches	14
Funding/Financial Support	13
Referee concerns	13
Dirty play/Fighting	13
No negatives in game	11
Politics in rugby	8
Time commitment	7

## ***INJURY***

In response to the question regarding the negative aspects of rugby, it will be somewhat surprising to some people that the women listed 'injuries' as the number one concern; but it is not necessarily unexpected. As I have already noted, contact sports for women are relatively new. Women are neophytes and the issue of injury is an unfamiliar topic. There is a serious deficiency in comprehensive research data relating to women in contact sport and resultant injuries. Unlike their male counterparts, the women have not had the benefit of participating in rugby from an early age and are still learning skills associated with the game.

In a Master of Science thesis, Eric Lewis studied rugby team injuries over two seasons (1992-94) and had some astute comments regarding women's rugby injuries (Lewis, 1994:8-9). He recorded the injuries sustained by three different rugby sides: senior men, senior women, and a youth squad. He discovered that 20% of all injuries in female rugby were concussion injuries. This was significantly higher than the 7% of concussion injuries in the other two groups. It was his contention that the higher rate of concussion was the result of incorrect head position while tackling, since the tackle has been identified as the cause of many injuries in rugby. Further, Lewis suggested, that experience is critical in coping with the dynamic violent contact of rugby. It was not surprising, he surmises, that women who were the least experienced group of players, sustained 31% of their injuries while being tackling and another 20% while tackling. One of Lewis's recommendations was that women spend more practice time tackling and being tackled. This issue of safety on the rugby pitch is very important and is directly linked to the quality of coaching, which is another negative

the women listed (14 replies ). Rugby clubs must have qualified coaches in position to facilitate learning the game and to teach proper and safe skill techniques to prevent injury. While accepting Lewis' contentions about tackling, I believe there is another possible source of injury: that is, the set scrum. If coaches lack the fundamental knowledge regarding set scrummaging techniques they are inviting serious injury to their athletes. This is why some medical professionals are calling for the use of under-nineteen 'no push' scrummaging laws for women's rugby ( Australian Rugby Review, 1996-97:58-59).

The women's game is becoming more aggressive and vigorous and female athletes are just as willing as men to expose themselves to physical risk (Young and White, 1995:55). In her research on women's hockey, Nancy Theberge reported that the risk of injury was a concern to female hockey players. This is comparable to the situation in women's rugby. Theberge stated that the ability to withstand pain was a routine feature of women's hockey. Overcoming pain and playing while injured were measures of the player's commitment to hockey. Pain and injury were not an excuse for less than full effort or best performance (Theberge, 1997:83).

Similar attitudes seem to prevail in rugby. One university rugby player said that rugby is pain and that you have to be psychologically prepared to hurt in practice and games. She further stated, that while she may have to pay the price later in life, right now she does not care. These attitudes conveyed by the women in rugby and hockey certainly deconstruct and dismantle existing myths regarding females' ability to play aggressive contact sport or to accept the pain / injury often associated with participation.

As an experienced coach, I cannot emphasize strongly enough the need for qualified

medical personnel to be available for women's rugby matches. I recently attended the Ontario women's high school championships (1998) in Whitby, Ontario, and there was a lack of medical personnel at the tournament. Sixteen teams played a very demanding four-game schedule over two days. Several players were injured and it was the coaches who had to deal with the injury situations. This is unacceptable. All school sport associations should ensure that competent certified medical staff are available for the athletes at all major competitions, especially full contact sports. Is it a question of organizational planning or is it the lack of resources ? It would be an interesting study to also ascertain how the level of medical support differs for the boy's tournament from that of the girls.

### ***ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN'S RUGBY***

Until twenty-five years ago, rugby was a 'male-only' domain. The organizational structures and levers of power within the game were held by men. Rugby was exported from the British Isles to various parts of the world, including Canada and in most cases the rugby organizational framework mirrored the British model. The rugby unions were controlled by individuals whose experience and background was British. In Canada there has been a gradual shift over the last twenty-five years and most rugby clubs are now organized and administered by people born and raised in Canada and the strong and direct links to British rugby is fading. I believe this is a very important factor in the growth of Canadian rugby, particularly in the high schools. Many club executives are individuals who were educated in Canadian school systems, in which young women have been involved in athletic and sport programs. Equality of opportunity in high school sport was encouraged and it is short step to accommodate girls

who wish to play rugby as part of their inter-school experience. Thus, to allow these same girls to play club rugby was not 'that big a deal' for many Canadian-born rugby administrators. There are no data to support this particular position and it represents my personal viewpoint, albeit based on 25 years in the education system and close to 30 years in rugby. Unfortunately, some individuals will always produce the worst case scenarios possible and this distorts the actual reality of the situation. Again, like many issues raised in this thesis, this is another potential research question.

To paraphrase some of which I have gained from my graduate school experience, rugby has been a conservative patriarchal sport and the addition of a new element, such as women's rugby, creates a whole new set of sport and social conditions that have their own discourse. I have had the opportunity to observe the development of women's rugby in Edmonton, Alberta which has been and continues to be a focal point for the expansion and evolution of the game in Canada. In my capacity as a player, a coach (male and female) and administrator I have observed first-hand many of the situations mentioned by the players in the survey. It is to some of these situations that I now turn.

When respondents refer to the 'old boys' or the 'accent crowd' the reference is to individuals whose rugby background is 'non-Canadian' and their particular vision of rugby does not include women. It is my belief that this type of attitude regarding women's rugby represents a small minority of males in rugby and the female players, with their enthusiasm and commitment to the game, continue to convert many sceptics.

Another issue raised by the women is their second class status at some clubs, usually actualized in the priority afforded the women within the club structure. The glaring examples

are usually the lack of proper coaching, inferior field allocation and poor playing kit, especially jerseys. While the female members are expected to pay the same annual club dues as their male counterparts, equal opportunity is not always forthcoming.

A very critical component of any rugby club, or for that matter any sporting organization, is the decision-making body and the women have not been well-represented at this important level (Theberge, 1985:194). There has been considerable debate surrounding integrated versus separate but-equal sports administration and which organization system is best for women. At the moment, there are only two independent rugby clubs in Canada, the rest of the women's teams are affiliated with men's rugby clubs or educational institutions.<sup>2</sup> In British Columbia, the women have their own administrative organization to oversee the game ( West Coast Women's Rugby Association ), but despite having 18 members, the Association is given one position on the provincial rugby union executive. As the women's game continues to expand, female administrators must occupy more influential positions at the rugby executive level. This includes club, local union, provincial and national decision-making bodies.

In sociological terms, this representation on governing bodies is a question of power and a group's ability to lobby for particular interests. Within the executive structure there are many different agendas, and women's rugby is only one. There is tenacious competition for limited club resources and priorities may vary from club to club. The emphasis could be on the men's first grade team, junior development, school rugby, an overseas tour, building a club house. While women's rugby must learn to compete for the resources, the women must be given access to decision-making bodies so that this learning can take place. Until this



happens the women's program as the most recent addition to the club, may be low on the priority list. The most successful clubs are usually the ones which share valuable resources and attempt to develop all aspects of the club, including the women's program.

Unlike men, the women have not had sufficient time to foster a veterans' network and most administrative responsibilities have to be handled by active players. One player from British Columbia succinctly summarized the point by stating that the quickest way to burn out is to combine playing and executive duties.

Movement toward administrative equality comes slowly, but it does come. In 1998 there was a significant first for women with the election of Anne Barry as president of the United States Rugby Football Union. This is a first in the world of rugby.<sup>3</sup> At the international level there is the International Rugby Football Women's Advisory Committee whose role is to promote the women's game and integrate women's rugby into all aspects of the worldwide governing body, the International Rugby Football Board (International Rugby Football Board internet).

### ***RUGBY AND HEGEMONY***

There has been feminist scholarship (Bryson, 1987; Thompson, 1988) which utilizes Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony and links it to the control of sport. Hegemony deals with domination or control and functions as a set of experiences that maintains the status quo and authority over subordinate groups. According to Gramsci, there is a continuous reconstruction, recreation and alteration that take place to ensure that the ruling elite maintains power (Hargreaves, 1992). Does this concept apply to rugby? It is Thompson's

belief that rugby in New Zealand has contributed to the patriarchal power and control of women. She wrote that there has been a socialization of New Zealand women and they have been influenced by an ideology which accepts and glorifies men's rugby (Thompson, 1988). When Thompson was studying rugby as a subculture in the United States (1993) she concluded that the behavior of American men toward women was offensive.

Does rugby in Canada fit the hegemonic mould? It would be hard to deny that there is reconstruction going on in rugby due to the involvement of women. The fact that thousands of women are playing a traditional male sport is an indication that the rugby establishment is being challenged. There is a transformation happening in rugby, but I believe it is one of accommodation. Therefore, I take a different stance than that of Thompson. In my experience, the game is adapting to the inclusion of women. I do not believe the women are a subordinate group being dominated. Certainly, this is how I interpret what my respondents said. The women have been unhappy with certain aspects of rugby, but nowhere in the research data have they indicated that they feel collectively dominated. There are personal examples of domination, but it begs the question as to whether these are personal issues or evidence of deeper social problems. One respondent in the survey mentioned, for example, that she received no support from her husband because she played rugby. She eventually left him. While I was involved with the Canadian women's national team one player withdrew because her husband claimed she was not caring for 'her' children. It is my contention that these are isolated cases of men wanting to be in control, perhaps this is an area that could be further examined. Eleven respondents said they had no negatives to report. There are a number of ways this could be interpreted. Was it a superficial response to a serious attempt

to uncover negative aspects for women's rugby ? Is the game so good that these individuals have no complaints? Or is Gramsci right and these women are being exploited and led to believe the system is serving their needs?

Young and White (1995:45), are among those scholars who believe that women's increasing participation in aggressive sport can be interpreted as a dialectic, in which resistance to male domination in sport are tempered by a degree of hegemonic incorporation. The discourse in women's rugby, they argue, involves the expansion of the game and women's the quest for equal opportunity. If the assertion by some academics is that the women are being controlled by a patriarchal organization, I stand in opposition. It has been my rugby experience that males within the rugby community have willingly helped the women develop their game. They have provided support, coaching , officiating and administrative help and were happy to do so. At the same time, there have been barriers to the advancement of women's rugby in Canada, but based on the large numbers of women participating in the game they are not insurmountable. I believe Rosie Golby, the president of Women's Football Union (England), summarized the situation best when she said, "It will be a long time before every man accepts women playing rugby, but the barriers are gradually being broken down" (Cited in Bate, 1997:61).

**Survey Question # 5: *Should the 'Laws' of rugby be changed so there would less physical contact in the women's game(or remain the same for all)?***

This question generated the most emotional and colorful remarks. Since the responses were so diverse and personal, I have included those that seem to capture the mood of female

rugby players. The question was based on a short article which appeared in the Australian Rugby Review ( December 96 / January 97:42-43). The main thrust of the article was safety in rugby and there were specific comments by an Australian doctor, who is the Australian representative on the International Rugby Union Medical Committee. There had been a medical committee meeting in Rome, Italy and the twelve doctors on the committee were unanimous in recommending that women not play under rugby international law and that all women's rugby should be played using the U19 rugby laws. What is interesting about this recommendation for this research centers on the discussion of '*myths*'

noted earlier in the thesis. Do the '*experts*' (medical doctors) have the evidence to support the contention that women cannot play under international rules? Or, is this but the latest attempt of men to limit women's inclusion in sport? Certainly the imposition of the regulation would have a profound impact on women's rugby. The law would have a major impact on scrummaging and limit the push in the scrum to a one-metre maximum.<sup>2</sup> This would be a major disadvantage to teams with a dominant set of forwards who could impose their superiority on the opposition and secure quality possession of the ball during the game. The scrum can be seen as a means and not just the end. It is the means by which possession is gained or, conversely of denying the opposition quality ball. Further, it exhausts the opposing forwards while continually imparting the confidence of superiority. A change in this component of the game is very significant.

Although safety is a very important consideration, the restrictions on pushing in the scrum are a 'slap in the face' to women's rugby, especially the elite players who play at the provincial, state and international level. The assumption appears to be that women cannot

scrum properly, or that they lack the ability to do so, and that the result would be dangerous rugby. From the coaching perspective there is another important issue and this has to do with the ability (or lack of ability) to teach and train women's rugby teams to use the proper techniques safely in the set scrum.<sup>5</sup> Apparently the medical committee does not believe women can scrummage nor that coaches are capable of imparting the required technical knowledge. Therefore, their recommendations are that 'all' women's rugby teams use the U19 laws. Has the medical committee observed high caliber women's rugby? One of the outstanding aspects of women's international rugby is the high quality of scrummaging. Two teams which demonstrated this aspect are Canada and England.<sup>6</sup> There are injuries in men's rugby, including in the scrums, but there is no call for a change in the laws in the men's game. The issue should be centred on having qualified coaches at all levels of rugby or retraining coaches, not on changing the laws of rugby for women.

This article and the position taken by the International Rugby Union Medical Committee were the basis for survey Question Number Five. Not one of the 162 women surveyed endorsed any changes to the laws in women's rugby and their comments reflected the opinion that the laws should be the same for female and male. Here are some quotes from the women:

*"No, if I wanted to play a non contact sport I would play baseball or soccer."*

*"No fucking way!"*

*"NEVER!"* (in very large letters )

*" No, contact is one of the best parts and makes the game stand out from other sports*

*for women.”*

*“The question is very “ offensive ” and it wouldn’t be rugby.”* (offensive high lighted)

*“No, change would be degrading for women.”*

*“If contact disappears in the women’s game I will bust who ever’s ass is responsible.”*

*“No, proper coaching and contact is not dangerous.”*

*“Definitely not, removing contact would be patronizing and reverse the efforts of women to excel at the sport”*

*“No, why should we change, it won’t be rugby. It is a great challenge because of the contact.”*

*“Same, girls contacting girls.”*

*“Hell no, women can be just as tough as men.”<sup>7</sup>*

It is obvious by the players’ comments (Appendix C) that they are adamantly opposed to any changes in the laws of the game to accommodate women. Safety is a definite concern by all groups in rugby, including women, but the focus should be on the instruction of safe and proper techniques in the physical components of the game, especially at the introductory level of rugby. There are pundits who claim that women lack the strength to play a full contact sport like rugby, but this is an uninformed position. The women are playing against other women with comparable physical size and strength and no comparisons should be made to the men’s game. At the women’s elite level, players are on individual fitness and strength programs that are especially geared to rugby and the player’s position.<sup>8</sup> There is a concern by some women about safety at the youth beginner level, but their position on law changes is

crystal clear. A change to the laws would be a reconstruction of a barrier they have already negotiated in women's rugby.

**Survey Question # 6: *Women's rugby is one of the fastest growing sports in the country.***

***Why do you believe this is happening?***

Responses: 44 different replies.

#### **Most Frequent Replies**

<b><i>REPLY</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
Physical/aggressive aspects of rugby	35
New sport/opportunity to play	23
Anyone can play	17
All shapes and sizes can play	7
Exciting sport	6
Introduction at the high school level	5

These responses are similar to the replies in Question One. Therefore, no detailed explanation is forthcoming. But it is interesting that once again, the opportunity to play a physical contact sport is a major attraction for a player.

**Survey Question #7: *The popularity of women's rugby is growing throughout the world. Would you consider living and playing in another country? Where? Have you already played rugby in another country?***

***NO REPLIES - 26 total***

<b><i>REASON CITED</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
No	18
No, because of career	1
No, because of family	1
Not at this time	1
would not move just to play rugby	6

***YES REPLIES - 36 total***

Yes	128
Yes, if supported	2
Yes, I need a job	1
Yes, if I was paid	4
Yes, not to play but be involved in other aspects of rugby	1

***RETIRING PLAYERS - 2 total***



***WHERE WOULD YOU PLAY RUGBY?***

<b><i>COUNTRY OF CHOICE</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
Australia	44
New Zealand	43
Anywhere	25
England	19
Europe	10
Scotland	4
United States	4
Ireland	3
Wales	1
Argentina	1
Italy	1
South Africa*	2
British Columbia	1

**\*There is only touch rugby for women in South Africa**

***HAVE YOU PLAYED RUGBY IN ANOTHER COUNTRY? (Affirmative responses)***

<b><i>COUNTRY</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
United States	9
Australia	5
Netherlands	3
France	2
Europe (sic)	2
New Zealand	2
Cook Islands	1

An overwhelming number of respondents (136) indicated that they would consider living and playing in another country. Australia (44) and New Zealand (43) were the two most popular destinations. There is an attraction to traveling to the southern hemisphere but the women are also cognizant of the fact that the best rugby in the world, men or women, is played in this region.<sup>9</sup> There is a global aspect to rugby. The game is played all over the world and access and communication with foreign clubs all over the world has been simplified by the increased use of the Internet. There are thousands of electronic rugby addresses. For example one, Internet address (<http://www.nceas.nesb.edu/~burton/tags.html>) has thirteen pages of women's rugby e-mail contacts around the world.

The opportunity to travel 'on tour' has been an integral part of the men's game for decades. This may partially explain the strong desire of the respondents to play abroad. Further, the traditional barriers to participants (domestic responsibilities, parenting, career ) do not seem to be a hindrance to the majority of the women.

**Survey Question # 8: *Have you played other team sports? Is rugby similar or different than the other team sports you have played?***

Responses: 95 different replies to the first question. The second question connected with playing other team sport is much clearer. Only 8 out of 162 respondents replied that they had not played another team sport.

***HAVE YOU PLAYED OTHER TEAMS SPORTS?***

Yes, I have played other team sports. 57 replied yes, but no specific sport was mentioned.

Specific number of team sports cited. These totals *do not* include the 57 listed above as yes.

One team sport	18
Two team sports	27
Three team sports	20
Four or more team sports	17

Based on the information provided by the women, rugby is attracting athletes who have extensive background in sports of 162 respondents, 139 (86%) stated they have played other team sports besides rugby. This suggests that rugby is attracting quality athletes from other games. If individuals are capable of playing two or more team sports (64 athletes) they presumably have above-average athletic ability to play sport. There is evidence that rugby is not only attracting more and more players (see Question # 1) but that quality athletes are now entering the game. If one of the objectives of Canadian women's rugby is to be competitive internationally, (Canada was 4<sup>th</sup> in the 1998 World Cup) rugby must be able to attract excellent athletes. Presently, the best team in the world is the New Zealand women, who

decisively defeated all opposition at the 1998 Women's World Cup of Rugby. I observed the New Zealand women's team when they participated in the 1996 Canada Cup in Edmonton, Alberta. I attended their training sessions and it was apparent that they were an exceptional rugby squad, and excellence was built upon a foundation of quality athletes.<sup>10</sup> Data provided by the women give an indication that there are quality athletic performers moving to rugby but it is too early in the development of the women's game to make any specific analysis. What can be stated however, is that the desire to participate in sports is not the same thing as a desire to participate in team sport. It is clear that for the rugby playing women, team games are and have been an important part of their athletic experience.

### ***IS RUGBY SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT THAT OTHER TEAMS***

#### ***SPORTS YOU HAVE PLAYED?***

There is a vast array of replies to this question.

#### **Most Frequent Replies**

##### **Similar to rugby**

Team aspect	20
To soccer	17
Similar to rugby (sic)	7

### **Different than other sports**

Physical/contact aspects	43
Rugby is a different sport	29
Emphasis on team work	29
More social	13

Two patterns emerge in the 'similar' category: the team aspect, and a similarity to soccer. The comparison to soccer is an interesting one and the game does share some common aspects with rugby. Soccer is played on a spacious playing surface with a large contingent of players (eleven); it is a game that is in constant motion: the use of feet in the game and the awareness of space are all valid comparisons to rugby. Shoulder to shoulder contact is permitted in soccer but that is where the similarities end.

There is a very wide range of responses as to how rugby is 'different' than other sports. The most obvious is the physicality and contact of the game (43 replies ). There is no other comparable team sport in women's athletics and 29 respondents listed this fact. Once again the team work aspect of rugby was emphasized (29) by the women and this was discussed in previous questions. This is a question that elicited many varied comments from the players. This may be an indication that the women's game is in the process of transition. As more women take up the team sports such as soccer, hockey and rugby, it would be interesting to see how the responses change.

**Survey Question # 9: *What is the difference between rugby and other sports?***

Responses: 119 different replies.

This question has too many different responses (119) to analyze. Two replies do emerge in connection with the difference between rugby and other sports. The respondents indicated that rugby players are more confident (34 replies) and that the game of rugby is more aggressive (23 replies ). It is the belief of some respondents that the non-rugby players may be intimidated (6 responses) but you would have to survey a group of non-rugby athletes to gain a legitimate perspective. (Appendix C).

**Survey question # 10: *What has been the highlight of your rugby career?***

Responses: 66 different replies

**Most Frequent Replies**

<b><i>HIGHLIGHT</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
Provincial team/National provincial competition	51
National team-related items	25
Winning some type of championship	18
Playing in a championship	8
University-related	11

The women have indicated that they are performance driven and want to play at the highest level possible. Fifty-one respondents cited participation on a provincial team or involvement in the National championships as a highlight. Twenty-five responses mentioned

involvement with the Canadian national team and related international experiences, the apex of women's rugby. The involvement and winning of a championship regardless of the level of competition are a strong indicators that the women enjoy playing competitive rugby in an organized league structure.

**Survey Question # 11: *What are your personal goals in rugby?***

Responses: 58 different replies

**Most Frequent Replies**

<b><i>PERSONAL GOALS</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
Be a better player	48
Women's National Team	36
Coach	15
Enjoy/have fun	14
Play on the provincial side	13
Perform my best	12
Stay involved	12

The responses listed by the players are very general in nature and are referred to as 'dream goals' because they are what people want to have happen. A dream goal is one in which goals are not specific, not time related and not measurable. The fact that young women are eager to participate and play at the national team level (36) and provincial level (13) is information that could be utilized by the elite level coaches. It is also an indication that for

many women competitive sport is an attractive one. That so many players wanted to be better (48) is a goal linked to other factors, most notably the caliber of coaching available to the athlete. Many programs and administrators have insisted on “ female-only ” coaching for the women’s teams. Although there are important reasons for such a policy, it must be kept in mind, that for the skilled athlete who strives to become a better player, good coaching takes precedence over the gender of that coach. The most poignant comment was by a former national team player who plans to retire gracefully, after achieving so many firsts in the game. “I have been lucky in rugby, I was on the first Alberta team, the first Canadian team, first World Cup team, played in the first Can-Am game and the first Hong Kong sevens for women. Wow, lots to be proud of.”

**Survey Question # 12: *If you could change one aspect of rugby, what would it be?***

Responses: 62 different replies

**Most Frequent Replies**

<i>CHANGE THAT WOULD BE MADE</i>	<i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i>
Nothing	25
Attitude toward women’s rugby	20
Better qualified officials	19
Images of the game	11
More financial support/sponsor	10 + 4
Laws and related items	10
More qualified coaches	8



The fact that 25 respondents indicated they would not make any changes probably surprises some people. The indication is that some women do not view rugby as an ideological site for change or a means to empower women. Twenty respondents said they would like to change attitudes toward women's rugby, but other frequent answers dealt with the technical aspect of the game: coaching (8), better officials (19), laws (10) and a concern for financial aspects (14) of the game. Some academics consider sport as a venue to challenge male privilege ( Theberge 1985; Bryson 1990 ) and existing power structures. The data suggests that women in rugby do not view their sport as vehicle for political change. In an article on the experiences of elite women athletes, Young and White (1995:45-61) indicated that there may be uncertainties regarding sport and the emancipation of women. Like my respondents, the athletes in the Young and White data do not demonstrate a desire to challenge the sporting structures. One athlete said that sport was a personal experience and that she was in sports for herself and not to prove a point. The authors also mentioned that their respondents disliked the feminist label and they suspect that the women view sport as an individual experience and not politically empowering.

It is obvious that such attitudes have played a role in Hall's (1993) position concerning praxis labeling, etc. Certainly Blinde, Taub and Han's (1994) research with collegiate athletes contains some thought provoking comments. They discovered that athletes recognize the inequality in sport, but their awareness on other women's issues was limited. Interestingly, some of the inequalities mentioned by these collegiate athletes were similar to those cited by the rugby players: less promotion, less than ideal practice times, poor facilities and lack of importance. The responses of their athletes led Blinde, Taub and Han to the

conclusion that some athletes stressed their disassociation from feminism and some had an anti-feminist perspective. Women's sport does provide a positive role model for girls and women, the authors continue, but it does not appear to be a functional method of advancing or encouraging the overall causes of women. My experience based on involvement in women's rugby from high school to the national team is that the women's main focus is directed at securing an equal opportunity to play and participate in rugby. It does however, beg the question: are female athletes in team sports conscious of issues of gender? Are they more politically conservative than their non-athlete counter-parts, or is there an implicit cautious attitude because of the labeling that often accompanies women who are successful athletes? All these questions would be fruitful areas for future research.

If you add the 25 'no' responses with the technical replies (coaching-8, officials-19, laws-10) and greater financial aspect (14) you have a total of 76 responses. One might argue that the women are concerned about the development of the game that rugby is a not presently an ideological site for women's empowerment at this time. Certainly, such statistical information would be used by liberal feminists to forward their position about equality of opportunity. I however, would take a more cautious position. I believe that because women's rugby is in a state of rapid expansion at all levels, it will take time to gauge the impact the women will have on this former traditionally male game. The very fact that women are playing rugby in increasing numbers is an indication that women will no longer accept the sporting status quo.

**Survey Question # 13: *Are you involved in other aspects of rugby?***

**Most Frequent Replies**

<b><i>OTHER INVOLVEMENT</i></b>	<b><i>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>
No/Nothing	79
Coaching	59
Administrative*	47
Refereeing	6
Therapist/Trainer	4

**\*This total combines different types of administrative work**

Seventy-nine respondents indicated that they have no other involvement in rugby. This is not that surprising given that many of the respondents are younger women, playing at the high school and university level. They are new to rugby and their focus is, and should be on, learning the game and developing fundamental skills.

The fact that 59 respondents are involved in coaching is very positive. Most of the involvement is at the high school level and this is very important. This is the critical entry point for women's rugby. There is a shortage of quality coaching in both the women's and men's programs, which put the women in a double bind. First, there is inadequate coaching and as rugby expands, there is less likelihood that the quality coaches will focus on the women's program. The coaching shortage is exacerbated by financial considerations as well. Some large club sides in Canada are "parachuting" in foreign paid coaches and this payment for coaching places a new financial burden on rugby clubs and impedes the development of

Canadian coaches.<sup>11</sup> These imported coaches normally concentrate on men's rugby and the women are low on the priority list. The involvement of the women in coaching becomes even more important in the development and growth of women's game.

Forty-seven players indicated that they are involved in the administration of the game and the better part of this work is at the club level. It is vital that the women challenge for executive positions not only at the club level, but at the upper echelons of the rugby hierarchy (regional rugby union, provincial executive body, national executive body).

I believe the women should follow the "TPP" model (Tri-Power Position) in order to be at the heart of the decision-making process.<sup>12</sup> From my vantage point as a coach and administrator, there are three advantageous positions on any decision-making body: president, secretary and treasurer. The president usually has the final say in club affairs and a vital tie-breaking vote on executive decisions, is the club official who interacts with other sporting organizations and government agencies and thus is in the most influential position. The secretary is responsible for all club correspondence and controls the executive agenda. The addition, deletion and judicious placing of items on the committee agenda can affect important club decisions. The third important position in the TPP model is the treasurer who is responsible for the flow of club finances. In most rugby organizations only two people have the authority to disburse club funds, the president and the treasurer and these individuals control vital resources. The executive must work within the framework of the club constitution and is ultimately responsible to its members, but actions and influence of the top executive will affect the direction of the organization. In terms of longevity, the women are new to rugby. Many find themselves in situations where they have to negotiate and haggle

at the committee level with members who are experienced business people and may be biased against the women's program. The administrative side of rugby is often over looked, but this is where the decisions are made and the women have to be involved. As already stated, there are some very good examples of women in important executive positions: Anne Barry is the first woman to be president of the United States Rugby Football Union, Wanda Noury is the first woman to sit on the executive board of the French Rugby Union (Federation Française de Rugby) and in Canada, Joséé Lacasse, who plays for the women's national team, is one of the four new directors on the current Rugby Canada executive. The presence of women in the rugby club is so recent, with the emphasis on playing rather than administration, that the dreaded 'old boys network' still exists in some cases.

## **ENDNOTES**

1. I have combined several responses that deal with the physical nature of rugby and entitled the group physical aspects.
2. The two independent women's clubs in Canada are the Edmonton Rockers and the Ottawa Banshees. Two Alberta based women's teams (Coven and Renegades) had independent until they joined men's rugby clubs in 1997.
3. While Joan Barry (United States) is being referred to as the first female president of a national rugby union, Laura Jackson was president of the Edmonton Rugby Union from 1986-1988 and many people believe she was the first women to hold that position in rugby.
4. Scrummaging is a method of restarting the game after a violation of the laws of the game. Eight players from each team pack down against each other and compete for the ball which is introduced into the middle between the two opposing packs.
5. To date (1998), the International Rugby Union has not taken any action on the medical committee recommendations and there appears to be little support at this time. The 1998 Women's World Cup of Rugby used international rugby laws and not the U19 laws.
6. From 1991 to 1994 the Canadian national women's team was coached by Dr. Ian Humphries, a top flight front five specialist. He has played at the international level for Canada and is rated by many experts as an outstanding rugby technician. The skill and technique of the Canadian women in the scrum was exceptional and they were the only team that could match the pack of the 1994 World Cup champions from England.
7. Some of the women had a concern about under-seventeen and under-nineteen players. In Canada men and women start to play rugby at an older age than in major rugby playing nations, so this is a valid concern.
8. During my term as a coach with the Canadian women's national team (1991-1994) every player was on a fitness and strength program developed by Dr. Ian Humphries, who was the director of the Kinesiology High Performance laboratory at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, B.C.
9. The New Zealand men's rugby team, known as the 'All Blacks' because of the colour of their jerseys, are rated as the number one team in the world. The New Zealand

women recently won the 1998 Women's World Cup of Rugby in Netherlands. The Australian men are rated in the top three in the world and the women are ranked number five.

10. I located the site of the New Zealand team practice and observed three full training sessions prior to the competition. On all three occasions I was the only observer at the training. The other three teams in the Canada Cup rugby tournament for women (Canada-United States-France) stayed within five minutes driving time of the practice, but never attended.
11. For example, the four major clubs in the Edmonton Rugby Union (Clansmen, Druids, Nor'Westers, Lep-Tigers) all have paid coaches (3 Australians and 1 Englishman). The Edmonton Rugby Union men's team in the Canadian super league is coached by one of the Australians.
12. The TPP model is my own working theory and is based on 23 years observation in the educational system and close to 30 years in rugby, many at the executive level.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Attending the School of Graduate Studies at Queen's University has allowed me an opportunity to investigate and analyze one of Canada's fastest growing sports phenomenon, women's rugby. I was able to use my extensive background and valuable contacts to gather information from women throughout the country. The respondents, in my opinion, have made several crystal clear statements about their involvement in rugby, a game that until recently was played by males only. The women have a desire to be involved in a physically aggressive sport and rugby is their choice. They have no desire whatsoever to play a 'watered down' version of the game, they want to participate using the same laws (rules) as the men.

They have two major concerns; injury and the attitudes that exist in some quarters regarding women's participation in rugby. They are not particularly politically motivated, but often actions speak louder than words. The development of the women's game in the last ten years has been astounding and now the school systems are playing a major role in the expansion of the game in Canada.

When I began researching this topic, I was surprised to discover how little has been examined concerning women in contact sport and in particular, women who play rugby. It is hoped that the information provided in this thesis will be beneficial to scholars and to the rugby community. As a rugby coach who is vitally interested in the game, I end this thesis with some recommendations based on the data provided by the respondents.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Promotion**

In order to sustain the expansive growth in the women's game, Rugby Canada in conjunction with the ten provincial rugby unions, should develop a national promotion campaign for womens' rugby. The Alberta Rugby Union has produced a four minute video for the promotion of the sport and has made it available to all schools and rugby clubs. Rugby Canada should develop a similar project, but on a larger scale, because there is competition from all sports (including American universities) to recruit quality athletes.

### **Clarification of the Laws of Rugby**

The players have indicated the rugby laws (rules) are confusing. The provincial rugby unions should produce a short introductory booklet that could be distributed to new players. The governing bodies in rugby are forever changing and modifying the laws. They should only be changed after each World Cup and then left in place for the next three years. During this time, the changes should be evaluated to assess their usefulness.

### **Injury Prevention**

There is no data on injuries to women in rugby. This has to change. The rugby community must work with the sport medicine authorities and initiate research into this area. Sports injury data would assist in the identification of priority areas for injury prevention, would help provide safer playing conditions and could be used to educate players and coaches. My research data indicated that injury was a major concern to the respondents.

Negative publicity from rugby sport injuries could drive athletes away. Women have been playing rugby in Canada for over twenty years and there should be medical data available to all who are concerned with the game.

### **Officials**

Everyone in the rugby community should enthusiastically support the recruitment and training of new officials. The conscription of referees has not kept pace with the rapid expansion of players (women and men) and this is an area that must not be overlooked. I also recommend that officials be paid, traditionally rugby referees provided their services free of charge. There must be new incentives introduced to attract and encourage new people and payment seems an obvious one.

### **Coaching**

There must be a renewed effort to train and upgrade the coaching in Canada. Rugby Canada has been active in this area, but there is a shortage of qualified coaches. The very fact that rugby clubs are importing overseas paid coaches is not a positive sign. My respondents “ know ” that there is a shortage of good coaches; they want quality coaching and they know that the women’s programs are normally disadvantaged in this area. If we are to keep players (male and female) involved, there must be a serious effort to train coaches.

## **Equal Opportunity**

A determined effort should be made to insure that women in rugby have an equal opportunity to participate and play. They must have access to the same coaching, facilities, officiating and equipment as their male counter-parts. This is the responsibility not only of the rugby unions, but of each individual club in Canada. There can be no second class citizens in rugby. The women will not tolerate it and the sport requires it.

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A ETHICS REVIEW**  
**SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**  
**QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY**

**ETHICS REVIEW PROCEDURE**

**STAGE 1: PRELIMINARY REVIEW FORM**

Name of Researcher: Hart Cantelon, Ph.D./John O'Hanley, M.A. Candidate

Name of Faculty Supervisor (if applicant is a student): H. Cantelon

Title and Purpose of Project: Social Culture (Habitus) of Women's Rugby

Brief Description of Project: To ascertain as accurately as possible. the culture of women's rugby.

Description and Selection of Subjects: Current players playing the game at the club, university and national levels in Canada and abroad

Nature of Tests Employed: Open-ended questionnaire

**Question Check List:**

	YES	NO	N/A
1. Is there any physical risk expected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is there likely any breach in confidentiality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the study involve deception of the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is there any subject (physical or psychological) discomfort, embarrassment, or harassment expected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Does the study involve captive or disadvantaged groups, such as prisoners or the mentally handicapped?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Does the study involve subjects for whom vicarious consent is needed, i.e. experiments on children with the consent of parents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Does the study involve experimenters who are in a position to unduly influence subjects to participate, such as experiments by professors involving students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the study involve a risk to the safety and well-being of the investigator and/or research assistants in regard to possible dangerous behaviour on behalf of the subjects (i.e. prisoners, patients, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DATE: 12/08/97 SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER: \_\_\_\_\_

(AND SUPERVISOR IF A GRADUATE STUDENT): \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE OF DIRECTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** A proposed consent form must be attached and must include: (1) a description of the purpose of the study and its value; (2) a clear description of any risks involved; (3) what rights the subject is giving the investigator, i.e. the nature of the tasks which the subject will be required to perform; (4) the rights of the subject to discuss any matter of concern in the first instance, with the principal investigator, and if this is not deemed satisfactory, with the Director of the School. In the case of questionnaires administered to adults where the answer to all the above questions is 'NO' or 'N/A', a simple statement of acknowledgement on the part of the respondent, which ensures confidentiality, may be substituted for a regular consent form.



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SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Queen's University  
Kingston, Canada  
K7L 3N6

**August 12, 1997**

**To Whom It May Concern:**

**John O'Hanley is enrolled in the graduate program in the School of Physical and Health Education, Queen's University. As part of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree, Mr. O'Hanley is collecting data on the sport of women's rugby.**

**Your cooperation in completing the short questionnaire is greatly appreciated. All information will remain confidential and you may withdraw from the research at any time.**

**Thank you for your participation in this study. It will provide valuable information on what is one of the fastest growing sports among girls and women in Canada.**

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hart Cantelon".

**Hart Cantelon, Ph.D.**

**Associate Professor**

**School of PHE/Department of Sociology**

## APPENDIX- B

### WOMEN'S RUGBY QUESTIONNAIRE

#### BACKGROUND DATA

Present club \_\_\_\_\_ Position played \_\_\_\_\_

Age: Present age \_\_\_\_\_ Age when you started to play \_\_\_\_\_

Total years played \_\_\_\_\_

Level played: (circle one or more )

Club rugby      Union rep rugby      Provincial: Senior women U17 U19

National team: How many 'Caps' do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### QUESTION SECTION (please be specific )

1. Why did you start to play rugby?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. In your opinion, what are the positive aspects of rugby?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What obstacles did you encounter when you first started to play rugby ?

\_\_\_\_\_



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4. What are some of the negative aspects of rugby?

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5. Should the "Laws" of rugby be changed so there would be less physical contact in the women's game ? (or remain the same for all players)

---

---

---

6. Women's rugby is one of the fastest growing sports in the country. Why do you believe this is happening?

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7. The popularity of women's rugby is growing throughout the world. Would you consider living and playing in another country ? Where ? 7b. Have you already played rugby in another country?

---

---

---

8. Have you played other team sports ? Is rugby similar or different than the other team sports you have participated in?

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9. In your opinion, what is the difference between women who play rugby and those who do not ?

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10. What has been the 'high light 'of your rugby career?

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11. What are your personal goals in rugby ?

---

---

---

12. If you could change one aspect of rugby, what would it be ?

---

---

---

13. Are you involved in other aspects of rugby besides playing ? (coach-admin-manager)

---

---

---

**Thank You !**

## **APPENDIX-C RAW DATA**

### **SURVEY QUESTION # 1 WHY DID YOU START TO PLAY RUGBY ?**

**46 different replies.**

couldn't play football 4

interested in contact sport 6

play a sport where I could tackle 1                      Total 46 physical aspects

aggressive sport 13

physically demanding 7

physical contact 12

I like rough sports 1

I wanted to hit guys and make them realize we are not cream puffs 1

I wanted to see if I could handle the sport 1

social sport 1

meet new people 5

friendship 1

learn new skills 1

needed players 2

friends played 24

family influence 13

curious 6

everyone has a chance to play 1

play some thing new 45

dissatisfied with other sports 6

needed something to do 1

interesting 13

drink beer 1

mental thing 1

meet men 1

watched the guys play 1

challenge 7

dynamic game 4

fitness 12

competition !

fun to play 15

play same rules as men 1

no opportunity to play 3

started at university 2

offered at high school 15

played touch as a kid 1

started at 5:00 2

basketball coach suggested I try 1

no other sport like it for females 1

I could use my size - it is a positive experience 1

inspired by high school coach 1

wanted to play team sport 7

wanted to play a British sport 1

drinking with the men and decided to play 1

wanted to play a sport that didn't require an athlete 1

loved the complexity of the game 1

### **MOST FREQUENT RESPONSES**

physical aspects 46

play something new 45

friends played 17

offered at high school 17

fun to play 15

family influence 13

interesting sport 13

fitness 12

challenge 7

## **SURVEY QUESTION # 2 WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF RUGBY?**

**Most players had more than one answer to the survey question.**

intensity 2

be aggressive 15

controlled aggression 1

contact sport 18

degree of aggression 2

physical demands of the game 27

fitness 47

conditioning 1

tackling 1

demanding sport 3

competitive 7

prove we can be aggressive 1

tough game 3

contact not malicious

attitude of the game 1

different types of people on the team 1

social aspects 24

meet people 17

social sport 2

friendship 28

fun with a group of women 1

play hard still be friends 1

travel 6

fun 8

interaction between teams 1

good mix of women

team play 59

rely on team-mates 1

put your ass on the line for team-mates 1

team spirit 9

tight knit group 1

co-operation 1

work as a unit 2

team bonding 6

trust 1

feel of unity 1

skill development 8

learning the game 2

push to the limit 1

dynamic/ great game 9

fast growing sport 2

everyone accepted 2

position for everyone 5

position for all types of bodies and size 18

game not changed or adapted for women 1

new people encouraged to play 1

open minded sport 1

builds self confidence 12

builds self esteem 4

enthusiasm 1

mental challenge 13

play your best 1

I control my success 1

commitment to the game 1

challenge 5

respect for all players 1

tactics 2

thinking game 4

discipline of training 3

unconventional sport 1

positive outlook 1



sportsmanship 4

how you play the game 1

goal orientated 1

stress /anger relief 7

teaches heart and desire 1

amazing Scottish coach 1

very little equipment 1

### **MOST FREQUENT RESPONSES**

team play                       $59 + (1 + 1 + 1 + 2) = 64$

fitness                         47

friendship                    28

physical demands          27

social aspects               24

aggression                    $15 + (1 + 2 + 1) = 19$

contact sport                18

meet people                 17

position for all body types and shapes  $18 + (5) = 23$

mental challenge            13

**SURVEY QUESTION # 3 WHAT OBSTACLES DID YOU ENCOUNTER WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED TO PLAY RUGBY ?**

**78 different replies, many players had more than one comment.**

none 6

not many 3

smooth transition 1

brick wall against women playing rugby 1

progress, but long way to go 1

women shouldn't play contact sport 9

not appropriate for women 1

stereotypical image by media 1

women who play are gay 8

rep as lesbian sport, it didn't bother me, but could be an obstacle to sponsorship 1

perceptions of female rugby players 1

gender barrier 1

no support from parents 14

my mother cried when she heard I started to play rugby and cried again when she discovered

I played a position called 'hooker'. 1

no support 2

no support from husband, I eventually left him 1

women's rugby not real rugby 2

attitude of men re: women's rugby 22

women's rugby called bitch rugby 1-changed when I wrote a letter to the local newspaper.

not taken seriously 3

sport director at university -no support for women's rugby 1

too rough for women 2

no logistic support 2

Accent crowd / old boys - did not like women playing rugby 5

notion that women's rugby is unfeminine 4

stereotype image-big beer drinking women 1

lack of coaches 15

quality referees 4

no training staff 1

injuries 4

bruises 1

conflict with other sports 4

problems with high school team 1

getting rugby into schools 1

cold weather 1

no video resources for beginners 1

practice time 2

no other female teams to play 1

learning to drink 1  
get past the novelty stage 1  
negativity from other women's teams 1  
no recognition for rugby in North America 1  
no financial support 7  
travel problems 3  
I have not played enough 1  
what position to play 3  
team problems 1  
lack of players 2  
'guts' to go to the first practices 1  
meet strange people 1  
afraid to hurt people when I hit them, I kept apologizing 1  
size to small 9  
age 2  
rules / laws 36  
learning the game 22  
inexperienced 1  
lacked fitness 10  
club clique 1  
lack of competition 1  
motivate myself 1

no U17 team for women 1

didn't look up field and see play evolve 1

physical challenge 2

get used to physical contact 3

fear of making a tackle with full force 1

fear of being hit 1

how to tackle 1

thinking it was dangerous 1

intimidated by bigger players 4

not enough games 2

lack of commitment by team-mates 3

need to build confidence 1

I didn't feel part of the team 1

I went through 'hell' because I was a good player 1

think to pass backwards 3

passing skills 1

no focus on basic skills early on 1

lack of varsity status

difficulty becoming team player, played individual sports 1

## **MOST FREQUENT REPLIES**

attitudes toward women playing rugby (grouped comments )	86
understanding the rules / laws of the game	36
learning the game	22
inexperienced	1
lack of coaching	15
physicality of the game	13
lack of fitness	10
size	9

#### **SURVEY QUESTION # 4 WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF RUGBY?**

**Over 60 different replies, many players had several comments.**

old boys club 2

men telling women not to play 2

negative connotation of women playing rugby 4

no respect 8

attitude of men 7

need equal treatment 4

treated second best 2

stigma of being aggressive 1

less priority than men's teams 2

uneven distribution of fields, time, jerseys 4

no women's involvement in decisions 1

no recognition 1

little faith in women's rugby 2

behavioral expectations for women 1

Total in admin-group 46

negative image (being butch) 5

drinking / alcohol 16

breaking the rules 1

dirty play 10

fighting 3

dangerous sport ( viewed by others) 1

that you have to be mean to play 1

that you have to be big to play 3

rugby players are stupid / psychopaths 1

not an athlete 1

injuries / potential for injury 55

sore body 1

lack of commitment at the club level 3

not enough games 3

cold weather 3

starts to late in the year 1

played in bad conditions 1

not enough referee's for women's rugby 3

do not get the better ref's 9

patronizing referees 3

politics in rugby 8

should be able to wear scrum caps 1

funds / no money \$\$\$ 12

no funding for national team 1

need sponsor 1

disorganization at club level 1



not all players get to play 1

lack of coaches 11

coaches who lack knowledge 3

safety 1

no strength training 1

no school program 1

no university program 1

little opportunity to play at young age 1

no PR for rugby ( press or TV ) 3

bad press 1

stereotypical view by press 1

bingo 1

women who play just to pick up men 1

time consuming 7

*none so far* 11

admin. is a thankless job 1

to many rules 2

teach women to be less aggressive 1

bitchy women 1

lack of sportsmanship 1

backs get all the ball, forwards should get the ball more 1

men have U19 team at the Canada Games, but no women's teams 1

## **MOST FREQUENT REPLIES**

injuries	55
combined treatment of women in rugby	
lack of equality and related	46 + 1 = 47
drinking	16
lack of coaches or skilled coaches	14
funding /money	13
referee concerns	13
dirty play / fighting	13
no negatives	11
politics of rugby	8
time commitment	7

**SURVEY QUESTION # 5 SHOULD THE “LAWS” OF RUGBY BE CHANGED SO  
THERE WOULD BE LESS PHYSICAL CONTACT IN THE WOMEN’S GAME ?  
(OR REMAIN THE SAME FOR ALL PLAYERS )**

**Not one player in the 162 surveyed wanted changes regarding less physical contact for women!**

Listed below are all the individual replies, there are some very interesting and thoughtful comments.

no understand the risk

no (question scratched out )

same for all

no, less contact more injuries

same, key is proper training

no, contact attracts a lot of players

no, that is why we play

same for all

same for all, women don't get hurt any more than men

same for all

same, it's women vs women

no, why change it won't be rugby. It is a great challenge because of the contact.

no fucking way ! (in very large letters)

no, no more injuries than men

absolutely not, same for all

same, game would be less extreme

same, rugby is rugby

absolutely not !

no ! Touch league for those who do not want contact.

same

no !

no way, no change it is the game

same laws

no, I have read studies that show more injuries in men's rugby. (blatantly sexist and ignorant  
)

absolutely not

no ! it would belittle the sport (tighter calls on rule breakers )

same

no, women play a different style

same

no

no, same for all

absolutely not !

no, if I wanted to play non-contact I would play baseball or soccer

no way, same for all

no, contact is the attraction. No contact for U15 or a touch league

nothing should change

no way

no, changes for U19/U17 for safety reasons

no, change would be degrading for women

no ! stereotypical type of question

no, it will diminish the women's efforts to play contact sport

no, definitely no change

no, it's women vs women

no, women vs women there is equality among the women

no, same for male and female

remain the same for all

if contact disappears in the women's game I will bust who ever's ass is responsible for it.

same, difference in men and women (size)

never ! ( in very large letters )

no, but use scrum caps

no, contact draws in new players

no, get off the field if you can't handle it-if they change it will be complete bullshit is an aggressive sport (two line answer )

no way, we are not playing against men

no, proper coaching and contact is not dangerous

no, mass = force x acceleration

can't answer the question it is to demeaning to women

no, no changes

what a joke ! We are women not aliens !

definitely not, removing contact would be patronizing and reverse efforts of women to excel at the sport (two line answer )

no (in two inch letters )

remain the same

no

no

no way !

remain the same for all players

remain the same

definitely not, I like the rule for U19 no contact scrums

remain the same, women play because of the contact, it isn't tennis you know !

I don't really think so ! (full paragraph on the topic)

no, same for all, contact is what makes it fun

no, why should there be an exception ?

definitely not, no special laws for women, contact makes the game. We would be lowered to an inferior level (two line answer )

no, same for all

no, contact is one of the best part and makes the game stand out from other sports for women

for what conceivable reason would they change ? They are idiots !

no, 1 metre push reduces the effectiveness of the pack. It is frustrating !

not at all

no, same for all

same for all, games that modify the rules take away competitiveness for women. If I wanted less contact I would play touch football or touch rugby (two line answer )

no, join the tennis team if you don't like contact

remain the same

remain the same

no way !

no

no, we can take ! Change the rules for men.

no, respect the laws there is less chance of injury

no, we are not inferior or whimper

It would complete ludicrousnes (sic), it wouldn't be rugby

no, contact educes anger, take it out on the other team

same for all

no, women are capable of playing full contact

no, why should the women's game be different

same, if women want equality in every aspect of life they need the same 'opportunity' as men

same for all

ridiculous, we are intelligent and aggressive

same, it wouldn't be rugby without contact

game is fine the way it is

equality should be maintained. Women use more strategy .

no, same laws, we can handle contact

no, it wouldn't be rugby

no, emphasis on safe tackling and learning how to play

same, girls contacting girls

question is " **very offensive**" it wouldn't be rugby. If you can't handle the contact play soccer

or don't play sport at all (two line answer )

absolutely not

no, that would be sexist-we can handle it !

absolutely not !

no !

stay the same

no, take out the contact and it is not the same

remain the same

what ?

remain the same (in very large letters )

no

no

remain the same

remain the same



remain the same

no !

tough call, changing the rules would change the game

no, remain the same

remain the same

remain the same

no, if you can't handle (contact) don't play

no, remain the same

no, remain the same

remain the same, everyone is equal

stay the same

no, contact is part of the game

no, laws are fine

no

no, no need to change the laws

remain the same

remain the same

definitely not, like the physical challenge-not all sports are equal to men

great the way it is

no reason to change

remain the same

remain the same

remain the same, play right and you won't get hurt

no, that is the point of rugby-it is physical

rules fine, it is not that violent

remain the same

no, rugby isn't rugby without contact

hell no ! Women can be just as tough as men

no, call more penalties and use the sin bin     \*(some rugby federations send players off  
the field for short time durations, this is  
called the sin-bin )

no (large letters )

no, remain the same

remain the same

remain the same

remain the same

not really

? (this was the reply )

definitely not, it is a physical contact sport

remain the same

absolutely not ! Women have been playing rugby for 30 years. Remove the contact and you  
may be injured by 'accidental' contact or dirty retaliation. Have you checked out the stick  
work in women's "non-contact" hockey lately ? (Three line answer )

**SURVEY QUESTION # 6    WOMEN'S RUGBY IS ONE OF THE FASTEST  
GROWING SPORTS IN THE COUNTRY. WHY DO BELIEVE THIS IS  
HAPPENING?**

**44 different replies to the question.**

physical contact attracts athletes    18

never been a female sport that allowed women to be involved in contact    1

release aggression    1

demand to play an aggressive sport    1

women can play aggressive    13

intensity of the game    1

women are not satisfied with traditional sport    1

do not want to sit on the sideline and look pretty    1

growing interest in women's sport    1

able to do something they have not been allowed to do    1

equal right to play    1

women believe they can do what ever men do    1

women more confident    1

unique opportunity    1

breaking barriers    1

new challenge for women 2

new opportunities for women 2  
introduction at the high school level 5  
anyone can play 17  
all shapes and sizes can play 8  
more women aware of rugby now 3  
publicity and press have increased 1  
some great ambassadors in the game 1  
exciting game 5  
something new 6  
new experience 1  
totally different 2  
more interesting than other sports 1  
strong sense of club 1  
mental challenge 1  
fitness 4  
rugby open-minded in B.C.  
word of mouth by other athletes  
teamwork 1  
social sport 4  
great people in rugby 1  
friendship 1  
cheap to play 1

little equipment 1

fast game 1

no cuts 1

love to play 1

commitment from players willing to coach younger players 1

it was stifled before 1

### **MOST FREQUENT REPLIES**

physical / aggressive aspects	35
anyone can play	17
all shapes and sizes can play	7
new sport /opportunity to play-and related others	10+13= 23
introduction at the high school level	5
exciting sport	6

**SURVEY QUESTION # 7 THE POPULARITY OF WOMEN'S RUGBY IS GROWING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WOULD YOU CONSIDER LIVING AND PLAYING IN ANOTHER COUNTRY? WHERE? # 7B. HAVE YOU ALREADY PLAYED RUGBY IN ANOTHER COUNTRY?**

no 18

no, because of career 1

no, because of family 1

not at this time 1

I wouldn't move just to play rugby 6

yes 128

yes, if I was supported 2

yes, I need a job 1

yes , if I was paid 4

yes, not to play-be involved in other aspects of rugby 1

retiring 2

**Where would you like to play?**

Australia 44

New Zealand 43

anywhere 25

England 19

Europe 10

Scotland 4

United States 4

Ireland 3

Wales 1

Argentina 1

Italy 1

South Africa 2 (Editor's note-there is only touch rugby for women in South Africa )

British Columbia (province in Canada )

**Have you played rugby in another country?**

United States 9

New Zealand 2

Australia 5

Cook Islands 1

Netherlands 3

France 2

Europe 2

**SURVEY QUESTION # 8 HAVE YOU PLAYED OTHER TEAM SPORTS? IS RUGBY SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT THAN THE OTHER TEAM SPORTS YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN?**

Have you played other team sports ? 162 possible replies.

No, I have not played other team sports 8

Yes, I have played other team sports 57

(didn't mention specific sports played, just replied yes )

Specific number of sports mentioned. These numbers do not include the 57 mentioned in 'yes'.

one (1) sport 18

two (2) sports 27

three (3) sports 20

four (4) or more 17

**SIMILAR**

similar 7

to boxing 1

to soccer 17 (kicking-space awareness-teamwork )

to water polo 1

to team handball 1

to football-the passing 1



to broomball-physical contact 1  
to basketball, but more aggressive 2  
to basketball, in some aspects 3  
team aspect 20  
team bonding 2  
friendships 3  
intensity 1  
yes, but not as intense 1  
be fit 2  
dedication 2  
ball movement 1  
aggressive in nature 1  
skills are transferable 3  
skills 1  
communication and effort essential 3  
running 3  
physical demands 2  
fun 1  
intellectual 1

## **DIFFERENT THAN OTHER SPORTS**

more aggressive 2

extreme sport 1

physical contact 12

physical aspects 19

more violent 1

rough 1

personal and intense due to contact 1

first sport coaches didn't have to tell me to settle down 1

more intense 3

different intensity 1

more demanding 1

it is a different game 28

different attitude 1

nothing like I played before 1

so many players on the field 3

emphasis on team work and co-operation 21

close as a team 1

more mutual respect 1

you really stick together in rugby 3

sense of team 3

way better friendship and respect for each other 1

played other sports, they all 'suck' 1

better atmosphere 2

best team sport 1

rugby brings women from so many factions together 1

no snotty attitudes 1

support one another 1

good interaction between veterans and 1<sup>st</sup> year players 1

no 'cattyness' in the sport 2

not only team-mates but friends 3

not in direct competition with team-mates 1

one person can't win a game 1

rugby community- both female and male have common ground 1

rugby is a way of life 1

rugby is a culture 1

rugby is off the field too 2

rugby team closer off the field 1

more social 13

everyone gets a chance to play 2

all body types can play 2

position for everyone 2

attracts diverse people 1

multi-skill sport 7

unique skills 1

challenge 2

more fun 3

rugby is less talking and more work 1

be versatile 1

more self-reliant 1

put everything on the line 1

put everything I have into the game and feel so much pride 1

sportsmanship 1

balance between competitive and social aspects 1

team divided into backs and forwards 1

in rugby everything is better 1

tour more 1

game left on the field 1

socialize with the opposition 3

other sports foster distension between teams 1

basketball has a higher profile 1

more running 1

better around sport 1

my personal love of the game 1

mentally demanding 1

competitive 1  
it demands concentration and smarts 1  
rugby not as close 1  
each team is different 1  
encourages members to play longer 1  
other sports have 'hot dogs' 1  
only see soccer team-mates once a week 1  
little politics 1

## **MOST FREQUENT REPLIES**

### **Similar to rugby**

team aspect 20  
to soccer 17  
similar 7

### **Different than rugby**

physical /contact & related 43  
different sport 29  
emphasis on teamwork 29  
more social 13

## **RUGBY SURVEY QUESTION # 9 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RUGBY AND OTHER SPORTS?**

**119 different replies, many players had several comments.**

**There were numerous single replies to the question.**

**R= Rugby player      N= Not a rugby player**

N-missing out on physical contact    1

N-think rugby is to aggressive    1

N-fear of contact    2

N-are wimps    1

N-are timid    3

N- are intimidated    4

N- not interested    2

N-should try rugby    1

N-fear of appearing unfeminine    1

N-think we are overly aggressive    1

N-can be aggressive without contact    1

N- have strengths in other areas

N- lazy / out of shape    1

N-don't want to play

club level no difference 1  
nothing 4  
same 1  
none, they have not played 6  
not that much difference 10  
no difference, do not know the game exists 2  
can' generalize about this question 3  
similar to some sports 1  
it is a preference 1  
depends on who they are 1  
you either love it or hate it (rugby ) 1  
I don't know 2  
R- has physical aspect 9  
R -more confident 34  
R-assertive 6  
R-are more forceful 2  
R-more self esteem 4  
R-more aggressive 23  
R-have more drive 1  
R-more active 2  
R-competitive 1  
R- fitter 1

R- handle pain 2

R-more contact in rugby 2

R- not afraid of contact 2

R-stronger (physical and mental) 3

R-stronger 6

R mentally tough 4

R-tougher- handle pain 1

R- tougher 10

R-braver 2

R-more committed 2

R-work well with each other 1

R-team bonding 1

R-open minded 1

R- no competition with themselves 1

R- know what they want 1

R-friendship 4

R-more sociable 5

R-not afraid to show aggression 2

R-don't degrade themselves 1

R- are unselfish 1

R- strong character 1

R- are not wimps 2



R-are a certain type 1

R-like to socialize

R- are out going 6

R- think they indestructible 1

R- are out spoken 3

R- accept all body types 1

R- have theory about more testosterone 1

R-not afraid of a new challenge 5

R- are dedicated 2

R-are not lesbian 1

R-not up tight 1

R-place for everyone 1

only difference- bruises 1

they don't, we do 1

R-less constricted by fear 1

those who fear, those who don't 1

R- better able to cope with stress/ crisis 1

girls who play more physical sports are not afraid 1

R-we train for hours, others can't 1

R-like to live on the edge 1

R- determined to play what is considered a brutal sport 1

R-are cooler 2

R-more comfortable with their bodies 1

R- less girly-girly 1

R-hard play accepted and respected 1

R-thick skinned 1

R- are down to earth 3

R-drink more 2

R-exposed to more pain 2

R-carry a rugby attitude 3

R-less consideration about appearance 1

R-higher up (rep) more motivation 1

R-injuries 1

R- not afraid of hard work 1

R-are not 'bimbos' 1

R- not worried about how people view them 1

R- not limited by societies notion of women as non-physical beings 1

R- more comfortable with ourselves 1

R- more open to discussion 1

R- not intimidated as easy as NR 1

R- sports orientated 1

R- give every thing they got 1

R- sheer bliss of sport (rugby), NR don't have concept of sport 1

R- not afraid to get down and mean 1

R- not afraid to get dirty 1

R-says bring it on ! 1

R- more macho 1

R- come from various backgrounds 1

R-are less stressed 1

R- do not understand the meaning of ‘ I can’t do it ‘ 1

R- excellent work ethic 1

R- can handle endurance others can’t 1

R- camaraderie similar to men 1

R- have guts 2

R- not afraid to get hurt to win 1

R- courage to try tough sport 1

R- take more risks 1

R- more discipline 1

R-will improve your social skills 1

R- different way to express our selves 1

R-different ways to spend our free time 1

## **SURVEY QUESTION # 10 WHAT HAS BEEN THE 'HIGH LIGHT' OF YOUR RUGBY CAREER?**

\*note-one group of players are at the high school level and are new to the game of rugby and have limited experience.

### **High lights !**

#### 66 different replies.

playing on Canadian National team 10  
playing in the World Cup (with National team ) 4  
playing in the 1996 Canada Cup (with National team ) 2  
playing for Canada in the Hong Kong sevens for women 2  
singing the national anthem when I played for Canada 1  
playing of the national anthem before an international game (player) 1  
training with the National team 1  
playing for Canada and scoring three tries 1  
received recognition from National team 1  
played an exhibition game against the National 1  
playing with Stephanie White at the Hong Kong 7's -great captain 1

participating in the EADP camp 5 (Elite athlete development program )  
 being the captain of the EADP team that played team Canada 1  
 playing rugby on the Provincial team 31 (Senior and U19 teams )  
 winning the Canadian National Championships 10  
 captain of my Provincial team 1  
 participating in the Canadian National Championships 7  
 scoring a try at the national championships 1  
 try out for the provincial team 1  
 captain of my team 1  
 captain on a rugby tour  
 MVP in high school 2  
 all-star recognition 1  
 winning MVP in 7's tournament 1  
 played in all-star game 1  
 winning a high school championship 2  
 playing in a high school championship 8  
 won city high school championship as coach 1  
 winning a University championship 3  
 playing at university 8  
 winning a club championship 1  
 playing for Richmond (London, England ) in the European club championship and winning  
 1

playing in an intercity 'rep' match 2

playing in the New York 7's tournament 1

playing with my sister 1

finding the sport

playing rugby 6

all of it 1

scoring my first try 4

team in the playoffs 1

team I played with improved 1

meeting interesting people 2

travel 3

playing in New Zealand 1

tour to Australia 1

tour to Scotland 1

playing against Australia National team 1

kicking for my team 1

the team growth and improvement 1

coaching 2

playing for my coach 1

playing first grade rugby 1

watching new player develop 1

playing for a club team 3

playing my best 4  
 played well in 7's tournament 1  
 contributions to the game 1  
 playing on a team with men 1  
 great people I have met 3  
 friends in rugby 6  
 respected by my team-mates 1  
 scored an exceptional try 1  
 game saving tackle 1  
 recovered from a serious injury to play again 1  
 won coaches award 1  
 played well as a unit 1

## **MOST FREQUENT REPLIES**

national team related	25
provincial team / national championships	51
university related	11

**SURVEY QUESTION # 11 WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL GOALS IN  
RUGBY?**

58 different replies, many players had more than one goal.

play for the National team 26  
play on the World Cup team 9  
captain the Canadian team 1  
play on Canadian 7's team 1  
most capped player in Canada 1  
be the best player in the world 2  
go to the EADP camp 1-(Elite player development camp)  
play for the Provincial team 13  
play on the rep team 1  
play club rugby 3  
win a club championship 4  
play overseas 7  
play at the highest level possible 7  
win a National Championship 2  
do well at the National Championships 1  
be a team player 4



play as long as I can 16

play until I am forty 1

I want to know I gave my best 2

perform / play my best 12

enjoy /have fun 14

be a better player 48

coach 14

be a paid coach 1

be a referee 4

be involved in administration 1

be fit or fitter 9

maintain friendships 1

learn to tackle 1

better thrower 1

be tough 1

learn to drop kick 1

score a try 2

avoid injury 2

be aggressive 2

be confident 2

win a high school championship as a coach 1

play other positions 4

succeed in my personal goals 1

release energy 1

learn the rules 1

not sure 1

retire 2

retire without injury 1

retire gracefully- been lucky in rugby -I was on the 1<sup>st</sup> Alberta team, 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian team, 1<sup>st</sup> World Cup team, 1<sup>st</sup> Can-Am team, 1<sup>st</sup> Hong Kong sevens for women. Wow lots of firsts to be proud of. ( this is a three line answer )

educate other people about rugby 1

develop rugby for girls 1

keep rugby going in Saskatchewan 1

get other women involved in rugby 1

help at the grass-roots level 1

develop a rugby touch league (I have had 2 knee injuries )

give back to the rugby community 2

stay involved in rugby 1

assume a leadership role 1

be a good role model 1

remembered as a good player 1

respected by team-mates and rugby community 1

## **MOST FREQUENT REPLIES**

be a better player	48
National team related	36
enjoy /have fun	14
Coach	14 + 1 paid to coach
play on the provincial team	13
perform to my best	12
stay involved	12
improve specific skills	3

**SURVEY QUESTION # 12 IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE ASPECT OF  
RUGBY WHAT WOULD IT BE ?**

62 different replies, many players had more than one suggestion.

nothing 25

wear scrum caps 1

reduce the size of the cleats 1

bigger ball 1

change shorts 1

change boost rule, hold on shoulder 1

more points for a try 1

eliminate 'knock-on' rule

allow forward pass 1

rules 1

substitution rule 1

more singing 1

less pressure to drink beer 1

social side 1

recognition for whole team when some one scores 1

more 7-side rugby 1

clean up dirty play 6

more penalties for bad tackling 1  
 better quality of officials (referees ) 19  
 more qualified coaches 8  
 play on main fields 3  
 politics in rugby 2  
 selection process for National team 1  
 injuries 1  
 just play 1  
 length of game in the U19 competition 1  
 more competition 1  
 longer season 1  
 hurt less the next day 1  
 develop a positive image for rugby 1  
 image of rugby 4  
 image of women's rugby 3  
 stereotypical image-gays play rugby 1  
 bad press from men's rugby 1  
 women's rugby on television 1  
 a global attitude 1

more financial support 8  
 more financial support for provincial players 2

find sponsors 4

publicity 2

more mutual respect 2

equal support for men and women 2

'Old Boy' attitude regarding women's rugby 1

change attitude towards women's rugby 3

respect for women's rugby 8

no support from men's team 1

too rough for women

same opportunity as men 1

equal funding 1

introduce rugby into grade school 1

get as many girls as possible involved in rugby 2

increase awareness of rugby in community 1

develop rugby in a cultural sense 1

women's rugby become more popular 1

more people involved 1

more teams 1

education in the sport 1

stop all the Law / rule changes 3

lack of recognition at the high school level 1

more international recognition 1

don't know

## **MOST FREQUENT REPLIES**

nothing	25
attitudes towards women's rugby	20
better qualified officials (referees)	18
image of the game	11
more financial support	8+ 2= 10
find sponsor	4
laws / rules related items	10
more qualified coaches	8
development of the game	9
clean up dirty play	6

**SURVEY QUESTION # 13 ARE YOU INVOLVED IN OTHER ASPECTS OF  
RUGBY?**

no / nothing 79

coaching 59

administrative position 24

social director 4

President 5

Union board 2

Rugby Canada 1

manager 'rep' team 4

manager men's 'rep' team 1

fund raising 6

Total for admin-type involvement-47

refereeing 6

help out 1

therapist /trainer 4

**Most Frequent Replies**

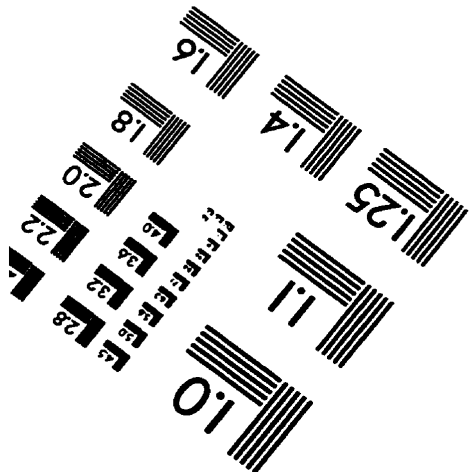
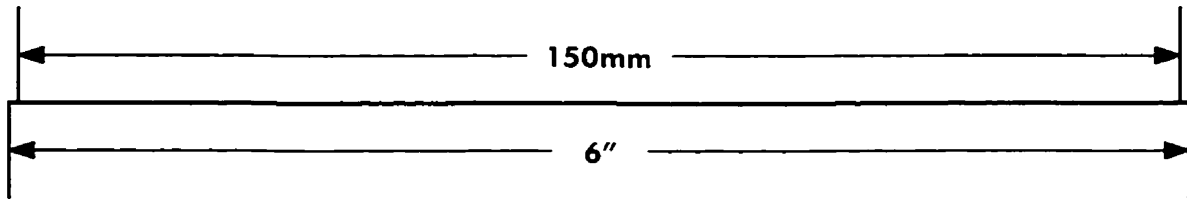
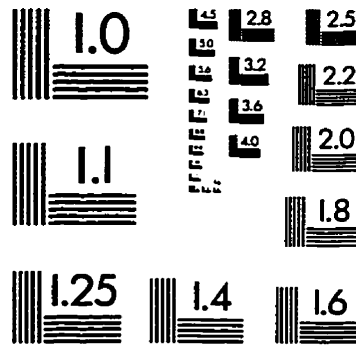
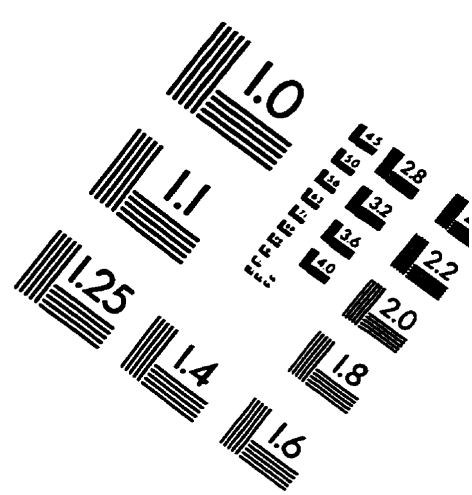
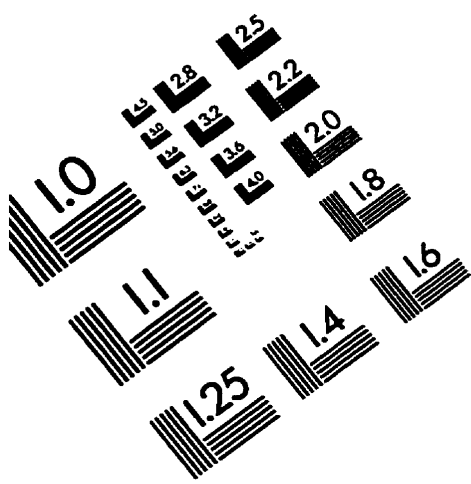
No / nothing 79

coaching 59

Admin-work (total ) 47



# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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