

*Your fun and easy guide
to demystifying the game of rugby.*

Rugby

FOR

DUMMIES[®]

2nd Edition



Mathew Brown
Patrick Guthrie
Greg Growden

A Reference for the Rest of Us!



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Rugby For Dummies[®], 2nd Edition

**by Mathew Brown,
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Greg Growden**



Rugby For Dummies[®], 2nd Edition

Published by

John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd.

6045 Freemont Blvd.

Mississauga, ON L5R 4J3

www.wiley.com

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication
Data

Brown, Matthew (Matthew Timothy)

Rugby for dummies / by Matthew Brown, Patrick Guthrie,
Greg Growden. — 2nd ed.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-470-15327-7

1. Rugby football. I. Guthrie, Patrick, 1962- II. Growden,
Greg III. Title.

GV945.B76 2007 796.333 C2007-902522-6

Printed in Canada

1 2 3 4 5 TRI 11 10 09 08 07



About the Authors

Mathew Brown is America's foremost rugby writer. From 1999 to 2004 he wrote a weekly rugby column for Fox Sports.com, was a producer of *Championship Rugby*, and also hosted and produced the Fox Sports World *Rugby Report* and tended bar at *The Rugby Club*. Since 2005 he has been the rugby producer for MediaZone Rugby and writes the weekly Brownie's Best of the Weekend and Brownie's Weekend Preview columns. Brown began his rugby career at Occidental College, has been a member of various clubs from Missoula to Riga, played international rugby for Latvia, and has coached at the collegiate and club level.

Patrick Guthrie pioneered the delivery of rugby programming to North Americans. He produced more than 700 rugby television shows including *Championship Rugby* and *The Rugby Club* for the International Channel, FOX Sports International, ESPN, ESPNU, and Versus from 1995 to 2007. Mr. Guthrie is the Executive Producer of the USA Sevens from 2003-07 and Churchill Cup in 2006. He was instrumental in launching the MediaZone Rugby broadband service worldwide and has been Director of Rugby at MediaZone.com since 2005. A former member of the USA Rugby Board of Directors from 2003 to 2006, he currently serves on the USA Rugby Congress.

Greg Growden is one of Australia's best-known sports writers. He began writing about rugby union in 1981, and since 1987 has been the chief rugby writer for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He is also a regular on New Zealand television rugby shows.

Greg's other books include *A Wayward Genius: The Fleetwood Smith Story* and *Gold, Mud 'N Guts, The Incredible Tom Richards: Footballer, War Hero, Olympian*.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to rugby and all who have ever played, watched, or enjoyed it. The sport has been the driving force in both our lives and we're hopeful that this attempt to enlighten the uninitiated will bring a greater audience to this fascinating and wonderful game.

—Mathew Brown and Patrick Guthrie

Authors' Acknowledgments

Thanks to Train and Vandy for getting me started and to Godfree for instilling in me a deep and abiding love for the game. Thanks to all of the teammates I've ever played with from the Blackshirts, Oxy Olde Boys, Powell River, All-Maggots, Miesnieks, Exiles, Vail, Flies, Tsunami, and many more over the years. Special thanks to Guthrie for convincing me to join him on the quest to expand the rugby audience and to Jan for giving me the opportunity to immerse myself even more fully in the worldwide game. Thanks to Reid for keeping me housed and my family for putting up with me forever and understanding how important this sport is to me.

—Mathew Brown

My father comes first for his support, love, and recognition early on that I was on a crusade to grow the game, no matter the personal costs. Special thanks to Bo Kelly for his trust and financial backing to get the whole project started. Kudos to Bob Watkins, Ed Hagerty, and Dennis Storer for being my three wise men. Thanks also to Jan Steenkamp for sharing my dream of building a global home for the game. But most of all, thanks to the Oxy Olde Boys, Kev, Yauch, and Brownie in particular for introducing me to my life's great passion.

—Patrick Guthrie

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Acquisitions, Editorial, and Media Development

Editor: Robert Hickey

Copy Editor: Kelli Howey

Cover photo: Russell Cheyne/Stone Collection/Getty Images

Cartoons: Rich Tennant (www.the5thwave.com)

Composition Services

Publishing Services Director: Karen Bryan

Project Manager: Elizabeth McCurdy

Project Coordinator: Lindsay Humphreys

Graphics: Kim Monteforte, Heidi Lawrence Associates

Proofreader: Aptara

Indexer: Belle Wong

Photo Credits:

Fig 8-2: Getty Images/Daniel Berehulak; Fig 9-2: Getty Images/John Gichigi; Fig 9-3: Getty Images/Clive Brunskill; Fig 10-3: Sport the Library/Action Photos Rugby Union; Fig 10-4: Sport the Library: Tom Putt; Fig 10-6: Newspix/Mark Evans; Fig 10-8, 13-1, 15-1, 17-2, 23-2, Fig 15-2: courtesy Kevin Roberts; Fig 15-3: courtesy of Jen Doan, USA Rugby; Fig 16-1: Dave Stephenson (www.luminaphoto.com); Fig 16-2: courtesy of Chuck Bruce; Fig 16-3: courtesy of Pat Sayer; Fig 17-1: Dave Stephenson (www.luminaphoto.com); Fig 21-1: International Rugby Academy; Fig 22-1: Sport the Library; Fig 23-1: Doug Crosse; Fig 23-3: Dave Stephenson (www.luminaphoto.com)

John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd.

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Professional and Trade Division

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Diane Graves Steele, Vice President and Publisher,
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Composition Services

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Introduction

Welcome to *Rugby For Dummies*, 2nd Edition. This book is your introduction to a sport that has attracted a passionate following around the world for more than a century, but is just now exploding in popularity in the United States and Canada. As rugby devotees ourselves, we understand the natural appeal of the sport and why you feel the need to find out more about it.

Rugby is the world's third-most popular team sport and is played in more than a hundred countries. The nonstop action is breathtaking as the athletes confront each other over 80 minutes of gut-wrenching competition.

Although it was first introduced here more than 133 years ago, up until very recently rugby was a mystery to most North Americans. In the past few years rugby has made the transition from being a totally amateur game to a fully professional sport. This revolutionary development has increased the fitness of the players, sped up the game, and created a vastly more entertaining, television-friendly product that is growing by leaps and bounds all across North America.

This book is intended to help parents, players, coaches, and their families get acquainted with the basic elements of this fantastic game. We hope this book lifts the veil of mystery that has shrouded the sport and enables you to appreciate both the excitement on the field and the camaraderie off it that makes rugby truly unique.

About This Book

Rugby For Dummies includes all the information you need to get started in the sport, whether you want to be a player, coach, or spectator. It's the first comprehensive guide to all things rugby and was written specifically for a North American audience. Plenty of foreign books talk about rugby, but to our knowledge (and we know it all!) this is the only one that explains the game in terms that Americans and Canadians can easily understand.

We've made ease of access and cross-referencing a priority at all times, so you can use this book to quickly locate a specific topic, find the information you're looking for, and get on with your life.

Conventions Used in This Book

Rugby has its own language, so to help you understand what we're talking about we've made a point of putting rugby jargon in *italics* and then defining those terms right away. If we missed one here or there, however, and you encounter a term you're not familiar with, check the glossary in Appendix B.

Why You Need This Book

If you tried to figure out rugby on your own, it would take you at least a decade of constantly watching, playing, asking questions, and absorbing the atmosphere for you to get a good feel for the game. We know, because that's how we did it. Until we wrote this book there was no easy

way to access and assimilate all the information needed to gain a solid understanding of the game — other than personal experience through trial and error.

Whatever your reasons for reading this book — whether you're barely acquainted with the game or possess a wealth of knowledge about it — *Rugby For Dummies* answers your questions and increases your understanding of the sport.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized into six parts. Each of the parts covers a major aspect of the game.

Part I: Rugby: Roots, Boots, and All

The first chapter tells why rugby is a unique sport and gives you a preview of all the information that's contained throughout the book. Then we cover the basics of the field, explain the scoring system, and take a quick look at all the positions. To prevent you from showing up unprepared, we also list all the gear you need to play.

Part II: Getting Down and Dirty

The second course is the meat-and-potatoes portion of this book. First, we explain the various responsibilities and

skills needed to play all 15 positions. Second, we introduce the laws of the game and the match officials, which leads to an explanation of the object of the game, what happens after a tackle, and the concepts of offside and foul play. Then we discuss the differences among tackles, rucks, and mauls. Next, we analyze scrums and line-outs. We then shift gears to address the individual skills of running, passing, kicking, and tackling, and finish off with a look at tactics and training for rugby.

Part III: Welcome to the Oval Planet

This part spans the globe to survey the annual calendar of provincial, interprovincial, and international competitions. We move next to the Rugby World Cup and the International Rugby Board's (IRB) stable of events. Then we move back closer to home with a look at the USA National Team — the Eagles, followed by a look at the pride of Rugby Canada — the Canadian National Team. We conclude with a tour of the heart and soul of North American rugby — the club game.

Part IV: Coaching and Refereeing

Part IV covers the full spectrum of coaching — from the minis to the Super League — and explains how you can become a certified coach. The refereeing section reviews the responsibility of the ref and what you need to do to become one so that we can address the current shortage of whistle-blowers.