

NZ Rugby Football Union MCH, 2020u

16 April 1892

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As rugby grew in popularity in New Zealand, it became necessary to standardise the administration of the game in the colony. Despite some opposition, a New Zealand Rugby Football Union was founded in Wellington on 16 April 1892.

During the 1880s there had been many squabbles about fixtures, scoring values, and the interpretation of the laws of the game. A supreme authority along the lines of the (English) Rugby Football Union was needed to give guidance and pass judgment on such matters. Visiting teams also found it awkward to have to deal separately with local unions rather than an overall governing body.

Suggestions for a New Zealand union gained little momentum until 1891, when E.D. Hoben, the secretary of the Hawke's Bay union, toured the country promoting the idea. He received enough support to convene a meeting in Wellington in November at which a constitution was drafted for examination by the unions. Delegates representing the Auckland, Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, Manawatū, Wairarapa, Wellington, Otago and Canterbury unions met again in Wellington on 16 April 1892. Poverty Bay, Bush, Nelson, Marlborough and South Canterbury did not send representatives but offered their support.

The powerful Otago and Canterbury unions did not initially join the NZRFU. By 1895, however, they and Southland were affiliated with the national organisation.

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