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SPORT TEAM LEADERSHIP

COACHING AND CAPTAINCY

in

ELITE LEVEL

RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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VOLUME ONE

THIS THESIS

IS

DEDICATED

TO

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(M.A. Hons.)

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(B.A., M.B.S.
1st Class Hons.)

PENNY McCONNELL
(M.A. Hons.)

AND

THE SUBJECTS OF THIS STUDY:

THE PROVINCIAL TEAM;

AND

THE 1992-95 ALL BLACKS,
PARTICULARLY THEIR COACH AND CAPTAIN
WHO REKINDLED THE FLAME

ABSTRACT

A wide range of literature exists on coaching but it is concerned predominantly with the high school and college levels, is based upon athlete or coach perceptions, or is confined to observations of training or competition. As leaders of sports teams, coaches and captains have rarely been studied at the highest level of national or international sports competition.

In the present study, the team leadership roles of the coach and captain in elite rugby union football in New Zealand were examined using participant observation and other qualitative research methods. Elite was defined as New Zealand rugby's highest internal level of competition: (a) the national provincial championships and (b) international test matches of the national team, the All Blacks.

The study explored the roles of the elite rugby coach and captain *in vivo* in a wide variety of team situations. It was felt that this could provide first-hand information on particular team leader behaviours, on what a coach and captain actually do, and how they are perceived by those around them. The main objective, however, was to use grounded theory techniques to create a model of elite rugby team leadership that might guide developmental programmes on such leadership.

The research phases undertaken were those of participant observation with a Provincial Team for five matches, a survey of provincial teams' coaches and captains on their leadership associated with actual matches, three years' participant observation with the All Blacks (including observation in eight test match weeks), multiple perspectives on elite team leadership from past rugby test players in New Zealand and overseas, and interviews with national team leaders in sports other than rugby.

Participant observation, interviews, questionnaires and document analysis generated data from the research settings. These data were considered in terms of symbolic interactionism and subjected to a grounded theory process. This led to a set of elite rugby team leadership categories and properties which, in turn, generated a comprehensive set of theoretical propositions.

The propositions became the basis for a model of elite rugby team leadership. This model was then considered as the basis for a programme to develop elite rugby team leaders. Significant aspects of the research findings which have not featured in previous research literature included the coach's vision, team culture, centrality of the game plan, match week build-up, the importance of the captain's playing example, the coach's ability to utilise teaching precepts, the coach's personal qualities, and the need to develop and evaluate team leaders. The model, and the developmental programme principles emanating from it, are seen as relevant for developing elite level leaders in team sports other than rugby.

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* * * * *

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GLOSSARY AND TECHNICAL TERMS

Gendered Language: Researcher's Note

The elite teams in the present study are male rugby teams. The team leaders are male. Observation and discussion in the results phase and results chapters use terms denoting male coaches and captains. The use of such language does not indicate any assumption that elite teams, rugby teams or team leaders are necessarily male. Rather, the use of male terminology in this study is related directly to the male context of the research subjects. The results, in Chapter Nine, may have relevance to elite teams of either gender and are thus expressed in non-gender specific language. (See also Chapter Ten.)

- Blindside** When a scrum is formed there is usually a greater open space (the open side) between one side of the scrum and the sideline than there is on the other (blindside). The lesser space on the blindside usually leads to specific blindside tactics.
- Body on the line** Placing oneself at risk in complete physical commitment.
- Bomb** A high kick which gives the attacking team time to reach its catcher as the ball is caught.
- Council** The administrative board of the NZRFU.
- Drill an opponent** To aggressively tackle an opposition player and stifle an actual or potential attacking play.
- Haka** A traditional Maori war dance or choreographed challenge to a visiting or intruding group.
- Hongi** A Maori greeting enacted by the pressing of noses together.
- Into Touch** The sideline boundary of the field is known as the touchline. A kick into touch goes over this line and leads to a lineout.
- Lineout** When the ball is put into touch by one team it is then thrown, by the other team, into two lines of forwards who compete for possession.
- Loosehead** When two scrums pack down and the front rows (three players in each) interlock, one "head" will be nearer to the halfback putting the ball into the scrum. This is the loosehead -- the other two members of that front row are each wedged tightly between two opposing heads. Having the loosehead at the scrum means the hooker is nearer the ball being rolled in than is the opposing hooker, thus giving the loosehead prop's adjacent hooker an advantage to hook the ball first.
- Mana** A Maori term denoting special prestige.
- Maori** Indigenous or native person of New Zealand.

Maul	A formation, or pack, of forwards which cohesively attempts to surge forward while holding the ball in their midst.
NZRFU	New Zealand Rugby Football Union.
Number Ones	The elite team's formal dress, including a blazer, tie, white shirt and grey trousers.
Old Timers	Ex-players who had played for the elite team in past years. Often the Old Timers are elderly.
Openside	See Blindside.
Pakeha	A Maori word denoting, broadly, a person of European or white descent.
The Pill	Rugby ball.
Ranfurly Shield	The premier trophy in New Zealand rugby which is held by a province which accepts "Shield challenges" from other provinces.
Read the Game	To scan the play, determine its pattern or movement, and plan related field moves if necessary.
Red Hot Ball	Very fast and urgent clearance of the ball for an attacking move.
Ruck	A formation, or pack, of forwards which cohesively attempts to heel or ruck the ball back to their halfback.
Runners	Forwards who have a role in the game plan of bursting forward with the ball to gain some yards of territorial possession. Often the ball is expected to then go to a second runner.
Scrum	The forwards of each team pack down in a set formation, binding together. The two packs then push against each other to contest possession of the ball which a halfback has rolled between them. One pack will succeed in hooking the ball back, by foot, to their halfback.
Second Phase	First phase play is the set piece such as scrum or lineout which has a relatively formal structure. Second phase is a more indeterminate state of play such as a ruck or maul.
Set Piece	See second phase.
Sevens Kick off	To kick off with a tactic similar to "seven a side" rugby rather than the normal "fifteen a side" kick off.
Sprigs	The studs, tags or protuberances on the base of rugby boots to enhance the sureness or stability of players keeping a foothold on the turf.
Tangata Whenua	A Maori term for the "people of the land", or original inhabitants, which usually means the Maori people.

- The box** An area of unprotected territory behind the main line of opposition players.
- Tighthead** The opposite of loosehead.
- Willie Away** A planned move from the lineout, named after an All Black captain.
- Wipers** A low sweeping kick deep into the defenders' territory, usually going into touch.

CHAPTER ONE**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the study, noting the centrality of sport in New Zealand society and the particular prominence of rugby, the national game. The apparent influences of this sport, coupled with the researcher's interest in team leadership, are noted within discussion of the genesis of the study. The chapter then outlines the purpose and broad sequence of the research.

- 1.1 Background to the Study
- 1.2 Purposes of the Study
- 1.3 Methodological Considerations

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Sport is of central interest to New Zealanders of all ages and walks of life. Almost half the New Zealand population is actively involved in sport or leisure, television viewers accord sport programmes consistently high ratings, and significant time and space is given to sport by the print media. Recognition comes through success in elite sport, and sport metaphors figure prominently in the language of everyday life, the business world and politics.

Despite the pervading presence of sport in New Zealand society, it is only in recent years that academic researchers, other than physical educationalists or historians, have made sport the subject of critical examination. Sociologists, for example, are turning their attention to the place of sport in contemporary society. Thus Cameron (1993, pp. 11-12) states:

Sport in contemporary New Zealand society is more than just game playing....acting out of loyalties or release of tensions. Sport, as ritual, is an important vehicle for reproducing the values and practices which maintain social order...sport can be seen to fulfil a hegemonic role...to challenge the structure of sport is to challenge the very basis of society.

Related academic analyses of sport may include consideration of its roles and rituals, its possible reflection of society's structures, as well as the participant roles and dynamics within sport organisations, particularly teams. Historical research has been apparent in certain regions, for example, in Otago by Crawford (1984, November) and Manawatu by Swindells (1978).

Sport in New Zealand has clear governmental recognition, with a Ministry for Sport, Fitness and Leisure and other national bodies organising sport programmes, administering sport participation and disbursing finance to individuals and sport bodies. The New Zealand Sports Assembly combines over 100 national sports associations, with a collective membership claimed to be over 1.5 million in a country with a population of some 3.5 million. Rugby, considered by many to be the national game, has the largest participation level of any New Zealand winter sport (see Appendix A.1 for participation levels, and Appendix A.2 for a history of rugby prior to its introduction in New Zealand).

Originating in a British public school in the early nineteenth century, rugby spread relatively rapidly in its Southern Pacific environment, being taken up by all sectors of New Zealand society. The spread of rugby through last century was attributed by Phillips (1987) to networks of public school old boys. McDonald (1996), McLean (1991), and Palenski (1992) suggest that the sport also drew into its participatory fold Maori and Pakeha, town or rural dweller, the professional and the artisan.

Administered by the New Zealand Rugby Football Union since 1892, rugby football has a national structure that is tiered from primary school-age children through high school, grade, club, regional, and provincial levels to the famed representative rugby team of New Zealand, the All Blacks. As the elite national team, the All Blacks have a virtual iconographic status in the country and in the wider rugby playing world. “When you tell people you are playing the All Blacks there is almost a hush of reverence and respect. It is as though everyone understands this is the ultimate challenge” (Campese, 1991, p.84).

Fougere (1990) argued that rugby's widespread establishment was facilitated by its promotion of a “particular vision of New Zealand life” (p.115). This vision may be seen as recognising an emphasis upon social order, egalitarian values, comradeship and structures, in which participants felt not only secure but united. In the twentieth century rugby has enhanced its prominence as New Zealand's national sport. A 1905 *Originals* All Blacks tour of the British Isles entered national folklore, along with that of their successors, the 1924 *Invincibles* team. South Africa-New Zealand test matches have emerged as struggles that transmute the national psyche of each nation. In wartime, rugby occupied a special place in the recreational escapism and comradeship of servicemen. The post-World War II rugby era, however, has been characterised by a volatility associated with increasing social changes, shifting relationships, sport values and violence, a decolonised world, heightened awareness of race relations, and the engagement of politics and

sport, which came to be highlighted by the 1981 Springbok tour of New Zealand (see Fenton, 1981; Fougere, 1990; Newnham, 1981).

Into the 1990s, All Black rugby has embraced winning the inaugural World Cup in 1987, losing the 1995 World Cup final in extra time, domestic debate over the national coach appointment, and exerting an influence upon international playing styles. Professionalism was formally embraced in 1995.

The eyes of contemporary sport commentators have increasingly scrutinised rugby administrators and team leaders who influence the realities of rugby in action. In rugby, as in other team sports, the coach and captain have roles of particular importance, being subjected at the elite All Black level to closer media scrutiny than any other of New Zealand's national teams. The leadership of coach and captain is seen as directly affecting player and team success through such elements as team selection, playing strategies and tactics, game plans, decision making, influence upon players, and team preparation and training.

Although dimensions of sport team leader roles may be compounded by the "contamination" of such factors as the referee, ground conditions and performance of the opposing team (Chelladurai, 1993), their apparent impact is noted by a range of rugby writers and players. At the apex of the elite rugby pyramid, the coach and captain face the major task of having the national team win its games and perform with an appealing playing style. As Stewart (1976) states, "Quite often the difference between a winner and a loser lies in the more superior knowledge of a coach and his [*sic*] application of that knowledge" (p.1). Seefeldt and Brown (1991) concur on the leader's impact, noting that "The benefits of athletic participation are directly related to the quality of the leadership provided by the coach" (p. 1, Section 6). The contention that the influence of elite sport team leaders is critical in the achievement of individuals and teams is reinforced by the views of prominent rugby players, sport sociologists and sports psychologists (see, for example, Cox, 1990; Gill, 1986; Horn, 1992; Palenski, 1982; Rowe and Lawrence, 1990).

Despite the expression of such views, and in stark contrast to volumes of descriptive writing on team leadership, there is a marked lack of research literature on the actual practices of elite sports team leaders and how these might influence individual and team performance. The bulk of research has focused upon coaches at high school and college levels or relied upon interviews and surveys, observation at training and, to a limited extent, observations in game situations. Although

the work of researchers such as Côté, Salmela and associates in Canada has yielded valuable perspectives on elite athletes and coaches (see Chapter Three) there is a paucity of first-hand information on elite coach behaviour in all settings, such as confidential team talks, social interaction with athletes or the elite team dressing room. The literature on elite captain studies is even more severely restricted. This is reflected in the observation of Cratty (1989) that “the leadership forces within the team itself have not been the subject of extensive scientific or semi-scientific scrutiny” (p.239).

Trudel and Gilbert (1995) and Woodman (1993) note that coaches can develop greater use of scientific information on effective coaching and pedagogy. At the same time, coaches have expressed a strong desire for such information. (Personal communications, five national New Zealand coaches.)

Recognition of rugby’s dominance of New Zealand sport, the impact of rugby’s elite All Black team upon the public, and the apparent lack of field research on elite team leaders, initiated the researcher’s orientation towards the present study. Any new knowledge generated was seen as possibly assisting elite leader development and having relevance for elite team sports other than rugby.

1.2 PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

As an educator and active sport person, the researcher had noted the apparent impact of prominent provincial rugby teams and the All Blacks on the public, and upon the playing styles and strategies of lower level teams. A strong interest in team leadership suggested that influences of elite team leaders could be important in this process. The genesis of the present thesis was furthered by the researcher’s reflections upon the perceived discrepancy between, on one hand, colloquial and anecdotal rugby writing in the field of elite rugby team leadership and, on the other hand, the virtual absence of research literature on this. The former group is relatively voluminous in sport literature, being characterised by historical accounts, descriptive comments and personal assumptions about coaching and captaincy. The latter field of research literature is markedly sparse. Given the prominence of elite rugby in New Zealand, its status as the national game, and the manifest mythologies emanating from this much discussed domain of New Zealand life, the researcher was struck with the apparent lack of academic scrutiny of what rugby team leaders, with all their apparent influences, actually do in carrying out the processes of coaching and captaincy. Reflecting upon this, the researcher developed informal perspectives and personal

speculation on the realities of elite rugby team leader behaviour in and out of the public eye, and framed some initial research questions.

The initial research questions generated were:

- How can we know if sport leadership and rugby commentators are accurate in their assumptions and assertions about coaches and captains as elite team leaders?
- What are the qualities of excellent rugby coaches and captains?
- What do elite rugby team leaders actually do?

These questions were subsequently reformatted, as follows, to guide the research:

1. What are the team leadership roles of elite rugby coaches and captains?
2. How are these leadership roles enacted at an elite level?
3. What are the most important qualities of elite rugby coaches and captains?
4. How are these qualities illustrated at an elite level?
5. Given the team leadership roles and qualities of the elite rugby coach and captain, how can these best be developed?

These basal research questions fostered further considerations such as:

- Historical antecedents of present-day coaching and captaincy
- Contextual settings of elite rugby team leadership
- The captain-coach relationship
- Variables affecting elite team leadership
- Leadership roles of persons other than the coach or captain
- The elite coach's ability to change player understandings and behaviour
- Possible leader-performance linkages
- Commonalities between elite team leadership in rugby and other sports

Ultimately, the study provided data which led to especial consideration of the fifth research question above, namely: Given the team leadership roles and qualities of the elite rugby coach and captain, how can these best be developed? To this end, the research attempted to draw upon participant observation and other modes of qualitative research to create a theoretical model of elite rugby team leadership that might well have relevance to all levels of rugby football and other elite levels of team sports.

1.3 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The review of literature on rugby team leadership confirmed the paucity of research in this field. Furthermore, the writing on rugby coaching and captaincy was markedly weighted towards the

biographical, the descriptive and the coaching manuals. While the literature indicated broad agreement on the qualities of excellent coaches and captains, there was little validation (through fullness of observation for example) of assumptions about what team coaches and captains actually do in the enactment of their roles. Indeed, the theoretical stance of writers on elite team leadership tends to lag behind the debates and content focus of much of the writing on leadership found in other contemporary fields such as business, management and education leadership (see, for example, Rost, 1991; Wheatley, 1994). Ironically, despite the limited first-hand studies of what elite coaches actually do, there is a strong body of business and management writing which ostensibly draws upon sport coaching and team development, often basing this upon assumptions rather than validated knowledge of realities of actual coach behaviour (see Carling and Heller, 1995; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993; Miller, 1993).

An elite rugby team is an organisation. Rost (1991, p.185) suggests that developers of future models of leadership “may have to see themselves as scholars who are doing grounded research on the nature and practice of leadership in organisations”. He posits that researchers on leadership should embody certain qualities:

the kinds of scholars I have in mind are those thinking women and men who understand that leadership is more complex than the mythology of leadership would have us believe. These scholars are reflective practitioners. They do research about leadership in context, leadership in this organisation, this community, this society. These practitioners think of themselves as educators, scholars who have the expertise to help other women and men understand what leadership is all about and inform their practice of leadership in their organisations and societies (pp.185-186).

The complex nature of leadership that Rost describes, coupled with the variety of settings in which rugby leadership is actualised, places special demands upon the researcher seeking to peel back the layers of thinking and behaviour to discover significant meanings in the rugby culture. Consequently, the questions refined after the literature review in the present study called primarily for qualitative research methodology, with the aim of producing theoretical propositions as the basis for designing a model for the development of elite coaching and captaincy in the rugby culture. It was decided to use a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1994) but, at the same time, to seek a symbolic interactionist perspective in order to explore elite team leadership in the rugby culture.

The research involved a two-phase design with participant observation studies being made of rugby team leadership at two levels of elite rugby, provincial and national. A pilot study utilising

this methodology was carried out with a boys' high school rugby team set in the context of a major inter-school game. The team coach and captain were the subject of in-depth observation and semi-structured interviews, with informal interviews also being conducted with some parents. The realities of this trial study of rugby coaching and captaincy led to minor modifications in methodology.

The research study then turned to a major provincial representative team. Team leaders and players were the subject of participant observation, interviews and questionnaires over a time period of four weeks involving five competition games in New Zealand's national rugby championship.

In the second phase of the field research, selected rugby team leaders at the provincial level provided rare insights into the realities of their roles in actual game settings. A questionnaire elicited perspectives on team leadership with a particular focus upon expectations and reflections on leadership in a national championship match.

Systematic research on elite sport teams at the international level is severely restricted. The third phase of the study, therefore, focused on the legendary national rugby team of New Zealand, the All Blacks. The influence and role model impact of this team and its leaders upon the national psyche, and their position as New Zealand's premier rugby team, suggested the need for extensive participant observation activities related to the coach and captain roles. This was carried out over the full settings of eight international rugby test match weeks over three years. Again, participant observation was complemented by semi-structured and informal interviews as well as questionnaires and document analysis. The rich array of data accumulated over each phase of the research design was subjected to data analysis in keeping with grounded theory research.

The researcher then listened to the voices of past and present All Black players, including all living All Black coaches and test captains. In this fourth phase of the study, over half of the available 436 living All Blacks were surveyed on team leadership by questionnaire or interviewed. A range of prominent overseas international players was also surveyed on their perceptions of elite New Zealand rugby and elite rugby team leadership. Finally, elite team leaders from winter team sports other than rugby were interviewed to complete the set of multiple perspectives on coaching and captaincy.

The data generated by each phase of the research were examined for their symbolic meanings. Symbolic interactionism was utilised to provide particular insights into the meanings of artefacts, actions and language in the elite rugby team environment. Each phase of the research yielded a range of categories of elite rugby team leadership which were subsequently melded into a master set of categories and properties (see Chapter Nine). This generated a set of theoretical propositions on elite rugby team leadership. Distinctive threads of elite rugby team coaching and captaincy were drawn from these propositions to create a model of elite rugby team leadership which is thus rooted in the observed realities of field research. This model is seen as having relevance for other levels in rugby and other elite sport teams and was discussed as a possible basis for a programme to develop elite rugby team leaders.

The study concluded with a brief review and recommendations for further research.

THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORK FOR RUGBY FOOTBALL, NEW ZEALAND'S NATIONAL GAME

Sport exists in a social setting. This chapter outlines an historical perspective of the development of sport in New Zealand, particularly the dominant game of rugby football. Sport is a significant dimension of New Zealand life, and the place of rugby football, often called the national game, is pre-eminent. The chapter concludes by noting the implications for rugby of its team leadership, and the need to examine this further.

- 2.1 Historical Perspectives
- 2.2 Sport in New Zealand
- 2.3 Rugby in New Zealand
 - 2.3.1 Early Days
 - 2.3.2 Emergence of the National Team
 - 2.3.3 Expansion of the Game
 - 2.3.4 Coaches and Coaching
- 2.4 Summary and Comment

2.1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

A consideration of the development of sport in New Zealand society can assist understanding of the forces that have influenced its content, practice and present-day form, as well as providing a context for the consideration of the country's national game, rugby. It is not intended to paint a full picture here of the history of New Zealand sport, but to set the historian's canvas aside and sketch a bold outline of the influence of societal beliefs and values on the content and practice of sport. Park (1983) suggests that sport is a special form of history "to the extent that sport is a product of culture, created by and given meaning by people" (p.94).

The roots of modern world sports are embedded in the mists of religion and preparation for life in early societies. Brasch (1995) suggests that early sports such as running, jumping and swimming were created and given meaning by their linkages with survival and escaping danger. Sports from pre-Christian centuries range from skiing in Sweden to organised running in Egypt. The fourth and fifth centuries BC saw Sparta and Athens place an emphasis upon physical fitness and prowess. In Ancient Greece the Olympic Games were staged in honour of Zeus and festivals that

marked important seasonal changes persist to this day. Sansome (1988), in discussing Greek athletics, perceives sport as “the ritual sacrifice of energy”, a description appropriate to many elements of sport at the close of the twentieth century.

The *ludi* of Roman terminology included formal sports and games, while games in the Bible reflected their place in the society of those times with allusions or references to links with military sports, Roman man-beast fights, and conventional athletic contests such as running (see, for example: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Corinthians 15:32; 2 Timothy 2:5; 2 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 12:1; in The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version). Ritualised local sport or regionalised events in ancient and classical societies ranged from ball games to bull fighting, from boxing to boat races. Discernible patterns gradually emerged in sports, although rules were rarely more than localised, and often expressed in broad or rudimentary terms. Sport sociologists, such as Coakley (1994), describe the increasing organisation, transformation and formalisation of play and games into sport as a process of “ludic institutionalisation.”

The Middle Ages saw a range of popular pastimes, with local authorities, the church, and monarchies taking action against some sports and pastimes that were particularly favoured by the masses, usually on the grounds of the need for social order and military readiness. The term *sport* had not yet appeared in those early societies. In derivation *sport* is a shortened or alphetic form of *disport*, the Middle English word meaning “diversion, relaxation, pastime, amusement”. In use from the mid-fifteenth century, the word *sport* is rooted in the Latin *disport*, and meaning “carried away” (Little, Fowler and Coulson, 1966). At the time of the Renaissance and Reformation *sport* continued to be mainly localised in nature.

A remarkable range of popular games and contests was played and enjoyed in Britain “before the advent of modern sports” (Holt, 1990, p.13). Each village or team had its span of sports in ball games, running races, animal sports and minor games. Ford (1977) reinforces the perception of parochial sport, suggesting that the study of sport before 1700 is best done in the context of local history. Colonisation by European powers led to the transplantation of sport, illustrated by the appearance of cricket played in Syria in 1676, Virginia in 1709, and in India by 1721.

Sport, in its modern meaning and as a mass development, assumed shape and substance with the advent of the nineteenth century. From the end of the eighteenth century and on through the next, sport in Britain moved from a parochial context to national settings, with bodies of standard rules emerging and the setting up of national and international links and organisations. From such roots,

the twentieth-century relationship of sport and society can be readily recognised as organised sport assumed its now familiar shape and space. Nigg (1993) asserts that sport was influenced by: (a) the 1762 Rousseau novel, *Emile*, which presented the ideals of movement and sport; (b) the 1777 invention of the steam engine which represented the beginning of industrialised society; and (c) the 1789 storming of the Bastille that freed the lower classes. Social frameworks and influences of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, noted by sport sociologists and historians such as Coakley (1994), Guttmann (1978) and Mandle (1973), have included: transport and communications; newspapers and publications; technological advances; commodification and regulation; social class roles and hegemony; economic forces; religion and ritual; education; deviance; colonisation; values ascribed to sport; gender; and sport leadership. The increasingly formalised configuration of sport was augmented with such developments as specification of team numbers, basic rules, structures of national competition, positions and roles of players, and the formation and consolidation of national associations which established common ground for major sports across a nation.

A hegemonic shading of this sport-in-society canvas is discerned by a number of observers. Although the interpretation of the picture is not always agreed upon, Brohm (1989), Dunning (1975) and Hargreaves (1993) are indicative of those who see nineteenth century relationships of class and politics mirrored in sport. Many have stringently questioned the political and societal motivation for power clique support of sport for the masses, as developed in the nineteenth century. Sociologists have also questioned the efficacy of such values attributed to sport as the development of healthy bodies, healthy living, sportsmanship, enjoyable physical and emotional experiences and teamwork. Education, as an influential arm of society, is in a powerful position to promulgate political beliefs, and sport participation has been seen by many societies as the medium for fostering socially desirable values. Prominent among such qualities have been “manliness”, “sportsmanship”, fair play, and social propriety inherent in “playing the game”.

The acquisition of European sports by those in lands far from that continent seeded nascent forms of international competition, furthered by twentieth century advances in transport, communications, and the news and entertainment media. Decreased working hours, wartime, international competition, female participation in previously designated male events or sports, politics, and technological innovations have all influenced the shaping of contemporary sport. Through the present century sport has become more commercialised and codified, both nationally and internationally.

Since World War II there has been increased scrutiny of sport as a revealing microcosm of society. Sociologists have increasingly analysed the social processes extant in sport and such related considerations of power, behaviour and participation which impact upon sport structures. In the context of the present research study, the discussion of sport in society does not focus upon such issues as social control, the conquest of bourgeois values, spirit of amateurism, use of hegemony as a tool of critical analysis, masculine domination, social consequences of the division of labour, and cultural continuity. These are noted, however, in discussions of certain aspects of the present study arising from field research.

Organised sport today, arguably, even more than in its generic nineteenth century, is interlocked with such social frameworks as the media, economics, commercialism, culture and race, deviance, gender, politics, science, and education (including the inculcation of desirable social beliefs and values). Notwithstanding its frequently materialistic setting, the portrait of contemporary sport continues to catch the light of religion and ritual as it has done since its origins in days of myth and magic. Increasingly also, an interface has become apparent between sport and certain fields of learning such as nutrition, biomechanics, psychology, physiology and business. Significantly, traditional domains of learning such as history, geography and law now encompass special sport-related studies in many tertiary institutions.

Sport is also seen as an important dimension of society because of the values ascribed to it by society. Particular beliefs are often ascribed to sport participation, both positively and otherwise. Integral to most education systems of "western" societies, sport is often espoused as offering pleasurable physical activity, worthwhile personal qualities and the acquisition of team participation virtues in an egalitarian setting (Holt, 1990, pp.1-11; McKay, 1991, pp.1-2; Phillips, 1993, pp.5-6). Governments at regional and national levels have also subscribed to such beliefs, which have led to structures to support sport, financial grants for local sport and leisure projects, and major national initiatives associated to international prestige in the sports field. The financial insinuation of sport into contemporary society is also noted by sociological commentators. Sport has thrived in a market economy with the increasing commercial dimensions of sponsorship, professionalism, sport marketing, media rights and employment.

The brief discussion above of sport and society reflects Leonard's (1993) assertion that "Sport permeates virtually every social institution in society. The ubiquity of sport is evidenced by news coverage, sports equipment sales, financial expenditures, the number of participants and spectators, and its penetration into popular culture, movies, books, leisure, comic strips, and

everyday conversation” (p.3). This centrality of sport in contemporary society is reflected in the high visibility of elite teams, the associated phenomenon of hero worship, media focus upon success, and attention accorded to critical decision-makers in sport, such as team coaches and captains. Such perceptions of sport are shaped by public image, team success, and decisions and actions of sport team leaders.

Although not the major thrust of the present study, the contextual elements of sport and social frameworks noted above have influenced the shaping of contemporary sport, including the setting and practice of rugby in New Zealand. As recently as the 1970s, sport studies in Australia and New Zealand “tended to assume much about the basic nature of sport Sport was generally seen as character building, as fostering local community identity, and as being nationally binding in terms of international competition, it was normally seen as an instrument of goodwill among nation states” (Pearson and McKay, 1981, p.67). Some of these assumptions are illustrated and challenged in elements of the present study, particularly in terms of rugby and politics in the New Zealand vs. South Africa context. In New Zealand, as with virtually all sport-playing nations, social forces impact upon contemporary sport. It is New Zealand, a multicultural South Pacific nation, to which this chapter now turns in order to examine the setting of sport, particularly that of rugby, a British form of football.

2.2 SPORT IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand is a self-governing democracy of two major islands, populated by some 3.3 million people. The majority of these inhabitants have forebears from Western Europe, particularly the British Isles. From the 1820s and 1830s settlement from such parts of the northern hemisphere was sporadic but it increased from the 1840s, often in organised waves under the auspices of various British immigration schemes.

The European settlers found an indigenous people, the Maori, who have subsequently merged into the general population in adaptation to the incoming “civilisation”, but who have retained a vibrant sense of identity with its attendant cultural ethos and practices. In present day New Zealand, 400,000 or approximately 12 per cent of the population, identify themselves as Maori and, together with English, their language is an official language of New Zealand. Bordered by the Pacific Ocean and Tasman Sea between its southern latitudes of 33-53 degrees, New Zealand has an equable climate which, combined with open land, water and snow covered mountains, encourages a range of sports.

Interest and participation in sport have been apparent in New Zealand society from the times of pre-European settlement. In the early Maori societies, for example, games, physical pastimes and certain activities associated with ritual and training, could be considered as sport in the European sense of this term. Thus Best (1976) describes:

- (i) Military exercises, and games viewed as useful training, (wrestling, boxing, jumping, foot racing and tree climbing).
- (ii) Aquatic games and pastimes, (swimming, surf riding and canoe riding).
- (iii) Agility or manual dexterity games, (dart throwing and jackstones).
- (iv) Games and pastimes of children, (flying, tobogganing, top spinning and possibly stone bowling).

In many, if not all, of these activities, there were dimensions of ritual, training, defence and games, noted previously in this chapter as key elements in the origins of sport. Similarly, Maori tradition recounts legendary swimming and athletic feats which echo those found in ancient societies.

The European settlers (known as Pakeha by the Maori) introduced their own sports to their new homeland. Cricket was introduced by the missionaries in the northern Bay of Islands in the North Island by 1825, and was observed there by Charles Darwin some 10 years later. Cricket flourished as early as the 1840s with clubs formed in Wellington where, as in other areas, the militia promoted the spread and consolidation of sport. Indeed, a belief existed in Wellington at the time that a certain Colonel Dawson would always release persons held in the cells if they were needed for cricket! (Internal Affairs, 1940). Within the next fifty years, horse racing, professional athletics, bowls, various forms of football, tennis, croquet and archery were common sports in New Zealand.

Concomitantly, the pioneering life -- with its rigours of clearing the land, establishing homes, draining swamps, setting up small communities, and the long hours of labour -- led to agricultural and pastoral gatherings which included various competitions related to the rural life. Ploughing, wood chopping, mustering and sheep shearing competitions evolved which remain to the present day.

The following account of a nineteenth century cricket match could be applied to virtually all other sports of that period, and to some rural sport events in twentieth century New Zealand. Often such events were centred on the local church or hotel, a prominent community organisation or district's social centre.

[At Xmas] a cricket match was always played and all the sides were Married v. Single. The rules of the game were never taken very seriously and no-one worried how many players were on each side. But everyone batted and the runs were faithfully kept. Well before sunset the table would be laid again with cold meats and bonbons while down the centre the Christmas cake would be placed. The custom was for each family to bring a cake, usually iced and decorated. After tea a dance would take place, sometimes in the open, sometimes in a neighbouring barn (Internal Affairs, 1940, p.16).

Hunt clubs were transplanted from their English setting, complete with traditional dress and custom. The expansion of settler sports ranged from the recognition of live pigeon shoots at shooting clubs to curling. The first curling club formed in 1873, only two years after the first New Zealand golf club had been launched in Dunedin.

An examination of local newspapers illustrates a typical range of sport activity in the Canterbury area of the South Island, for June 1872, which included ploughing matches held in three rural districts, a cross country “paper hunt”, and a football match between Heathcote and College. Auckland defeated the locals at athletics, evoking the comment that more training was needed in this sport which had “acquired a distinctive importance amongst our recreative amusements equal in every sense to that which pertains to cricket and boating” (*Lyttelton Times*, 1872, p.7). The allegiance of socio-economic groups to certain sports is reflected in other newspaper records of the day, such as in the May 27, 1878, edition of *The New Zealand Herald*, which noted the Tradesmen's Athletic Club at Ellerslie and the Pakuranga Hunt Club. The same issue, amidst the selling of Crimean shirts and boys' knickerbocker suits, paid attention to Man-of-War boating races and local football.

Expenditure on sport was reflected in the 33,500 pounds spent at Otago race tracks in 1873, in an era when footracers earned cash from professional racing (Crawford, 1984). As in the USA, Australia and the United Kingdom, the sports extant in New Zealand society were seen as positive forces which enhanced healthy living and countered the lures of alcohol and tobacco.

By the end of the nineteenth century, national associations had been increasingly formed and developed. Communications, increasing industrial skills, and settlement technology enhanced the development of sport equipment and competition. The growth of secondary schooling, with its attendant conformity, provided pools of potential players and strengthened the standardisation of rules. Other institutions also accepted the positive values of play and recreation. For example, by 1875 the Dunedin Curative Asylum had activities such as bowls, croquet and rambling.

Cycling had become popular with the advent of the penny-farthing cycle and moved on apace with subsequent improved models.

There are clear parallels here with the development of organised sport in nineteenth century Europe. The mass movement of sport grew apace in both settings. Communication and transport advances facilitated both sport competition and the standardisation of it. An expansion in the organisation of Australasian sport in this period is observed by some sport sociologists as increasingly embracing capitalistic and democratic values such as the division of labour, discipline, constitutions, meetings, thrift, subscriptions, sanctions and assigned duties. These elements, along with the rise of city suburbs and the industrial environment, were applicable to New Zealand in varying degrees, as they were to Australia.

I suggest that its framework, organisation, ethics, even its quirks and quiddities, were nineteenth century industrial. In organised sport we see the inventor, the entrepreneur, the employee, the class conflict. Whatever you like to name as part of Victorian industrial society was there: its passion or classification, order and detail, for moralising, for self-improvement, for respectability (Mandle, 1973, p.513).

The century closed with major sports consolidating their structure. New Zealand horses were experiencing success in Australia's prestigious Melbourne Cup and a decrease in violent blood sports, such as coursing with live hares and live pigeon shooting, was to become increasingly evident.

Rugby assumed greater prominence in the early years of twentieth century New Zealand. The 1905 *Originals* were the national team who toured the British Isles where, probably because of their black jerseys, they became known as the "All Blacks". These words were elevated in a few months from orthodox nomenclature to the realm of sport mythology. Rugby's entrenchment as the national game was enhanced by the political recognition and public support accorded that particular team. "The success of the 1905 All Blacks in Britain helped make the game a vehicle for colonial cockiness and national pride....Large crowds gathered outside Post Offices to hear the results... The sense of national pride which the All Blacks generated helped to legitimise national structures even as the way they organised to play both reflected and reinforced the belief that specialisation enhanced efficiency" (Rice, 1992, p.262).

The advent of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and Girls' and Boys' Brigades, fostered the

emphasis upon healthy physical activity and associated moral values, particularly that of “playing the game”. Before World War One the national school curriculum had sport securely ensconced for its perceived values and formal experience of team play. A survey of government supplied school readers reveals tales of English public schools, replete with “chaps” playing “rugger” and cricket. Indeed, the exposure of young people to moral and sporting values espoused at school fashioned many lasting attitudes.

The New Zealand School Journal has been a key reading source for some 90 years. In 1907 an essay on “The Manliness of Sport” noted that “If a man is off-side...it is not good form.” (Jenkins, 1939, p. 5). The 1922 Journals stressed the role of games and sport. Along with an exhortation to “play the game of Empire” (ibid., p.14) were comments that “As British people we love fair play” and “Life itself is a game, and by playing it unselfishly, honourably and nobly we shall be carrying out the wishes of our Great Captain” (ibid., p.14). Moral exhortations included the ultimate sport metaphor, urging young New Zealanders to “always be ready to sacrifice ourselves for the good of the side” (ibid., p.15). Later years reinforced the same sport-morality linkages, all of which are redolent of espoused beliefs found in nineteenth century British schools.

The impact of political and economic forces upon New Zealand society in the economic depression of the 1930s was also seen in their influence upon sport, such as at the annual meeting of Auckland Soccer in 1932 when many clubs were declared to be unfinancial. A 1935 advertisement for Darlow's footballs advised potential purchasers that they would be assisting the New Zealand farmer, tanner and football maker “and thus relieving the bugbear of unemployment in your own country” (Maddaford, 1987, p.22).

A signal step forward in New Zealand sport came with the 1937 Physical Welfare and Recreation Act. The Labour Government of that time was concerned at the low level of fitness of young New Zealanders and the implications of this for adequate defence. A physical welfare programme was hindered by the advent of World War II and the subsequent election in 1949 of a National Government. The National Council for Sport, set up to support sporting bodies, also withered.

Post-war, the country's population became more urban and more mobile. Perceived social problems, such as the antisocial behaviour of teenagers with few facilities for activity, influenced consideration of the social role of sport in New Zealand society. Coupled with the post-war industrial growth and resultant urban development, the integral place of sport in New Zealand society was reflected in local government provision of sport grounds and facilities. Chapple notes

that, in the late 1950s and early 1960s for example, the “new” timber town of Kaingaroa had two dozen different organisations associated with sport (cited in Thompson and Trlin, 1973, p.129). The daily press also reveals the extent to which sport featured in contemporary life. A close examination of such Saturday evening sport papers as the *8 O’Clock*, *Sports Post* or *Star Sports*, provides an unfolding and confirmatory picture of New Zealand winter sports in New Zealand cities over the post-war decade.

The Recreation and Sport Act in 1973 set up a Ministry of Recreation and Sport and a Council for Recreation and Sport. Administratively, the political recognition of sport, at times in a response to perceived social needs, was reflected in the rise of the Hillary Commission, the New Zealand Sports Foundation, and the New Zealand Assembly of Sport. Arguably, such structures have assumed de facto roles of social organisation and control through their power in financial disbursement and economic patronage.

The Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, set up in 1987, was revamped in early 1992 as the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure. Currently headed by Wilson Whineray, an acclaimed All Black captain of the 1960s, the Commission has introduced *Kiwisport*, a simplified set of sports, into 95 per cent of New Zealand schools. It disburses some \$12 million annually to sport, fitness and leisure groups. This Commission has also been instrumental in financially supporting the establishment of Regional Sports Trusts throughout the country, which have initiated support for local sports, developed fitness programmes from infants to the elderly, and set up supportive linkages with schools, sport and leisure groups, and local government.

The New Zealand Sports Foundation was incorporated in October 1978, and is independent of other sports organisations and government. Its primary role is to fund and support elite athletes through the disbursement of government resources (from the Hillary Commission) and corporate sponsorship. The New Zealand Sports Assembly was established to represent the interests of national sports organisations and acts as a lobby group, making comment on proposed legislation affecting sport in New Zealand.

In New Zealand “sport and leisure is a \$4.5 million a day business” (Hillary Commission, 1993b, p.3) which supports almost 23,000 jobs and generates some \$300 million per annum in taxes. *The Business of Sport and Leisure*, a major study commissioned by the Hillary Commission examined sport, fitness and leisure, and related these to social and economic outcomes and activity. The survey indicated that membership of sport and leisure organisations in New Zealand comprised

1.4 million people. The study, authored by Jensen, Sullivan, Wilson, Berkeley, and Russell (1993) was the first major analysis of the New Zealand sports industry and estimated the value of major sectors of New Zealand sport near to one per cent of the Gross Domestic Product, equivalent to the overall clothing and footwear industry contribution to the GDP. In addition, hundreds of thousands of volunteers contribute their time and energy to assist in the development of sport and leisure activities. Even a highly conservative estimate places the economic value of this contribution in excess of \$200 million each year (Trenberth and Collins, 1994, p.3).

Sports codes have diversified, sport values have shifted, and social issues have been strongly reflected in the interplay of sport and politics and the directions that certain forms of sport have taken. Recreation and leisure interests have been reflected in the 1990 Hillary Commission *Life In New Zealand Survey*. This placed swimming/diving, cycling, pool/snooker, tennis and aerobics as major interests of New Zealanders over 15 years of age. However, the “informal engagement [in sport] by small groups is more common than participation in large-scale, more formally organised sport” (Perkins and Cushman, 1993, p.192). Almost 50 per cent of New Zealanders link with a sport or recreation club. More New Zealanders, however, watch sport than participate in it. The media presentation of sport is strong, with a typical weekend, that of 6 and 7 October 1994, for example, providing some 10 hours of sport in the 41 hours of available television viewing on two of the country's three channels between 11:00 a.m. and 9:15 p.m.

The independent and more individualistic sports of tennis, rowing, canoeing, mountaineering and squash have seen world champions emerge from New Zealand. Technology and international competition have raised realities and spectres of international competition, commercialism and sponsorship which have been apparent in such ventures as the America's Cup for yachting.

Sport has become a major consideration in the social and economic life of New Zealand. Whether viewed through the lens of the media, commercial interests, the amateur-professional debate, international competition, politics, funding, national prestige, symbolism, or with critical consideration of the beliefs and values sustaining a sport, the observer is struck by the pervasive nature of sporting activities in New Zealand society. The most pervasive of these activities in organised sport, is that of rugby union football. Rugby illustrates the interface of sport and society in New Zealand and makes for itself a special case of national and international prominence. Played throughout the country, the national game has varied perceptions, expectations and cultural meanings attached to it by various societal groups (Crawford, 1985b; Nauright, 1990; Phillips, 1984; Thomson, 1993).

2.3 RUGBY IN NEW ZEALAND

2.3.1 Early Days

Arguably, the genealogy of New Zealand's national game of rugby union football may be traced to the games of ancient and medieval cultures (see Appendix A.2, An Historical Outline of Rugby Football). The immediate antecedents of Antipodean rugby are found in nineteenth century English public schools. The sport today retains many common features of its upper class origins, while also forging a distinctive New Zealand identity in its land of adoption. "A history of sporting practices must take into account systematic transformation such as the emergence of a new sport or popularisation of an existing sport" (Bourdieu, 1988, p.154).

The first reported Antipodean football games were played in Australia in 1829 and in 1864 the first rugby club was formed there, often playing against crews of visiting British warships. Other clubs followed, and the Southern Rugby Union was set up in 1874 to control rugby in that colony. Despite that Union's intentions, rules were often vague with violence and injury being major concerns. Soccer gained popularity, and Victorian Rules or "Australian Rules" football gained an especial stronghold in Victoria. Today, the strength of Australian rugby still lies in Queensland and New South Wales. An Australian editorial in 1857 reflected views on sport which are still voiced : "sports are the germ of sound morality and permanent happiness - and of national prosperity and national honour" (Hickie, 1993, p.15).

In 1870 the effects of the Rugby game were first felt in New Zealand. Charles John Munro (1851-1933), son of Sir Charles Munro, a speaker of the New Zealand House of Parliament, had returned from his public school education at Christ College, Finchley, in London. In New Zealand, Munro lived in Nelson and introduced the new sport to the town, beginning with male youths at Nelson College.

At this time variant forms of football had emerged in the relatively new European settlements in New Zealand. Forms of Gaelic football, "Australian Rules", and association football or soccer were all noted by writers and historians (Palenski, 1992, p.12; Swan, 1948). The impact of the Australian strain of football was strong, noticeably in the goldfield areas, and was seen by some as the natural choice for New Zealand's major game.

Munro's introduction of rugby led to an historic match, on May 14, 1870, between the College and the town in Nelson. The score of 2 goals (Town) to nil was not as significant as the occasion. Some months later, the College team travelled by steamer to Wellington, then overland by coach to the Hutt Valley where they played a Wellington team.

The game spread quickly. Commentators have suggested that the appeal of “the running and hacking game” lay in its limited need for equipment, clear objectives, limited rules and sense of physical contestation. The settlers from Great Britain and the indigenous people, the Maori, were engaged in rugby over many regions of the country by the mid 1880s (see McLean, 1991; Palenski, 1992). There is still conjecture on the reasons for rugby’s appeal, with some sociologists suggesting that the male oriented settler period lent itself to aggressive sport and its related male socialising. Historians and sociologists describe a culture of alcohol (beer), mateship or camaraderie, and the ascribed masculine values of not showing pain, physical aggression, acceptance of illegal play within a broadly agreed “code”, and the exclusion of women from much of the game’s rituals and related social settings (Fougere, 1990; Phillips, 1987). These characteristics have been seen by social commentators to last until the 1970s and 1980s (ibid.).

Local histories and newspaper accounts over the years have outlined the impact of rugby upon virtually all New Zealand districts, including the themes of national pride and sporting jingoism. In 1874, 3,000 persons out of a Dunedin population of 18,000 were spectators at an Otago versus Auckland rugby game (see Crawford, 1978a; Crawford, 1984).

The influence of English public schools was noted in private and some state secondary schools in New Zealand, where teachers introduced and promulgated the sport as an avenue to conformity, discipline and seeming egalitarianism (see McDonald, 1996; Richardson, 1983; Ryan, 1992). At Dunedin in southern New Zealand the game was introduced by the teacher son of a Rugby School master, and in Auckland, at the northern end of the growing nation, former English public school pupils influenced the change from “Victorian Rules” football to the rugby code (Ryan, *ibid.*, p.118). The introduction and codification of the sport was one dimension of this influence. The extent to which the so-called public school ethos was adopted in terms of sportsmanship and onfield conduct agreed upon by “gentlemen” is debatable in its colonial context (Ryan, 1992). Scott Crawford suggests that rugby “helped create a sense of community and identification” (1984, p.8). He notes the rise of rugby in Otago with impromptu games initially and an increasing standardisation of rules and equipment. Crawford notes the critical role of “a mandarin bureaucracy who set up a stable administrative base and made sense and order out of the hodge-

podge of English football, Victorian rules and various rugby codes” (ibid., p.9). However, in 1877 when a club player died in Auckland, the Parnell District Coroner declared that rugby was a game for savages. The *New Zealand Herald* in that year noted bull-fighting and cock-fighting as recreations that had more to commend them “than the rough-and-tumble hoodlum amusement yclept football which our youths seem to take so much delight in” (Phillips, 1984, p.95). According to *The Otago Daily Times*, June 3, 1878, some public feeling was evident against rugby which was seen as developing the worst impulses of human nature (Crawford, ibid.). (That this concern was not limited to the colony was seen with newspaper reports of the first three seasons of Yorkshire rugby in the 1880s, which saw 71 deaths and 366 injuries.)

Reciprocal tours of New South Wales were instituted and the British rugby team of 1888 introduced the concept of backs handling the ball behind the forwards, a practice previously thought by New Zealanders to be offside play. In turn, a prominent New Zealand captain, Tamihana Ellison, is credited with the introduction of a wing forward, which was seen by opponents as being an obstructionist position near the rear of the scrum.

In 1888-89 a *New Zealand Natives* team toured Britain, the first overseas rugby team to do so, winning 49 of the 74 games it played in the British Isles between October 3, 1888, and March 27, 1889. This attracted substantial newspaper attention in the “Mother Country”. The team was predominantly comprised of Maori, with five Pakeha team-mates. With a belief in the influence of a coach, they took such a team member to England, particularly to teach them Victorian Rules football as a demonstration sport. A British comment of the time reflected existing attitudes on imperialism and sport.

The spectacle of the noble Maori coming from different parts of the earth to play an English game, is a phenomenon that is of the very essence of peace. It is one of our proud boasts that wherever we go, whatever lands we conquer, we found the great national instinct of playing games. Plant a dozen Englishmen anywhere...and in a wonderfully short time the old schoolboy instinct will out, and the level sward is turned into a cricket field in summer and a football arena in winter. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 1888, September 28, p.8).

It was not only the men in the new settlement who took the colonial field. Grimshaw (1972) notes the impact of the new secondary schools for girls, women's suffrage, and feminist movements in generating women's wishes to take part in a full range of sports: “Women began to participate in cricket, athletics, tennis and swimming” (p.9). Despite the increasing acceptance of women's

sports by sectors of society in late nineteenth century New Zealand, the public announcement in 1891 of a women's rugby team for a national tour was met with condemnation (Coney, 1993).

Traditionally however, in New Zealand's male dominated rugby universe women have been seen as back-room providers of cakes and afternoon tea. Emerging gradually in their own rugby competitions in various countries, the roles of women in rugby and perceptions of them by the male rugby world would gradually change. "The processes of signification and embodied ideologies are not fixed and unchanging, but rather sites of struggle and negotiation over gender values and understandings" (Hargreaves, 1994, p.196), and so it has been through the rising rugby decades of the twentieth century.

2.3.2 Emergence of the National Team

In 1892 the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU) was formed, although the South Island unions of Southland, Canterbury and Otago did not join until 1893-1894. The famed black jersey with its silver fern emblem, black shorts and black stockings with white bands were adopted as the national team's playing uniform at the annual meeting of the NZRFU in 1893. This was upon the motion of Tamihana (Tom) Ellison, the noted national player and lawyer. Ellison that same year captained the first New Zealand team to play under the auspices of the NZRFU and produced New Zealand's first influential coaching book (Ellison, 1902).

"The Union rationalised and systematised rules, organised competition, and appointed referees armed with considerable authority. As a distinctive code, rugby had been fostered by secondary schools during the 1870s, but in the space of thirty years it became the national game" (Rice, 1992, p.262).

New Zealand did not enter a team in the rugby competition of the 1900 Olympic Games. Of the three teams entered, France won the gold medal, Germany the silver, and Britain bronze. Rugby went on to be played in the 1908, 1920 and 1924 Olympics, and has been approved again as an Olympic sport, with probable entry into the AD 2004 Olympics. The last Olympic rugby champions were the USA, in 1924.

By 1904 New Zealand rugby's national teams had won 76 games of the 104 played against Australian and British teams but then faced their most demanding challenge to date. In 1905 the *Originals* toured Great Britain captained by the famous Dave Gallaher, in whose memory the

Auckland club competition trophy is still named. Gallaher's reputation as captain is legendary, with tributes to his leadership noted in British and South African rugby histories (see Dobson, 1989; Starmer-Smith, 1986). His team played 35 games, losing one game only. In the course of this tour the team was referred to as the All Blacks. The precise origin of the term is still debated but the name endures. "It was appropriate that the first players from overseas should have been New Zealanders, for the All Blacks, as they have been called since 1904, [sic] have been probably the greatest rugby players of the twentieth century" (Viney and Grant, 1978, pp.30-31). The importance of the 1905 tour in terms of New Zealand rugby lay in two broad areas, those of player skills and skilful team game-plans. Positions in the team had specialist players, and forwards played with pace and in support roles for the backs. The patriotic fervour of the tour and establishment of New Zealand as a foremost, perhaps the foremost, rugby playing nation, gave the tour an importance that is difficult to over-emphasise.

The links between rugby and political gain in New Zealand were seen on the return of that national team's tour of Australia with a reception from the Prime Minister in Wellington, and laudatory comments from the Leader of the Opposition. The 1905 team had been recognised throughout their successful tour by Prime Minister Seddon, who capitalised on their record in every possible public relations situation.

The material attraction of pounds, shillings and pence in the rugby world of the day was noted by Vamplew (1988). Financial allurements were felt in 1907 by the Old Golds professional rugby league team which left New Zealand to play in England, and included some 1905 All Blacks who were now seeking payment as league players. Reactions in New Zealand echoed social attitudes in England with Crawford (1984, p.8) quoting a newspaper letter describing the union player as a "clean cut thoroughbred" in contrast to the "ungamely draught horse" of league. Since the split of rugby football codes into union and league, which had seen the latter formalised in 1895 (Dunning and Sheard, 1976), there have been tense and sometimes bitter relationships between the "amateur" and "professional" rugby codes. (Rugby league has been a cause of concern for rugby union administrators in the 1990s with players being "purchased" by rugby league clubs and the massive financial support looming for a super rugby league structure.) In 1913 the Canterbury Rugby Union in New Zealand seriously discussed the adoption of league rules on an amateur basis but this was defeated. The extremes of prejudice between the codes are illustrated by the case of Reverend C.M. Cheras, Bishop of Rochester in England until 1961, who played a handful of rugby league games when young and was consequently debarred for the rest of his life from rugby union coaching or administration (McIntosh, 1963). Restrictions upon rugby union players re-

entering this code after playing league have been apparent throughout the twentieth century until the professional era in 1995-96.

2.3.3 Expansion of the Game

The development of rugby in New Zealand over the two decades following World War One was striking. New Zealand Universities and Maori teams made their first tours overseas and the New Zealand Services team, representative of World War I armed forces, won the King's Cup tournament in Britain. This team played in South Africa, with the non-selection of such outstanding "coloured" Services players as the All Black Ranji Wilson. In 1921 the first South African (or Springbok) visit to New Zealand provided a drawn test match series -- and the first signs of the black and white political storm clouds that were to hang over rugby's green fields for some 70 years. A peak controversy came in 1921 when South Africa played against New Zealand Maoris at Napier, which resulted in an inflammatory cable from a South African correspondent, C. W. F. Blackett, who stated, "Bad enough having (Springboks) play officially designated New Zealand natives; but spectacle of thousands of Europeans frantically cheering on band of coloured men to defeat members of our race was too much for Springboks, who were frankly disgusted" (McLean, 1991, p.41).

The 1924-25 All Black team, which became known as *The Invincibles*, won every match of its tour of Britain, France and British Columbia. *The Times* in London issued a special supplement on the play of the All Blacks. Two of the great Maori players from that tour, Jimmy Mill and the peerless George Nepia, three years later found themselves omitted from the All Black team to tour South Africa because of their colour.

Following an inaugural tour of New Zealand by the composite British Isles team, known as the Lions, the Bledisloe Cup was introduced for trans-Tasman test competition in 1931. That season's rivalry against Australia was to see the demise of New Zealand's traditional 2-3-2 scrum and adoption of the formation noted in Figure 2.1. The All Blacks had been playing with two men in the front row, three in the second row, two in the back, and a wing forward detached from the scrum. The legality of the latter player had been questioned by the Lions management and the alternative scrum formation used by other rugby nations had appeared to reveal greater potency as a massed force to secure possession. In 1937 the South Africans, often described as the greatest rugby team to tour New Zealand, won the test series in New Zealand, and two years later Fiji made its first tour. The political irony of having one visiting team selected of all white players

and another whose colour would have excluded them from selection in the preceding team, appeared to be of no public concern to New Zealanders. This would change markedly in the following generation.

Following World War II, a team known as the Kiwis was selected from the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force, to tour Britain and France and play some games in New Zealand. Their fast flowing and open style of fifteen man rugby, involving all of the team in important segments of play, was acclaimed at each venue and was to later influence All Black play in the 1960s when the Kiwis captain and vice-captain became manager and coach, respectively, of the All Blacks.

In 1948 New Zealand was admitted to the International Rugby Board, some 80 years after rugby had been first played in New Zealand. The first post-World War II tour of South Africa a year later saw controversy on rules and the quality of South African referees follow the loss of all four test matches there by the All Blacks. Another All Black team also lost two tests at home to Australia. The image of rugby was enhanced by the 1950 British Lions who played attractive rugby in the tradition of their 1930 forebears. The coveted Ranfurly Shield, awarded in 1901 by a Governor of New Zealand, Lord Ranfurly, for provincial rugby supremacy, generated large post-war crowds with Otago dominating the Shield's possession for much of this period. Contestation for this most prestigious trophy was secondary in 1956, however, to the South African tour of New Zealand. Given the intense rivalry between the two countries since 1919, coupled with the All Blacks' losses sustained in 1949, the expectations of the New Zealand rugby administration and the vocal public were demanding upon the All Blacks. The resultant state of rugby tension engendered national team experiences of a siege-like response to public pressure. (Personal communication from players. See also Roger, 1991.) In New Zealand society there were voices increasingly seeking the recognition of non-white players in South African teams, and the inclusion of Maori in New Zealand teams to South Africa. The often discordant skeins of politics and sport were becoming more visibly interwoven.

The public appeal of rugby in a small country like New Zealand has often surprised visitors and sport commentators. J.B.G. Thomas (1961a), a well-respected writer and author of more than twenty rugby books, has observed: "New Zealanders are crazy about the Rugby Union game. Rugby to a normal New Zealander is a way of life and far more than a mere sport. It is a national form of demonstration of the physical prowess of the youth in the country" (p.109). As described by a famous Australian opponent, "When you are playing the All Blacks you are playing the best in the world" (Campese, 1991, p.80).

Tours continued to and from New Zealand in the 1960s, including visits by individual unions from the Five Nations countries of Great Britain and France. All Black rugby surged in an expansive playing style, winning 38 of 43 tests contested in the later 1960s under the famous Fred Allen as New Zealand coach, and the successive captaincy eras of Whineray and Lochore. The retirement of these key figures and changes in the national style of play were followed with a series loss to the 1971 Lions, under their acclaimed coach, Carwyn James, which brought a reevaluation of New Zealand playing style and goal kicking (see Appendix B.4). One year later the first telecast of a test match occurred, New Zealand vs. Australia. In the same year a direct satellite telecast was received in New Zealand of the All Blacks match vs. Wales at Cardiff. The impact of this communication medium was to heighten the visibility of player actions, bring games into previously remote households, provide coaches with rapid insights into opposition teams, and raise rugby's profile through enhanced visibility.

The rugby world charted new courses in the 1960s and 1970s with tours of New Zealand by Victoria, Romania, Western Samoa, Cook Islands, Argentina and Italy. In a 1965 speech made in South Africa while that country's rugby team was touring New Zealand, their Prime Minister, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, reiterated that Maori players would not be welcomed as touring All Blacks. The rising assertion of the New Zealand populace declaring "No Maoris, no tour" led to agitation in politics and sport, with debate on the extent to which the two could, and should, interact. A proposed tour of South Africa by New Zealand was consequently cancelled. Verwoerd's successor, Mr. J.B. Voerster, amended the official viewpoint and in 1970 "coloured players" (three Maori and a Samoan) were included for the first time in a touring All Black team to the Republic of South Africa.

A 1976 New Zealand tour to South Africa saw student riots and police shootings in that country matched by vociferous public condemnation in New Zealand of the political domination of South African sport which resulted in the persistent non-inclusion of coloured players in touring Springbok teams. Prominent All Blacks, including the celebrated captain Graham Mourie, declined selection in All Black teams to play South Africa. Rugby faced a backlash in schools from teachers who withdrew their involvement in rugby coaching because they saw the New Zealand rugby administration supporting sport contact with racist sides. As Bourdieu (1988) was to observe, "the social meaning attached to a sporting practice by its dominant social users (numerically or socially) can change" (p.154).

The racial discrimination debate was fuelled by the traumatic tour of New Zealand by the 1981 South Africans, which brought rugby, politics and civil protest to flashpoint, figuratively and literally. Two tour matches in 1981 were cancelled on police advice, and the nation was dramatically divided on issues of racial selection and the rights of sportspersons to play without restriction. The next proposed All Black tour to South Africa was cancelled after legal action, and a private substitution tour by many of that team (known as the Cavaliers) took place. The gradual recovery from such societal strains took most of the decade. It may be argued that the disassociation of educators from rugby assisted the development of other school sports, and that the cataclysmic social and political debates had an overall effect of shifting rugby from its previously lofty place in New Zealand sport. For many in the ostensibly bicultural society of New Zealand, the icon of rugby was irreparably tarnished.

The 1990s were preceded with a World Cup in 1987, won by the All Blacks under the coaching of Brian Lochore, a past All Black captain, who initiated a new era of test match dominance. The ensuing decade has seen such international issues as professionalism in rugby, bans on players for drug-taking and onfield violence, debates on World Cup organisation, controversy on the selection of national coaches, and intense media debates in New Zealand and world rugby.

Despite the trauma of the 1981 tour and the issues noted above, rugby remains in 1996 as New Zealand's major sport. "By every measure rugby is our biggest sport. It has the most players, greatest income, highest profile and largest crowd and television exposure" (New Zealand Rugby Football Union, 1993, p.18). There are 205,000 registered rugby players, compared with 137,000 in 1988. Ten years ago there was \$78,000 spent on coaching whereas now there is \$543,000. The NZRFU surveys indicate that 22% of the general population note rugby as their first choice of a sport to watch or play, with 12% choosing league, 7% outdoor cricket and 5% electing netball or tennis. The largest television viewing audience in 1994 was the Bledisloe Cup test between Australia and New Zealand, with 41% of the nation's homes watching the rugby encounter. (See also Appendix A.)

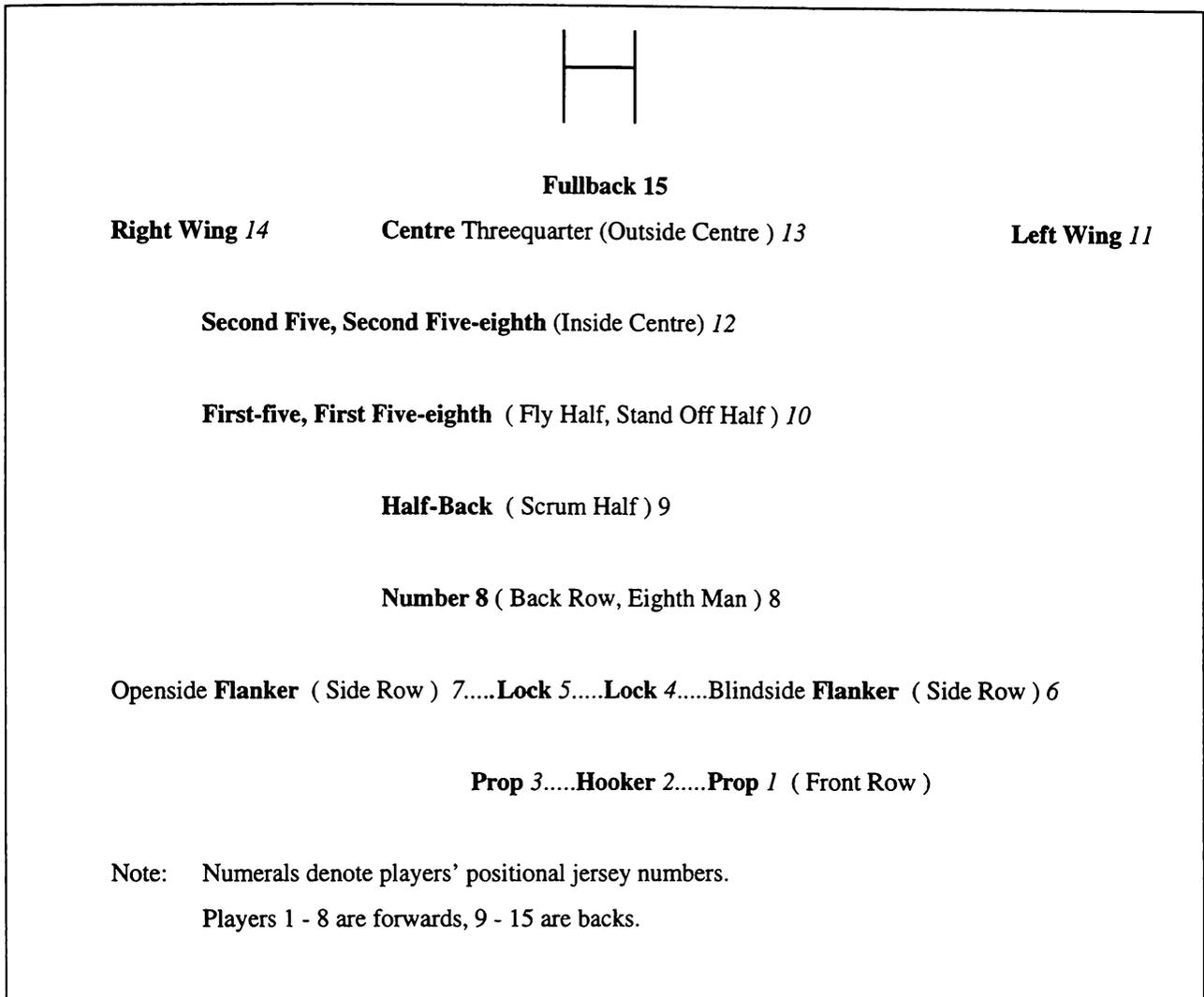
In 1993 a review of rugby (the Boston Review, see Boston Consulting Group, 1994) set out major considerations for New Zealand's rugby development into the twenty-first century. The brief of the review group was:

1. To review New Zealand rugby as it is currently structured.

2. To analyse its current strengths and weaknesses and determine the issues and opportunities facing the game.
3. To recommend appropriate strategies, structures and competitions to best serve the requirements of the game for the future.

The major recommendations of the Boston review included: the development of a reorganised super-team national competition, possibly with Australian state teams taking part; reorganising the NZRFU Council to make it less cumbersome and more business oriented; to possibly reduce the number of international test matches in order to maintain high interest in, and support for, the national All Blacks team; and to generally assume the structures and practices of a more competitive, market-focused sports organisation. The report poses challenges for rugby's leaders, administratively and at the elite team level. Given this, it is significant that the NZRFU had set the following guideline to the brief for the review. "Paramount to the above brief was the need to recognise the important part rugby played in the heritage of New Zealand and to ensure that so far as practicable the traditions of the game were preserved" (New Zealand Rugby Football Union, 1993, p.4).

Demands facing rugby in the 1990s, such as implications of professional sport, the Boston Review's generation of changes in rugby administration, public expectations of the All Blacks, and ever-present changes to the rule book with their resultant premiums placed upon leadership, are challenging the game's administrators. Despite these, today's game of rugby is still played on a field readily recognised as an adaptation of The Close at Rugby School in England where the game originated. Much of the modern nomenclature and custom are rooted in the public school practice of its early exponents, such as the touch-line, where the first player to touch the ball over the side-line would put it into the field of play, or the visible sign of the goalposts, shaped as they have been since 1846. The grounding of the ball over the opponents' line, enabling the player to "try" for a conversion, would not appear alien to nineteenth century public schools or even to combatants in the harpastum game of Roman times. Internationally, the moves to standardisation have included the terminology of player positions and jersey numbering, albeit that New Zealand nomenclature for field positions is still not identical with that used by other countries (see Figure 2.1).



(New Zealand terminology in bold.)

Figure 2.1 Rugby team positions terminology, 1995.

2.3.4 Coaches and Coaching

To this point, this chapter has not dwelt upon the impact on the game of certain individuals, although the more accessible records of nineteenth and twentieth century rugby have noted the influence of key persons upon the shaping of the 15 player game and the fortunes of teams. The national debate in New Zealand over the selection of the All Black coach for the 1995 World Cup team clearly showed the grip on the national psyche still held by “the national game”, and reflected the widespread belief that the coach is the key figure in such an elite sport team's fortunes.

Back in the 1880s, Harry Vassal of Oxford University was such a figure who “brought practising and coaching into the game” (Dobson, 1989, p.13). He is credited with introducing tactics that led to Oxford's rugby superiority for 1881-1884. A decade later in Western Province, South Africa, Herbert Hayton Castens became acknowledged as the first rugby coach in that country, regarding rugby as “a game of science with tenets that it was essential to study closely” (ibid., p.38). Successors of his included Danie Craven and the legendary “Mr Mark”, A.M. Markotter (see Appendix B.1, #22). Two other South Africans, Heatlie and van Heerden, were key influences in developing the coaching of rugby in Argentina (Dobson, 1989).

In New Zealand's early twentieth-century winters, Jimmy Duncan became a noted coach, having an influence on positions and tactics. Gallaher and Stead, from the 1905-06 All Blacks, are still renowned for their insightful leadership and the relevance of their coaching manual. The achievements of Tommy Lawton and Johnny Wallace with the highly acknowledged 1927-28 Waratahs, the national team of Australia, and the 1937 test team which won accolades against the Springboks of South Africa, have been chronicled as outstanding leaders (see Pollard, 1984, pp.142-143). Their legacy includes Bob Templeton, Bob Dwyer, Dave Brockhoff and the controversial Alan Jones. Internationally acclaimed coaches who never coached their national team include the gifted Carwyn James of Wales, and Vic Cavanagh of New Zealand.

In the land of the All Blacks, national team coaches and captains who have won recognition at home and abroad for shaping their country's rugby fortunes include Fred Allen, Jack Gleeson, Brian Lochore, Graham Mourie, Wilson Whineray, Andy Dalton, Wayne Shelford and Alex Wyllie. Their legacy as apparent shapers of team fortunes has been inherited by club, provincial, state and national coaches who have assumed an increasing prominence in their sport of rugby football. Implicit in an acceptance of their influence is a recognition that such team leaders can influence a team's results through qualities and acts of leadership. Such leadership is seen as influencing match results, player participation, skill acquisition, team direction, achievement and income. The rugby coach, states John Reason (Reason and James, 1979), is “with us to stay -- accepted and approved with the stamp, albeit varied, of authority” (p. 256). The coach, as the key team leader, is expected to generate results. In certain arenas test rugby has been seen as more important than questions of life and death -- especially for the coaches, and the tests between New Zealand and South Africa (see McLaren, 1994a).

A preliminary exploration of research texts and popular literature on sport team leadership indicates little information, however, on how such team leaders enact their roles in the realities of

the team situation and its sport context. Rugby coaching literature, especially, appears on initial reading to provide virtually no first-hand account or objective description of the coach or captain in action, of how the apparent role of influence is enacted (see, for example, Robertson and Osborne, 1984; Vodanovich and Coates, 1982). Discussions of their influential roles are ostensibly based upon assumptions of how these roles are carried out, rather than any substantiated or objective first-hand confirmation of this. Frost (1968) illustrates this differential when he notes that “Some French critics have said that French rugby came of age. Mias was not only an inspiring man and leader; he also gave the French team a sense of purpose and direction. He emphasised fundamental principles and created a style of play” (p.118). The perception of Mias is clear, but there is little to show what this team leader actually did in his “leader” behaviour.

Questions emerge from a critical consideration of sport in society and of the place of rugby in New Zealand specifically. These centre on the belief that if sport is an important dimension of our society, and if the influence and achievements of rugby teams relate to the leadership of them, then there is value in determining what these leaders do, and whether their leadership can be enhanced consequently to further a positive engagement with sport for its participants. Is the initial judgement accurate that the literature provides wide-ranging discussions on the role of top level sport team leaders, but little actual evidence of the day-to-day realities of their role enactment? How can we know if sport leadership and rugby commentators are accurate in their assumptions and assertions about coaches and captains as elite team leaders? What are the qualities of excellent rugby coaches and captains? What do elite rugby team leaders actually do? Such emergent questions stimulated a systematic search of the literature now considered in Chapter Three.

2.4 SUMMARY AND COMMENT

Sport is an integral dimension of society. This chapter has drawn upon broad developments of New Zealand sport history, from its elements of indigenous ritual and social survival to the present. The social forces and industrialisation that shaped today's organised sport through the formative eras of the nineteenth century are reflected in today's continuing environment of professionalism, commercialism, and the apparent paradox of global sport impacting locally through media, economics and the adherence of followers in New Zealand and the sport universe generally.

The study of sport in society has increasingly engaged the post-World War Two sport sociologist, researcher and historian. The ways in which sport is revealed as a microcosm of society, the impact of societal forces, and the influence of sport upon its societal environment are all illustrated by rugby in its context as New Zealand's primary game. This game originated from English public schools but has progenitors or related stock in variant forms of folk football throughout the world (see Appendix A.2). A consideration of its development reflects such major domains of the wider sport-society interaction as: social class issues; media representation and influence; codification and standardisation; commercialism; professionalism versus amateurism; hero worship; economics; technology; sport science; sport structures, and the all pervasive elements of sport leadership.

Rugby has traditionally involved participation by all sectors of New Zealand society. From colonial days, through emergent tours of overseas countries, and the increasing efficiencies of team play and administrative organisation, the "union" variant of football has placed the All Blacks in the forefront of world rugby. In this position the leadership roles of the coaches and captains have been increasingly scrutinised, with various theories and beliefs espoused on the efficacy of those key persons. Arguably, an understanding of the role realities of rugby team leaders would enhance an understanding of how to positively enhance their performance. If, as many leadership theorists suggest, leadership is an act of influence, what does an elite rugby coach actually do in attempting to influence team members and team fortunes?

This study now turns to consider the literature on elite rugby team leaders and field research which examines the elite rugby coach and captain in action, in order to critically determine the literature's contribution to providing an understanding of the elite rugby coach and captain as sport team leaders.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ON ELITE RUGBY TEAM LEADERSHIP

This chapter reviews related literature on rugby leadership. A large body of research and writing exists on leadership, with a smaller but significant field on sport team leadership, particularly on coaching, but no substantive research exists on elite rugby leadership. Much of the existing sport leadership research examines high school, college or university levels. Elite sport leadership studies tend to provide perspectives on coach roles and behaviours, primarily utilising surveys or interviews to elicit coach and athlete perceptions, or draw upon observations of coaches at training. There is some initial research into elite coach development. Field research on sport team leadership in all elite settings of coach and captain behaviour is absent from the literature. The literature on rugby leadership tends to be anecdotal and less formal, predominantly expressed through coaching manuals, biographies and tour books. This chapter concludes with a summary and comment on the literature findings and notes the questions that helped to guide the present study.

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Elite Sport Team Leadership
 - 3.2.1 Coaching
 - 3.2.2 Captaincy
- 3.3 Elite Rugby Team Leadership
 - 3.3.1 Coaching
 - 3.3.2 Captaincy
- 3.4 Elite Rugby Team Leadership: New Zealand Perspectives
 - 3.4.1 Coaching
 - 3.4.2 Captaincy
- 3.5 Summary and Comment

The previous chapter noted a range of questions (p.32) which coalesced into the broad question: “If, as many leadership theorists suggest, leadership is an act of influence, what does an elite rugby coach actually do in attempting to influence team members and team fortunes?” (p.34). This chapter explores that question through a review of the literature on elite rugby team leadership, in order to sharpen the specific questions for the present study. As noted in the preceding chapter, *elite team* refers to a team at the highest internal national level of competition (such as state, provincial or county), or engaged in international representation.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Leadership

The 7,000 literature references noted in Bass (1990), indicate the range of leadership perceptions and definitions. Defining leadership, according to Bass (1990), involves more than identifying

leaders and how they move into their positions; it should account for the continuing generation of leadership. Bass defines leadership as “an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Leaders are agents of change, whose acts affect other people more than other peoples’ acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group” (ibid., p.20). In essence, the leadership role is one of influence upon, and generating change in, followers (Martens, 1987). Rost (1991) defines leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p.104). This definition provides four critical components: the relationship is based on influence; leaders and followers are interdependent in this relationship; leaders and followers intend real changes; and leaders and followers have mutual purposes (p.104).

The literature on leadership indicates a broad historical development of theoretical perspectives, which may include: (a) the “Great Man” [sic] belief that leaders had predestined, genetic or hereditary leadership rights; (b) trait theory, indicating a belief that leaders had certain traits which could be delineated from studies of leaders; (c) behavioural theories which sought to isolate key behavioural patterns, and drew strongly upon the Ohio State University studies, noting major dimensions such as structure and consideration; (d) contingency and situational theories which considered leadership in terms of the circumstances in which it is to be exerted; (e) the path-goal theory which emphasised leadership styles; and (f) transactional and transformational leadership theories, considering the leader’s role in maintaining or uplifting an organisation (see Bass, 1990; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Rost, 1991). Consideration of these may assist an awareness of leadership factors, situations and leadership debate, but Rost (ibid.) warns against assumptions that such convenient groupings necessarily imply progress in understanding leadership, as studies have not yet developed a clear accord on its concept and practice.

Utilising a methodology which could prove informative as a research tool applied to sport leaders, Kouzes and Posner (1987) surveyed 550 leaders by questionnaire to ascertain their leadership strategies when achieving personal best leadership experiences, and then utilised 42 in-depth follow-up interviews. They suggested five fundamental leadership practices: challenging the process; inspiring a shared vision; enabling others to act; modelling the way; and encouraging the heart. Similar elements such as vision, influence, follower commitment, empowerment, service,

and group dynamics are noted by many commentators (see Bass, 1990; Bennis, 1989; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Sergiovanni, 1987).

3.2 ELITE SPORT TEAM LEADERSHIP

Despite the prevalence of literature on leadership and its having captured the interest of sport management scholars “minimal empirical attention has been directed toward the actual ‘movers and shakers’ who lead organisations” (Weese, 1994, p.179), or to the struggle of sport management scholars and practitioners “in their efforts to arrive at a valid and applicable concept of leadership” (ibid.). Notwithstanding such views, the high profile of sport team leader roles is reflected in the sport news media through to the plethora of publications on business leadership which draw on assumptions about teams and their leadership, especially in terms of coach roles, despite the lack of validating research evidence (see, for example, Evered and Selman, 1989; Orth, Wilkinson and Benfari, 1987). (Indeed, McNeillis, 1993, argues that elite sport team leadership is congruent with elements of business leadership, each role having such parallels as pressure, goal setting, organisation, and training time.)

Sport team leadership is a dynamic process, affected by variables which include team homogeneity, player experience and leadership, tradition, and community support (Pratt and Eitzen, 1989a). This leadership makes a difference to followers, participants and the results of sport competition (Freischlag, 1985; Hale, 1989; Hemery, 1991; Isaacs, 1978; Pratt and Eitzen, 1989a; Seefeldt and Brown, 1991; Stewart, 1976; Summers, 1991; Weiss and Freidrichs, 1986). It may be posited that elite coaches are leaders since they have influence within their team organisation and upon perceptions and practices in that sport’s wider environment (Alderman, 1976; Iso-Ahola and Hatfield, 1986). Team leadership may be formal, (official positions such as team captain), or informal and emergent, (players or officials providing unofficial leadership).

Despite the importance of leadership in the elite team setting and a concentration of related literature on the coach, “The leadership forces within the team itself have not been the subject of extensive scientific or semi-scientific scrutiny” (Cratty, 1989, p.293). Horne and Carron (1985) underscore the lack of systematic research examining leadership in sport, and Kuklinski’s (1990) overview of sport leadership concluded, ...“there is a paucity of research and conceptual literature about leadership in sport situations even though coaching requires one to be a leader Because coaches are leaders, coaching effectiveness can be maximised through understanding the concepts

of leadership” (p.9). The concept of the sport team as an organisation is infrequently examined in the literature, as is research on sport organisations (Slack, 1993).

An examination of advanced dissertational studies indicates a dominant focus on leadership as a general field, with studies of leadership styles and behaviour, and a comparative absence of elite sport team leadership. The 147 leadership dissertations of 1992 in North America included one with a sport focus. A survey of sport dissertations for 1993 indicated no research on a national sport team’s leadership (see, for example, University Microfilms, 1994). Soucie (1994) observed that 55 doctoral dissertations in North America for 1969-89 on leadership in sport were mostly descriptive of the leadership behaviour of department heads and athletic administrators of educational institutions. The European picture is similar (Pieron, 1986; Pieron and Cheffers, 1988).

Dissertations in Australia, United Kingdom and New Zealand reflect a similar field. An extensive review of North American observational studies of coach behaviour by Trudel and Gilbert (1995), did not provide an in-depth study at the national or international sport team leader level. Of the 111 studies noted by Trudel and Gilbert most centred on high school or university level sport and neglected the full observation of onfield and off-field coach behaviour.

Elite sport team leadership has primarily been researched through: observation at training or games; surveys or interviews of athletes and coaches to determine perceptions of coach qualities, behaviours, personality traits, or leadership styles, (often utilising coach assessment scales or models); consideration of athlete satisfaction; and examining performance and coach-athlete compatibility.

Team members are seen to respond to leadership behaviour which has an emphasis upon training and instruction, develops athlete abilities, fosters group effort and coordination, gives positive feedback in recognition of athlete performance, and provides social support (Carron, 1988; Chelladurai, 1978; Dwyer and Fischer, 1990; Schliesman, 1987; Weiss and Friedrichs, 1986). Such behaviours indicate root similarities between teaching and coaching (Gould, Giannini, Krane and Hodge, 1990; Tharp and Gallimore, 1976) and the coach could benefit from knowledge of teaching (Mawer, 1990).

McNeillis (1993) provides a rare discussion of sport leadership and management in terms of athletic training, suggesting that leadership is an influence relationship with an emphasis upon knowledge of self, staff and profession, and the utilisation of people skills. He considers management as an authority relationship, with a focus upon organisation, communication and attainment of the sports mission, and suggests a fusion of roles to enhance goal attainment. Murray (1986) assumes the coach is a leader, noting the importance of leadership style and power.

Research is relatively skeletal at the elite team level to ascertain how such behaviours are manifested through all team settings, and there is an absence of relevant field research on sport management (Olafson, 1990a). Some have argued for scientific study of the leader (coaches) (Cratty, 1989; Danielson, Zelhart and Drake, 1975; Gould, Hodge, Peterson and Giannini, 1989; Gould, Hodge, Peterson, and Petlichkoff, 1987). Others state that research could be enhanced with understanding team culture (e.g., Weese, Maclean and Corlett, 1993), and look for linkages of leadership with cultural diversity (e.g., Chemers and Ayman, 1993).

The seminal works of Mintzberg (1973) on everyday contextual roles of the manager, and Wolcott (1978) on perceived realities of the secondary school principal's role, do not appear to have been substantially reflected in sports team leadership research. Cratty (1989, p.268), however, supports such studies, suggesting that leadership should be studied "within a global context consisting of task and situational variables, including those that frequently change and those that are relatively stable," noting the lack of literature on informal team leaders.

Widmeyer (1986) notes the need to research group effectiveness in a team, suggesting that a team's interaction influences the level of effort brought to a task, task performances, strategies of members, and levels of knowledge and skill available to the group. Melnick (1986) suggests that if group processes of symbolic meaning construction are critical in team life, then the role of the coach should be considered in such processes and in the construction of the team's social world. Integral to this role are coach behaviours which influence team culture, but which are not necessarily revealed through questionnaires, win-loss ratios, or even in-depth interviews and understandings (see also Slack, 1991). Schein (1990a, 1990b) notes the social world or organisational culture context of leadership, within which sport is "an individual action with a symbolically interpreted result" (Digel, 1988, p.177).

The importance of linkage with organisational culture has rarely been considered in terms of team leadership, and the impact of one upon the other. "The behavioural norms, codes of conduct, stories, symbols, rituals, and so on traditionally associated with sport and subsequently sport organisations would provide fertile ground for studies of organisational culture and its ties to leadership" (Slack and Kikulis, 1989, p.187). This is reinforced by Schein (1990a, 1990b).

With the caveat that leadership efficacy and theory may be explored further in the present study's bibliographic literature, this review now moves to consider more specific spheres of team leadership in elite sport, particularly rugby.

3.2.1 Coaching

Coaching may be defined as an influence role which is "the recognised practice in sport whereby individuals intend to improve the performances of an athlete or team and to reduce the unpredictability of performance towards an identified target competition" (Lyle, 1993, p.15). Coaching, which dates from ancient Greece (Simri, 1980a), also aims to enhance the athlete's personal growth (McConnell, 1995a). This influence in an elite sport context is reflected in the perception that "behind every successful athlete you will find a coach," (Stewart, 1976, p.1). The Hillary Commission (1993a) noted the key to personal achievement as high quality coaching and leadership through to the highest performance level. "A lack of elite coaches is the most crucial problem facing New Zealand athletes", ("Elite coaches biggest", 1994, p.16). High quality elite coaching may be seen as an art and science (McConnell 1995a; Woodman, 1993).

Coaches influence the behaviour or satisfaction of athletes and their achievement (Anshel, 1990; Buzas and Ayllon, 1981; Chelladurai, 1978; Hemery, 1991; Horn, 1992; Lyle, 1993; Maetozo, 1981; Mahoney, Gabriel and Perkins, 1987; Stewart, 1976; Weese, MacLean and Corlett, 1993; Woodman, 1993). Although the coach is seen as a leader (Frisco, 1991; Frisco, 1992; Ogilvie and Tutko, 1966; Vogel and de Jong, 1991; Weese, MacLean, Corlett, 1993), commentators rarely explain actual leadership indicators and qualities. In contrast, Rushall (1982) suggests there is little evidence to suggest that coaches directly influence athletes (see Appendix B.1 in this present study for athlete perspectives on such coach influence). It may be, however, that the coach is influential in shaping the team's environment and satisfaction to influence performance, rather than directly influencing individual players, and this could be studied (Anshel, 1990). Qualities such as the ability to focus an athlete or team, knowledge of what it takes to be successful, maximising player talents and enhancing team affiliation are dimensions of successful coach

leadership (Kuklinski, 1990; Murray, 1986; Schliesman, 1987). Howe (1990) suggests that the primary role of coaches is facilitating satisfaction for all participants, achieved by assisting athletes to reach their optimal level, enabling athletes to accept personal responsibility for their performances, and having a commitment to become the best coach possible.

Despite the coach's importance, "Research on the [coach] phenomenon has unfortunately been sparse and sporadic....The study of leadership is critical to the understanding of performance because leadership is instrumental in enhancing the motivational state of the athlete and/or team..." (Chelladurai, 1990, p.329). Within coaching organisations, leadership dimensions have rarely been considered in depth. The Coaching Association of New Zealand, for example, refers to people skills in terms of leadership but does not explain such skills or coach leadership (Coaching Association of New Zealand, n.d.a).

Chelladurai (1984, 1990, 1993) has been influential in two of the main paths traversed by sports leadership researchers and theorists within the past twenty years. His multidimensional model of leadership has signposted one of these research paths, predicated on the belief that a sport team is a formal organization having a coach enacted leadership role which is a behavioural process of influence with high interpersonal interaction. In Chelladurai's model, which draws upon leadership theories, "group performance and member satisfaction are considered to be a function of the congruence among three states of leader behaviour -- required, preferred and actual. The antecedents of these three states of leader behaviours are the characteristics of the situation, the leader and the members" (Chelladurai, 1990, p.329).

Kuklinski (1990) and Hardy and Jones (1994a) confirm support for Chelladurai's model, noting that experienced performers prefer social support more than do inexperienced performers, although "Much remains to be learned about the group dynamics of sports teams" (op cit., p.73). Chelladurai (1993) posits that decision styles in coaching are important in leadership, drawing on cognitive and social processes and an integrated team in order to facilitate effective participation in decision making. A high congruence between the coach's decision-making style and that preferred by the athletes influences athlete perceptions of the coach's effectiveness (Gordon, 1988). A second path by Chelladurai and associates saw them develop a Leadership Scale for Sports (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980).

Horn (1992) confirms the dominance of research over the last two decades centred on identifying effective leadership styles. Ogilvie and Tutko (1996) found top coaches to be organised, emotionally stable, intelligent, and dominating without a marked interest in the needs of others. Tutko and Richards (1971) noted coach beliefs in discipline, rules and an impersonal attitude towards the athlete. They identify three basic coaching styles (Figure 3.1), with the authoritarian style noted by several sources (Hendry, 1974; Ogilvie and Tutko, 1966; Tutko and Richards, 1971). Other prominent leadership styles include the autocratic, consultive, participative and delegative (Chelladurai, 1993; Chelladurai and Arnott, 1985; Chelladurai and Haggerty, 1978).

Coaching Style	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Authoritarian	Intense energy Well-organised Plans thoroughly Severe on player errors	Disciplined Atmosphere Facilitates dedication	Sensitive players may 'turn off'
Personable	Flexible Creative Concerned	Respect Good feeling Team cohesion	Flexibility and consideration can be seen as weakness
Casual	Easy-going to the extreme Relaxed and passive	Players develop independence No real pressure to perform	Lack of structure and organisation No development plan

Figure 3.1 Coach leadership styles (Tutko and Richards, 1971).

Daly (1984) notes Counsilman's belief that mature, emotionally stable players cannot identify with, or respect, the autocratic coach. Elite athletes see their coaches as being more autocratic, less democratic, and more socially supportive than do low ability athletes, (Pratt and Eitzen, 1989a, 1989b; Salminen, Liukkonen and Telama, 1990). Their research does not indicate if the perceived coach behaviours changed in the course of competition. (Lefebvre and Cunningham, 1977, for example, noted that coaches of a United States university football team tended to communicate more with players after successful matches.) Males may prefer more autocratic leadership than do female athletes (Carron, 1982). An international athlete, Hemery (1991), suggests that the coach-athlete relationship can encompass an authoritarian approach on the field and genuine friendship off the field. This may reflect the emotional maturity and control of athletes being higher at the elite level (Ogilvie and Tutko, 1966). Serpa, Pataco and Santos (1991) studied eight World Championship Handball teams, eliciting elite athlete perceptions that their coaches emphasised task orientation (training and instruction, rewarding behaviour) with little emphasis on democratic behaviour. Their studies do not indicate with certainty whether the

coaching behaviour led to achievement, or whether higher level teams shape and reinforce certain coach behaviours because they are winning. Nor is there any explicit consideration of the relationship between the coach and key team members such as the captain and informal leaders, with whom the coach's behaviour may be socially supportive and democratic.

Although training is an essential element of coach-athlete interaction (Trudel and Gilbert, 1995), all behaviours and dimensions of coach leadership styles cannot necessarily be readily observed in training or competition only (see Chaumeton and Duda, 1988; Horn, 1992; Markland and Martinek, 1988). Coach behaviour may differ in match and practice situations (Wandzilak, Ansorge and Potter, 1988), especially as a trained team is needed for match success (Hemery, 1991). The trained team, argue Chelladurai and Saleh (1978), cannot develop norms in the short duration of a game so the coach must develop a uniform approach and impose action. Chelladurai and Saleh do not, however, appear to recognise the impact of such intangibles as team spirit, game plans, tradition, role familiarity and player-coach trust. These may change from practice to competition, across player abilities, participants' playing or non playing capacity, athletes' needs as individuals, or the context of performance.

Orlick and Partington (1988) and Docheff (1990) illustrate those who note the athlete's need to develop mental competence. This may be facilitated by the coach's teaching and training skills, especially in developing time on task, athlete learning, organising developmental tasks, monitoring improvement and appropriately increasing task complexity (Naylor and Howe, 1990). Links between coaching and pedagogical dimensions should be analysed (Trudel and Gilbert, 1995). Despite recognition of the coach's need for teaching skills (Tharp and Gallimore, 1976; Tinning 1982) there is a lack of qualitative evidence on "the ecology of sport settings" where instruction occurs (Kidman, 1994, p.20).

A body of Canadian research represents a major thrust into conceptual fields of elite coaching. Salmela (1994) interviewed elite coaches to understand their career development and perspectives on coach education. The interview responses emphasised evolutionary dimensions of elite coaching, as well as support for mentoring and formalised coach education. Salmela further noted that elite coaches had integrated perspectives on coaching in contrast to the segmented and artificial emphases in this field often held by academics. The coaches' self-perceptions noted in this research were not validated by extending the study to a survey or interviews of the athletes

with whom they were associated. Schinke, Bloom and Salmela (1995) argue for more studies of elite coach behaviour, as does Bloom (G. Bloom, personal communication, August 25, 1995).

Côté, Trudel and Salmela (1993b), noting the literature on coaching, advocated formation of a general model on coaching to integrate knowledge generated by the research because no theoretical framework necessarily provided an explanation of the more important coaching features or the most significant relationships among these. Côté, Salmela and Russell (1995a, 1995b) used interviews with 17 elite gymnastic coaches to generate data which were analysed through grounded theory to conceptualise coach knowledge. Although only nine of 17 coaches responded to a post-interview survey on the data's accuracy, a reliability check by independent judges confirmed the data categorisation. The study, despite adding key considerations to perspectives on elite coaches, does not include triangulation measures such as athlete interviews or observation of the coaches in all settings, to confirm the coaches' professed knowledge and self-description. Coaches' self-perceptions may differ from their athletes' assessment of them (Chelladurai, 1993). A study which draws from an elite, individual, independent sport (gymnastics), may generate data markedly different from an open, team, interdependent sport, (e.g., rugby). In the former type of sport such behaviours may not have the same relevance to the latter interdependent sport settings, although Gould, Giannini, Krane and Hodge (1990) suggest that the body of elite coach knowledge has a generalisability.

The Dynamic Model of Coaching, developed by Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria and Russell (1995) from the study of gymnastic coaches incorporates dimensions of competition, organisation, training, coach characteristics, athlete characteristics and context. These distinguish their model from behavioural models, (c.f. Chelladurai) in offering a conceptual framework for the study of coaching. Research of coaches in open team sports could draw upon this model. Salmela provides relatively unique perceptions from elite coaches in their own words.

Gould, Hodge, Peterson and Giannini (1989) surveyed 101 and 104 elite coaches to discern strategies used to develop athletes' self-efficacy, and coach considerations of the effectiveness of these strategies. Their research provides no validation of coach self-perceptions by such means as surveying their athletes or observing the coach in action, but does provide clear indicators of strategies to consider in elite coaching behaviour such as effective instruction and drilling, encouragement of positive talk, modelling confidence, and liberal use of reward statements. Gould, Giannini, Krane and Hodge (1990) surveyed 130 elite coaches by questionnaire to elicit

their main knowledge sources, which were evidenced as experiential learning and communication with other coaches, rather than formalised coach programmes.

Formalised coach education programmes may not reflect elite coach perspectives (Haslam, 1990, cited in Côté, Salmela and Russell 1995a; Côté, Salmela and Russell, 1995b; L. Johnston, President of Coaching New Zealand, personal communication, May 16, 1996). Given their lack of conviction in the efficacy of formal coach programmes, it is not surprising that less than half of the elite coaches in the survey (Gould et al., 1990) believed in an existing core of well-defined elite coach principles and concepts.

One of the few field research studies of an elite coach by Tharp and Gallimore (1976), saw a recording checklist developed from a study of the UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden (see Figure 3.2). Thirty hours of recorded observations of 2,300 coach behaviours were codified into ten categories and labelled. Given the scarcity of such elite team leader observations, the coach behaviours are noteworthy.

Category	Description
Instructions	Verbal statements about what to do, or how to do it
Hustles	Verbal statements to activate or intensify previously instructed behaviour
Modeling - positive	A demonstration of how to perform
Modeling - negative	A demonstration of how <i>not</i> to perform
Praises	Verbal compliments, encouragements
Scolds	Verbal statements of displeasure
Nonverbal reward	Nonverbal compliments or encouragements (smiles, pats, jokes)
Nonverbal punishment	This infrequent category included scowls, gestures of despair, and temporary removal of a player from scrummage, usually to shoot free throws by himself
Scold / reinstruction	A combination category: a single verbal behaviour which refers to a specific act contains a clear scold and reasserts a previously constructed behaviour; e.g. "How many times do I have to tell you to follow through with your head when shooting?"
Other	Any behaviour not falling into the above categories
Uncodable	The behaviour could not be clearly heard or seen

Figure 3.2 Coach observation checklist (Tharp and Gallimore, 1976).

Tharp and Gallimore's research has been replicated in other studies (see Douge and Hastie, 1993; Lacy and Darst, 1985), but draws on coach behaviour at practice rather than in all team situations such as team talks, the dressing room, and strategy planning. Communication is seen as a critical coach quality (Hastie and Hanrahan, 1993; Madden, 1994). Wider dimensions of elite coach behaviour are noted in Figure 3.3 (see Chambers, 1979; Daly, 1984; Hemery, 1991; Howe, 1990).

Anshel (1990) suggests that the best coaches are secure individuals, and equates a sense of leadership with the provision of purposeful direction. He notes the leader as being “in charge” but provides no indication of the need, expressed in leadership literature and indicated in Figure 3.3, for the leader to have a vision for the team’s goals and development. Anshel draws a distinction between *successful* coaches (winning coaches, who get others to behave as the coach wishes), and *effective coaches* (who generate athlete performance in accord with the athletes’ intentions and needs). He suggests that teams under “successful” coach leaders may have a high win rate but often there is a “somewhat low level of satisfaction” felt by team members (p.178). This perception is at variance with realities of elite athletes who develop high satisfaction in fashioning a winning record, with commensurately positive personal feelings. This literature is not consistent. Gross (1990), for example, considers *successful* coaches as those who have a winning team, and Howe (1990) discusses *effective coaching* as a unitary term encompassing similar elements to those of Anshel’s *successful* coach. (Douge and Hastie, 1993, note a range of coach observation studies indicating characteristics of effective coaches but not at the elite level.) Horn (1992) cautions that surveys and measures of coaching effectiveness may not provide “crucial behaviours that distinguish the effective from the non-effective leader/coach” (p.192), suggesting that more qualitative research should be done in this field.

Sharing visions, goals, strategic plans. Communication (verbal, non-verbal, media). Organisation skills. Knowledge of the sport and its rules. Knowledge of growth, development and the science of human performance (training, conditioning and exercise physiology). Role model, honest, ethical and fair. Dedicated, enthusiastic, mature and aware of own personality. Courage, boldness, enthusiasm, sense of humour. Develops positive relationships with athletes, understands and handles the athlete well.	Developing state of mind of athlete belief. Athletes clear about their responsibilities. Involve athletes in goal setting and problem solving. Cares about athletes’ balanced lives. Ability to teach. Flexible in style and solution forming. Sets strategy. Develops discipline. Effectively runs practices and training. Provides reinforcement. Effective use of personnel. Positive evaluation of athletes.
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Figure 3.3 Broad sequential dimensions of elite coaching.
 (After Chambers, 1979; Daly, 1984; Hemery, 1991; Howe, 1990.)

No study was located which provided feedback on coach and player perceptions of the elite team coach and outlined what that coach actually did in all facets of their leadership role. Counsilman, in Kimiecik and Gould (1987), commends qualitative research which draws upon rich descriptive data of elite coach experience to provide knowledge. Gould et al. (1987) note the advocacy of research studies including observation of coaches in training and competition and utilisation of in-depth interviews.

The field of sport team leadership then, appears to be replete with assumptions about coach roles which are not necessarily substantiated by first hand knowledge of all phases of that leader in action. A basal knowledge of how elite coaches or captains enact their role may assist the possibility of grounding team leader discussion or development in the realities of that role. A focus upon such first-hand knowledge could provide insights into contextually specific leadership behaviour and indicate the validity of sport leadership beliefs, coach studies and previously limited observed coach behaviours. Only a handful of studies draw upon field research techniques to discern the actual behaviours of team leaders, (Hanin, 1992; Horn, 1992), despite the environment of the team being seen as the “best source of useful information on one’s effectiveness as a coach” (Freischlag, 1985, p.71). Salmela, Draper and Laplante (1993) emphasise the need for research to trigger the “wealth of unique perceptions” held by elite coaches (p.300).

Horn (1992), believing that “considerably more research will be needed before a clear picture of the impact of particular leadership styles on athletes can be obtained” (p.191), suggests “observational measures of coaching behaviour may provide a unique contribution to the current research on leadership effectiveness in the sport domain” (p.193-194). Future research suggested by Horn includes peer group leadership and captaincy while Pratt and Eitzen (1989a) recommend that such research should “systematically observe coaches throughout a season and in the best of research worlds, longitudinally, to understand the nuances of leadership that bring out the best in their players” (ibid., p.321). The research could also consider team dynamics (see Freischlag, 1985), ethics (see Luke, 1984), and power and leadership style (Pratt and Eitzen, 1989a).

Elite team coaching has rarely been examined in depth longitudinally. What research exists has focussed primarily upon non-team sport with data drawn from surveys, interviews and observations. A conceptual model of elite coaching was noted from Salmela et al., but no field research was found in other elite coach research to validate this or examine its efficacy in terms of the realities of elite coach behaviour in the full team context. Further research is needed then, into coach-as-leader behaviours (Cratty, 1989; Trudel and Gilbert, 1995). Attendant considerations could be explored, such as coach attributes and athlete perceptions of the ideal coach (Freischlag, 1985), long term investigation of coaches (Kimiecik and Gould, 1987), visionary leadership (Weese, Maclean and Corlett, 1993), group dynamics and coach-performer relationships (Hardy and Jones, 1994a), and situational coach leader behaviour (Hardy and Jones, 1994a). The collective efficacy related to a team’s positive outcomes in an elite team sport (Naylor and Howe, 1990) may indicate further coach influences for examination. Vision is virtually ignored in

leadership research, despite its prevalence in much of the leadership literature (see, for example, Bass, 1990; Kouzes and Posner, 1987).

3.2.2 Captaincy

The critical importance of team leadership influencing the team atmosphere was noted by French (1982), yet little research is available on the elite team captain, even if seen as a dependent of the coach rather than as a functional independent athlete (Patterson, 1981). The captain is the key link between coach and players, a catalyst in developing a functional team, providing liaison between coaching staff and players, implementing coaching directions, acting as a leader and/or example during team activities, being an onfield team official, and reinforcing team discipline (Mosher and Roberts, 1981; Patterson, 1981; Weese and Nicholls, 1987). Although Irvine (1978) cautioned against the coach becoming too powerful and reducing the captain to a figurehead, Mosher and Roberts (1981) suggest that the captain's role is strenuous, requiring a knowledge of players and the team which complements that of the coach and enhances the latter's effectiveness. The captain's leadership is needed on and off the field of play. The captain ensures a flow of communication including team meetings, sets an example, assists the coach, is involved in planning, and leads in game activities and sport ethics. Arguing that "natural leadership tendencies are important to make this role more manageable" Mosher and Roberts (1981, p.2), do not discuss the meaning of, nor explicate, "natural leadership." The lack of clarity is further confused with his apparent interchangeability of leadership and management, for example, noting action (which is also applicable to management) as the captain's major tool for providing leadership.

Experience	Aggression
Maturity	Positive attitudes
Athletic ability	Developing team spirit
Effective communication	Enthusiasm
Example or role model	Developing cohesion
Assist with team discipline	Unselfish
Assist with planning	Dependable
Interact with referee	Control in game
Intelligence	Coordination of effort
Extroversion	Inspirational
Empathy	Knowledge of rules
Respected	Motivator
Decision making	Coolness under pressure
Influences players	

Figure 3.4 Team captaincy dimensions.

(After: Congill, 1980; Hale, 1989; Murphy and Gooch, 1992; Patterson, 1981; Weese and Nicholls, 1987.)

A captain may be selected by the team (Freischlag, 1985; Hale, 1989; Patterson, 1981), or the coach (Mosher and Roberts, 1981; Weese and Nicholls, 1987). In team sports there are senior or key athletes who, with the official captain, provide vital leadership while in varied team settings the designated captain may delegate certain responsibilities to team-mates. The interaction with team-mates is critically related to the captain's personality and example (Brearley, 1994). Patterson asserts that the elite captain in Canadian sport could have an enhanced role through greater coach recognition and support and this linkage could be examined in research.

Relationships may exist between players' field positions, interactions and team leadership (Gill, 1986; Grusky, 1963). For example, inconclusive research suggests that high interaction players in field sport play have more probability of attaining leadership than do low interactors. Again, Gill suggests that "performing independent, critical tasks may be more important to leadership than spatial location and interaction in a highly dynamic field sport" (ibid., p.225), recommending that international research consider individual characteristics and situational factors to further understanding of sport team leadership. Chelladurai and Carron (1977) analyse sport team leadership in terms of playing positions, suggesting that field leadership is influenced by positional opportunities for a player to observe the game's action, to be visible onfield, and to interact with other players.

Perceptions of field positional leadership can be framed in the context of specific sports. It is not clear from the research whether this occurs through players being placed in such positions because of their leadership skills, or if players in such field positions develop perceived leader abilities because of the positional interaction. South African rugby is said to have a dominant number of team captains and coaches who "are selected from positions of high interaction" (ibid., p.279). In contrast, Cratty and Piggott (1984) suggest that field position may not be as important in selecting a captain as are leadership qualities, experience on the team, consistency of performance, regular selection, and personal attraction to followers. This applies to international team captaincy in cricket which has been equated with leadership quality (Brearley, 1985; Close, 1964; Johnston, 1978; Maclaren, 1924; Simpson, 1977) while international captaincy in rugby league has noted qualities such as the ability to control players, abhor indiscipline, exhibit self-confidence and set an example (Drane, 1994; Freeman, 1992). The qualities of elite captaincy across a range of sports are shown in Figure 3.5.

Captaincy Quality and Roles	Sport Directors					Total	
1. Accepts and delegates leadership responsibility	AF	B	RL	RS		4	
2. Has trust and respect of team		B		RS		2	
3. Coach-captain interaction		B	RL	RS	WC	4	
4. Develop team spirit and unity	AF				WC	2	
5. Be a trusted person, counsellor to players	AF	B	J	RL	RS	WC	6
6. Role model of behaviour		B	J			WC	3
7. Onfield motivator and decision maker	AF		J	RL	RS		4
8. Skilful player	AF				RS		2
9. Team spokesperson	AF		J	RL	RS		4
Key:	AF = Australian Football		J = Judo		RS = Roller Skating		
	B = Bocce		RL = Rugby League		WC = Women's Cricket		

Figure 3.5 Australian national coaching directors' perspectives on captaincy.

(Reference: *The Role of the Captain in Senior Competition*, 1983.)

This review has noted the paucity of research literature on elite team captains, despite their apparent influence and the range of commentators who acknowledge the importance of their roles. Thus Horn (1992) recommends that future sport research includes the dimensions of peer group leadership and captaincy. This review now turns specifically to elite rugby team leadership to seek further insights into the roles of captain and coach.

3.3 ELITE RUGBY TEAM LEADERSHIP

Rugby today is played in 75 countries (Stuart, 1995). Its social context, in which team leaders exert their roles, has been described by fiction writers such as Gee (1985), Hughes (1903) and Slatter (1968), and sociologists including Donnelly and Young (1985) and McPherson, Curtis and Loy (1989). The latter suggest that "deviant behaviour has become a ritualised and integral facet of rugby players' lifestyles. Off the field, rugby players violate societal norms regarding fighting, obscene language and songs, nakedness (a male striptease is a ritual at rugby parties), drunkenness and vandalism against property" (McPherson, Curtis and Loy, 1989, p.263).

The portrayal of rugby as a deviant subculture of sport is reinforced by Young (1988), suggesting that studies are needed of the nonplaying behaviour of players and rugby persons. Although not with an elite team, Young collected data through a participant role for 30 games over 20 months with a university team in Canada and interviewed persons in the wider rugby environment. He does not clearly differentiate between the elements of rugby deviance drawn from literature and the insights gained from his field research. Rituals and symbols are said to meet a player's psychic needs and provide a team with a suffusing and integrative dimension of team life in which team relationships, routines and actual playing circumstances may depend upon symbols. There is little

or no research on social reinforcement in elite rugby (Webb, Weiss and Cribb, 1983) or, indeed, of the elite rugby sub-culture in which team leadership is enacted.

Elite rugby team literature is dominated by biographies, tour books and coaching manuals, in which rugby leadership is rarely discussed directly. Scott and McLean (1955) provide an exception:

Leadership in Rugby consists of knowing the capacity and limitations of your players and extracting the utmost from them without attempting systems of attack which they would be incapable of performing accurately...leadership is the basis of attacking team play, because it is the leader who must decide whether it is worthwhile to present particular forms of attack when these seem not to be succeeding, or whether to initiate other schemes which are within the knowledge of all of the players (p.52).

Sport team leadership, “the ability to translate worlds into action” (Rutherford, 1971, p.31) may be the product of experience (Sharp, 1968) and include getting the best out of players and decision making (Rutherford, 1983, p.76). The better prepared, post-war international rugby teams from South Africa and New Zealand (Donnelly and Young, 1985) have had coaches and leaders acknowledged for such qualities, which were perceived as impacting upon team performance (see for example, Craven, 1956; McLean, 1968a; McLean, 1970; Miles, 1995; Norrie, 1980).

The perceived public persona of elite rugby persons, with their accordant publicity, may also positively or adversely affect a sport’s support, participant numbers, financial base, sponsorship, as well as the attraction and retention of top athletes. Ingham, Howell and Swetman (1993) note the influence of such key sports figures upon the historical development and hegemonic construction of sport, and suggest “strategic writing” on such heroes “and their career activities” (p.208).

Given the apparent importance of elite rugby team leadership the research literature is sparse despite the coach and captain roles being seen by a number of commentators as the critical persons in the team environment (see, for example: Campese, 1991; Howitt, 1977; Thomas, 1992; Veysey, 1992). These roles are now examined in more detail.

3.3.1 Coaching

Rugby union is an open sport in which various skills are performed in a changing and variable environment. It is also an interdependent sport, because the successful outcome of the team’s performance is dependent upon effective interaction among players. In this environment, “A

player's approach determines what they do on the field but the coach determines how well they do it" (James, Dawes, McLauchlan, Evans, Taylor, McLoughlin, Gibson, Hiller, and John, 1972, pp.86-87). Such coaching is equated with rugby leadership and links with motivation, group behaviour and innovation (Reid, 1980). The leader's perceived impact may be marked: "Our Springbok coach was responsible for our success. In fact, I believe that if he hadn't been the coach, the All Blacks would have won" (South African test player, personal communication, June 7, 1995).

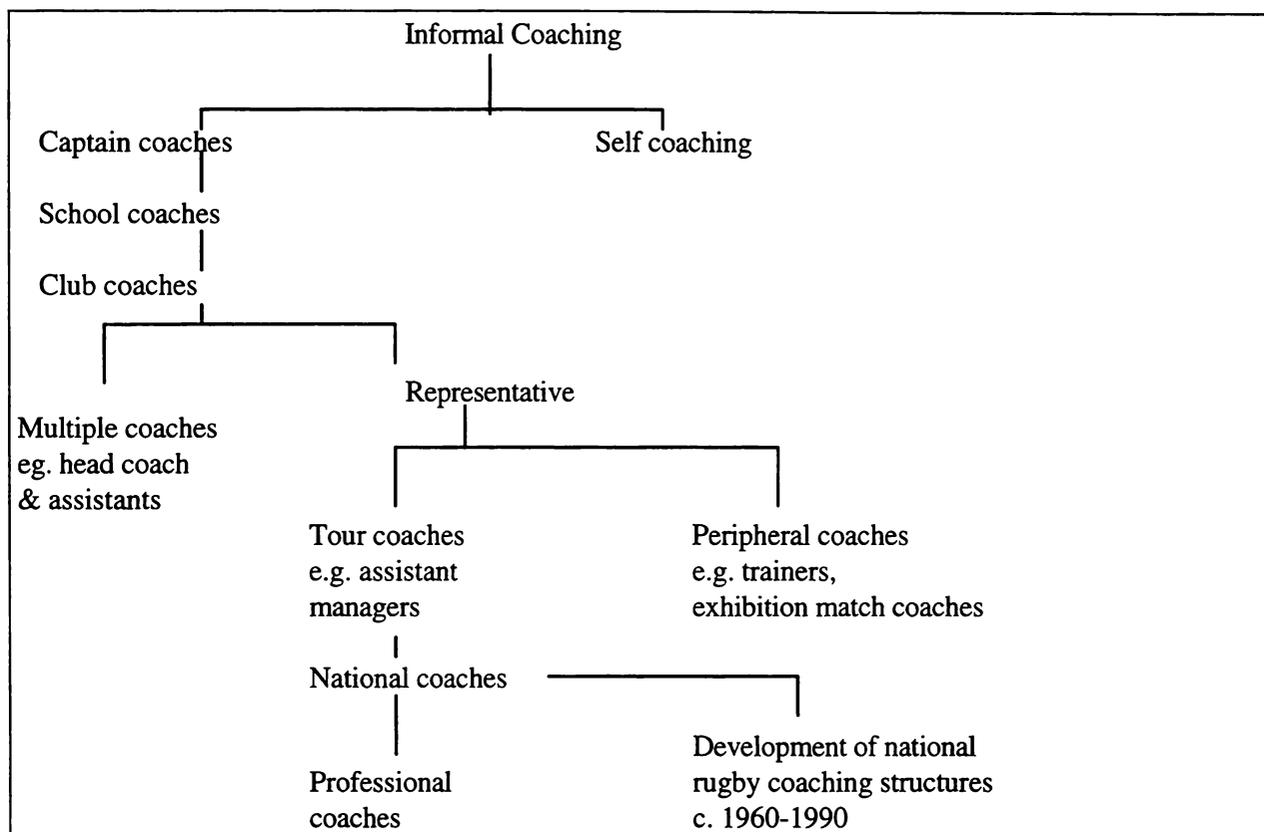


Figure 3.6 An informal genealogy of national coach roles.

The literature reveals a broadly divergent genealogy of rugby coaching, informally represented in Figure 3.6, with an element of over-simplification. Not all rugby lands, for example, had parallel coaching development. Clubs and universities in the United States often developed multiple specialist coach responsibilities for various dimensions of play, such as backs or kickers, and formal national coaching structures were more slowly accepted in Britain than in Southern Hemisphere countries. There has been evidence also of unofficial financial assistance to obtain coach services prior to the era of formalised professional coaching, which contrasted with amateur rugby in England or the sides with a Corinthian ethos in North American colleges.

Jones (1937) noted rugby in the 1930s as little changed from that of the 1890s and 1900s, with intensive coaching being confined to the schools. The advent of the formal rugby coach, with attendant responsibilities and control, did not occur until post World War II, although exceptions such as the marked influence of Markotter in South Africa were noted in early decades of the twentieth century. Jones saw leadership among the forwards winning as many matches as goal-kicking, especially as forwards developed the scrum as a “unit” which, in turn, facilitated changing tactics to suit the run of play. He saw coaching as an art and a method of personal expression. A coach should not accept the judgement of players by others as a substitute for his own judgement and should be a guide, philosopher and friend (Jones, 1937; Wakelam, 1936b). It was argued that training avoid being boring, with progressive time through the season being given to “tactics” and a weekly coach and team time for receptive discussion (Jones, 1937, p.151). Rugby existed for the players’ enjoyment with the emphasis on fair play (Ellis, 1953; Gibbon, 1927). Even into the 1980s a viewpoint existed that supported amateur ideals in rugby coaching (Reid, 1980).

The advance of rugby coaching during the 1950s and 1960s in British football was “the most remarkable development ever seen in the history of the game” (Williams, 1976, p.11). National elite coaching moved further forward in the British Isles in 1966 when Robins was appointed assistant-manager, in a coaching role, of the Lions team to New Zealand. Officially, his role was still subject to the discretion of the captain, who would have control of the team’s tactical and playing discussions (O’Connor, 1975). Positive linkages of the two leaders were critical:

[Coaching] is concerned with how and when things should be done, either by an individual or by the team. It is concerned with how to stand back and to observe and analyse so that one can be of assistance, how to develop the best attitude towards the game by individuals and by the team, how to communicate all these things to the players (this is vital), how to work with the captain on tactics and how to be of assistance to him in working things out for the good of his team. Coaches must adopt a positive approach to the game and to training. A coach has got to build confidence in the players he is dealing with and try to remove a fear of not winning . . . (Welsh Rugby Union, 1981, pp.4-5).

In 1975, a former national player and Chairman of the then Four Home Unions (England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland), noted that the reason for the British Lions winning two successive series, after failing to win a series for fifty years, was “improved coaching and administration” (O’Connor, 1975, p.9). The danger of coaching being overdone, and stifling the instinctive flair of individual players, has been noted (Davies, 1979; John, 1974), but elite players do acknowledge the value of team leaders (Davies, 1977; Deans, 1987; John, 1974; Wheeler, 1983). One elite coach, for example, influenced the Scottish captain’s play and “the whole pattern of Scottish

rugby” (Deans, 1987, p.36), and the 1986 Australian coaches were seen to identify problems clearly and develop ways to overcome these (Williams, 1991).

Williams G. (1975), whose coaching was noted by the British Isles captain Dawes (1975) as positively influencing team performance, advocated developing a “team dedicated to play rugby football to the best of their ability” (p.7). This demands insights into each player’s physical, mental and emotional dimension in an organised and considerate team environment (Cratty and Piggott, 1984; James, 1972; James 1983; Welsh Rugby Union, 1981; Williams G., 1975).

Reid (1980) emphasizes the coach role related to results, providing a rare perspective on the rugby coach as leader:

A style of leadership acceptable to the group, which from a basis of mutual respect, seeks to elicit, develop and extend optimal levels of competitive behaviour, thereby promoting the attempts of those involved to achieve success, within the recognised boundaries of the competition (p.186).

The elite coach must have a vision and see a pattern, appreciate the critical aspect of psychology, and have the major voice in selections based on a pattern for players to play (Rutherford, Laidlaw, and Mair, 1988). Consequently, rugby should be a total game (Greenwood, 1985), collectively and individually, for players (Dawes, Evans, Morgan and James, 1979), with the elite coach role encompassing the philosopher, psychologist and physician (Mould, 1991). Rugby coaches also need to communicate and express social reinforcement (Webb, Weiss and Cribb, 1983). A good memory, experience, common sense, imagination, and an ability to accept responsibility for the team are further qualities of a successful coach (Dwyer, 1992). James, a British Isles and Welsh rugby coach, is seen by John (1974) and Davies (1979) as illustrating these qualities, being a little distant from elite players but relating appropriately to them, although possibly lacking flexibility in relationships (Uttley, 1981). In his communication with elite players James avoided volatile team talks (Panckhurst, 1994).

A major factor in the 1966 All Blacks defeat of the Lions was their onfield organisation (McLean, 1966). Critical here are elements such as: initial team organisation, (organisation, co-ordination, signals, moves); tactics of defence and attack; practice and performance; a playing plan for the match, and the art of retaining elements of spontaneity. Although some argue that rugby is essentially a simple game (French, 1980; James, 1983; Stewart, 1983), others such as McLauchlan and Dickinson (1981) and Van Heerden (1967) ascribe a level of sophistication related to high

levels of ability and crucial decision making. Such perspectives, however, are not mutually exclusive. The game may be simply conceived in terms of goals, strategy and playing style but can acquire in-depth knowledge and high-order skill levels, to manifest success through simplicity. Such success faces multiple demands which bring demands on coach qualities to develop compelling and creative strategies and avoid stereotyped play (James, 1983). (Figure 3.7 illustrates perceptions of coach qualities at an elite level.)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total
Positive team attitude	X	X					X	X			4
Clear thinking/ intelligence	X		X	X		X	X	X			6
Understand players	X		X			X		X	X	X	6
Selection	X			X							2
Technical knowledge			X		X		X	X		X	5
Interaction with captain	X	X							X	X	4
Philosophy	X						X		X		3
Diagnosis / analysis	X		X	X			X			X	5
Aims	X							X			2
Transformation / vision	X							X		X	3
Planning and tactics	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	7
Ethics											0
Demanding high standards	X				X						2
Coaching attitude	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			7
Drive for perfection	X				X			X			3
Programme for team	X					X					2
Personal qualities	X				X	X		X			4
Mental dimension	X			X				X			3
Motivator/communicator		X	X	X		X		X	X	X	7
Man management			X			X		X			3
Teaching skills				X							1
Positive running game	X	X					X				3
Practice and training	X	X	X			X					4
Organisation	X						X				2
Knowledge of skills	X							X		X	3
Knowledge of rules	X										1

Key: A Rutherford (1971) D James (1983) G Dwyer (1992)
 B Williams (1976) E Williams (1962) H Poidevin (1990)
 C Davies (1977) F Campese (1991) I Rutherford (1983)
 J Rutherford, Laidlaw and Mair (1988)

Figure 3.7 International perceptions of elite rugby coach qualities and roles.

The elite rugby coach needs understanding of fitness, injury, nutrition and basic psychology (Miles, 1995). Maud and Schultz (1984) studied physiological and anthropometrical characteristics of the 1992 United States international rugby team. Aerobic fitness was lower than that of national soccer and ice hockey players in America and that of the New Zealand All Blacks,

suggesting a lower acceptable level of rugby fitness, lack of appropriate fitness knowledge, or deficiency in fitness training and application. Although the levels of elite player fitness affect physical demands, player skills and tactics engaged in by the coach, the links between elite coach knowledge and rugby team performance have potential for further research.

Davies (1977) notes that captains lack the “distance” from onfield action to be able to view matches objectively as coaches can. McKenzie, Holmyard, Docherty and Parke (1990) do caution, however, that even with a distance from play rugby coaches may fail to adequately comprehend their actions through gathering inaccurate information. Such observations can then result in unrealistic training programmes. Franks, Sinclair, Thompson and Goodman (1986) recommend a structuring of the rugby coach’s observation. Observational accuracy is challenged by the pace of rugby play generating multiple actions, often virtually simultaneously, which are most appropriately recorded on videotape. Specific analysis can then be undergone, with computer based analysis being recommended. More effective and match related coaching and teaching of the team’s skills can then be generated. Dalley, Laing and McCartin (1992) and Dixon (1993) note coaches improving technical skills and influencing lower injury rates. “Coaches continue to send strong clear messages when they select an injured player - a message that skill is more important to them than fitness” (Handcock, 1993, p.74).

The coach’s teaching skills are important. Gray, S.W. (1989) observed a rugby coach teach rucking skills to three player groups. The most efficacious teaching came with the use of behavioural coaching (modelling the skill, imitating this and evaluating the execution of the skill), and verbal calls which encouraged players’ onfield communication. Although it helps for a coach to be an ex-player (Dawes, Evans, Morgan and James, 1979) rugby coaches should not necessarily coach as they were coached (O’Reilly, 1993) but could learn by utilising principles of effective teaching (Greenwood, 1978).

Boivert (1989) argues for rugby coach research to consider sport psychology, sociology, physiology, history and geography. Such wider considerations may however contribute to information overload, which is a concern about elite coaching held by Gray, S. (1989), a United States rugby captain.

Greenwood (1986) argues for a coach to have vision, to dramatise his purpose and create an atmosphere, just as does a good captain. The possible linkages between these two elite rugby leaders are now considered.

Coach - Captain Linkage

The elite coach and captain face special demands in forming a positive team leadership pairing and optimising team performance. Ellis (1953) signalled the shift in 1950s rugby team leadership attention from captain to coach, in giving equal attention to both leaders and noting that few books were aimed at coaches. The move towards responsibility in elite rugby team leadership being borne by the coach rather than the captain brought some clashes of authority and role difficulties (O'Connor, 1975). Some elite captains, particularly from the British Isles, sought to retain control despite their responsibilities being arduous and demanding (Watkins, 1980).

Templeton, a past Australian coach, emphasised the captain knowing what to do on the field (James, 1983). This leadership comes from a close relationship with the coach, mutual confidence, and the captain's decision making skills (fostered by coach-captain planning and review through the season). The elite captain then, may be seen as an extension of the coach, a team leader who will have the full confidence of the coach and draw better commitment from the players onfield (Davies, 1979; Edwards, 1984; Greenwood, 1985; John, 1978; O'Connor, 1975; Thomas, 1993; Thornett, 1967; Watkins and Dobbs, 1971). Greenwood (1986) emphasises "active and focussed" observation as an imperative for coach and captain to respectively develop understandings of improving performance and team efficiency.

Representative of commentators who discuss the coach and captain is Thornett and Easton (1966) (see Figure 3.8).

Coach	Captain
Shape team preparation & tactics	Shape team preparation & tactics
Team discipline	Team discipline
Protect good name of team	Protect good name of team
Encouraging every player to play to their limit	Encouraging every player to play to their limit
Broad plan: - fitness	Have player respect
- high team morale	Be experienced
- well trained in basic skills	Field control - keep players forward
- team talks	Onfield contingencies
Discuss problems with players	Utilise senior players
Training	

Figure 3.8 Coach and captain roles (Thornett and Easton, 1966).

Not evident in the roles noted in Figure 3.8 is the captain's help with training nor the coach assisting the captain with game tactics, utilising the team as a major resource (James et al., 1972, p. 94). The captain also has a role translating training sessions to onfield realities (Frost and Uttley, 1981). Each role requires a degree of mental strength. Reyburn (1970, p. 74), for example, notes that neither the coach nor captain of one touring South African team provided the necessary "tough, inspirational leadership".

Thomas (1974) notes four outstanding leader pairs of post-war international touring rugby teams: Craven (coach) and Kenyon (captain) of 1951 South Africa; McPhail (coach) and Whineray (captain) of 1963 New Zealand; James (coach) and Dawes (captain) of 1971 British Isles and Ireland; and the 1974 British Isles and Ireland team leaders of Millar (coach) and McBride (captain).

Although some consider the team leader "who match after match decides the difference between his team winning and losing is the team captain" (Booth, 1961, p.74), the research literature is thin on the ground with respect to joint coach-captain development.

3.3.2 Captaincy

While historically the elite rugby captain was still of greater importance than the coach after World War II, such captaincy assumed a more interactive leadership role with the coach. The latter development may be traced historically as in Figure 3.9.

Post-war years continued to illustrate the transformational influence of certain elite rugby captains, as in Jackson's 1958 try for England, (captained by Evans), against the touring

Wallabies. Jackson's prime thought was that "under Evan's encouragement and fine leadership, there must be a chink with so much pressure" (Sharp, 1968, p.13). Again, Sharp's memorable try for England vs. Scotland, March 1963, was a pre-planned move onfield.

Elite captains of such teams need to command a team place on rugby playing ability and be fully accepted by the players, which did not occur with the 1956 Springbok and 1966 Lions captains (Hutchins, 1991; O'Connor, 1975; Roger, 1991). Such examples lend credence to the belief that the best fifteen should be picked at the elite level and the captain selected from among them (Rutherford, 1971). The captain's personal qualities in understanding and withstanding pressures are critical (Bennett, 1981). Thompson, the outstanding 1953 Lions captain in South Africa, exemplified ethical leadership when described by his opposing skipper as being so scrupulously fair, the tests could have been played without a referee (Parker, 1955).

- A. The impact of All Black teams and their captains, in changing rugby tactics and play (Gent, 1932; Wakelam, 1936b).
- B. Literature recognition of elite team captain qualities, including the analysis of opponents, utilisation of All Black-style play, ethical qualities, inspiration, quick decision making, strength of character and knowledge of the game (Parry-Jones, 1986; Wakefield and Marshall, 1935).
- C. Dominance of training, tactics and team culture by the elite captain, and an emphasis upon playing in the "right spirit" (Gent, 1932; Thomas, 1961a; Wakelam, 1936b).
- D. The perceived influence of individual captains upon team fortunes. Examples are: Beamish of Ireland (Craven, 1953a), Walker of the British Isles (Thomas, 1961a), Towers of Australia (Craven, 1956), Porter of New Zealand (Wakelam, 1936a), and Evans of England (Stevenson, 1981).
- E. Discussion of Elite captaincy in the rugby literature, with little emphasis on coaching until the 1950s and 1960s (see, for example, Creek, 1950; Gent, 1932; Mainwaring, 1950; Tanner, 1950; Thomas, 1961a; Wakelam, 1936b).
- F. Captain-coach linkages in the post-World War II tests, such as Whineray-Allen, Dawes-James, Mourie-Gleeson.
- G. The emergence of national captains as national coaches illustrated by Dawson (Ireland), Lochore (New Zealand), du Plessis (South Africa), and McGeechan (Scotland).

Figure 3.9 Features of international captain development to 1990s.

Having the captain in one playing unit of the team may necessitate an additional player-leader in another. Thus Lee (1984) suggests that elite team leadership qualities may not necessarily be

located in one player, and could be distributed among the captain, vice-captain and coach, but does not discuss the possibility of onfield leadership also being distributed in more than one playing position, (e.g., a forward captain and a “back general”). Hooker is illustrative of a captain’s position in “the heat of the battle,” where leadership is by example (Frost and Uttley, 1981) and should be complemented with a back player leader (Greenwood, 1986).

Halfbacks, for example, are often seen as such key decision-making backs, integrating a wider range of environmental stimuli simultaneously more than do other players (see Maynard and Howe, 1989, who tested 144 rugby players to determine attentional style and attentional subscale classification). It is unclear from the Maynard and Howe study if players were selected for positions because of their qualities, or whether they developed the qualities in their team position. However, the research finding is reflected in the relatively high proportion of post-war international teams captained by halfbacks, (see Appendix G.6 for New Zealand examples). Loose forwards and first-fives would also require similar vision and response to field stimuli.

The elite rugby team captain qualities noted in Figure 3.10 are supported by many writers: management (Allen and McLean, 1970); leadership (Davies, 1979; Parry-Jones, 1986; Wallace, 1976); vision (Davies, 1979); inspiration (Gault, 1984). Further leadership qualities include: selflessness (Burrows, 1974); providing direction, motivation, situation control and decision making (Watkins and Dobbs, 1971; Williams, 1975); team spirit and loyalty (Watkins and Dobbs, 1971); intelligence (Wilson, 1968); leading from the front (Duckham, 1980; Williams, 1975); personal strength of character (Burton and Jones, 1982; Cotton, 1981); being authoritarian onfield and democratic off-field (Gray, 1990); tactical skills and knowledge of opponents (Sweet, 1962); and ability to read the game, balancing it against the abilities of one’s own players (Greenwood, 1986).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Know strengths / weaknesses of players (own and opposition)	X				X		2
Reads match and conditions	X		X	X	X	X	5
Outstanding player			X		X	X	4
Team understanding	X			X	X	X	4
Involved at training			X	X			2
Not aloof but a little distant		X				X	2
Strong character		X		X		X	3
Can change game plan		X		X	X	X	4
Personal quality	X	X	X		X	X	5
Team man		X		X	X	X	4
Personal conduct on/off field		X	X	X	X	X	5
Respected by the team				X	X	X	3
Interacts well with the team					X	X	2
Communication			X	X		X	3
Playing example "from the front"					X		1

A Rutherford (1971)

C Wallace (1976)

E Friedlander & Telbutt (1949)

B Williams (1991)

D Dawes et al. (1979)

F Frost & Uttley (1981)

Figure 3.10 International perceptions of elite rugby captain roles and qualities.

Leadership is noted by writers such as Dawes et al. (1979), Wallace (1976) and Williams (1975) as an elite captain quality, but is not explained or defined. Overtones of transformational leadership and setting standards are reflected in the literature (see Duckham, 1980; Williams, 1979; Williams, 1991). Associated with such perceptions is the elite captain's ability to communicate with, and uplift, the team with well planned options.

I think that the more options that are available to a captain on the field, the more flexible he can be. The only limitation on the ability of the team is really the captain's ability to call the right moves at the right time. If he wants to call some particular move he cannot do this unless it has been practised and unless it has been given a title, so that he can comment it at the point where he wants it done. It follows that I think there is a priority for organisation in all teams at all levels (James et al., 1972, p.51).

John Pullin, the England rugby captain who is still the only leader to defeat Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, was described by Burton and Jones (1982) as having team talk skills that "helped us to a test victory" (p.117). Support for the impact of such elite team talks is strong (Davies, 1977; Davies, 1979; Duckham, 1980; Thomas, 1961a; Whineray, 1979).

Luke (1984) provides a rare North American perspective of the elite captain's rugby team leadership, emphasising onfield decision making and tactical changes. As an ex-Canadian captain and coach, he notes:

Rugby captains may come in all shapes and sizes and with their own particular styles of leadership but the best ones possess at least some of these characteristics seen in great leaders. They include:

1. The ability to lead and organize others.
2. The ability to inspire other players.
3. Knowledge of the game, its history and its laws.
4. The ability to make (tactical) decisions under pressure.
5. The ability to act under pressure.
6. Honesty.
7. Humility.

It would be easy to extend this list and praise the virtues of great leaders but in reality few players combine them all on the rugby field. What is needed is a player who has some notions of leadership, understanding and appreciation of his teammates, knowledge of the game and its laws, enough ability in the game to encourage his teammates to follow his example, and a high enough fitness level to keep ahead of his mates. In addition to needing general leadership qualities and attitudes the captain...is called upon to make some specific decisions before and during the game (p.38).

Although a certain broad agreement is noted in the literature above, rugby practitioners and commentators do not always provide a consensus in their perceptions about captaincy (refer Figure 3.11).

Lee (1984) provides one of the few discussions of the rugby team captain as leader, reflecting leadership perspectives noted earlier in this study. "The designation of a particular player as captain does not automatically confer leadership upon that person. Leadership may be thought of in terms of a person's capacity to influence the behaviour of others" (p.175). He suggests influence relationships may be exerted by team members other than the captain if the latter does not exhibit leadership skills. A captain elected by the team may have initial support for his authority modified by player perceptions of his influence. Lee notes the captain's roles of task leadership (goal pursuit), and socio-emotional leadership (maintenance of positive intra-group feelings). The former includes captaincy responsibility in training, planning discipline, and conformity to team norms of performance. Group maintenance challenges the captain to foster team spirit and generate the compatibility and relationships which strengthen the team. Lee suggests that these two dimensions of team leadership may place conflicting demands upon the captain with possibly dichotomous goals of winning and team harmony.

Selection Argument	Counter Argument
Experience [as player] is vital in a captain Frost & Uttley (1981).	This cannot be a constant edict. 'Good' captains have been appointed from inexperienced ranks (O'Meagher, 1994).
"There is no substitute for experience in captaincy" Frost & Uttley (1981, p.68).	The qualities of the potential leader are more critical than experience (McConnell, 1994).
"[X] was a jovial extrovert whose personality made him a born leader" Frost & Uttley (1981, p.91).	The most respected and/or popular players may not have the desire or the ability to be captain (Cameron, 1981).
"On the field the authority of one man in particular" Frost & Uttley, (1981, p.65).	The reality is that with any formal captain emergent leaders will also develop to assist in distributed leadership (McLean, 1964).
"In the All Blacks, everyone knows what their job is and they need no direction other than some encouragement " Loveridge in Palenski (1985, p.144).	The captain has the capacity to provide emotional and encouraging support coupled with key decisions to influence the game above the coach's influence (Veysey, 1986).
"As a captain I'm not going to behave differently towards guys" (Past elite captain, personal communication, August 17, 1992).	Once a captain is appointed, they may be observed to provide enhanced or increased emotional support than previously (O'Meagher, 1994).
An All Black team should not be captained from the wing Veysey, (1984, p.252).	"That is not to say that there have been no good captains who have played on the wing" Frost & Uttley, (1981, p.84).

Figure 3.11 Variant perceptions of elite team leader qualities.
(Bold added by researcher.)

According to Watkins (1980) and Luke (1984), elite rugby team captains should receive both formal and informal leadership training and be appointed at the international level for a full season to allow growth in skills and confidence. An ex-England rugby captain and rugby analyst reflects the lack of knowledge and research on elite captaincy, which could form the basis of such training. "I don't think anyone knows enough about it. No one has taken the trouble to really analyse the game, as a business firm would....things aren't taken seriously enough" (Greenwood, 1986, p.110).

3.4 ELITE RUGBY TEAM LEADERSHIP : NEW ZEALAND PERSPECTIVES

3.4.1 Coaching

Historical Development

Chapter Two of the present study noted the centrality of rugby in New Zealand as "an index of status and achievement" (Cleveland, 1967, p.212). All Black rugby in New Zealand has markedly influenced international play (Wakelam, 1936a, 1936b), and is physical in its impact (O'Connor, 1975) with its black uniform having overtones of aggressiveness (Frank and Gilovich, 1988). The "celebrity frenzy" over All Black coaches who, over the past 15 years, "have been subjected to

immense scrutiny, criticism and publicity” (Stuart, 1995, p. C3) highlights elite coaching in New Zealand. Past All Black coach Wyllie articulates demands upon the elite coach as selector and team coach, who has custodianship of the national symbolism of “that Black jersey” (A.J. Wyllie, personal communication, May 21, 1991). Despite this iconography and the impact of elite rugby in New Zealand, Stuart (1978), a past All Black captain, notes the uneven development of New Zealand coaching from times when “little thought was given to the selection, training, retention and recognition of coaches” (p.87).

The first flame of elite rugby coaching in New Zealand flickered initially with official coaches of the 1888-89 Natives Team, and the 1905-06 All Blacks. Lawler, coach of the 1888-89 Natives Team cost the team 200 pounds in expenses as their Victorian Rules football coach. However, the team had a demanding itinerary of 107 matches in 11 months, including sea travel, with virtually no spare time for Lawler to coach them in the skills of his code (Ryan, 1993).

A Natives Team player, Ellison, produced the first coaching book in New Zealand (1902). Neither this guide, nor the controversial appointment of 1905-06 coach Jimmy Duncan, (who took a player’s position), led to a blossoming of coaching in the first half of the twentieth century for experienced or past players were to fulfil that role, in part, at all team levels. At the provincial level, coaching has developed consistently in the post-war period (Personal communication, from past players).

An early post-war influence upon New Zealand rugby was Charlie Saxton of Otago who believed “leadership, loyalty, decency, self-discipline, teamwork and physical fitness are qualities required to make good teams” (Personal communication, February 21, 1992). He did not define leadership but believed 15 man rugby made New Zealand rugby respected, and pointed to the coaching sequence of discipline, respect, team spirit and morale (Personal communication, February 21, 1992). Saxton was coached at school by Duncan, the 1905 “Originals” All Blacks coach, and played for Otago when coached by the Cavanaghs, before captaining the *Kiwis* (1945-46) and then becoming Otago coach. His coaching precepts of Position, Possession, and Pace were based upon the scrum and attacking rugby (Tillman, 1957). Saxton emphasised preservation of the spirit of rugby (Saxton, 1973). Finlay, vice-captain of the *Kiwis* and provincial coach, argued for pre-match and after-match discussions, and coaching on principles of basic rugby such as passing at the right time, correct backing up and team support (James et al., 1972, p.86-87).

Vic Cavanagh is universally acknowledged as one of the great twentieth-century rugby coaches, whose outstanding 1935-1949 coaching of Otago emphasised winning the ball at scrum, taking play over the advantage line and setting up a ruck. This would often tie up an opposing back player which then gave the Otago backs an overlap to run with the ball if Otago rucked the ball quickly (O'Connor, 1975, p.28). Such play influenced New Zealand and world rugby (*ibid.*).

According to Hopkins (1980, p.26), Cavanagh, whose father "Old Vic" was also a noted Otago coach, was "the best coach never to have coached the All Blacks." An excellent teaching style was characteristic of each Cavanagh's coaching, a combination of verbal explanation with walking through the motions and then speeding up the process. Kirton has noted these simple and lucid explanations with their logical emphases (Personal communication, July 17, 1993). Often demanding in practice, "Young Vic" was also noted for his concern for players' off-field well-being (Tillman, 1957), and his influence is still apparent in rugby beyond New Zealand (Dwyer, 1992).

The efficacy of the coach is closely paralleled by the responsibility and role of the director of a play (Parry-Jones, 1986). Drawing upon this metaphor, the 1949 New Zealand dramas of simultaneous test series losses to South Africa and Australia, were unsuccessful productions. The 70 year old director of the play, the All Black coach in South Africa, was seen as being out of touch with his elite rugby cast and the technical demands of their roles (Personal communications from players). "It would be a safe bet that Vic [Cavanagh] would have altered the course of New Zealand rugby [in 1949] given the opportunity," argued later All Black coaches Everest and Watson (Hopkins, 1980, p.29).

Typical 1950s rugby coaching manuals note basic elements of the coach role but no consideration was given to leadership roles or qualities (see, for example, Auckland Rugby Union, 1952).

Other observers saw the basis of coaching as developing modes of attack and defence within the players' scope (Scott and McLean, 1955), fully preparing players, and helping them in their mental and physical approach (Williams, 1962). The elite rugby coach's influence was seen in Waikato's victory over the 1956 Springboks (Hutchins, 1991). Noting weaknesses in the South African blind side defence and observing their tall slow-leaping forwards, Coach Everest had the ball thrown in hard at lineouts, players hit the blind side, and the coach imbued his team with a

determined spirit. Everest publicly acknowledged that his successful coaching was modelled upon that of Cavanagh (*ibid.*).

Typical of 1950s elite rugby coaching was the 1956 New Zealand team, playing South Africa, which drew advice from experienced ex-players and had a playing style focussed on the forwards. Everest in 1957 touring Australia and McPhail in the British Isles in 1963-64, as “assistant managers” with All Black coaching responsibilities, expanded the playing style to develop more inclusive back play.

The unbeaten record of the 1967-68 tour of Britain by the All Blacks saw coach Fred Allen develop as one of the most famous of rugby coaches (O'Connor, 1975). Allen argued that the essence of rugby coaching “lies in reducing the complexities of the game to simplicities and then, rebuilding complexities on to the simplicities” (Allen and McLean, 1970, p.7), thus doing the simple things well (Walsh, 1984). Once players acquire ability in the fundamental skills of the game their team can then generate momentum and intensity of purpose. He argued that respect and love for the game was essential, with a basis of discipline, team-spirit, and morale. Allen was demanding at training and skilled in motivating individuals (Veysey, 1976), while commanding player respect (McLean, 1968a). He took Saxton’s precepts and placed them on a foundation of discipline, respect, and team morale (personal notes, undated). Allen (personal notes) described his team talks as private matters and “steadiers” of the team, ensuring that all players had equal knowledge of what was required over the 80 minutes of play, that players’ minds and emotional states were stable, and the best was obtained from each player (see also Allen and McLean, 1970, p.127).

The All Black coach, Gleeson, was acclaimed for his judgement of men, communication, skills, creation of confidence and knowledge, fostering of player self-belief, planning, interesting training, drawing of ideas from players, willingness to delegate, and mana (McKechnie and McConnell, 1983; Palenski, 1982; Veysey, 1984). Another national coach, Stewart, believed individual skills were the primary basis of team skills (Stewart, 1983), and was perceived by others as having a tactical appreciation, knowledge of laws, understanding of the team, motivation and innovation (McLean, 1976a; Palenski, 1982). All Black coach Lochore was seen as having a deep integrity and giving motivational team talks, in part resulting from his pride in playing for New Zealand (Veysey, 1992).

Stuart, an All Black captain and coach, saw coaching's basic elements as communication, management and relationships within three dimensions of change -- the technical, tactical and sociological. He emphasised that a coach should be certain of team objectives, and possess analytical and organisational skills (1978). In contrast to other rugby coaches, Stuart places an absolute emphasis upon relational aspects of the role, personal qualities, coach satisfaction of player needs, imagination, listening skills, maintaining learner interest, and stimulation of players.

The most comprehensive coaching guide in New Zealand rugby (Vodanovich and Coates, 1982), produced with the support of the NZRFU and its Coaching Committee in 1982, recommended 16 coaching books (all considered in this literature review) but provided no discussion of a coach's personal qualities.

All Blacks, Robertson and Osborne, in a publication directed at coaches (1984) do not discuss the coach role. Similarly, a NZRFU Director of Coaching and another All Black emphasised coaching's tactical and technical dimensions but omitted reference to interpersonal or social elements (see Freeman, 1985; Walsh, 1984), despite the NZRFU provincial coaching committee chairman, a past All Black, advocating development of thinking coaches as "people who will evaluate, analyze and improve football methods" (South, 1980, p.2). Such a thinking elite coach may require the skills of an able teacher (Vodanovich and Coates, 1982).

Watson's early All Black coaching tenure was seen as having an approach to players' errors which put excessive pressure on them to correct their failures but lacked imaginative understanding of player needs (Haden, 1988; Veysey, 1984). In Watson's later period as All Black coach he exhibited more of Gleeson's qualities in drawing upon players' ideas, a sense of humour, and an emphasis upon simple things being done well (Haden, 1983, p.94). Hewson underscored the need for positive team leadership when his 1979 All Black coach told him, "You'd be the worst fullback who's ever played for New Zealand...You might as well go home now for all the use you are" (Gault, 1984, p.10).

One All Black coach was noted as lacking knowledge of the game and its required tactics, with one pre-test practice being such a disaster that the backs proceeded to organise their own training session (All Black, Personal communication, September 16, 1993). This coach had not recently coached a top team (McKechnie and McConnell, 1983). In contrast, Wyllie, a Canterbury and All Black coach, is described by his players as having the skills of tactical appreciation, treating each

player differently, developing 15 man rugby, problem solving, and developing team cohesion and closeness, (Gifford, 1991). His warmth (Howitt, 1993) may have allowed loyalty to players to obscure objectivity and decisiveness in selections (Veysey, 1995). (The All Black coach following Wyllie is the subject of Chapter Seven in the present study.)

From having no substantial roles with New Zealand rugby teams, to coaching roles while officially named as All Black assistant-managers, official New Zealand team coaches were formally appointed as such in the late 1980s, and in 1996 the coach was to become fulltime and salaried for the first time as a professional national team coach.

Perspectives on Coaching

In the view of a prolific rugby writer Howitt (1991), and a former World Cup All Black captain, Kirk (1994, April 7), an elite coach should have a sense of vision, understanding of player feelings, good general knowledge of the game, goals understood by the players, discipline and organisation, the ability to create a team environment in which people respond positively and pride in meeting high standards. There should be a common focus, similar targets, a pool of energies and subjugation of individual aspirations in pursuit of a common goal (Thomas, 1993). Shelford, an All Black captain, believes that an elite rugby coach should be onside with the players, have sound selection skills, should involve senior players in planning but have the capacity to remain aloof when detachment is required (Gifford, 1990; Gray, 1990, p.102; O'Meagher, 1994). Hart (Thomas, 1993), later to be an All Black coach, has emphasised quality leadership and effective team building (ibid., p.178), but does not define leadership and appears to separate "quality leadership" from team building. Hart's ability to stimulate players, make players think under pressure, instill hunger and urgency in a team, motivate, and keep players interested, is widely noted in New Zealand rugby literature (see, for example, McKewen, 1994, May 15; McKewen, 1994, September 11; Thomas, 1992), as is his detailed match planning, and development of mental hardness in his players (Gifford, 1990). Mains, the 1992-1995 coach appointed ahead of Hart, was demanding at training, caring, "a player's coach," honest, and spoke his mind (Howitt, 1993). Stewart, an All Black coach, outlines similar requirements of an elite coach (1979, 1983) and emphasises the lack of coach education, seeing coach programmes as "essential" (1987).

The NZRFU presently has a Director of Coaching, funded by the Hillary Commission, who oversees the development of rugby coach qualifications. Each New Zealand province has its own coaching staff to develop programmes, club and school linkages, and training courses. The NZRFU's official materials on coaching of the national game contain virtually nothing on the leadership roles of the coach and captain, the elite coach's role or coach-captain linkages.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Technical skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Strategist analyst	X	X	X	X	X	X		6
Selection	X				X	X		3
Organisation	X	X	X				X	4
Support staff	X			X				2
Motivator	X	X	X		X		X	5
Communicator	X	X	X		X		X	5
Disciplinarian	X	X	X			X		4
Ethical standards	X	X			X			3
Imaginative		X	X		X			3
Training and practice				X	X		X	3
Man management	X	X	X		X	X	X	6
Loyalty to team			X			X		2
Game planner	X		X		X	X		4
Personal qualities			X	X		X	X	4
Vision	X	X	X		X			4
Game knowledge		X	X	X	X	X		5
Relationships		X	X		X	X	X	5
Respected		X				X		2
Team development		X	X		X	X		4
Teaching skills		X			X			2

Key: A Hart (Thomas, 1993) E Kirk (1994, April 7)
 B Stuart (1978, 1982) F Brewer (Gifford, 1995)
 C Tuigamala (Howitt, 1993) G Allen & McLean (1970); Allen, in Knight (1991)
 D Haden (1988)

Figure 3.12 New Zealand perspectives on elite rugby coaching.

In one of the few such studies ever completed of rugby in New Zealand, Holmes (1980) interviewed the two coaches and players of a secondary school first fifteen and senior club team to elicit perceptions of the coach. Motivation by the coach was perceived as critical by players and coaches to generate aggressive play. Holmes does not differentiate between players' self-motivation, motivation of skill development, or the team motivation which produces an independent effort satisfying game plan. Team unity and spirit were important, with each team espousing winning as their goal, but playing well was also valued. Both coaches drew upon their experience to optimise players' skills and felt a compulsion to keep up to date. Player involvement in team discussion and the maintenance of a spirit of "sportsmanship" were perceived as important

by the coaches. Players in each team believed the coach, as “guide, philosopher, friend,” should be respected, this being facilitated by firmness, control and a sense of humour.

In another club level investigation, Tod and Hodge (1993), interviewed eight male Dunedin club players on moral dilemmas in rugby, and suggest that players can learn positive and negative behaviour from coaches, parents, and role models. They note the absence of research on the moral reasoning of New Zealand rugby players and suggest, in their preliminary results, that moral reasoning, achievement motivation and goals should be considered by coaches as influences upon player values. An indirect but official influence on team values is the 1990 Code of Coach Ethics, Figure 3.13, seen by the NZRFU as a standard for coach behaviour at all levels (Guy, Gentry, Stewart, and Smith, 1991).

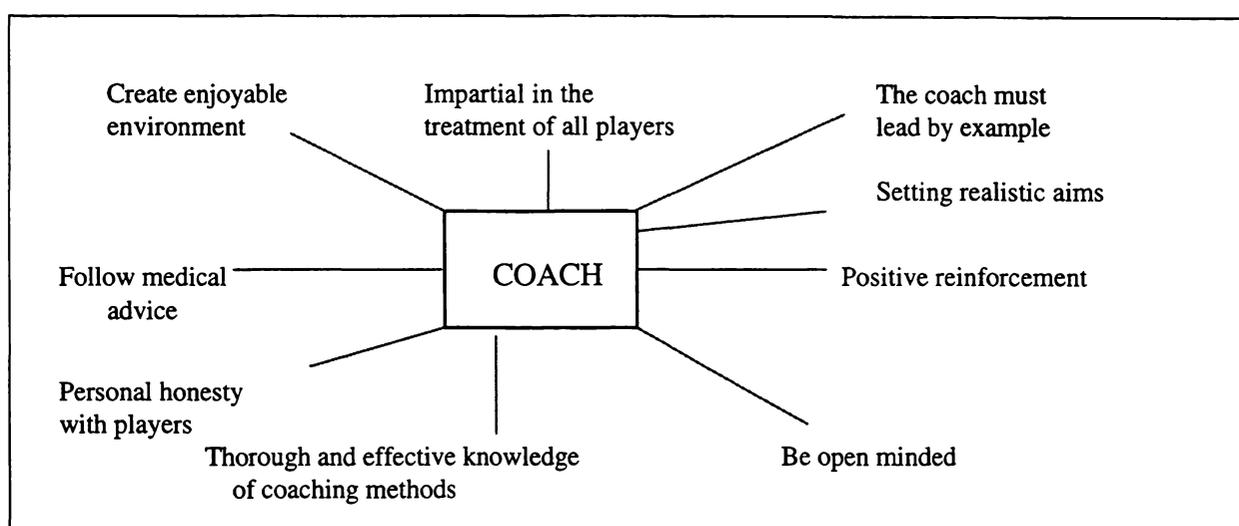


Figure 3.13 NZRFU (1990) Code of Coach Ethics.

There are, however, no ethical considerations in the guide which deal with gender equity or the cultural values of rugby players. A coach’s culturally stereotypical views may link players to certain positions (see, for example, Melnick and Thompson, 1996), whereas a culturally aware coach could generate a rationale for field selection based upon skills and positional needs. Off-field ethical considerations covered could include evaluation of the team environment to ensure that this included players’ families (Lewis P., 1991) and recognised cultural values appropriately.

Captain-Coach Linkage

The coach’s development of teamwork, strategies and tactics impact on the match through the captain’s onfield guidance and direction (Jarden, 1961). Allen and McLean (1970) described the

interactive coach as a guide and friend who greatly assists the captain in a process which develops mutual confidence.

“To witness the development of Gleeson [coach] and Mourie [captain] as a great New Zealand coach and captain pairing was a privileged experience. The mutual respect they held for each other, and Gleeson’s trust, was imprinted through Mourie to his team. Actually to call it “his” team is a misnomer, for all the players in the teams Mourie captained were in no doubt the team was theirs (Haden, 1983, p.140).

Gleeson wanted the game played at pace by thinkers which fitted the Mourie persona perfectly. Watson, All Black coach, remarked on his complete faith in Mourie as captain and the openness he developed in the team. Dalton found it more difficult to develop a warm rapport as captain with coaches Watson or Burke than he had done with coach Gleeson (Knight, 1986) who had a more personal interaction with players. Dwyer (1992), Knight (1986), and Laidlaw (1973), suggest that such elite rugby team leaders affect their team’s results, although Dwyer warns a coach cannot win without good athletes (but can still lose with them). Dwyer estimates the coach’s impact on a team’s result as some 7 per cent, being approximately one-sixteenth of the input of coach and 15 players.

Implicit in a result is commitment to a game plan, with onfield variations if necessary (Scott and McLean, 1955). “It depends on the captain or the leader, the person who calls the shots, as to when and how it’s changed. If a mistake is made on the field with decisions over the game plan you’ve got problems. The coach is in the onfield leader’s hands...” (Gifford, 1991, p.203). A 1986 Cavaliers game against South Africa illustrated captaincy which failed to make such field leadership decisions (Knight, 1986). Despite the increasing use of technology, skilled training and potential for leadership development, the future role of the captain may remain relatively constant in this onfield context, but the coach role may change. In the future, elite rugby coaches may develop roles akin to those of an elite soccer manager, with a coaching squad of specialists (Haden, 1988).

3.4.2 Captaincy

New Zealand perspectives of elite rugby captaincy draw strongly upon the literature of prominent past players which indicates broad collective perceptions. To ensure the fullest possible consideration of viewpoints, this section of the review considered every published New Zealand rugby biography or tour book (see McLaren, 1985, which lists those to 1985).

Stepping back in history, Ellison (1902) argued that the captain should know the laws, command players' confidence, develop appropriate game plans and have a facility for "reading the game". This original text saw onfield leadership as perhaps best done from the half-back's position, with the captain and his team changing their general system of play if they gained superiority, found the backs or forwards being overworked, or wanted to introduce variety. Also regarded as a seminal work, Gallaher and Stead (1906) was regarded as relevant over 70 years later (James et al., 1972; Reason and James, 1979).

A good captain is born - he is a born leader of men. He must know all that there is to, be known about the game in theory and practice, must be a master tactician, must be possessed of the most acute perception, must be a keen judge of human nature, must know every peculiarity of each one of the men under his command and as many of these of his enemies as is possible, must be able to effect the most tactful combination of the *fortiter in re* with the *suaviter in modo*, must be cool in success and hopeful when things look black, and his resources must be infinite (Gallaher and Stead, 1906, pp.188-189).

Gallaher's 1905-06 All Black team influenced the idea of open football and revolutionised rugby in England (Wakelam, 1936a, 1936b). Gallaher's coach, Duncan, had been an innovative captain, who developed the idea of bringing his three-quarters infield to form a new five-eighths alignment (Stone, 1938), so changing the history and tactics of rugby. The captain was seen as a leader, respected by the team, using signals in the manner of American football for onfield play (Baskerville, 1907), discerning opposition weaknesses, and improving a team (Fletcher, 1925; Hunter, 1929).

In 1924, no coach went with the All Blacks to Great Britain, but Porter was acclaimed as one of the great pre-World War II captains. Noted for his onfield tactical skill and authority, his other abilities included consideration of his players, drawing opinions from them and getting the best out of each individual (McLean, 1991; Nepia and McLean, 1963). In contrast, the 1935-36 All Blacks could have achieved more under a captain other than Manchester (Oliver and Tindill, 1936) as this team leader lacked incisive judgement and the ability to lead from the front. Wilson Whineray was an acclaimed international rugby captain (Edwards, 1986; Norrie, 1980) who placed a priority upon the captain as leader. He noted that captains were not well prepared for team leadership, contrasting his own lack of preparation with the United States environments where there was a perceived emphasis upon leadership training. Whineray's successful business leadership record and test captaincy of 25 test wins and five losses underscores the relevance of his assertion that new and prospective captains should meet with experts on leadership, and be trained in communication and media relations (Knight, 1991; Vodanovich and Coates, 1982).

Whineray provided “inspired leadership” which drew the best from a team (Clarke and Booth, 1966, pp. 34-35), and saw the captain’s capacity “to pull people together” as leadership, with elements relating to people, to deal with problems and pool the team’s energies for a common purpose (ibid., p.222). He valued close links with senior players (Veysey, 1974), although this could have been at the expense of spending supportive time with young or inexperienced players (Knight, 1991; Laidlaw, 1973). Pryor, a famous Maori rugby player, recounts team talk inspiration by Whineray (Allen and McLean, 1970).

A past All Black captain, Laidlaw (1973), noted inspiration as a major element in the art of elite captaincy. He rated Graham as a most powerful New Zealand captain, with a strong mental capacity, authority, ability to marshal a team and inspire, and skill in reading and tactically directing a game (ibid., p.47). Lochore, a captain who could influence a match (Edwards, 1986, p.102), provides a practitioner perspective:

I try to analyse the game beforehand. You’ve got to think of the individuals within your side and work out tactics accordingly. I would possibly play better if I wasn’t captain because you are only playing for yourself, but when you are captain of a side you tend to think of other players. You probably try to play for them a little bit and work out how the game is going on the field, which takes a bit out of you (Lochore, in Sellers, 1992, pp.52-53).

Mourie was a great post-war international and All Black captain (Edwards, 1986; Gifford, 1991). Seen as a wonderful strategist (Dwyer, 1992), he led by example with high intelligence, a high onfield work-rate and with physical commitment (Veysey, 1984). Mourie had rapport with players, playing skills, brilliant tactical sense and effective team talks, understanding of all positions, analytic and planning skills (McKechnie and McConnell, 1983; Veysey, 1984). He also effectively liaised with management, media and the coach. Despite the skills he saw captaincy as “a difficult art, about which little has ever been satisfactorily said. Certainly there was never any captain’s manual thrust into my hand” (Palenski, 1982, p.82).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the All Black captaincy did not sit so easily with Loveridge or Wilson, who needed to be free of major responsibilities to play to their own standards (Veysey, 1984). “Mourie, Dalton, Leslie and before them Whineray and Lochore - these men had the capacity to absorb responsibility, to stand off from the madding crowd, to be men apart while never losing contact with the players as a team and as individuals. It is a rare gift” (Veysey, 1984, p.137).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total
Ensure player clarity		X				X	X		3
Philosophy accepted	X		X	X	X				4
Man management				X	X		X	X	4
Liaison	X								1
Achieving group synthesis	X			X			X		3
Training and practice	X								1
Problem solver	X								1
Leader		X					X	X	3
Onfield leadership	X		X			X	X	X	5
Good relationships, distance			X			X	X		3
Personal example	X					X		X	3
Commitment for team	X							X	2
Quality rugby commitment	X						X		2
Excellent player	X	X		X	X		X	X	6
Off-field leader							X		1
Captain-coach relationship	X	X		X	X				4
Confident		X							1
Communication skills		X	X	X	X		X		5
Game strategist and tactician	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	7
Knows rules well		X	X			X			3
Motivator	X	X	X	X	X			X	6
Respected		X	X	X	X	X		X	6
Understands players			X		X	X			3
Knows opposition		X	X			X			3
Skill in adversity			X						1
Promotion of game	X						X		2
Personal qualities			X	X		X	X	X	5

Key: A Mourie, in Palenski (1982) E Allen and McLean (1970)
 B Whineray (1979) F Auckland Rugby Football Union (1952)
 C Gallaher and Stead (1906) G Kirk (1995)
 D Scott and McLean (1955) H Fox, in Veysey (1992)

Figure 3.14 New Zealand perspectives on elite rugby captaincy.

Dalton, the appointed All Black captain for the 1987 World Cup, missed each match through injuries but exhibited “immeasurable” leadership (Gifford, 1990, p.132) and saw himself as a natural leader (Knight, 1986, p.69). Dalton noted the demands from media relations in elite level captaincy, public speaking, and the need to draw upon commonsense. His qualities were perceived as being in control, getting a lot out of individuals, dignity, reading a game and excellent interpersonal qualities (Brown, 1991; Gifford, 1990; Gray, 1990; Haden, 1988; Knight, 1986). “I would rather play under Mourie or Dalton than captain a team myself...Mourie gave players the freedom to take initiatives...there was always the possibility of having an exciting or entertaining match under his leadership...excitement, entertainment: add to them efficiency...and

you have total rugby” (Mexted, in Veysey, 1986, p.159). Mexted, a noted All Black, records Dalton’s innate warmth and ability to relate to all people, his effectiveness as a player, absolute reliability, and ability as a touring captain to express much more than onfield leadership.

Described by Dalton (in Kirwan, 1987) as a magnificent All Black leader, Kirk sees “authority of leadership” coming firstly from playing ability, with a proviso that successful teams need leaders to sustain them and create purposes for further growth (Kirwan, 1987, p.17). An astute reader of the game, with intellectual and verbal skills, Kirk was seen however, as being caught between the demands of the forwards and backs each seeking ball control (Gray, 1990).

Shelford, with the highest rate of victories as an All Black test captain, stressed the importance of leading by example. Shelford’s skills included self-confidence, utter commitment, hardness, knowledge of the laws, strong will, kindness, the ability to change tactics, and sense of humour (Gray, 1990). On the obverse side he was perceived as having unrealistically high expectations of less endowed players, a degree of obstinacy, lack of tolerance for lesser standards than his own, and an uneasy relation with the media (*ibid.*).

Rugby match leadership from players other than the captain can be critical in onfield tactics, off-field planning, and reinforcement of the captain (Gray, 1990; Kirk, 1995; Knight, 1991; O’Meagher, 1994; Veysey, 1974), yet the literature provides little guidance for the emergent elite rugby captain or informal team leaders, or information on their roles.

3.5 SUMMARY AND COMMENT

Despite the coach having a leading team role (Iso-Ahola and Hatfield, 1986; Weimin, 1989), there have been few attempts to determine realities of the coaching process and coach knowledge (Baria, Salmela, Côté, Russell, Moraes, Baier, Ping, and Pristarincha, 1993). The considerable body of research on sport leadership, is dominated by school, college and club levels. Although prominent researchers at the elite level, including Côté, Salmela and associates, have investigated coach qualities, roles and formative learning experiences, these studies do not cover a wide range of sports, and primarily utilize questionnaires, interviews or training time observation, to delve into the total context of the coach’s leadership role. Yet it is the coach who is the most important factor in athlete development (Maetozo, 1981), deserving of more complete research, such as through participant observation (Gould et al., 1989).

The considerable body of literature on elite rugby coaching and captaincy is derived almost wholly from manuals and players' reminiscences or biographies. This chapter has noted the emphasis upon elements such as communication, game plans, responsibility, motivation, strong mental capacity, onfield strategies (captain), off-field tactician (coach), technical skills, team management and relationship building.

The literature from New Zealand and other countries, indicated the critical modern-day role of the elite rugby coach. Significant dimensions of elite rugby team coaching were noted: planning, which draws upon skills of analysis, selection and a clear philosophy; technical knowledge of the game, positions and individual skills; personal qualities, especially those of clear thinking, motivation, communication and high standards; practice and training, drawing upon organisational skills and discipline; man management, which evokes respect through positive relationships; the impact of elite rugby team leadership upon other persons, playing styles and perceptions of rugby; and the coach-captain relationship. Unlike general coaching literature (see, for example, Naylor and Howe, 1990; Pyke, 1991; Tinning, 1982; Tharp and Gallimore, 1976) rugby literature does not emphasise instructional skills of the coach.

The role of team captain and examination of this vis-a-vis with that of team coach, has had minimal attention by researchers at the elite level of sport. These realities occur in a social environment, seen by Donnelly and Young (1985), in rugby, as featuring sexism, alcohol, and deviant social behaviour. Virtually no research exists on elite rugby team coaches or captains, despite this sport's dominance of the New Zealand sportscape (Edwards, 1984; Watkins and Dobbs, 1971), and consequently critical considerations of their roles and qualities draw predominantly upon the perceptions of rugby writers and players.

Elite rugby captains exerted a primary influence upon their teams' fortunes through the first 80 years of New Zealand rugby, with coaches becoming more influential team leaders from the 1950s and 1960s. Elite team captaincy is seen as primarily falling into onfield and off-field dimensions.

Onfield leadership is exerted through playing example, *reading the game*, comprehending needs in play, utilisation of tactical skills, and knowledge of the rules. Man management draws upon personal qualities, communication and motivation, and support for the team. Captain-coach relationships have been noted by a range of writers, and are facilitated by a clear philosophy, knowledge of players and positive involvement at training. Off-field leadership is based upon

respect and high personal standards of conduct. The official NZRFU manuals note some of these leadership dimensions, rarely discuss key elements such as the selection of the captain, but do emphasise the importance of the game plan (Guy et al., 1991; New Zealand Rugby Football Union, n.d.).

Elite rugby team leaders operate in a wide range of social contexts, interacting with players in public and private team settings. “If you do not have a real team in the true sense of the word, off the field, then how are you going to have one on the field?” (Campese, 1991, p.90). There would appear to be value in understanding this “off the field” team world.

Bennis (1984) suggests that an effective mode of gaining understandings of effective leaders is to spend time with them. However, first hand evidence of what a team leader does, in all public and private team settings is rare. Knowledge of expert coach or captain realities may provide insights for practitioner (Parkhouse, Ulrich, and Soucie, 1982) and theorist alike. This is confirmed by Gould, Hodge, Peterson and Petlichkoff (1987) who recommend research through “actual observations of coaches in practices and competitions, and by in-depth interviews that allow for the acquisition and interpretation of rich qualitative data” (p.37). “Future research should...systematically observe coaches throughout a season and in the best of research worlds, longitudinally, to understand the nuances of leadership that bring out the best in their players” (Pratt and Eitzen, 1989a, p.321). Research is needed on the realities and behaviours of coaches in their actual team contexts (Parkhouse, Ulrich, and Soucie, 1982; Woodman 1993) and leadership in sport (Parkhouse, Ulrich, and Soucie, 1982; Weiss and Friedrichs, 1986). “In order to obtain an accurate measure of an individual coach’s actual behaviour, the researcher must carefully schedule observational data collection sessions. Such careful planning is necessitated because coaches’ behaviour has been found to vary as a function of the context” (Horn, 1992, p.192).

To carry out such observation, Côté, Salmela and Russell (1995a) suggest a “reality grounded approach might be useful in investigating such a complex domain of expertise as high level of coaching” (p.70), and utilised such a methodology themselves in eliciting perceptions of elite coaches. This approach could be utilised to generate understandings and theory from investigating all aspects of elite rugby team leaders in action. Crawford (1986) noted his brief participant observation of a provincial team as they prepared for a game against a touring international team. That study left unanswered questions, such as the coach’s behaviour in private interaction with players, selection meetings, game planning and the build-up through the week.

Data generated from a study encompassing all aspects of elite team leadership could provide the base for education to enhance elite rugby coaching and captaincy. Before programmes for elite coaches are developed, the words and world of elite coaches must be understood (Gould et al., 1990). The Hillary Commission (1993a) asserts that “national sport organisations must develop the skills of their coaches and leaders” (p.17). In the United States, elite coaches of 30 sports at Olympic national and Pan-American levels indicated, in a major 130 coach survey, special interest in coaching education workshop and seminars, mentor programmes and a range of coaching science courses (Gould, Giannini, Krane and Hodge, 1990). Bennis and Nanus (1985) suggest that the primary competencies of leadership can be learned. Also learned can be teaching skills which should be acquired by the coach (Alderman, 1976; Bishop, 1991).

The literature rarely explored significant symbolic elements in elite sport and rugby related to, or utilised by, team leaders. Compressed or figurative language, (such as *man management* or *All Blacks*), and symbols (for example, *the silver fern* or *black jersey*) evoke images which impact upon perceptions of elite rugby. Little research exists which considers the embedded symbolism possibly influencing, and influenced by, the elite coach. “The behavioral norms, codes of conduct, stories, symbols, rituals, and so on traditionally associated with sport and subsequently sport organisations would provide fertile ground for studies of organisational culture and its ties to leadership” (Slack and Kikulis, 1989, p.187).

This literature review opened with Rost’s (1991) definition of leadership (see page 35 of this study). The elite captain and coach influence upon individuals, the team, and the team game plan have shaped the researcher’s definition underlying this present study, that *leadership is an influence relationship through which leaders and followers intend real change which has mutual acceptability and individual commitment*. This modification of Rost’s definition (see page 35) by the present researcher, adding *individual commitment*, recognises that changes having mutual acceptability may have even greater follower adherence if there is individual commitment.

Definition	Elite Rugby Team Leadership	Literature Source Examples
Leadership is an influence relationship,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach influences players through knowledge, personal skills and match preparation • Captain influences players through onfield example and decisions, interaction, and representation of team 	Wallace (1976) Luke (1984) Williams (1975) James et al. (1972) Gallaher and Stead (1906)
through which leaders and followers intend real change,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach and captain are committed to a definite style and game plan • Team development is planned • The process of growth or development, such as playing style, which is supported by all of the team 	James (1983) Jarden (1961) Palenski (1982) Allen and McLean (1970) Thomas (1992) Haden (1983)
which has mutual acceptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The game plan and team development has the full support of team leaders, the team and field units • Coach and captain are jointly agreed on team essentials • All players understand the team and its direction 	Vodanovich and Coates (1982) Palenski (1982) Miles (1995) Howitt and McConnell (1996)
and individual commitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual players are committed to the plan and team development • Individual skill and personal growth is implicit 	Gifford (1991) Miles (1995)

Figure 3.15 Leadership defined in terms of elite rugby team leadership literature.

(Present researcher's definition based upon Rost, 1991.)

The present study originated with a broad question on elite rugby team leadership which reflected a grouping of informal questions framed by the researcher. Critical reflection upon the resultant literature review indicated a range of perspectives on elite rugby coaching and captaincy, noted above, which have common themes but lack research validation. The literature strongly indicated a need for greater naturalistic enquiry into the role of the coach (and the captain, by implication, as this leadership role was rarely discussed). Precepts illustrative of this need were voiced by Weese, McLean and Corlett (1993, p. 105), ("The area of leadership holds great promise for the coaching profession"), and Curtis, Smith and Smoll (1979, p.391), ("Sport offers an excellent setting for studying the behaviour of leaders"). Consequently the broad question noted at the opening of this chapter was refined to a series of questions for research purposes to seek validation or first hand information on the elite rugby coach and captain.

1. *What are the team leadership roles of elite rugby coaches and captains?*
2. *How are these leadership roles enacted at an elite level?*
3. *What are the most important qualities of elite rugby coaches and captains?*
4. *How are these qualities illustrated at an elite level?*
5. *Given the team leadership roles and qualities of the elite rugby coach and captain, how can these best be developed?*

In turn, these questions were pivotal in deciding the most appropriate research methodologies to adopt in eliciting understandings of elite rugby team leadership. Chapter Four discusses these methodologies in detail.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter refines the broad research questions arising from a review of the research literature in Chapter Three, and examines the implications of these questions for the selection of the qualitative approach to the research methodology.

An analysis of the essential features of qualitative research methodology is followed by an outline of the qualitative research procedures used in the present study: participant observation, interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. These procedures were trialled in the context of a secondary school rugby team's annual match with a traditional rival before proceeding to their application with two elite level rugby teams which were the focus of the research: a New Zealand provincial rugby team and the New Zealand national rugby team, the All Blacks.

The chapter concludes with discussion of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism with which the research data were analysed in an attempt to derive theoretical propositions and meanings within the elite team leadership dimension of rugby culture. Finally, there is a critical reflection on the qualitative methodologies used in the study.

- 4.1 Research Questions
- 4.2 Research Design
 - 4.2.1 Mapping the Research Methodology
 - 4.2.2 Selection of Subjects
- 4.3 Qualitative Research
 - 4.3.1 The Nature of Qualitative Research
 - 4.3.2 The Challenge of Research Validation
 - 4.3.3 Ethical Considerations
- 4.4 Data Gathering Procedures
 - 4.4.1 Pilot Study of Procedures
 - 4.4.2 Participant Observation
 - 4.4.3 Interviews
 - 4.4.4 Questionnaires
 - 4.4.5 Documents
- 4.5 Generating Theory
 - 4.5.1 Grounded Theory
 - 4.5.2 Symbolic Interactionism
- 4.6 Reflections on the Methodology

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The preceding chapter noted the multi-faceted impact upon players and the public of the rugby coach and captain. Yet the research literature on these leadership roles does not provide a full picture of such facets of rugby as team selection, practice, team social life, coach-player, captain-player and coach-captain interactions, team meetings, or the changing room. Indeed, a team environment may well impact upon team leadership and also feature coach or captain behavior not

readily discernible by the observer or researcher who has restricted access to the team leaders and players in their private and public actions. Thus commentators such as Walker (1989) point to the value of ethnographic studies, illustrated by Mintzberg (1973), which incorporate rich and extended observations of what leaders actually do.

The present study sought understandings of role realities of what the coach and captain in New Zealand elite level rugby actually do, and how such knowledge might guide the development of elite coaching and captaincy learning programmes. As such, the study was informed by the following research questions :

1. *What are the team leadership roles of elite rugby coaches and captains?*
2. *How are these leadership roles enacted at an elite level?*
3. *What are the most important qualities of elite rugby coaches and captains?*
4. *How are these qualities illustrated at an elite level ?*
5. *Given the team leadership roles and qualities of the elite rugby coach and captain, how can these best be developed?*

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.2.1 Mapping the Research Methodology

In seeking answers to the research questions, the researcher had to determine the research field and methodologies which could provide access to the fullest range of relevant research data (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Goetz and Le Compte, 1984; Le Compte and Goetz, 1982). The research paradigm was rooted in the belief that elite rugby union football in New Zealand has an impact upon the general public's perception of rugby and upon the practices of those actively engaged at lower levels of the game. An attendant belief was that understanding the construction of elite rugby coaching and captaincy could indicate guidelines for the practices of rugby coaches and captains at all levels.

The researcher approached the research questions in the belief that we frame or construct the world through our experiences and perceptions; that this world has multiple realities constructed by its participants, and does not exist as a given or necessarily agreed upon state. A significant paradigmatic dimension, therefore, was the perceived relationship between the researcher and that

which was being sought in the research process -- the siting of an enquirer attempting to understand participants' actions and beliefs in rugby settings. A further element in the researcher's enquiry paradigm was the belief that finding out what is believed to be known by informants involves eliciting their constructions of reality and interpretations of their world. Guba and Lincoln (1982) note these paradigmatic domains as having ontological, epistemological and methodological centralities. The researcher's paradigm was taken as a guide and not as a set of conditions that might restrict exploration of emergent issues or perspectives which challenged the researcher's initial beliefs. Having determined the basal research questions and researcher orientations, the study turned to a formulation of research methodology and critical considerations of possible research modes. (Figure 4.1 summarises these.)

The findings from the literature, the researcher's paradigmatic orientation, and the social arena of team leader actions anchored the present study in the qualitative domain with an emphasis upon participant observation of rugby team leaders in action, supported by unstructured and informal interviews, questionnaires and the analysis of documents. This provided a rich range of data on elite rugby leadership behaviours for analysis.

The full range of content data was subjected to the process of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Strauss and Corbin, 1994). This methodology is characterised by an ongoing process of recording observational data, continuously classifying data into categories which are progressively reviewed through the research period, and defining and redefining the categories and their properties to generate theory. The theory may be framed, as in the present study, in propositional form. Additionally, the researcher drew upon the field of symbolic interactionism theory to consider symbols, rituals and ascribed meanings which underscored the constructed realities of rugby leadership (Vidich, 1955, p.350).

The field for the present study was that of the elite level rugby coach and captain. In the New Zealand rugby nation, virtually without exception, the coaches and captains discussed in print media are the national, provincial, and All Black team leaders. The national coaches meet with provincial coaches early each year to set out their policies and expectations, which then influence provincial styles and decisions (personal communication from seven provincial coaches). The content and processes of the country's rugby coaching certification were controlled by a past provincial coach (the Director of Rugby Coaching). Again, there is support for the suggestion that experts or elite practitioners may be viewed as models or mentors for aspiring practitioners and may even shape a game and the way it is played (compare, for example, Butcher, 1994; Edwards,

1978; Romanos, 1991, March; Romanos, 1991, September). Additional factors influencing the selection of a research field were the lack of rugby writing on elite coaching which is substantiated by research, and the desire of the researcher to examine one level of rugby team leadership in some depth.

<i>Flexible set of guidelines</i>	<i>Research questions</i> <i>Researcher placed in social world</i>
<i>Theoretical paradigms</i>	<i>World view of the researcher</i> <i>Representation and legitimation</i> <i>Inquiry paradigm</i>
<i>Strategies of inquiry</i>	<i>Researcher's skills and assumptions</i> <i>Activate paradigms of inquiry</i> <i>Researcher connected to specific methods</i> <i>Anchoring of paradigms in methodology</i>
<i>Research methods for data collection</i>	<i>Participant observation</i> <i>Interviews</i> <i>Questionnaires</i> <i>Documents</i> <i>Grounded theory</i> <i>Symbolic interactionism</i>
<i>Interpretive text</i>	<i>Constructing interpretations</i> <i>Grounded Theory</i> <i>Symbolic Interactionism</i> <i>Field texts</i> <i>Research text</i> <i>Public text</i> <i>Criteria for adequacy</i> <i>Practical application</i>

Figure 4.1 Overview of research methodologies.

(After: Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1982)

The map in Figure 4.2 indicates the content, thrusts, timeframe and research path of the study. The original intention of the researcher was to complete the study in the three year period 1991-1993. This was extended to include 1994-95 due to an opportunity to extend participant observation of the national All Black team to cover a complete test match series in New Zealand and an overseas test match.

4.2.2 Selection of Subjects

Observing and interviewing elite athletes to elicit their perspectives on coaching behaviours is not uncommon in sport research (see, for example, Gould, Hodge, Peterson and Giannini, 1989; Salmela, 1994; Salmela, Draper and Laplante, 1993). However, such studies often focus on independent sports, or behaviours that are not confirmed by observation, or which are only observed at training. Moreover, these studies are anchored in non-New Zealand sport settings.

As New Zealand's national game, rugby holds a premier position in the public imagination, has the highest playing numbers of any New Zealand sport, and tends to attract a great deal of media attention. Such prominence led the present study to focus upon a provincial team and the All Blacks national side. The following factors contributed to the selection of the subjects for study:

1. The phenomenon of hero worship and its influence upon public and player perceptions and actions. "Throughout the land, the true sporting heroes [have] continued to be the All Blacks at national level and leading players at provincial and club levels" (McLean, 1991, p.136).
2. The observation of coaches having been researched primarily at the high school, college or club levels with relatively few studies at the elite level. In addition, there is virtually no qualitative research study of elite captaincy behavior which provides observational data on how the captaincy role is enacted.
3. Provincial and national rugby coaches and captains in New Zealand are influential with respect to coaching styles, structures and programmes.
4. As the country's major sport with a national structure, rugby has the All Blacks, and then the provincial players, as the highest level participants in the sport.
5. The literature voices expressing a need for observation of coaches.

Initially these factors predicated an interview series from 1991, which was to include some 150 All Black players and coaches whose elite years spanned 1920-1995, including all living All Black test match captains and national rugby coaches. This was expected to be followed by a period of participant observation. In this interview series, however, the interviewing of a past

All Black captain led to an invitation to observe his coaching of a provincial team which resulted in participant observation, questionnaire and interview activities during the final five games of that team's experiences in the national first division championship.

In turn, interviews with the current All Black captain, the coach (a past All Black), the team manager and the other two All Black selectors resulted in acceptance of the researcher as a participant observer with the All Blacks team. This opportunity was unprecedented in 100 years of the national team's history. The researcher was able to fulfil participant observer, interviewer and questionnaire-creating roles during four test match weeks in 1992-93 (New Zealand versus Ireland, British Isles, Australia and Western Samoa). This was extended through the full three test home series against South Africa, and an overseas test match against Australia in 1994 (refer Figure 4.5, p.99). The interview groups and numbers of the interviews are shown in Figure 4.7 (see p.107). The figure indicates the appendices where the interview questions may be found.

The thought that there might be shared perspectives on team leadership between rugby and other winter sports extended data collection again to semi-structured interviews with six national coaches and captains of New Zealand's three other major winter team sports -- rugby league, field hockey and soccer. The interview format was selected for this latter phase of the study, (rather than questionnaires) in order to explore particular personal perspectives of these elite team leaders, as well as any linkages between tentative rugby-based propositions and the views of these non-rugby leaders.

Beyond this framework, the research extended to questionnaires with:

- (1) Players in the provincial team which was observed by the researcher.
- (2) Coaches and captains of representative provincial teams, before and after a particular game.
- (3) The All Black team at the time of participant observation.
- (4) Surviving All Blacks living in New Zealand (including past All Black test captains and All Black coaches).
- (5) A sample of overseas players who had played test match rugby against New Zealand's All Black team.

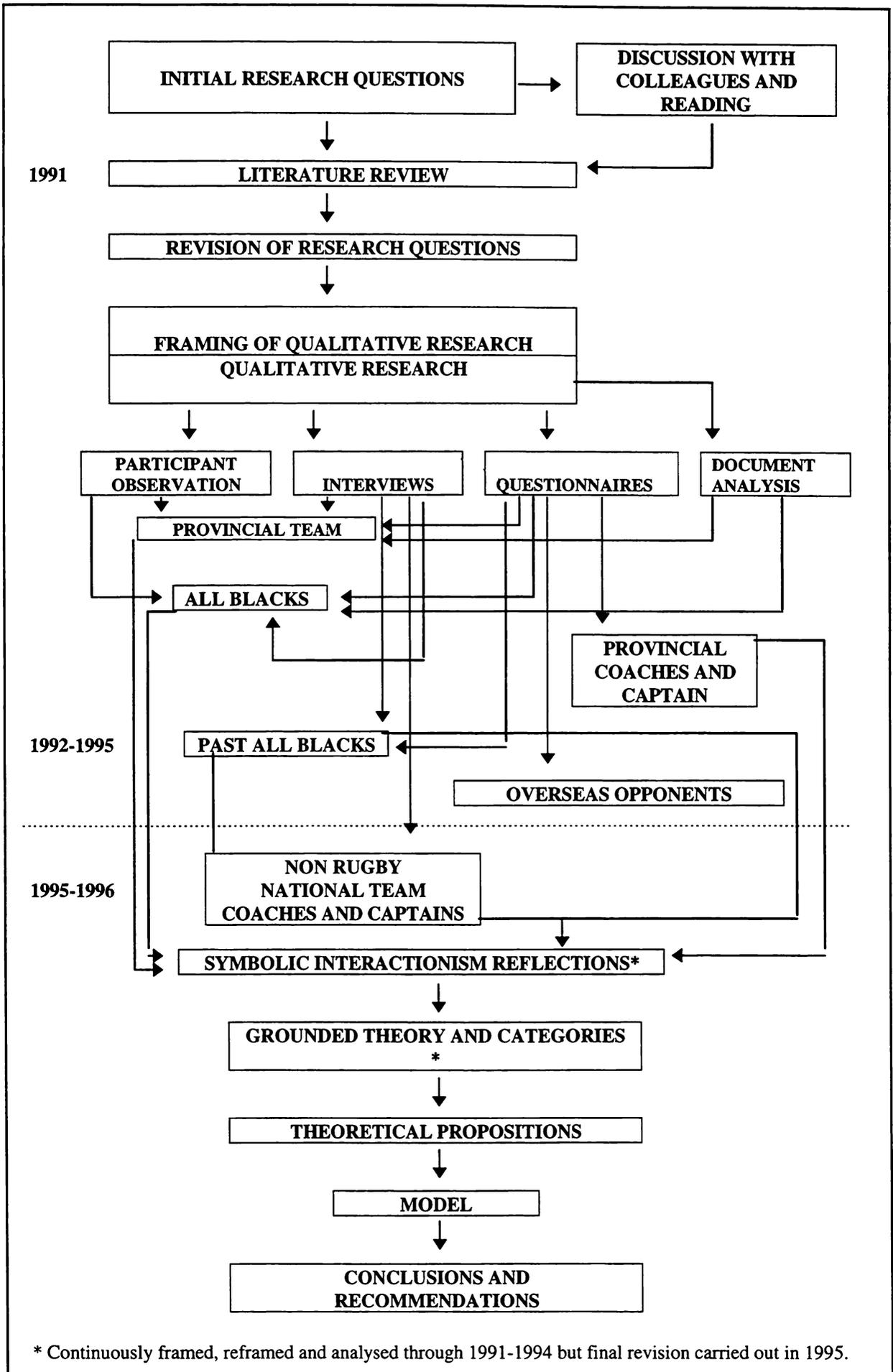


Figure 4.2 Research methodology map.

This questionnaire series was designed to elicit perceptions of, and reflections about, the roles and qualities of coaches and captains. Figure 4.8 (see p.109) summarises the nature, purposes and sequencing of this questionnaires series, and indicates the appendices where a copy of each questionnaire may be found.

Team	Total	Observation	Interviews	Questionnaires
Provincial Team	27	27	17	13
All Blacks				
(a) Past (Pre-1992)	231	0	124	107
(b) Present (1992-1994)	26	26	26	17 + 14
International Rugby Opponents	51	0	1	51
Non-Rugby Elite Team Leaders	6	0	6	0
Provincial Team Leaders	19	0	0	19

Figure 4.3 Research subject groupings and numbers.

Finally, the participant observation and questionnaire methodologies revealed a range of rugby documentation which included tour diaries, newspaper reports, programmes, facsimile messages, coaches' match notes and ephemeral material such as interviewees' prompt notes, Supporter Club membership cards, or coaches' impromptu notes. Photographs were used in some contexts to assist triangulation. Though not readily quantifiable or regular in its relevance or content, this documentation provided a range of perspectives for consideration by the researcher. As the discussion in Chapters Five and Seven indicates, documents were considered within the context in which they arose or were located during the participant observation.

4.3. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Rost (1991) argues that leadership research should be "about leadership in context, leadership in this organisation, this community, this society" (p.186). Thus Section 4.1 above referred to the need in rugby football for ethnographic research to illuminate the roles of rugby coach and rugby captain in the widest possible context. Other support for this viewpoint, with a sport-specific orientation, came from such researchers as Lacy and Darst (1985), Fine and Kleinman (1979), and Greenwood (1986). (See also Chapter Three in the present study.)

4.3.1 The Nature Of Qualitative Research

Qualitative inquiry is seen by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) as providing a richness of data from a natural setting, of revealing multiple realities. In such enquiry the research field is approached with the belief that data and significant events cannot be predetermined, and that intuitive beliefs, knowledge and normally taken-for-granted elements of the social setting may yield data or insights on the subject or cultural group under study. The field being observed or described is not necessarily approached with predetermined hypotheses or propositions, but with the open mind of a keen-eyed observer and recorder who wants to learn “What goes on around here?” Data are generated from learning what, in the social reality of the setting, does indeed “go on” (Erikson, 1986; Locke, 1989; Siedentop, 1989).

Meanings are critical to qualitative research. The qualitative researcher believes that shared intersubjective meanings and interpretations in any culture grow out of social interactions in that culture (Harris, 1981). An organisation or small community such as a sport team has its own social culture -- a small world of constructed and multiple realities. Access to such a world, with all of its social constructs, provides researchers with a way of knowing that world. Researchers may ask “What is the context? What are people saying and doing? And what meanings do they ascribe to various actions, symbols and objects?” (Locke, 1989). As Le Compte and Goetz (1982) say, qualitative research leads to an understanding of “shared beliefs, practices, artefacts, folk knowledge, and behaviours of a group of people. Its objective is the holistic reconstruction of the culture or phenomenon investigated” (p.54).

At the same time, the qualitative paradigm can help tease out the specifics of roles that people play within a cultural setting, “role” being the acting out of a pattern of behavior associated with a person’s location within a set of social relationships. Thus, if as Coakley (1994) suggests, the behavior of sport coaches “is greatly influenced by the organizational settings in which they work, and by the people they interact with regularly” (p.163), then that setting and those interactions need to be fully understood in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the coaching role. The researcher seeking to comprehend such social settings is usually oriented towards an interpretive epistemology, which draws upon qualitative methodology. In the present study qualitative methodology was seen as an appropriate way to explore and uncover the complex culture of elite rugby and the leadership roles therein of team coach and captain.

Methodologies commonly located in the qualitative research paradigm are:

- Participant observation
- Narratives
- Life history
- Interviews
- Case studies
- Formative evaluations
- Descriptive study
- Hermeneutics
- Interpretive research
- Grounded theory

The methodology selected for data gathering in the present study was primarily a combination of participant observation, interviews and questionnaires. Interpretive activity and theory generation were based on grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Strauss and Corbin, 1994) and symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Huber, 1973). It was anticipated that these two approaches would generate theoretical propositions which, in turn, would assist responses to the research questions posed at the beginning of this chapter.

In selecting qualitative research methods the researcher's concern was not with the relative merits or demerits of quantitative and qualitative research but with the appropriateness of the methodology for the research problems and the generation of theoretical ideas (Fetterman, 1989). Jonasson, Turowetz and Gruneau (1981) argue that "the courses of action which are best suited for sociological research with the occupational culture of sport are observation, participant observation, and intensive viewing techniques" (p.188). Such research methods are said to peel back the readily observable layers of a group to "examine subjective experiences in order to understand the development of personal and professional identities, because self and professional roles and attitudes emerge in response to social interaction and interpretive processes within the framework of environmental variables constituting the work setting" (Sage, 1989b, p.83).

Quantitative research was drawn upon in a limited degree. Questionnaires yielded quantifiable data which are drawn upon in the text where relevant to considerations of respondent perspectives and the force of these. The quantitative analysis of questionnaires assisted the

researcher in considering weightings attributed to respondents' open-ended and voluntary comments (see Appendix D.5 or Appendix G.4 for examples).

The sections that follow in this chapter discuss: the validation of qualitative methodologies; ethical considerations; the procedures of participant observation, interviews, questionnaires and document analysis that were central to the study; and the interpretive modes of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism that were integral to the study's generation of theory and propositions.

4.3.2 The Challenge of Research Validation

The subjective and interpretive elements in qualitative research have predicated criticism regarding the lack of validity and precision (see, for example, Goetz and Le Compte, 1984). Illustrative of these criticisms are unconscious bias, loss of perspective, limited sampling, observer effect, lack of neutrality, and problems of rigour.

Qualitative research, however, cannot be judged from a purely positivistic perspective because its purposes and methodologies are different. As with positivistic research, the qualitative approach is concerned with such concepts as validity, accuracy and research procedure replication. Indeed, qualitative research places a premium upon the veracity of description and triangulation (multiple "checking out" of interpretive formulations). Integral to qualitative research methodology are rich detailed field notes and the continual monitoring of emergent data. Thus, as the participant observation process generates a record of the actors, their actions and the setting, so too are these data compared with other data, probed for meanings and sorted into categories or themes in an interactive and cyclic process. Engaging in such holistic and contextual study takes the researcher into a constant sea of human interaction which may well come to reveal its own ebb and flow through the observer's accruing records. Locke (1989) avers that "Their data, their method and their integrity make an appeal for belief but the validation comes from the reader. There is no authority to be claimed solely on the basis of having done it right" (p.4). Fetterman (1989) echoes this position.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Janesick (1994), Le Compte and Goetz (1982), and Lincoln and Guba (1985) collectively highlight credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity) as key criteria for assessing the validity of a qualitative study. In the present study credibility for the analysis and interpretation of data in

the eyes of the informants was sought by such measures as a trial of the methodology with a secondary school rugby team before entering the elite level of rugby leadership, checking of records with key informants, the building of trust with the rugby teams researched to enhance open and frank communication, and triangulation.

Transferability or external validity addresses the degree to which representations may be compared from the present study's subject groups to others. The present study was seen as providing adequately detailed descriptions of the research setting and process to enable others to make reasoned judgments on the transferability of the findings to their own particular settings. In-depth discussion and semi-structured interviews with non-rugby team leaders indicated their clear perceptions of the research relevance and its external validity to other elite teams.

Again, dependability or reliability is achieved through a sufficiently detailed description of the research process being available to independent researchers to allow them to audit the present researcher's decision making path. This is further substantiated with the availability of research notebooks and recorded interviews as raw data for independent researchers. Linked with this is confirmability or objectivity which seeks to present the study's findings in sufficient clarity such that their derivation can be tracked to original data with acceptable interpretations and patterns. In the present research, apart from drawing upon the availability of records, the progressive use of grounded theory and consideration of major symbolic forms allows the inquirer to track the theory generation and findings of the study to the original data.

Harvey and McDonald (1993), with Miles and Huberman (1984b), reflect the belief of Fetterman (1989) that "the heart of ethnographic validity" is triangulation, or the confirmation of research processes and findings through cross-checking from multiple sources. Five modes of triangulation may be highlighted:

- (a) Data triangulation draws upon a range of data sources in multiple data gathering and thick description.
- (b) Investigator triangulation utilises a number of different researcher or evaluator perspectives.
- (c) Theoretical triangulation involves one set of data being interpreted through multiple perspectives.
- (d) Methodological triangulation utilises multiple methods to study a problem.
- (e) Interdisciplinary triangulation with confirmation sourced from another discipline or field of learning.

It must be remembered that qualitative research does not claim to represent a universal truth, but provides a particular way of looking at a social world -- in the case of the present research, the team leadership world of elite rugby team leaders. The interpretive perspective of the qualitative researcher reflects the belief that social and human reality are thought of as constructions of the mind, a subject-object relationship (Smith, J.K., 1983). For quantitative researchers truth is considered to be the extent to which a situation or statement corresponds empirically or objectively to *reality*. For qualitative researchers, however, the truth is what is agreed on in a particular setting at a particular time. Thus, research is not viewed as value free (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). A qualitative research study recognises the introspective and fluid nature of the human settings it examines. Consequently, the researcher tolerates ambiguity and employs a constant reflexive examination of data.

Avoiding a priori constructs, the researcher must nevertheless be aware of the possible loss of researcher impartiality and the risk of what ethnographers term as “going native,” (over-identification with the observed group). In the event of this occurring the researcher would record the shift in orientation and alliance as having potential to taint the research data (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). To help guard against such bias in the present study the researcher maintained a Researcher’s Notebook in which personal reflections and self-critical reviews were recorded and discussed with an experienced mentor (the research supervisor).

It is important to note that the qualitative researcher is an interpretive researcher whose research trail should be able to be replicated by other researchers, although the findings may not be exactly the same because different interactions, different relationship, multiple interpretations and different informant behavior may well colour a different picture (Harris, 1983). Figure 4.4 maps the broad research dimensions of the present study.

4.3.3 Ethical Considerations

In uncovering the nature of the social world of elite rugby players the qualitative researcher is placed in a position requiring acceptance, trust and ethical considerations. Guidance here for the present study came from Fetterman (1989), Kroll (1993), and Safrit (1993) in four ethical domains as below, each being followed by the researcher’s reflections.

1. Establishing Field Entry and Trust

Explanation of research goals, expected duration, procedures, benefits of research to the subject, risks or discomforts to the subject, availability of the researcher's supervisor for subjects' questions or queries.

Discussions were held with key team leaders on the observation and questionnaires to obtain their understanding and consent. The physical presence of the observer was discussed with key subjects (e.g., "When it comes to the test match dressing room where would you want me to be, to keep my presence as unobtrusive as possible?") Anonymity of respondents to questionnaires was explained. Subjects were carefully and honestly appraised of the research and the researcher's purpose, which led to informed consent. Primary benefits of the study were discussed in terms of the information available from the thesis for team leader development. The researcher undertook to write up a summary of major findings, in lay person language, for sport team practitioners and has drafted such a guide. Certain benefits were seen by key informants in receiving interim feedback from the researcher, such as the views emerging from questionnaires completed by a team or an interaction record from a team talk. (This raised the question of indirect researcher influence upon the observed setting, and this is critically reflected upon in Chapter Ten.) All key informants and past players interviewed were given the name and address of the researcher's academic supervisor whom they could contact if they had questions about the research. None did so.

2. Status of Records

Confidentiality, availability to subjects, publication without informant identification, final summary or copy to informants.

Records were shown only to the informants and, with the informants' consent, the researcher's academic supervisor. If an informant asked for the tape recorder to be turned off, or noted a statement as being "off the record," this request was observed. No informant is identified by name in the final thesis. All questionnaires were coded to prevent identification of players by any person other than the researcher. All team members were informed that the researcher's records were available for checking. All persons interviewed or responding to questionnaires were offered the opportunity to receive a summary of the research findings and a number requested this. A small number of key informants, including the four elite coaches and captains, receive a copy of the full thesis. Protection from harm did not arise as a major ethical issue

1. **Theoretical and literature basis for a qualitative study**
 - (a) Empirical : pre-entry experiential observation and hunches or *sensitising concepts*, and initial research questions.
 - (b) Critical review of the research literature to help refine research foci.
 - (c) Use of ethnographic field methodologies to provide understandings of elite rugby team leadership in action. (Participant observation, interviews, questionnaires, document analysis.)
 - (d) Use of grounded theory and symbolic interaction for categorising and theory building.
2. (i) **Data : Primary location**
 - (a) Elite rugby team settings of coach and captain behavior.
 - (b) Past player perspectives.
 - (c) Provincial coaches and captains.
 - (d) International opponents.
 - (e) Leaders of elite team sports other than rugby.

(ii) **Data : Primary collection**

 - (a) Participant observation of elite team leaders.
 - (b) Interviews of past and present team leaders and players.
 - (c) Questionnaires to elite coaches, captains and players (past, present, opposing).
3. **Sample**
 - (a) Trial with secondary school team, one game.
 - (b) Provincial team, five games, four weeks.
 - (c) National rugby team, eight test weeks.
 - (d) Some 150 All Blacks interviewed.
 - (e) Interviews of six non-rugby elite team leaders.
 - (f) Questionnaires from 131 All Blacks.
 - (g) Questionnaires from 51 test opponents.
 - (h) Questionnaires from 19 provincial team leaders.
4. **Analysis**
 - (a) Grounded theory : formulation of data, ongoing analysis and comparison of the emergent data, their categories and properties is continuous until saturation occurs. Propositions are formulated.
 - (b) Partial quantitative analysis of major questionnaires.
5. **Nature of results**
 - (a) Researcher's interpretations of what elite team leaders do.
 - (b) Categories expressed with theoretical propositions.
6. **Nature of construct validation**
 - (a) Outline of research process allows replication and audit trail to be reconstructed.
 - (b) 'Verite in situ'. The validity and veracity of the researcher's description of the research setting and emergent data bears scrutiny.
 - (c) Construction of a propositional model for coach education.
7. **Time frame**
1991-1995

Figure 4.4 Research dimensions.

(After Olafson, 1990a; 1990b.)

for the researcher, but did occur when frank comments or anecdotes were provided about past coaches, captains or contemporary administrators, and where injudicious use of the interview content could have possibly identified the informant. In such situations the researcher checked the

information with others and, if relevant to the study, it was noted with no informant or subject identification.

3. Subject Rights

Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

All subjects had the right to accept or reject the researcher's presence or questions, and all respondents were given the opportunity to vet the researcher's records. The elite team coaches and captains spoke with their players and gave personal assurances that player participation in discussion and informal or structured interviews was completely voluntary. (It was significant that no players, past or present, disengaged themselves or refrained from contact and interaction.) Confidentiality was discussed and all respondents were assured that their comments or responses would not be identified by name.

4. Research Setting

Response to questionable circumstances, validating data

The researcher prepared for possible questionable circumstances (e.g., the excess drinking extant in rugby folklore) by discussing the possibility with team leaders who were the primary focus of observation. It was agreed that if such a situation arose, the recording of this would be discussed by those key informants and researcher at the time. Protection of participant self-esteem without compromising research accuracy and integrity was a tenet of the study, although the researcher did not encounter any situation which threatened research accuracy or integrity and was only personally discomfited at one time. This was engendered by a non-rugby person and was in Match Four of the Provincial Team participant observation. Validity was sought internally through the thoroughness and richness of description and recording as well as checking with informants, and externally through triangulation (see 4.3.2 above). Grounded theory was utilised to generate theory from data (see 4.5.1, p.110). The provincial team leaders had a complete personal copy of the observational record to check. The All Blacks team leaders had a complete observation record from their first test. Following confirmation of that record's accuracy, the key subjects of coach and captain suggested that after each test match week the full detailed observation records be available if they wished to check them or seek clarification over their own observed leadership actions but they did not have to be provided with them individually. Recordings of significant incidents (such as team talks, the pre-test changing room and the captain's test eve "player only" team talks) were consistently checked with the key actors for literal accuracy, interpretive validity

and actor perspectives. All material used in the final thesis was checked by key informants. Three past players who preferred interviews without the tape recorder had full transcripts for checking. Unclear and highly personal data were monitored by the researcher's supervisor. Saturation was honestly recognised through grounded theory application. After the research was written up, the researcher checked the final thesis account with the major PT and All Black coaches, who provided their perspective of the research and data gathering (see Appendix H.1 for the All Black coach's views`).

4.4 DATA GATHERING PROCEDURES

This section discusses the various qualitative methodologies employed in the present study. Each research method is considered in terms of its essential features, the data it generated, and how these data were analysed to assist with the study's overall research questions. The section comprises the following:

4.4.1 Pilot Study of Procedures

4.4.2 Participant Observation

4.4.3 Interviews

4.4.4 Questionnaires

4.4.5 Documents

4.4.1 Pilot Study of Procedures

A trial of the methodologies was sought in a realistic rugby team setting, and opportunity arose for the researcher to undertake participant observation of a boys' college first fifteen rugby team playing an annual inter-school game. The principal of the school was contacted, a meeting held, and the proposal for observation was accepted by the principal and the team's two coaches. The latter were interviewed and the team observed at practices. At each practice the senior coach and captain discussed their perceptions of the team and its development, and a range of players and parents was interviewed during and after those practices. Participant observation activities with this team took place over two weeks of training and two days of travel for the annual match, including the build-up for the game and the after-match function.

Questions asked of the adolescent players and their coaches in semi-structured interviews provided the basis for a subsequent questionnaire used with an elite level provincial team. The interviews and surveys of player perspectives were orthodox, and did not present any special problems for the researcher. The survey trialled a series of questions orally, which subsequently became the basis for the elite team questionnaire. This was carried out with individual players to allow modifications to be made if any questions were not clear to the first fifteen players. A small number of minor changes to assist clarity resulted, but the survey essentially became confirmed as the Provincial Team Questionnaire (see Appendix D.5).

A further questionnaire was trialled which had its origins in the researcher's belief that the research literature did not consider opposing coach and captain perceptions of another team's game plan and on-field leadership. The rival school's coach and captain had provided their pre-match expectations and post-match evaluations of the game, along with perspectives on the captain's leadership. This informative questionnaire data gathering was to be paralleled in the subsequent research (see Chapter Six).

Participant observation in the pilot study also led to later research refinements. The researcher is a relatively reserved person and tended, at times, to hold back a little from approaching key informants, particularly the senior coach. Thus, for example, some elements of the game plan were not absolutely clear and the researcher experienced some minor uncertainties about the context of the captain's onfield leadership. When the pilot period was critically reviewed, it was clear that the dimension of rugby verity and of the sport's subcultural realities had to be more fully considered in any future study of provincial and All Black teams. The researcher simply had not realised that, in the ebb and flow of observation and social interaction, certain elements in rugby team leadership had the importance which they did. These revelations came from systematic review of the observational data to generate categories, which led to informally recorded but distinctive propositions. The process indicated the apparent centrality of such factors as the captain's playing skill, the coach's game plan, the coach-captain interaction, opposition perspectives and team talks. In post-pilot discussion with the researcher, the school teams' coaches (who were members of a provincial rugby team) emphasised their beliefs that such factors were also central in elite level teams.

The trial of the methodologies was seen by the researcher as markedly significant in the study's progression. In summary, this trial study:

- i. Refined certain data gathering techniques, such as providing working criteria for selecting what to observe in situations of multiple social interaction.
- ii. Established the central and significant role of the researcher's field notebook and "self reminders" in the observation record.
- iii. Confirmed the validity of the player questionnaire and possible insights from the opposition team leaders' questionnaire.
- iv. Indicated probable elements of significance in the context of rugby leadership.
- v. Engendered greater self-confidence in the researcher, especially in utilising the appropriate methodology.
- vi. Highlighted certain practical aspects of building trust and fitting into the observational settings.

4.4.2 Participant Observation

The most significant fieldwork dimension in the present study was participant observation of the provincial and national rugby teams' coaches and captains. Complementing this participant observation were the interviews with players and access to the key informants -- coach and captain -- who were open in discussing how they made sense of their experiences and perceived themselves.

The review of literature (Chapter Three) noted suggestions that the coach should be observed in a range of settings. Without full observation of the leader there may well be behaviours which escape commentators, writers or researchers' ability to provide new or significant data on coach-leader behavior. There is virtually no participant observation research on the roles of the elite coach and captain beyond the practice and training environment, which includes such roles as private interaction with players, disciplining or sanctioning of players, leading team meetings, pre-match strategy talks, "build-up" in the dressing room, selection committee meetings, and private player social settings. It is this emic perspective of the insider's view of reality that is at the heart of qualitative and ethnographic research (Becker and Blanche, 1958; Fetterman, 1989; Sparkes, 1992a; Vidich, 1955).

Participant observation was employed in this study to provide such an 'inside picture' of elite rugby team leadership. Critical dimensions of this research mode which guided the researcher are outlined in Appendix C.1, and may be noted in summary as:

- the primary means of viewing elite rugby coaching and captaincy from within multiple realities of team life
- acceptance of the research within the problematic world of elite rugby
- the length of time spent in the observed setting and the related richness of the consequential record
- the continuing review of data and its confirmation by key informants
- decisions on what to observe and the related need for loss of the researcher's novelty status
- full acceptance and associated greater awareness by the researcher of non-verbal symbols
- informal interactions and exact recordings of discourse assist in revealing the observed world
- the importance of cross-checking data and use of review procedures
- saturation and the use of interviews to clarify data understandings and perceptions
- the need for a faithful record of the observed world's realities

Observation data in the present study were generated from the researcher's time "inside" two elite level rugby teams in New Zealand: a provincial team, and the national team (the All Blacks). Figure 4.5 summarises the main participant observation match dates, each of which culminated a week of observation. The procedures noted below apply to both teams, except where their applicability to the All Blacks only is noted.

Provincial	All Blacks
1.9.91	6.6.92 v. Ireland
11.9.91	3.7.93 v. British Isles
14.9.91	31.7.93 v. Western Samoa
21.9.91	17.7.93 v. Australia
28.9.91	9.7.94 v. South Africa
	23.7.94 v. South Africa
	6.8.94 v. South Africa
	17.8.94 v. Australia

Figure 4.5 Participant observation matches.

(Dates are match days -- observation covered preparatory days and post-match day.)

In order to develop **systematic observation** skills the researcher became familiar with the literature on elite team and rugby leadership and appropriate methodologies to be utilised in participant observation. These were then drawn upon in the pilot study of a secondary school rugby team. This trial raised certain considerations for the researcher which helped shape the subsequent observations (see Section 4.4.1 above).

Entry was obtained respectively through the provincial coach's invitation and the All Black coach's agreement to the researcher's request. The aims of the research were described primarily

as the observation of the relevant coach and captain in their leadership roles with the team in order to develop greater understandings related to the research questions. The researcher spoke about his study to each team at its first team meeting, emphasising informant anonymity, recording accuracy and cross-checking of data. In each setting the observer was fully accepted for a succession of matches, with access to the team collectively and individually and open acceptance in all team settings.

The **researcher's observations** were recorded in a series of 26 field notebooks. The researcher also maintained a Researcher's Notebook in which personal reflections, brief notes from research literature, and reflections on research modes and data were noted. Key symbols were developed in recording to note queries or possible validations of observation to follow up. A small stereo cassette tape recorder (operative on mains or battery power) facilitated verbatim records of interviews and direct quotations, accuracy in data recording with fast-speaking informants, and reinforcement of researcher understanding as the tape was played in the researcher's car and study to allow a more complete understanding of an interviewee's perspectives and information. The tape recorder could be pre-set by an internal clock to record a post-match media conference off-air when the researcher was elsewhere, and its internal radio captured some passages of onfield play, on-air interviews and sport programmes.

The researcher's field equipment was carried in a small totebag. (It eventually became a symbol of victory to some All Blacks as it was not present at any losing game.) At times the research tools were supplemented with match programmes, chocolates, player wallets, the coach's dictaphone cassettes, the Provincial Team manager's cigarettes, or pieces of players' uniform or gear. The researcher's 35mm camera was carried for the All Black period of elite team observation. This had functions which allowed photographs to be taken in various team contexts, providing a visual record to assist validation of settings such as confirming the players present, seating arrangements, or elements of a scene initially unrecorded in print.

Initial coach and captain observations were carried out over five national championship matches played by a provincial rugby team (given the pseudonym of Provincial Team, or PT). This team was observed in a full range of social and active settings. Each week followed a basic pattern: drive to training nights; observe; discuss any matters with team leaders; drive home; check record for clarity; check record against other sources; follow up query notes; check recording materials; vet material for any emergent or validating categories, following grounded theory; and plan for the next day's observation.

Key informants confirmed the accuracy of written records, with deletions being possible and, at the conclusion of the five game period, the researcher provided team management with a typed 104 page transcript for their verification. Responses from two of them illustrate the veracity of the record, as the following examples indicate: “I have talked over your notes with [Coach, Captain, Sponsor’s Representative] and all share my view that they are an excellent job.” “All in all I have no alterations to suggest and I consider them to be a very accurate and sensitive recording of the events.” Telephone discussions with the coach and captain were also employed to check their responses.

The researcher reflected on his participant observation period with the provincial team in his Researcher Notebook. An example follows:

The quality of the observations grew, I think, with the duration of the observation. Yesterday was a strange day. I didn’t enjoy the Supporters’ Club setting but I will miss the team. I had come to identify with them at times and have had to remind myself on those occasions that this was occurring! Reading a myriad of research guides and texts did not adequately prepare me for the time with Provincial Team. In my time with the next team, which I would really like to be the All Blacks next year, I will have a richer collection of data.

Ethical questions were fewer than expected as no restrictions were placed upon my observation at any stage, although the coach was understandably apprehensive when giving me the game plan for the Ranfurly Shield match days before that ‘test’. This trust in the observer was appreciated. Most rugby followers will accurately recognise the provincial team observed in these pages. Allowing for my possible identification with the team, the observation records few examples of excesses of behavior. It is ironic that the most sexist behavior was enacted by the motel owner who paid for a ‘stripper’ because he believed that fitted the rugby world. (Researcher’s Notebook 30.9.91).

Participant observation with the **national All Black rugby team** included a wide range of settings, given the “live-in” dimensions of eight test match weeks, the highly elite status of the team putting up with public attention, veneration and criticism, and such special contexts as national selection committee meetings, the captain’s team meeting on the eve of a test match, private, one-on-one coach and player interactions to do with playing and/or personal problems, and a variety of formal and informal occasions. Despite this more diverse contextual range, plus

the researcher's awareness early on that he was the only "outsider" in 100 years to accompany the All Blacks as part of their group, researcher entry and acceptance proved to have no special difficulties, such as the friendly, trusting and co-operative attitude of the coach, captain and players.

The first test week resulted in some 80 typed pages of observational record being given to the coach, manager and captain for checking. Their expressed confirmation led to their suggestion that subsequent records be checked with key informants, and attributed quotations confirmed, but the full record would not be required. Continual checking with the coach and captain was maintained over the eight test weeks. As occurred with the provincial team, all observational records were available for the coach, captain and manager for accuracy checks and possible deletions of material they considered confidential. (No material changes or deletions were sought by them.) Data were cross-checked for accuracy and authenticity of evidence (Krathwohl, 1993).

Observation and findings were continually checked with informants and triangulated wherever possible with other personal perspectives, documents or data. Taking findings back to the field was regarded not simply as necessarily testing information, but also as an opportunity for critical reflection. The All Blacks willingly explained their perceptions of meanings assigned to events. An example of this was the test changing room -- a dimension of elite rugby which has virtually not appeared in either popular literature or research. With regard to this room, players explained the ways they privately responded to the coach's instructions and personal words, the seating arrangements, individual rituals, visitors and "psyching up".

Every effort was made to avoid presumptions by the researcher. Thus each test week followed the same pattern. The researcher rang the coach, manager and captain, formally seeking approval to join the team. He then assembled with the players, discussed the week's structure with the coach on the assembly day and merged into the team activities. Such courtesies appeared to facilitate acceptance and trust. For example, an All Black photograph was inscribed to the researcher by the captain with "Thanks for being such a good team member". Another from the coach stated; "Thanks, you shared a tough week," indicating voluntary statements of acceptance. In reality the researcher felt a number of self-imposed pressures to be self-effacing but helpful, which included :

- (1) dressing to fit in with the group, whilst being unobtrusive but not identical with the team members;
- (2) finding a place in the changing room which allowed for writing but which did not disturb any player's routine;
- (3) sitting at the back in team meetings;
- (4) using silent pens and notepaper;
- (5) discerning an appropriate seat on the test bus without intruding on seating rituals

or team member custom; (6) collecting or holding player gear at training, especially in wet conditions; and (7) remaining silent in the changing room.

In retrospect the researcher found the secondary school rugby team observation to have been a valuable pilot study. It had made the researcher aware of the need to ensure that the coach was indeed fully observed and questioned. This facilitated the fullness of both elite team observations. Ready acceptance of the researcher's presence by the Provincial Team (PT) management and players was again evident with the All Black grouping during eight test match weeks.

Theory was generated through full and confirmed observation records. The early practice of using highlighter pens to identify possible field note concepts could not accommodate their tentative, multiple and changing nature. Coding was thus done in the observation notebook by annotation, with emergent concepts being listed and regrouped in a separate folder maintained for that purpose. As Strauss and Corbin advise (1990, p.68): "The most important thing is to name a category, so that you can remember it, think about it, and most of all begin to think about it analytically." (This process is discussed further below under Grounded Theory.) The tentative categories of participant observation were melded with those generated from interviews, questionnaires and document analysis to form the sets of categories reported in Chapter Five and Chapter Seven. (See also Appendix C.1 and Appendix C.3.)

4.4.3 Interviews

Participant observation reveals the immediate world of the coach and captain and their acting out of roles. Interviews can elicit what is in the mind of the actors and ensure that observational assumptions do not put unwarranted meanings or perspectives in the actors' heads. They provide a means of data gathering, collecting information and facilitating triangulation (Howe, 1988). An interview provides in-depth opportunities for the informant to explain his or her social world, how it is perceived, and allows explorations of the informant's world. The researcher is moved beyond the observation of social interaction, rendering opportunities for more detached inquiry and key actor perceptions which may have not been drawn out in the observational context. Fetterman (1989) notes the value of interviews being conducted in the later stages of a qualitative study as the researcher has then developed particular understandings of the informant-actor perspectives.

In formal or structured interviews the questions are predetermined and asked in the same order for all interviewees. There may be a limited number of response categories. The interviewer

assumes a knowledge of the key questions and basic understandings of the interviewee's life. The acquired data is prescribed systematically and objectively, which renders it open to ready analysis and interpretation. This mode of interviewing is not conducive to marked freedom or flexibility in questioning and may be seen as the verbal approximation of a questionnaire. Fontana and Frey (1994) suggest that responses may be recorded on the basis of a pre-planned coding scheme. The researcher maintains a neutral stance towards the interviewee's responses and maintains a style of "interested listener" (ibid., p.364). The formal interview may have in-depth open questions in certain circumstances.

Semi-structured interviews have a specific number of questions but provide opportunity for the interviewer to probe interviewee perceptions beyond immediate answers. These interviews often discuss a specific but implicit agenda with a balance sought between naturalness and the need to acquire certain basal or core understandings from the interviewee. This more open interview has the researcher seeking a structure through exploring specific aspects of the topic area "a mixture of conversation and embedded questions" (Fetterman, 1989, p.49). Clarification and topic expansion may be developed but have broad parameters placed upon them.

Informal or non-formal interviews rely upon the interviewer's ability to generate questions which most appropriately probe issues with no proposed questions. The researcher responds to the immediate environment and adapts accordingly, drawing upon a degree of interpersonal informality to progress as a conversation, following individual or joint interests. Topics may arise spontaneously in conversation and exploration of these allows interviewees to provide a full perspective in their own terms. Fontana and Frey (1994) note the qualitative dimension of the unstructured interview and its integral links with participant observation. The structured interview "aims at capturing the precise data of a codable nature in order to explain behavior written categories, whereas the [unstructured interview] is used in an attempt to understand the complex behavior of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of enquiry" (p.366). There is merit in less emphasis on the interviewer and a greater emphasis upon perceiving their role as the collecting of oral reports, enhancing the dimension of life history and "creative interviewing" to give the research informants greater freedom to express themselves (see Spradley, 1979, for extended discussion on ethnographic interviews, and Appendix C.2). Fontana and Frey (1994) note that "give and take" conversation between interviewer and subject with its empathetic understandings, natural responses and verbal intercourse is "more honest, morally sound, and reliable because it treats the respondent as an

equal” (p.371). This, in turn, encourages subjects to talk on their own terms and uncovers meanings that the subjects construct about their social world and operative frames of reference.

Fetterman (1989) notes the use of the basic survey question as the initial cartography in establishing a map of the terrain to be traversed in the questioning, including the establishment of boundaries. This is adapted in Figure 4.6 as indicative of the researcher’s approach to interviewing. The interviews followed a pattern of key questions on the role and qualities of an excellent coach and captain, and a related group of questions which then allowed free and open exploration of interviewee responses.

Dean and Whyte (1958) note possible inhibiting factors which influence informants’ reporting in the interview situation. These factors include: ulterior motives; bars to spontaneity; informant desire to please; and possible idiosyncratic factors. Distortion in first-hand reports is seen through informants not having observed an event, being unable to recall an event, unconsciously modifying a report of a situation, or consciously reshaping an event through recall.

To counter such possible biases in informant information, the interviewer calls upon a range of research techniques including implausibility or suspicion and recognition of distortion, unreliability of the informant, knowledge of an informant’s mental set, and comparing the account of an informant with those provided by others. Additionally, the researcher may draw upon the use of a camera and tape recorder, as occurred in the present study. Pictures allow reflection and create referential bases for the researcher to consider critically as “precise records of material reality” (Collier, 1967, p.5).

Interviews were utilised in two sectors of the present study as the primary methodology. Semi-structured interviewing with 124 past All Blacks, to obtain their perceptions of elite rugby team leadership, basically adhered to the structured interview noted above. This procedure was utilised in order to provide data which could be readily compared, and yet allow open-ended or informal questions linked to responses in the particular interview. A similar technique was used to obtain data from all living All Black coaches and captains who had had responsibility for test leadership. Those elite team leaders were interviewed on the roles and qualities of coaches and captains, match leadership and possible development (see Chapter Eight). Semi-structured interviews were also held with elite coaches and captains from major team sports other than rugby. These interviews included core questions also asked of elite rugby coaches and captains. Thus tentative

considerations could be developed on elite team leadership across team sports. (See also Appendix C.2 for further dimensions of interview methodology.)

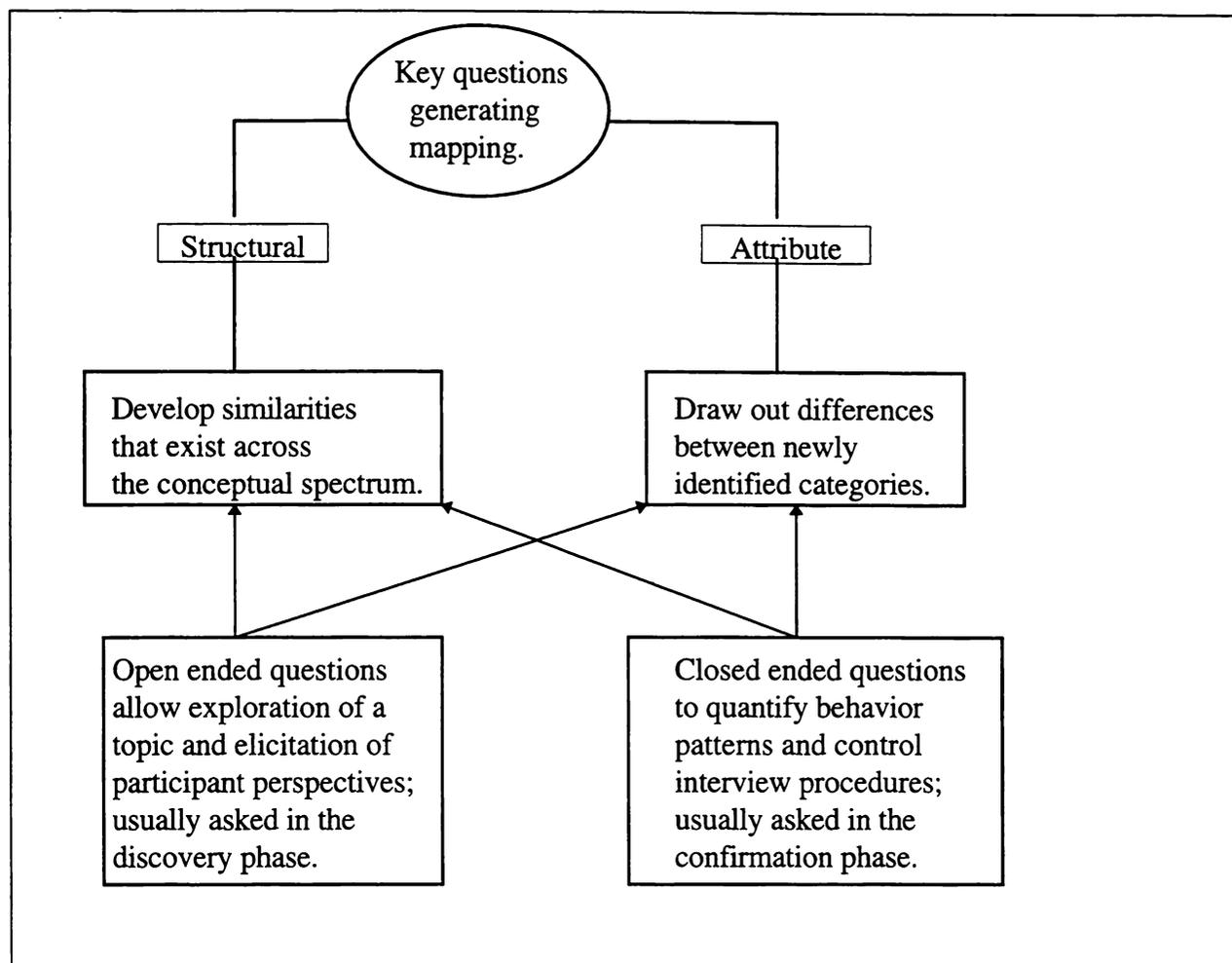


Figure 4.6 Perspectives of the interview territory.

(After Fetterman, 1989.)

Participant observation of the two elite teams at the provincial and All Black levels emphasised informal interviews with players. These interviews were usually on the lines of a “structured conversation,” and served to provide perspectives on observation data. The interaction often occurred in informal team settings with the researcher seeking understandings of player perceptions, and views on team leader roles and qualities. Figure 4.7 indicates the range of interviews used in the present study.

4.4.4 Questionnaires

The use of questionnaires offers an efficient means of gathering data across a wide field, complementing participant observation, interviews and document analysis. Fetterman (1989)

notes the utilisation of questionnaires by qualitative researchers in the wake of the researcher having mapped the terrain of the field of study. The questionnaire also offers a process of validation for research evidence gathered by other methodologies and researcher opportunity to prepare considered, unambiguous and neutral questions. In the present study, questionnaire methodology was used to survey players in the elite Provincial Team, the All Blacks, coaches and captains of opposing provincial teams, major All Black captains and coaches, past All Blacks, and a group of overseas test rugby players.

Interview Group	Interview Type	Numbers	Appendix
Provincial Team	Informal Semi-structured	Various-continual 17	D.4
All Black Team	Informal Semi-structured	Various-continual 26	F.3
Past All Black Coaches	Semi-structured	4	G1
Past All Blacks	Semi-structured	124	G.1
Non-rugby national team leaders	Semi-structured	6	G.12

Figure 4.7 Summary of research interviews.

[Past All Blacks include 26 captains, and 7 players who became All Black Coaches.]

The selection of questionnaire methodology was linked with the construction and purpose of the interviews and elicitation of responses to key questions on team leader roles and qualities. The technique was also chosen for its opportunity to gather a wide range of opinion relatively quickly. Questionnaires used with past players contained a set of open-ended questions common to all respondents while closed-order questions on desired qualities of team-mates allowed quantifiable responses. Whereas the study's semi-structured interviews developed as a conversation, with the interviewer creating the reality of the interview, the questionnaire was seen as a more neutral form of data gathering. The questionnaires for the national, provincial and past players had common core questions in order to generate comparative considerations.

Questionnaires differ from interviews, having no interactive element with its attendant possible frailties of bias, omission, selectivity of conversation, and degree of informant disclosure related to the relationship with the interviewee. The questionnaire, however, may be misinterpreted by the respondent, yield idealized responses, and may target an unrepresentative sample of the

population. Piloting the questionnaire before its application may eliminate the foregoing weaknesses and result in the removal of ambiguous or misleading questions, and inappropriate response categories. Such means, however, do not necessarily remove potential for bias.

Questionnaires used in the present study are noted in Figure 4.8 which also indicates the appendices where copies of the questionnaires may be found. Each questionnaire followed the same basic pattern of development and implementation. It was drafted after critical consideration of research and interview questions in order to develop a relevant path for the content and linkages with key elements of the interviews. Special care was taken to generate clear questions to elicit desired information and provide for open responses. Apart from demographic information, the questionnaires sought perceptions about coach and captain roles and qualities, along with responses sourced from the respondents' particular rugby experiences. Special considerations were clear formatting, avoidance of technical jargon, checking for unambiguity, ease of completion and recognising the busy life of respondents. The questionnaires for the opposing coaches and captains (Chapter Six, Appendix E.2, Appendix E.3) were checked with experienced colleagues to lessen ambiguity.

Draft questionnaires were checked with a pair of experienced colleagues and trialled before implementation. The questionnaire of the PT players was trialled with four of the team who were not in the final respondent group, whereas the All Black questionnaire was trialled with the coaches who also had input into the content. The overseas test player questionnaire was trialled by a small group of post-graduate students, as was that for the opposing provincial captains and coaches. The past player questionnaire was checked with experienced academic colleagues, but was not trialled as it contained questions used in previous interviews or questionnaires in this study.

The questionnaires for the elite provincial team were given to the players by hand. All other surveyed groups received theirs by mail. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a letter of information addressed to the respondent by name and a stamped addressed envelope was enclosed for the questionnaire's return. Overseas questionnaires had a one month return period.

The questionnaires are discussed further in the relevant chapters of this study with explanations of their respective analyses.

Questionnaire Group	Numbers		Appendix Location
	Sent Out	Completed	
Provincial Team - Players and Coach	(15 + 15) 30	(13 + 14) 27	D.5
Provincial Coaches and Captains	(15 + 15) 30	(12 + 7) 19	E.2, E.3
All Blacks	(17 + 22) 39	(17 + 14) 31	F.5 F.7
Past All Blacks	219	107	G.3
International Rugby Players	80	51	G.9

Figure 4.8 Research questionnaire numbers.

4.4.5 Documents

Documents and print records may prove to be valuable sources of information in the research environment. Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that the former includes personal material such as field notes, personal notes, memos, speech notes, letters, diaries and intra-group memoranda. Records are considered to include formal or official certificates or statements such as letters of appointment, contracts, rule books or licences. Written texts may be perceived as having socially assigned meanings with interpretations embedded in the reader's social constructions of textual language. As Fetterman (1989) says, material documentation may indicate purpose, images, concerns, priorities, goals or organisational values. The broad consideration of documents and records may include the material culture of artefacts ranging from written texts to clothing, from banners to ornaments, foods, films and musical expression. The present study considered items of rugby's material culture, along with records, as integral elements in the domain of Documents. Documents in the present study fell primarily into the groups noted in Figure 4.9. They indicate a range of elements which provided perspectives on the rugby leaders' world additional to those obtained from observation, interviews and questionnaires.

Artefacts, documents and records provided the study with a range of symbolic considerations. Within the material culture of rugby, and sport, the attitudes, symbolic values and meanings assigned to such diverse elements as items of clothing, press reports, advertisements or art works provide the researcher with "a rich symbolism" (Lipsky, 1978, p. 349). Meanings of these move a researcher closer to the team's lived experience (see 4.5.2 Symbolic Interactionism below).

A.	Personal writing	Memos Tour diaries Faxes, cards and letters Players' match preparation notes
B.	Intra-team memoranda	Daily team notes Game plan Team notices
C.	Coach	Dictaphone cassettes Game analyses Personal communication
D.	Public print	Newspaper reports Match programmes Rugby journal articles
E.	Marketing	Advertisements Videotapes Rugby products Banners and slogans

Figure 4.9 Broad document groups.

4.5 GENERATING THEORY

4.5.1 Grounded Theory

At the risk of over-simplification it may be observed that theory in quantitative research usually generates the methodology and data gathering, whereas in qualitative methodology theory may be generated from the gathered data. Sage (1989a) notes that grounded theory is fundamentally different in both conception and procedure from “research designs in which variables are defined, operationalised, and measured, and predetermined hypotheses are tested and then accepted or rejected” (p.26). Originating from Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory has provided a way of thinking about and conceptualizing data, and establishing a systematic methodology of observation, recording, classification and interpretation (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p.275). This approach has been adopted in a variety of research studies, for example, in health (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), in education (Battersby, 1981), and in sport, to a limited extent, (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria and Russell, 1995). It forms the basis of theory generation in this present study.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) note a four-step process in grounded theory which builds upon the researcher's establishment of a knowledge base through rich data gathering.

1. COMPARING INCIDENTS APPLICABLE TO EACH CATEGORY

In this stage incidents (properties) located within the observational record are discovered and labelled or coded, and once such phenomena are identified they are grouped conceptually into categories because of their perceived commonality. The researcher critically reflects upon such aspects as the full range and continuum of each category, its essential characteristics and parameters, conditions under which it is manifested, and continually examines the process of category selection.

2. INTEGRATING CATEGORIES AND THEIR PROPERTIES

As incidents are progressively recorded by the researcher they are coded and compared with each other, examined for commonalities with previous incidents, and considered for appropriate classification in an existing category. Dissonance of the new data with existing category properties indicates consideration for extending an existing category or establishing a new category.

3. DELIMITING THE THEORY

The coded data, progressively assigned to such categories, continue to be subjected to the researcher's constant review and comparison through rigorous consideration of their coding and placement. Data are continuously reviewed and classified into coded emergent categories. This process also assists the researcher in avoiding personal biases or assumptions which can influence perceptions, perspectives and theory. As the categories develop distinction and their properties settle with decreasing additions or modifications, the researcher becomes engaged in adjusting categories and modifying their configuration and content. If the properties being generated at this stage are not new, they are not added to the data. *Axial coding* allows the researcher to make connections between a category and its subcategories. There is a focus now upon the specification of a category: its content; the strategies by which it is acted out; its influence on, and inter-relationship with, other categories; and the consequence of such strategies. As the categories are delineated and subjected to analytic scrutiny, they may become modified or restated as distinctive qualities or properties appear. (See Appendix C.3.)

Concomitant with this process the categories and data are also considered and revisited in terms of emerging or tentative theories, and subjected to the researcher's asking of theoretically

oriented questions. Emerging theories are subject to ongoing examination which anchors the qualitative process in its own characteristic research rigour. Modifications to emerging theory occur as saturation of categories develops. “Theoretical saturation” occurs when no additional data or attendant categories and properties are being generated. As Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.62) put it, “As he [sic] sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated. He [sic] goes out of his [sic] way to look for groups that stretch diversity of data as far as possible, just to make certain that saturation is based on the widest possible range of data on a category.”

4. WRITING THE THEORY

With saturation comes the final delineation of categories and their significant properties and relationships as well as the tentative development of theories. Next, the researcher moves from inductively formed beliefs about the state and context of emerging theory to explicating a living picture of reality grounded in the categorised data. This story line or description will have a framework which forms the basis of systematic subjective theory, gives voice to the matters studied, and is expressed in such a form that a reader could enter the same field and follow the writer’s path. The human faces and contextual landscape of the story line are now systematically framed “into a picture of reality that is conceptual, comprehensible and ...grounded” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.117). This conceptualisation centres on an over-arching phenomenon or category which relates to all categories and now becomes the core category. (If such an existing category does not exist, then the researcher is faced with providing an embracing term which touches all phenomena or categories.)

Key reflective questions noted by Strauss and Corbin (*ibid.*) to focus theory construction are: “What phenomena are reflected over and over again in your data? Give me a summary of your findings? What essential message about this research area do you want to pass on to others? What do you consider important about this area and why?” (p.122). The core category properties being identified, other categories may be related to this as subsidiary categories and arranged to fit the story (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The arranging and grouping of categories, along the range of their properties and the dimensions of these, are seen as assuring the connectedness of data.

The tentatively emerging theory from connected data and categories is now set out in a print, diagrammatic or mapping format generated from, and grounded in, the researcher’s data. The category relationships are indicated and validated by checking them against the data. Statements are made to explicate these relationships and are checked to ensure that they fit the story

“messages” or themes of the categories. In this present study the theory is expressed in print form. Chapter Nine outlines the master set of categories and properties generated by the data, as explained above, and then explicates the theoretical propositions resulting from these. Essentially, the over-arching phenomenon binding these is that of elite rugby team leadership.

The grounded theorist is immersed in a human world requiring sensitivity to gender, race, informant contact, relationships, power, roles and social constructions, with all of their attendant actors and informants. The integrity of the theory draws upon the sensitive, consistent and accurate collection and presentation of data in this world.

Figure 4.10 summarises the empirical checks used in the present study in building grounded theory. Appendix C.3 provides a sample of the grounded theory process as it occurred.

4.5.2 Symbolic Interactionism

While grounded theory was a key research tool in the present study, understanding of the sports teams was enhanced through use of symbolic interactionism to peel away surface observations and focus upon symbols, meanings, language and human interaction. Within the social setting one approach to leadership research examines how participants construct social meanings, with symbols, actions, beliefs, and perceptions shaping the domain of leadership. Blumer (1978, 1980) utilised symbolic interaction in the belief that human beings interpret and define each other's actions. Reality is substantially observed by the researcher, through observing symbols -- be they verbal, nonverbal, dress, speech mode, actions, artefacts, which “all provide clues to the symbolic meanings that become translated into interaction and emerge from it” (Denzin, 1978, p.9). Situations have meanings developed through people's interpretations and their actions result from this (Harvey and MacDonald, 1993). Symbolic interactionists are interested in learning how a person takes another's perspective and learns the meanings and symbols through interaction (Denzin, 1978).

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) aver that “People act, not on the basis of predetermined responses to predefined objects, but rather, as interpreting, defining symbolic animals whose behavior can only be understood by having the researcher enter into the defining process through such actions as participant observation” (p.33). Sport settings may illustrate Durkheim's observation that rituals are the dynamics of a process which joins together a system based on symbols (Rock, 1979). Groups have sets of shared social and subjective meanings which develop through social

interaction (Harris, 1981). The creation of definitions demands consideration by the researcher, even that of defining or constructing self through one's interaction with others. "To understand behaviours we must understand definitions and the process by which they are manufactured" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p.33).

Haas and Shafir (1978) note that human action is symbolic. "Symbolic interactionists believe that the distinctive attributes of human behavior grow from man's immersion in a cultural environment that depends on the existence of language and the creation and manipulation of signs and symbols...Communication through symbols makes the formation of human groups possible and gives them continuity in time and space. The learning of symbols initiates and facilitates the evaluation and transmission of traditions, skills, goals, tactics, rules and procedures" (p.5).

Blumer (noted on p.1831 of Harvey and MacDonald, 1993) suggested that three basic premises lay at the heart of the symbolic interactionist perspective.

- (i) Individuals act towards things because of the meanings that such objects have for them. There is not an a priori stimulus inherently attracted to the objects. Meaning is conferred on events, situations, gestures, objects and people.
- (ii) Meanings of stimuli value arise through social interaction in human society . Communication is symbolic in its language and symbol usage. The life of society is the sum of human actions.
- (iii) It is critical to recognise that meanings are not static but are shaped and reshaped through an interpretive process by which individuals personally deal with the things they encounter. Meanings become the instruments for action (See also, Blumer, 1969; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Colton, 1987).

Fine (1986) suggests that symbolic interactionism can provide a focus on the meanings created in team sport and on how these meanings influence play. Acts within a sport team have no meaning in themselves but are created by the social actors with attendant meanings for the athletes and team leaders or managers. "Regrettably there has been little symbolic interactionist research to deal with team sport" (ibid., p.160). Coaches, like people in other groups, societal or occupational roles, project an image in terms of certain approved social attributes (Snyder, 1990). Little research has been done to examine perceptions of these attributes or their symbolic representation within the team (see, however, Ward, 1977). Noting the role of symbols in providing an insight into a culture and their use as a tool for examining cultural beliefs and practices, Fetterman (1989), identified implications to consider in the sport context. Symbols may be considered as elements of ritual, with ritual being repeated patterns of symbolic behavior. There are examples of

rituals in winning and losing, morality and sportsmanship, teamwork, individual effort and point scoring, pre-game processes, public appearances, team meetings, and after-match functions.

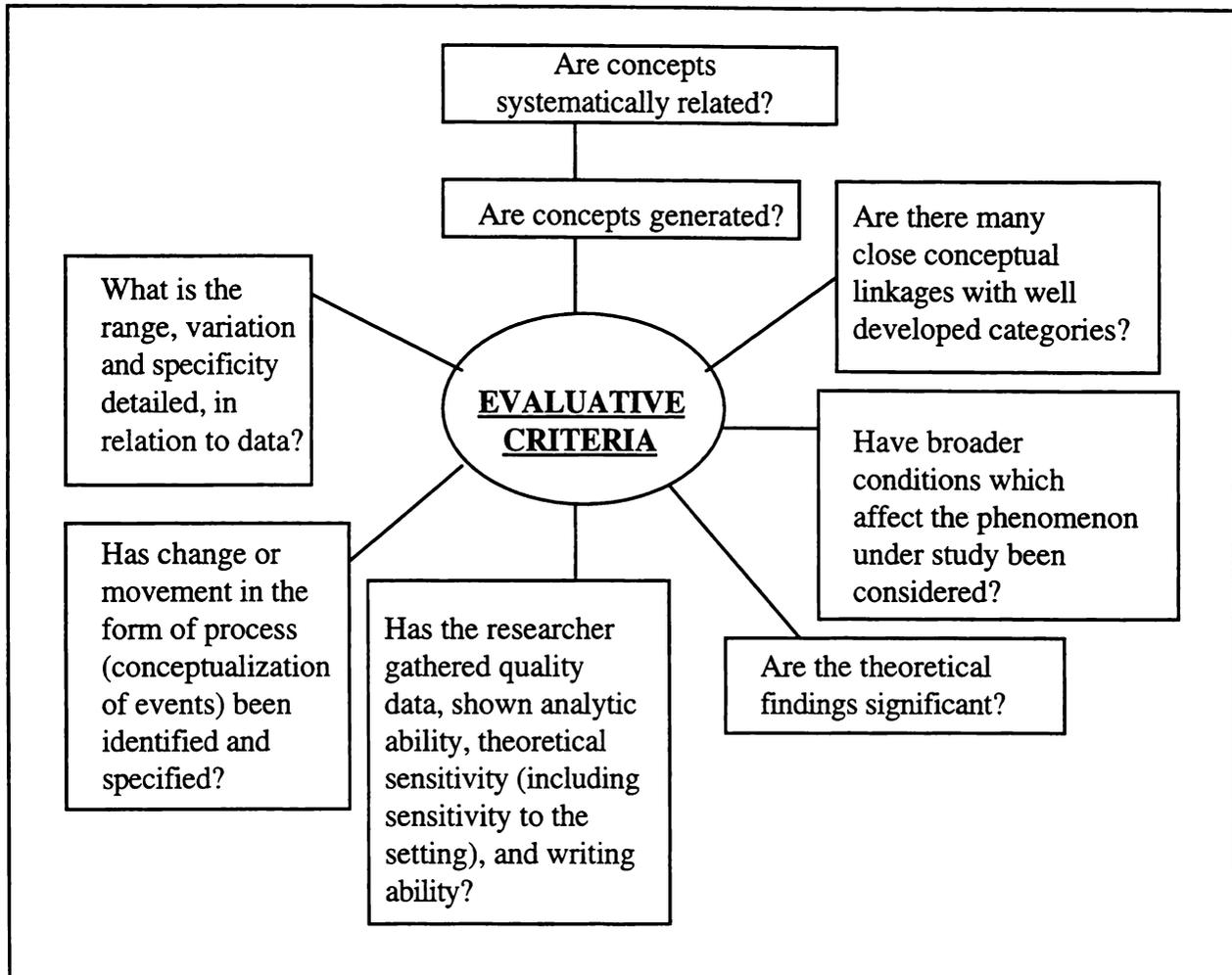


Figure 4.10 Empirical grounding of the study.

(After Strauss and Corbin, 1990.)

Members of a sport team may appear to have a common sense of identity through the symbolic meanings created under sport activities, which makes sport particularly appropriate for symbolic interactionist analysis (Fine, 1986). The use of prayer, ritualistic superstitious behavior, dressing room rituals, group beliefs and practices are prominent in the lives of athletes and coaches. Womack (1992), for example, notes that ritual is important to sports interaction and “For a clear understanding of ritual it must always be studied in context” (p.200). Symbolic interaction of ritual is determined by Womack as important for the following reasons:

- signalling intent to the other team
- establishing rank order among the team and promoting “intra-group communication”
- assisting players in dealing with ambiguity in interpersonal relationships

A team creates its own meanings, norms and artefacts in developing a *team (small group) culture*. The idioculture or idiosyncratic culture of a particular team is fused from shared experiences, expectations and created set of meanings unique to the team. Notwithstanding the strength of the team culture, at some stage it will be challenged by a match or game result. The reality of sport is that *coping with failure* informs a researcher of the meanings players and the team ascribe to coping with this outcome and maintaining self-esteem in adversity.

The concept of *sport ritual*, that is, of individual and team rituals invested with symbolic power, is observed by Fine (1986) and Fine and Kleinman (1979) as providing insights into a team culture and simultaneously providing a tool for the examination of cultural beliefs and practices. The *generalized other* refers to the relationship between the individual team player and their team. The team, which gives the player a unity of self, is the *generalized other*. Through generalizing the attitudes of team mates towards shared activities, actions, or objects, the individual develop normative expectations within the social setting of the team.

Rhetoric as a sense-making device generates an understanding of meanings conveyed through elements such as team talks, cheers, athlete chatter and slogans. "Indeed, when talking about the rhetoric of sport it is particularly valuable to describe those moral communications embedded in coaches' lectures to their teams" (Fine, 1986, p.163). Fine seeks meanings that are communicated within the sports scene and an understanding of how situational aspects of the specific sport are used to make points of meaning.

Momentum and history provide another lens for the symbolic interactionist. Teams have historical dimensions -- the past constituents of a sport history, of a season in which the particular match is embedded. Goffman (1976) notes the "referential afterlife" of salient events which signpost the paths of memory. Associated with such markers are the meanings assigned to record keeping and statistics. A team exists in time and space with its dynamic tensions and emotional content shaped by these dimensions.

This study drew upon symbolic interactionism in four ways:

- (i) The researcher's awareness of symbols and rituals was heightened by the literature on symbolic interactionism. This enhanced the search for meanings below the apparent surface of social settings.
- (ii) The importance of seeking informants' assigned meanings to events was underscored.

- (iii) Certain artefacts, actions, statements or people were considered in terms of their symbolic meanings. (Coming to immediate mind are the black jersey, coach's hand on a player a few minutes before a test, an after-match speech acknowledging the sponsor, and deference to the manager as "The Legend." Such meanings are discussed in the relevant results chapters.)

4.6 REFLECTIONS ON THE METHODOLOGY

Research can be weakened through bias, faulty data accumulation, inaccuracy, incomplete data, time restraints, faults in data interpretation, or lack of validation. This present study, with its very human domains of discourse, observation and recording, was not immune from such potential difficulties.

Within the research path the researcher did note a tendency at times to identify with the person(s) and team observed. This was especially so with the provincial team as that was the first extended participant observation and the team had a period of losing games. In the national team setting the researcher developed a strong sympathy for the coach who was often subject to media criticism, much of this being inaccurately based on perceived actions which a particular reporter may have assumed as a fact, but which the researcher's data indicated were possibly inaccurate. The close association of participant observer and subject(s) may have coloured the shade of interpretations of coach actions if triangulation and independent data had not been considered. The role was particularly challenging in terms of the researcher's full acceptance by the All Blacks and the dichotomy of role -- participation or observation -- which arose in a limited number of situations. Examples of these are included in Chapter Seven and are the basis of critical self-reflection in Chapter Ten. Triangulation and the acceptance of the recorder-observer's findings by other informants was found invaluable in this regard. Additionally, the researcher maintained a log of self-reflection, notes and personal comments which acted as a counter to "going native." This was complemented by meetings with the researcher's supervisor who was vigilant in perusal of the researcher's sense of continued objectivity and data assessment.

THE PROVINCIAL TEAM

This chapter traces the culture of an elite provincial rugby team with particular reference to the roles of the captain and coach. The researcher spent five match weeks with the team using participant observation, interviews, questionnaires and documentation analysis to generate research data. These data were analysed using grounded theory and symbolic interactionist techniques to generate properties and categories on rugby team leadership, as well as significant symbols in that team's culture.

The chapter concludes with a summary and review which includes reflection upon the methodologies and findings.

- 5.1 The Provincial Team
- 5.2 Participant Observation
 - 5.2.1 Observation of Provincial Team Match Weeks
 - 5.2.2 Participant Observation Data: Categories and Properties
 - 5.2.3 Interviews in the Provincial Team Setting
 - 5.2.4 Interview Data: Categories and Properties
 - 5.2.5 Provincial Team Questionnaires
 - 5.2.6 Questionnaire Data: Categories and Properties
 - 5.2.7 Documents In the Provincial Team Setting
 - 5.2.8 Documents Data : Categories and Properties
- 5.3 Symbols, Categories and the Research Questions
 - 5.3.1 Symbolic Interactionism
 - 5.3.2 Provincial Team Categories and Properties
 - 5.3.3 The Research Questions
- 5.4 Summary and Reflections

5.1 THE PROVINCIAL TEAM

This chapter reports findings from the application of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism to data collected through participant observation, semi-structured and informal interviews, questionnaires and the study of documentation related to a provincial rugby team. The researcher became part of rugby culture of this elite team as it competed in five matches in New Zealand's national provincial championship over a period of 32 days. The schedule involved the researcher in 3,220 km of driving to be with coach, captain, team officials, players, supporters and hotel managers at practices, matches and lodgings over the observation period.

The broad schedule for the study of the provincial rugby team was as follows:

- August 1991: Coach interviews.
- Participant observation of team practices.

- September 1991: Participant observation with five inter-provincial matches, including one Ranfurly Shield game.
- October-December 1991: Player questioning and consequent data analysis.
- January 1992: Observational records checked by key informants.

The findings are reported in three parts as follows :

- A. Background on the nature of inter-provincial rugby in New Zealand, together with information on the provincial team selected for the present study.
- B. A selection of detailed observations associated with the five match weeks spent with the elite team in order to illuminate rugby leadership in action, with particular reference to the roles of team coach and team captain.
- C. Development of grounded theory on leadership in elite level provincial rugby football, together with consideration of the research data in symbolic interactionist terms.

Background

In 1876 the regional governments in New Zealand's six provinces, were abolished in favour of a national governing body. Despite this governmental shift, a regionalised focus for sport and aspects of social, civic and political life has persisted. Thus, for example, there remains to the present day both a national and provincial rugby football administration and playing infrastructure. The national body, the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU), uses provincial representation as the basis for its administration activities. Again, apart from the national team (the All Blacks), interprovincial rugby competition since 1879 has been regarded by rugby followers and the general public alike as the elite level of the sport. A major feature in inter-provincial rivalry has been competition for the Ranfurly Shield and the establishment since 1976 of different forms of national rugby championships involving elite provincial teams. The Ranfurly Shield, donated as a challenge based trophy in 1902 by Earl Ranfurly, Governor of New Zealand, has been the most valued rugby symbol for provincial teams. "Although the national championship has been successful, the Ranfurly Shield retains a special magic," (McLauchlan, 1986, p.1080). The special atmosphere of a "Shield Challenge" match evinces the atmosphere and intensity of an international test match (Carman, 1967; Knight, 1980; McMenemy, 1986).

The provincial rugby team researched in the present study had its home base in a major city situated in a coastal province of New Zealand. Rugby has been played in this part of the country since 1870 and the province was one of the founding members of the New Zealand Rugby

Football Union. Historically, this province has provided the third greatest number of rugby players in the nation reaching All Black status.

At the time of the present study this provincial rugby team was coached by a past All Black captain and contained three recent All Black players. The team was racially mixed, ranged in age from 18-33 years, and varied in top level rugby experience from provincial novice to All Black. The total complement of the team included a squad of 26 players, the team coach, the team manager, a masseur, and the major sponsor's representative. In the reports below the provincial team is referred to as PT, while persons are acknowledged in reference to their support role or playing position. These positions are referred to in the observational study as in Figure 5.1.

Fullback	FB	Blindside Flanker	LF2
Right Wing	RW	Openside Flanker	LF1
Left Wing	LW	Loosehead Prop	FR1
Centre Threequarter	CT	Tighthead Prop	FR3
First Five/Second Five	FE	Hooker	FR2
Halfback	HB	Lock (Loosehead)	L1
Number Eight	LF3	Lock (Tighthead)	L2
A reserves player is denoted by 'R' following positional letters (e.g., RWR indicates the reserve Right Wing).			
R = Researcher	C = Coach	AC = Assistant Coach	M = Manager

Figure 5.1 Nomenclature abbreviation used to denote persons in the present study.

5.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The researcher entered the world of the elite team through an invitation from its coach to observe the team's training. That initial contact led to the researcher discussing his wish to observe an elite team's coach and captain in all team settings, and the PT leaders expressing their willingness to have him "join the team" as a participant observer for their impending final five games of the season.

5.2.1 Observation of Provincial Team Match Weeks

This section highlights typical passages of participant observation and traces this research period chronologically to provide indicators of the rugby world perceived by the researcher. Reference is

made to Appendices in which comprehensive samplings of detailed verbatim participant observation extracts are provided from the Researcher's Notebooks. These notebooks are available from the researcher, and present the complete participant observation record.

Provincial Match One

The participant observation began on a cold and damp winter Wednesday at a suburban recreation ground...

I am apprehensive at this first encounter with the team, having met only the coach before tonight. In the shed I'm introduced to the manager, who makes me feel welcome, as does the team's long term masseur. The team is out on the rugby field, under eight floodlights. (One of the players takes the team for stretching exercises.) They then move into warm-up activities under the captain's control and independent of the coach, who chats with a past All Black and PT coach who is here tonight to assist the backs. After training the players come into the training shed and sit on the sawdust floor. The coach introduces me to the team and I briefly explain my research study. Then the players break off... (Researcher's Notebook 28.8.91).

Friday was the next training day for the Sunday game. Players were open in their greetings and readily answered questions as they stripped for training. At 6:00 p.m. the coach and his temporary assistant discussed forthcoming opposition players...“Is he on the open side?...What's their halfback likely to do from the scrum?...Their number eight comes around reasonably low, so it's bloody hard to get under him. You don't know who their locks are? Brady and Walshe I think. That guy's well built, jumps at number two...Where will they jump Oliver? He'll be their end of the lineout man and Short will play old six.” Coach moved to his players. (The groupings of players were noted, with the Samoan players tending to be in proximity to each other.) “Guys, let's not get too concerned about new players. We spent a lot of time the other night making sure no opposition player can run down the short side. They have a big scrum. If we can get a good scrum position and push as we did the other night then we can hold them.” Coach goes on to outline possible short-side play in the context of the scrum...“They haven't got a very good flanker ...we can slip the ball to RW, that's his strength...you can stand these guys up...we can improve our game into the wind...Tonight we'll warm up, do our kick-offs...we'll be playing LF1 off the lineout, inside their first-five to cut him off. If he steps inside, we just can't afford that -- LF1, you'll look a real dick!...There was an instance last week when three of us were on one of them and you didn't communicate -- we need to communicate and know the opposition guys' names.” The coach asked the captain if he has anything to add and the skipper points out that the forwards must watch their body position. “We saw in the video how we were too low and our

arses were up in the air. Let's watch that tonight, eh?" The coach asked the leader of the backs, if he wanted to add to this. He didn't.

Already I am heading back into reading about observation. I note Sparkes (1992a) reminding the qualitative researcher that discourses are socially constructed, and I appear to have encountered this already! It's such a challenge to record accurately and capture setting, mood and actions. The literature indicates the observer can record the setting with writing that allows for a personal colouring, of impression rather than persuasion, of narrative not recitation, but I am a bit uncertain as yet on 'colour'. I'm trying to stick to full and accurate factual description. I'm putting my personal interpretations or uncertainties (such as points to check on later) in parentheses in my observation record (with an alpha symbol as a bookmark-cum-reminder in the margin) or in this separate notebook. I identified with what I came across in Van Maanen's (1988, p.105) suggestion that if a "dramatic control" style is drawn upon, the tale can be judged only on the basis of its plausibility or believability, not on the basis of accuracy or representativeness...The audience cannot be concerned with the story's correctness, since they were not there and cannot know if it is correct. The standards are largely those of: interest, (does it attract?); coherence, (does it hang together?); and fidelity, (does it seem true?). I'm going to give each rugby week's record of observations to the captain, coach and manager to check....

Recording is unlike the seemingly unidimensional and dispassionate observational assessments of coach behaviour noted in the literature. It already appears the manager could be important in the team structure and this rarely appears in research literature. The hero-worship of a boy and his identification with a particular rugby club, which has produced over 25 All Blacks, is possibly enhanced by the friendly greeting of him by many of the elite players. Drink is becoming apparent in the observation - beer and soft drinks - with the already ubiquitous cans. At one extreme, two All Blacks in the changing room are greeting a 13 year old while in the process of pulling off their street clothes, but in two days' time, they will be the focus of national media as they play for All Black selection in New Zealand's 1991 Rugby World Cup team. The literature on sport team leadership leans to the interview and questionnaire elicitation of coach perspectives and athletes' perceptions of coach effectiveness, but the possibility of "behind the scenes" observations to add to such research appears to become increasingly realistic. (Researcher's Notebook 29.8.91).

Out on the practice field, two days before the match, there was an urgency in the players...Play broke down and the coach's voice travelled to the watchers on the side-line. "Let's not travel quite so fast, we're travelling 100 miles per hour. Slow it down and get it right." They did. A ripple of approval ran down the sideline from supporters standing in the dusk....Forwards were criticised by their captain for their body position. They practised their positions again and moved to receive a kick off. The captain's voice eddied from the field, "Give yourself more room..." 7:15 p.m. The forwards were running through their lineout skills and drills, with codes for certain moves, when play stopped as the coach stepped in with clear, firm and succinct directions. They resumed...the backs ran in tries...the coach checked through the movement. "Let's score that try fellas, let's physically get over the line and score that try, actually force it down. I want you to think of the opposition, let's get physical and think of the opposition." The team put down a scrum and a wing scored on the blind. They repeated that move twice. Slight drizzle was falling. It was cold and the floodlights had a dull intensity in the mistiness, reminding the onlooker of a prisoner of war movie set...After the practice a player was observed criticising the coach to a team-mate, but he had not offered any opinion previously when the coach invited players to express their views on the forthcoming game.

A difficulty is apparent in the research methodology. It is the simple and practical snag of recording notes in a notebook that is becoming targeted by rain. Another is the decision making process of selecting which team leader to observe, for example, the coach working with the reserves or the captain working with the forwards. I decide that, given the overwhelming literature on coaches in comparison to captains and the apparently more significant influence of the former on team fortunes, the coach will be the primary focus unless he is exhibiting behaviour with which I am familiar and the captain is not doing so.

(Researcher's Notebook 30.8.91).

The assistant coach stated his objectives with the backs. "The basics are critical. I endorsed the value of having a new face to add to the coaching impact. The first place I look at in the backs is half-back. If he's losing time, say half a second, that's four yards, so our team could quickly be eight yards down." For this coach the simplicity of the game was important. "The great art of coaching is making it simple, and communicating so that even the thickest understand what you are getting across."

An All Black forward was the last to get dressed. He enjoyed rugby at all playing levels and, acutely aware of the World Cup team to be announced in two days, was philosophical about retaining his national team position. His girlfriend had helped his sense of proportion and values.

Rugby is not the complete world now for me but still a vital part of it. My position is important as a ball winning position. If you're doing it then you feel shit hot you're doing your job. The camaraderie thing, the team trips, friendships you make in rugby you keep for the rest of your life. You see your mate lying in a ruck and you pick up your pace to get to him...you get a real close bond with your club mates too...it's not the same as war, but you get committed for your mates. You share your happy moments and you share it when you're down.

I must check the terms used in this elite team's moves and their taken-for-granted terminology. Observation of field training indicates another dimension which compounds the research of coaches, the language and specialised terminology of the settings. Coach and manager shared concerns about some players and their commitment. This illustrates another element of the research on coaches which does not appear in player questionnaires or training/practice observations -- the private interaction with "significant others" in the team setting. With whom does the coach or captain share confidences? Who provides the sounding board for team leaders? What are the concerns they have? How do they resolve concerns?

(Researcher's Notebook 30.8.91).

Sunday. At the Ground on Match Day.

1:18 p.m. In the home team dressing room the players started to arrive for their 2:30 p.m. match. Their captain was sitting in the corner alongside four team mates. The room was surprisingly small. The atmosphere was already setting in with evident tension and self-immersion. The captain didn't speak. Stubble chinned, he sat in his track suit bouncing a well-worn rugby ball on his knee. (Concentration seemed to set him in a world into which I wouldn't venture and few would enter before the game.) Coach greeted me a little more tersely than he did at training. (*I checked that it was okay to be there and his "Sure!" was reassuring, suggesting that I may like to be in an unobtrusive corner near the reserves area, off the playing fifteen's changing room.*)The skipper came in to spit out a mouth of phlegm in the lavatory. In his playing kit he looked unseeing, audibly breathing and exhaling with an air of controlled tension. A lock forward came down the steps from the passage into the changing room, smiling a little tightly....The only loo was continually occupied so players peed in the shower outlet.... The dull grey of the shower room floor was repeated up the walls to head height. Above that level were yellow painted bricks. Overhead two lights shone through transparent plastic lampshades, each of which had a cobweb

resolutely clinging. Players thumbed through their programmes as they sat in various states of undress. There was little said....

1:35 p.m. Coach called his team together. Most were still in Number One gear - blazers, tie and white shirt, grey slacks and black shoes. "A feeling has to be inside you guys." The reserves' cover for players was emphasised. The noise from the concrete passage outside was intrusive, even through the closed door, a hubbub of chatter, muffled instructions and officials calling out. The tension inside the dressing room was controlled, intense, quiet, and revealing in its brevity. The distractions outside appeared as a thoughtless intrusion in the pre-match rugby environment. Coach's voice was backgrounded by the noise of those outside the room. It was too much for him. He rapidly ascended the steep flight of concrete steps, yanked the door to the corridor open, "Will you f--k off so we can talk?" A couple of television technicians were glimpsed in the passage. The outside hubbub abated immediately. Tension. Coach resumed, emphasising the need for thinking that he has discussed at training -- the proverbial "top three inches" of the rugby cerebrum...

The players move into their own modes of individual preparation. Their coaching and training now merge with the player's own will, expertise and intelligence....The coach has been moving through the players. He sits on the bench with one player, stands face-to-face with the next, pats one on the shoulder...in the reserves area he talks intently with a reserve player to ensure an understanding of the positional play required of a replacement. He winks to me as he goes past. It may be a little gesture to him but one I appreciate as I've deliberately not spoken to any player since I arrived 51 minutes ago. Much of the time I'm kneeling by a bench or standing in a corner wanting to be unobtrusive. (Researcher's Notebook 1.9.91).

2:11 p.m. Coach had moved into the shower area, eye-balling the three players warming up there and spoken briefly with them. Most players had their jerseys on. Coach talked to the team about the toss and its implications for play. (*The self-contained individual tension seems to have been partially released and infused in the more common accord of group commitment.*) His message to each was low, warm and brief, appearing to reach into their temporary detachment as they each responded with a grim grin, comment or involuntary gesture. The captain emphasised points..."No bad ball eh?" HB nodded supportively. The captain continued, "I'll take it from the front...hold the ball in the tackle...if the ball's on the deck throw our bodies on it...tight five, we need a big

f---g game. Let's remember it's the Old Timers' Day today. We don't want to let them down. If the ball goes out we start again. Let's do the basics well. Good discipline, eh? Our body position must be low."

2:15 p.m. "At half-past-one I asked you to focus." The coach's voice broke into individual reflections. "Just sit down and think of that ball, that's the only thing I want you to think of. HB, keep that in front of you. That ball belongs to us." The masseur moved into the reserves area to fill plastic soft-drink bottles with water as the coach's voice came through from the team room. Sprigs on boots click-clacked on the concrete. Captain returned to the changing room, announcing to his team as he descended the steps that, "We won the toss so we're playing into the wind."

The coach quietly reminded his fullback that PT needed "a wee bit more depth, eh?" The assistant coach entered to check some moves with HB. "Get on to their halfback as he'll break around. Body position man, body position, body position." He then noted HB's air of mental self-seclusion and responded with "Are you a bit uptight, man? I'll get off your back after this brief message." The forwards put their scrum down in the changing room with urgency as they heaved concertedly. The captain's voice emerged from its midst, "A little more aggression. If things don't happen we make them happen."

2:25 p.m. The captain exhorted, "Back up, support, communicating, talking. The Old Timers here today, play it for them. Most of all, play it for yourself, your own pride. FR1, I'll put my body on the line. Will you do that for me? L2, I know you'll do that for me." The lock forward nodded, unsmiling and grim.

2:28 p.m. "Let's go, guys, we're PT, eh?" The stocky captain led his team up the steps into the concrete corridor and out through the tunnel to the field. "Coming R?" enquired the coach. We left the changing room for the team's reserved area in the grandstand.

The dressing room has rarely appeared in sport research. The coach appeared to de-emphasise his presence, or perhaps the players moved into focus more. He noted to me that he believes his preparation of the team is virtually over by this stage and "it's over to the guys now." He gives individual support and briefly emphasises basic points of the game plan to the team. There already still seems a lot of "taken for granted" in his actions, such as with player learning style, individual understanding of players, and explanations to players of their individual roles. I find

it difficult to grasp clear goals for the game or a cohesive playing structure formulated by the coach and players. On the physical and tangible domains of the study the setting of the changing room was a shock. Given the role of players in the game, and their generation of rugby union finances, the dirty brick and concrete walls, floor and one toilet for some 21 of them made a marked impression. This seemed to be reflected in the careless or inconsiderate errors in naming players in the programme. (Researcher's Notebook 1.9.91).

It took the researcher some time to recognise players on the field. The coach muttered and passed criticisms of the referee and opposition.... A lineout formed in front of the stand. PT jumpers seemed to be held back. "Come on, don't take that shit," their coach yelled. Alongside, the reserves are adept at reading the game, which led to muttered comments. "Good nudge." "Aagh guys, come on! Jesus!" At halftime Coach explained to the team how to play in the second half. (What difference does the coach's team talk make at halftime? How do the players see this?)

A PT player lost the ball forward and his Coach burst out with, "You can't pass it to him, he can't control the ball!" The opposition halfback tried a move by himself, exactly as the PT coaches had discussed with the team at practice earlier in the week. PT swamped him but the game was gone.

The aftermatch changing room was new to the researcher: the slumped figure of the captain having to energise himself for a media interview, "tracer bullet" markings on a player's back from the opposition's rucking, deodorants, tendrils of shower steam and the gradual resurgence of player spirits. In that setting the PT coach spoke to the team briefly, noting their effort and good passages of play. The manager quickly addressed some organisational points. The team then moved to the after-match function where the teams would mingle. The room had polished varnish woodwork, and honours boards listing union officers and the province's All Blacks. Little islands of Old Timers, especially invited as guests of the union, chatted in a milling sea of diverse people. The room was packed for the impending announcement of the World Cup team. Television technicians were snaking cables around the podium. Cameramen were pushy.... The Chairman of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union stepped to the microphone.... Within two minutes PT had three ex-All Blacks, including their captain. The team closed ranks around them.

The challenge for participant observation is to present an observed world. The selection and definition of the "problem" had been relatively simple: given the restricted literature on elite team leaders, what do they really do in the team setting? How are they perceived? What implications does this have for coach and captain development? It now appears that previously

unobserved research settings such as today's changing room can reveal dimensions of coach and captain roles. Are rugby players really the sexist heavy drinkers portrayed by some dramatists and writers? Beer appears to be integral to the setting but so is soft drink and there is little sign of unusually heavy consumption. Is the image presented by critics of rugby sustainable, of forwards being wound up at halftime and pointed in the new direction? It seems that these guys are no less articulate and insightful in team moves and on issues outside rugby, than any social group. To what extent does the coach rant and rave as rugby critics indicate? Does the stress on "man-management" in rugby literature have validity? Is it possible to observe factors in the coach behaviour which may influence results of matches? The captain appears to have a strong role at practice but this is virtually absent in the literature on team leadership. Is this important? How does the team tie together behind the scenes? How will the coach cope with the Ranfurly Shield match, with only one game to go before the season's biggest encounter? Paradoxically, it has been difficult to gain an understanding, in one game, of what really happens in the dressing room before a big game, despite being an observer. On one level so much was recorded -- 30 pages of the researcher's notebook. On a secondary level there were a lot of unanswered questions -- did the players really visualise as the coach demanded? How did they learn and assimilate this information? Had this ever been discussed? What impact did the various pre-match actions, rituals and statements have upon players? This appeared to substantiate the need for both observation and interviews. Already I wonder if, without experience of the dressing room, a researcher would have the primary knowledge to guide questions on all aspects of team leader roles. (Researcher's Notebook 4.9.91).

Provincial Match Two

The captain had been active in training this week, controlling some phases and stopping practice passages to unequivocally insist on improvements needed. He had briefly spoken in previous team meetings, but on the night before the second game he spoke at some length, stressing the need for four competition points on the next day and asking other players what they wanted to say. The leader of the backs stressed putting the ball in front of the pack and helping them go forward or putting the ball through the back line and keeping the team moving forward. The skipper asked two key players for a special lineout effort in this game as preparation for the next Saturday's Ranfurly Shield game. Captain emphasised the need for physical dominance and the assertion of forwards' bodily strengths. "We know we're going to have to put our bodies on the line and smash through those defences. Use your elbows as you jump so they know you're there." He asked his coach if there was anything else to say. Coach noted a morning visit to check out the ground and facilities. One of the backs asked if that 10:30 a.m. visit would be compulsory. Coach

responded, a little sharply, “Yes.” (Perhaps this was the start of tension building up to the Shield game.) The skipper wrapped up discussion and players drifted off to dinner.

Last evening I informally interviewed hotel staff. It is now match day. Breakfast time. I check with the captain about a ten minute ‘interview’ and he says we’ll do it tonight. Over breakfast coffee I check with Coach on what I do today as I don’t wish to be intrusive in any team setting. His reply is reassuring. “Whatever you like, the guys really accept you so that’s neat.” I ask if I can observe just as I did last week. “Yep. The bus leaves for us to check out the ground at 10.00 o’clock and you’re just part of the outfit.” (Researcher’s Notebook 11.9.91).

The team visited the ground, discussing its condition and the weather, and received reminders from the coach about the importance of playing well. They are told by him to go and relax and “tune in for this bloody game.” In the team room the researcher discussed team leadership with an experienced Maori forward.

I slip downtown to buy a mobile for the players to give a new father in the team. The manager meets me outside the hotel with a PT tie and cufflinks. I am emotionally moved by the gift and the acceptance it illustrates, and underscore in my research diary the need to maintain objectivity in my participant observation. At 1:00 p.m. I note a young Samoan who is playing his first provincial game today. His father, sturdy and taciturn, sits in the foyer armchair. The young player stands by him chatting as he keeps a rugby ball moving in his hand restlessly, passing the ball from hand to hand. The father’s brown lava-lava is immaculate in repose. He is a big and imposing Samoan man reading the match programme with his son’s name on its centre page. What are the cultural dimensions of the team? Has the coach met this player’s father? Why are there no Samoan songs in this team with its six Samoans? Do they have a particular ethos within the team? Does the coach or captain ever greet these players in Samoan? (Researcher’s Notebook 11.9.91).

At the ground during the curtain-raiser the PT guys were politely sought by autograph seekers. The pre-match period was similar to that of the first game observed. This time the departure of the reserves from the dressing room, to leave the playing fifteen alone before kick-off, was noted by the researcher. Captain had a few words with the two first-time players and stressed to his pack the need to drive in low, and Coach emphasised basic game plan points to his first-five. The game was close but lost, with the coach making many notes in his little book.

4:47 p.m. The post-game setting was familiar....Coach chatted quietly with a player. Captain asked the players to have their shower and not to leave as he wanted to speak to them. He then stressed the need for pride in playing, that the players had let down the two guys who were having their first game for PT. The captain was self-critical and demanding of his team as he specifically noted the areas to improve. His words appear to strike home as the players visibly responded. He emphasised that the team had their biggest challenge in four days with the Shield game. He concluded, "Well, we can let our hair down a bit tonight and hit the grog a bit but not get drunk. I want to see guys enjoying themselves but I don't want anyone drunk. You know, much as losing this game f---g hurts me, maybe the most important thing about this week is that LF2's baby arrived safely."

The coach spoke briefly and pointedly on the positives and negatives of the game...a player pulled down the guitar and the team moved into their song before heading into another aftermatch function.

The post-match period in the dressing room had signalled a number of points for the researcher: some of the team appeared to be downcast by defeat but others quickly regained composure. Is this a natural aptitude, individually expressed or is this an indication of different playing values or goals? Does cigarette smoking in the changing room indicate a need by that player, and acceptability of this by the coach? Noting the captain's attention to one player who sits slumped silently after his first match, does anybody else sit with that player or quietly reassure him? Given the perception of emotionless rugby players engaged on winning, it was a salutary indicator of other values held by the team's captain, an All Black, who strove physically and mentally for 80 minutes to win the game but whose sense of balance noted the team's highlight for the week as the safe arrival of a teammate's first baby. This was a surprise for me, as I had not perceived this personal dimension of the captain in the first match week. That underscored the need to keep observing and recording as fully as possible, as the importance of an incident may well be tracked back through antecedents which did not have my awareness at the time.

(Researcher's Notebook 12.9.91).

Provincial Match Three

The PT team moved on to its major match, the Ranfurly Shield challenge. The team was announced before the first practice of the week and Coach prepared three pages of confidential game plan notes. He had been anxious in case they became public but gave a copy to the researcher.

Friday. Players were asked to write down their opponent's strengths and their plan to combat these. Players drifted around the motel that day. At the night team meeting jokes and banter died away. Players sat on the floor with their backs against their team-mates' knees. They packed on sofas, on a folded up bed, in any space that they could find in the small motel unit. Coach prepared notes for what he wanted to say, the first time he had done this for a PT game.

WE DON'T GET MANY CHANCES TO PERFORM ON A STAGE LIKE WE DO TOMORROW. THIS IS THE BIGGEST GAME WE'LL EVER PLAY IN. IT MAY BE YOUR ONLY GAME OF THIS MAGNITUDE. WIN, GUYS, AND YOU'LL BE IMMORTAL IN RUGBY. IN 10 YEARS, 20 YEARS' TIME, WHEN PEOPLE ARE HAVING A BEER OR A GIN SOMEONE WILL SAY "NAME THE 15 PT PLAYERS WHO BEAT A TEAM WITH 14 ALL BLACKS AND WON THE SHIELD." WIN AND YOU'LL BE HEROES....TONIGHT GUYS I WANT YOU TO VISUALISE...THINK...

Figure 5.2 Provincial Team coach notes for Ranfurly Shield match.

The team, crammed into the room, were wholly attentive. I dared not move to rub my leg, which was taunting me with pins and needles as I hunched on the floor, my back wedged against the manager's bony leg. "We've talked about visualising the things you do well. Get them in your head, things like kicking a ball through and following it to score. Scoring in a corner, tackling your opponent." He asked three players to outline their opponents and what they intended doing to contain and beat them. Fullback, second-five and lock, were dissimilar guys with different natures, attitudes, occupations and social outlooks. One Samoan, one Rarotongan and one Pakeha. Their captain spoke briefly. "Remember the key things...tackling, ball retention, discipline." He also emphasised the part individual players would play the next day. Coach ended the team talk with, "That's it guys, let's get a good night's rest." Players grinned at the thought of a "normal" night before such an abnormal day. Picking up their match programmes they stood or stretched, easing their way out.

I wonder at the hyperbole and its lasting effect as a motivational element. The atmosphere of such a meeting is affective. I suspect that some do not have the visualisation skills assumed by the coach. The three players were each serious and reasoned and concentrated on their presentation. I don't think it's just luck that these three were chosen to speak tonight...any

individual player could identify with one of them; all players could relate to the intensity of the trio. (Researcher's Notebook 13.9.91).

The day saw interviews with the motel manager, who was a past Auckland team manager, and local administrators. Coach went to the match ground with his key kickers, to check the wind and conditions. That night he was on a local radio sport programme for one hour. PT's chairman arrived to support the team. In his motel room the skipper lay on his bed watching television. "I am a bit tense because a lot rides on my shoulders. Guys tend to lift themselves up for an international and this Shield game tomorrow is definitely bigger than some of the games I've played on an All Black tour." In 11 or 12 hours the captain's Shield day would be a reality. What would he do on the day of this "international?"

Get up...I'll take a rest before the game and think about my role, evaluate my opponent pretty thoroughly, probably take about 10 or 15 minutes. I try to focus on doing everything right. I focus on what I will do as things arise, the patterns that develop. The forwards usually get in a few lineouts in the morning, I see how the others build up, chat to the guys and see how they're switched on...I'll have brunch and just see how the guys relax, but not too relaxed because the game is then only a few hours away. I imagine the game in my mind.

I appreciate such a key informant making such time available. Perhaps the neutral observer gives that informant a passive outlet for his verbal tension. In the build-up to a big game, the 30 hours or so before kick off appear to increasingly delineate the coach and captain's key roles.

(Researcher's Notebook 13.9.91).

The night before a match saw players melt into their rooms or gather in the team room. In the lounge bar area Coach explained the game plan to the past All Black who had recently assisted PT's back practices. "When they're in our half we're going to play patterned footy and play the tramlines. In their half we're going to pick up the pressure and speed it up." The PT coach then edged off his bar stool to head for his room. "I just hope that we've done it well enough, that everyone does their job well and things fall into plan." It was 16 hours before the Shield game.

On the morning of the Shield game the team crammed into the masseur's room. Outside, the rain and thunder underscored the mood. Each player read out his opponent summary and personal goals, being heard in silence. Coach pulled players' comments together, emphasising the need to play to an international level. "This is the only test match many of you will ever play. Don't take intimidation. If one of their players puts his hand on you to intimidate you, then let him know you

won't take it." He paused. "You don't start anything. We want discipline and concentration but you don't take any arrogant physical shit from them. You've all seen the way they push the rules. You've all seen them walk back through play between their opponent's half back and first-five...." His sentence was suddenly eclipsed by a bellow of thunder from outside which unleashed whipping rain against the motel window. A slim back shivered. The light was switched on. Other players provided their statements. The team discussion moved to the conditions, the probable greasy ball, the ground and spoiling the opposition line-outs. The team meeting rounded off and players sprinted through the rain to their rooms.

Winning is the objective. I attempt to be neutral in my consideration of the emphasis placed on winning the Shield. In my notebook I've written down a set of words from newspaper headlines gathered over this year, (including, 'hit them', 'kill', 'battle', 'thrash', 'murder', 'combat', 'warfare'), ready to mark them off as I find them used in the team talk by the coach or captain. None have been used with PT so far. Nonetheless some might find it difficult to accept a team sport mandating such intense physical engagement. Others may well be disconcerted by the directness and clarity with which these diverse young men speak, some lacking conventional education, some whose encounters with life's extremes may have led to deviant antisocial behaviour, and some for whom English is not their own first language to be used freely with facility, let alone felicity. Am I paternalistic when I reflect on my surprise that the completeness of common commitment has generated a fluency of personal communication from such markedly varied backgrounds? I speculate on whether any experiences in life other than their sport would stimulate such efforts and effective expression. (Researcher's Notebook 14.9.91).

Dead time. Four hours to kick off. This was becoming a familiar time of the ongoing study. Players lay on their beds, some were interviewed at small outdoor tables in assorted sponsor's gear and others had close friends or family call in briefly and a few players tossed a ball around.

1:10 p.m. The PT coach called the team group together in the restaurant after brunch and spoke briefly. "The time for talking is over. We all know the plan. We all know the commitment needed from every one of us." He told them that a Samoan back had asked if he could say a prayer for the game, noting that this was special for that team-mate who would be leaving after the game for his World Cup commitment. Coach asked the team to support their team mate with their attention but any response was up to the individual. The team stood quietly. The prayer sought the best skills of each, that they would "celebrate their bodies" through an honesty of effort, playing with the gifts they had been blessed with. There was no mention of winning or losing. It was a meditative counterpoint to the day's physical focus, reflective and unifying. The researcher was

struck by the response of the team who stood hushed for those few moments, and their accordant “Amen.”

The team moved quietly out to the bus. Captain’s words were recalled: “After brunch I’ll see how the team are relaxed. I might run the game through my head. Once you’ve left the bus and into the changing rooms you’re hyped up and nervous and have the feeling inside you. It all goes once you’re out.” As I got on the bus, last, there was a spare seat next to a tall lock. I glanced at it and raised my eyebrows in question. He nodded a silent assent. There was no verbal communication. Nobody spoke on the bus to the ground.

1:37 p.m. The team went up through the tunnel into the sunlight to check the ground, pointing out wet spots and speculating on what would happen if the ball, scrum, player, or tackle arrived in those places. Down in the dressing room the routines had become increasingly familiar : a forward cleaning his already spotless boots, players undressing, bandages, jerseys, and idiosyncratic routines. The skipper called to the manager for more shorts. Coach entered, declaring that “The track looks good, guys.” The masseur set up his table.... FE was chewing his gum...HB took a swig of water. The guitar leaned against wall.. A wing was already in his football gear, repeatedly running across the room and back. At 1:58 p.m. the referee came in to check sprigs, while outside the pre-match entertainment built up. Coach and manager chatted with PT executive members. TVNZ set up a table and chair outside the changing room and covered it with a New Zealand flag as a tablecloth.

2:02 p.m. With less than half an hour before kick-off Captain quietly chatted with his fellow front-row mates as Coach moved over to talk with him. Face to face, they talked with animation as the captain’s hands moved in and out while he emphasised points to the coach. His eyes were locked on the latter’s face. A forward belched. Players were urging each other on. “Up and running guys, up and running,” the captain chanted to the group. “Let’s get them together, let’s have a go boys. Three things guys: tackle, discipline, ball retention.” It was a pre-game litany now completely familiar to the researcher. “Keep with LF1. Keep with FE. Seal the pill off, eh guys? Control the ball. Get there with L1. Get there with LF2. Keep the upper hand all the time, whether it’s verbally or physically. They’ll test you out.” Breaking off from his tense exhortation the captain walked into the shower to spit.

2:07 p.m. Coach paced around. He stopped to talk to his captain again. “If we win the toss guys, well ! We’ll have them kicking off to us, a bit of sun left to go with us.” Coach moved to another

player.... The leader of the backs jogs and bounces on the spot, "If the ball's sitting there we've got to pick it up, we don't leave it there for someone else to pick it up." The captain's voice was heard again, "Discipline, we must have discipline. Player X get back." (This player had argued with the referee in the previous game.) Captain sat on the table for the strapping of his leg. A reserve forward quietly patted him on the back "Quarter of an hour, fifteen minutes before we're out fellas," from the coach. "How long?" asked a seemingly distant voice in the same room. Did the captain's words reach him? "Up and running, up and running, take the right options we must put the pressure on them." Their captain beat the words out with the rough rhythm of his jogging on the spot. A tyro reserve looked pale. The Samoans said little, even the extroverted fullback was restrained...FR2 sat. Solid FR2 never said much...liniment threaded the air...boots rasped on the concrete. One of the locks moved around the tight five, "We must be reckoned with, get up there with the loosies, not just talk about it, let's f---g do it." "Eighty minutes," snarled LF2, "Eighty minutes." The captain moved to a pair of inexperienced players..."We're all there together eh? Be aggressive, be hard, be staunch, be proud of that jersey you're wearing."

2:20 p.m. A player asked Coach the time...Coach patted one of his players on the back and moved to have a private word with another. The captain was running on the spot by the shower, the insistent rhythmic scraping beat of his sprigs on the concrete repeated in various corners of the changing-room. His voice was punctuated by his faster breathing, as he reinforced the game plan. "We cut errors right out of the game...we're going to keep good discipline...we keep the pace up." A couple of players nodded abstractedly...Coach comments to the room, "Four minutes fellows." The skipper was moving around his men ... "Tackle, tackle, tackle, eh FB? Don't wait for the loosies HB, get in there and get the ball. It's our turn boys for that Shield. It's our f---g turn." Coach spoke in a voice conveying tension, "FE, you know where we're kicking goals from, into that breeze?...Let's get away from taps, get the ball on the mark quickly. If you're an extra man in the lineouts, stay there, stay there, stay there." Captain's words now echoed the previous day's team meeting, "It's our international, it's our international, this is test match stuff guys. Discipline, discipline, we're in this together...Make it hard, we'll each be playing it out till it hurts, demand it from yourself...we make them think, we make them wonder, we hit things together."

2:27 p.m. "Skipper, you've been called." The Shield challengers lined up and moved out through the door, their sprigs rapping on the concrete, to fade as the coach and researcher followed them out, while the manager checked the room.

2:47 p.m. At an opposition score the PT captain gathered the team behind the line to stress the basic points of the game plan. "Discipline, ball retention, tackle" were his key words. Coach muttered at a referee decision.

3:09 p.m. Coach turned to say, "It's true what I wrote down isn't it?," recalling his team talk comment that the opposition's arrogance should be considered and turned against them. At halftime PT were only one point down.

3:19 p.m. The PT team huddled by the posts as their captain addressed them after a Shield holder score. PT's coach acknowledged a skilled opposition try with brief applause. The reserves were silent.

3:41 p.m. Eleven points were needed in ten minutes. "Shit guys, we must have a converted try," urged the PT coach. Again and again PT forced the opposition onto their line. Mutterings came from the reserves and spectators about the defenders' professional fouls and gamesmanship. The whistle blew. The Ranfurly Shield had been retained by the home team.

Some 16,000 rugby spectators have seen the challenge of the season. Ten points was the gulf between courage and containment, between complete effort and complete expertise and, ultimately, between the organization and opportunism of one team and scrummaging and skill of the other. Here, in the dressing room, I have a sneaking suspicion that losing might not matter enough to some players. Or is this my own attitude, that losing should hurt players more than it seems to? Perhaps I should accept that they all gave their best today but I still have a suspicion that losing, rather than the magnitude of the effort, really matters to only a few. Even if I am correct, is that a bad thing given the proponents (not in this group) of the alleged "win at all costs" ethos of some past teams? Does what the venture dictates, the values sometimes then divert? (Researcher's Notebook 14.9.91).

The dressing room had an air of team effort satisfaction. Soaked towels heaped up on the floor and bare brown and white bodies, raked with sprig tracks, eased slowly around the room....Captain entered after his media interview....cans of beer and bottles of soft drink were opened...the door was pushed open and three boys came in. The PT coach pointed to them, "Boys....," he called to his players and the boys' autograph books and rugby ball were signed by the team. "Barrack for PT next time, eh boys?," "Yes, and bring along your big sisters," called out another player. By 5:00 p.m., after chatting, changing, showering, interviewing, dressing,

recounting, singing, drinking, massaging, and aching, the coach called for quiet. The manager spoke, as did the captain briefly, thanking the team. “When we’re out tonight, hold our heads up high, and stick together.” The coach added quietly, “And let’s respect the place we’re staying at tonight guys. One song and then we’re off to the aftermatch function.”

The post-match hours indicated a range of social and gender perspectives illuminative of the rugby culture (See Appendices D.2 and D.3 for verbatim observation extracts illustrating the range of these, and the range of gender attitudes that elite rugby encompasses.)

The PT team briefly assembled in the motel restaurant at Coach’s direction, where he complimented them on their play. Captain supported this, “I was bloody proud.” Team members, including the researcher, had been assigned numbers which were called upon to indicate persons to speak. The team dispersed for the evening. The weary skipper headed for town to a restaurant and night club with a group of team-mates but his coach sat with two or three players in the bar. “I’ll just take it easy and have a chat with a few mates and the boys will know where I am.” The following morning some players had obvious hangovers. Some had stayed up into the night with a singing marathon, some had been in a card school. Farewells were exchanged as the team loaded up for the airport. The bus door hissed to close. A few players waved. Some heads were on the headrests even before the bus reached the road outside the motel.

Provincial Match Four

The Provincial Team then faced their final two games of the season and of the PT participant observation period. At training after the Shield game there was an underlying sense of achievement, an expressed belief that the team had achieved a new playing level, and practices had been positive with the coach emphatic on players not dropping their performance level. The captain, made his point succinctly: “We played pretty well and had a good go in the Shield game. As far as I’m concerned, it’s history now. If we go out and get screwed now, everyone will forget that game.” Coach had noted his satisfaction at the game plan being followed so well, players’ commitment, and his exasperation at the opposition team’s professional fouls. PT team leaders’ attitudes were reflected at the team meeting the night before their next game. In that team meeting, the coach was more insistent on individual requirements than in the two pre-Shield games.

On the first match day following the Shield game there was another team talk. The coach led off, despite some players still reading their programmes. The captain added a few brief pointers about

expectations of the forwards before he took the forwards away and the coach had the backs. At practices that week Coach was supportive of the young fullback playing his first game, but did not appear to have instilled a game plan as clearly as he had for the previous week's Shield game.

I'm not sure about today, I think the guys will struggle. They had a clear game plan for the Shield, personal challenges that were responded to and were on a 'natural high' with that game. The written notes that Coach used last week gave a focus for critical and meditative reflection. Strong verbal imprints in the changing room do not adequately compensate for structure, motivation, and clear, personally relevant, goals. But that period before kick off is still a special social setting! The team bus, changing room, and litanies followed the familiar pattern. There was more emphasis for this game upon on-field communication, "talking it up" in player terminology. I have noted the players to whom the team leaders speak. Coach and Captain make small and usually private, gestures of support to new players. In simplistic leadership terminology, I wonder if Coach is not a bit too strong on consideration rather than on task and structure. (Researcher's Notebook 21.9.91).

That game was lost. It concluded at 4:00 p.m. By 4:15 p.m. the PT coach had not spoken in the changing room. He had responded to the opposition coach coming in, and then sat on a bench. He then moved to sit by his first-game player and talked quietly to him. The captain was silent... Half an hour later the mood had changed... The coach and captain shared a joke and the former spoke. "Guys, can I just have a hush. Guys, let's not turn inward, let's have a bloody good night socially. Let's not get stupid. We'll have a bloody sound training run this week and play well next week. You never know, it could be our last f---g good night together tonight! Keep together tonight, eh? Let's make sure we grow stronger for the experience." The team moved to the aftermatch function and Supporters' Club.

The evening saw the rugby culture phenomenon of the *Court Session* and unwelcome appearance of a stripper for the team's social time, each of which illustrated domains of sport team life not usually revealed in elite sport research. (See Appendix D.3 and Appendix D.2 respectively.) These verbatim extracts show the actual rugby subculture encompassing team leader behaviour away from the public eye. The two appendices indicate realities of an elite rugby team's social life in which team leadership plays roles of being "one of the boys" on one hand and quietly "keeping an eye" on players on the other. The extracts also reflect the range of antithetical perspectives in rugby, colouring the environment in which social behaviour, including that of leaders, takes place. The finale of the season, on 28 September loomed a week away. The researcher's primary

impression was that the team did not have the virtually intangible qualities of a clear goal, game plan and individual roles fused into a winning ethos.

Provincial Match Five

The build-up to the final match was familiar to the researcher. Practices for the final game were similar to those over the previous four weeks, with the major training session taking place on a cool Thursday evening for the Saturday match. (A verbatim extract from the researcher's observation of this training Appendix D.1 provides a typical observation of the PT build-up to a match and illustrates coach and captain roles in team training and practice.)

Saturday. The pre-game rituals of the concluding match were familiar to the researcher. As the first half of the match ended it seemed similar to previous PT matches, with a mixture of good forward work and some individual feats but a lack of top level co-ordinated play and full use of the backs.

Shortly before half-time the PT coach turned to me and said I had seen everything that a coach and captain did but hadn't seen what happened with them and the team at half-time in a game. Now I am here on the field with them, and am struck by the surrounding space. The stands seem to be set well back, and the ground for a player to cover looks even more spacious and daunting from the middle than when looking down from the stand. The sensation of being a distinct group out here at half-time is strong. (Researcher's Notebook 28.9.91).

It was cold, out there in the middle for the fifteen elite players. Coach spoke as players stood or squatted around him. A couple of players sat on the ground. The background music was audible and clear. The PT skipper emphasised to his team to keep the game simple. The players hunched their shoulders and listened. FE was rubbed down by the masseur as the manager handed out pairs of shorts. Coach emphasised that opposition heads were starting to hang and opponents were puffing. "So lift the tempo, guys. Lift it up and keep the pressure on. There are too many of their guys lying over the ball. Use your bloody sprigs, rake them. If they won't get off the ball, bloody rake them. But we don't panic guys, and points will come. I promise you the points will come..."

The ref's whistle signalled the end of half-time. I felt a sense of detachment, of self-containment, in the team at half-time. They had a job to do. They know their roles and seem to exist within the time and space that provide for these. Understandably, it's the only time in my association with

the team, that there was no acknowledgment of my presence -- not a nod, nor a wink, no raised eyebrow. I carry off the masseur's first aid bag. Forty minutes later the points had not come, the game had been lost. The team leaders quickly did their press interviews and the team slowly unwound. They did not seem to have the intensity of commitment to each other, and to winning, that had been expected. The half-time talks provided a perspective on team leadership that had not been previously observed. (Researcher's Notebook 28.9.91).

In the changing room the aftermath of the season's last game came to a close...the bottle of port came around...a team song tailed off as the PT coach stood up. "Coaches don't often get a chance to speak like this. It's been a shit hot season. There is very little difference between us and the top team. If anyone's thinking of retirement, don't make a decision now, it's the wrong time to decide. It's a shit hot bloody game, and you're a great bunch to be with. This is the last of the 1991 team. We just didn't do something right, but we wear our blazer with pride." The manager added his words. "I believe that in the years I've been involved with the PT team, that this year is the best coach the team has had."

At the aftermatch function there was the ritualistic exchange of cuff links and tie for opposing captains and a tie presented to the referee. The PT skipper thanked his coach for support and noted that it had been really hard for him to captain the team as he hadn't been captain since school. After the formalities the team moved on to their PT Supporters' Club, which they endured at the request of their manager and coach. Gaffes by the M.C. engendered laughter, there were presentations and drinks with supporters, and after one hour the players quietly left. Sunday saw the end of season barbecue put on by the Supporters' Club. After drinks and food the captain spoke and thanked the hosts. The team made a presentation to their manager, who was moved by this. Captain was chosen as *Player of the Year*.

I muse on the setting. It's easy to make judgements on the supporters for their unabashed enthusiasm, constant earnestness and preoccupation with some players' space and time. I find some of their support to be a little loud in its proclamation by barracking, badges and badgering. Now, I'm not so sure of the totality of this judgement. It's difficult to recall any who lack good-will, or apparent sincerity, or a willingness to discuss or please. The union and players see them as providing a focus of support, and a lot of voluntary effort goes into their club. One of the players expressed a viewpoint pungently. "They might want to bend your ear a bit much but, shit, they help carry the game and work pretty hard for rugby." The team leaders respond to the supporters with courtesy and good humour. There may be some commonalities up

and down the country's Supporters Clubs -- sexism, a lot of drinking, the 'heavies', money raised to support rugby, opportunities for socialisation -- but there are also differences in the relationship between unions (or teams) and their Supporters Clubs, facilities and involvement of women. I do think that some players could do more to mix with the supporters. I observed one of the players, now the noisiest, who has been very willing to consume the constant supply of free drinks from the Supporters Club bar. He has been irritating some of his team mates with his boorish behaviour. No supporter is behaving in that manner. The obvious counter, perhaps, is that few supporters would play with such commitment on the field as does that particular player. An increasingly mellow mid-afternoon slips by. I muse on what the questionnaires and these interviews will reflect about the coach and captain. Will these underscore my observational record, and provide indicators on why five games have been lost? Will they give insights on strengths and weaknesses of the coach or captain? A myriad of symbols slide across my mind, such as the blazer, stripper, signed ball, sponsor's shirt, nomenclature, numbers, key words, Supporter's Club, presentations, Court, nicknames and changing room. I gather up my notebook, tape recorder and yellow carry bag, which is now distinctly grubbier from dirty benches, concrete floors, beer, bus racks and shower water. I have observed this team for five games, spread over 32 days, and driven 3,220km to be with them at practices and matches, through their exertions and in their relaxation. We exchange farewells and good wishes. For this researcher, it is the end of a rich and insightful association.

(Researcher's Notebook 29.9.91).

5.2.2 Participant Observation Data : Categories and Properties

The foregoing extracts of researcher observation are representative of the elite team setting and are a fractional part of the 120+ typed pages of full participant observation notes recorded by the researcher (which are available from him). The data from the full record were analysed and the categories which appear in Figure 5.2 were developed as outlined in Chapter Four of this study.

The observational record was progressively coded and recoded with a tentative generation of common conceptual elements into categories. Some categories were refined, adapted or discarded, and others were strengthened with further observations, which shaped subsequent theoretical frameworks. *Team practice* and *match*, for example, appeared early on as categories and attendant elements built up to reinforce these. Further into the observational period, under constant comparative analysis the *match* category maintained distinct conceptual characteristics. In contrast the *team practice* category assumed greater meaning interlocked within *team strategies* as the researcher gained greater understanding of the role of practice and training. By the final PT match above the data were virtually saturated and the categories and properties listed

1	Coach	Role Personal qualities Technical knowledge Game plan Social role Strategic planning Selection Leadership Relationship with captain Assistant coach
2	Captain	Role Qualities Onfield leadership Communication
3	Social	Supporters' Club After-match Music Player behaviour Drink Gender attitudes
4	Officials	Administrators Referee Team officials
5	Public Impact	Perceptions of players Hero worship All Blacks
6	Strategies	Training and practice Set moves Communication Game plan Standard of play Team talks Visualisation
7	Match	Changing room Coach behaviour Captain behaviour Onfield decisions Half-time Motivation
8	Administration	Roles Qualities Union officials Team officials
9	Team Culture	Team cohesion Court sessions Rituals Bonding Ethnic identity Goals Winning and losing Team rooms Sponsor's representatives

Figure 5.3 PT participant observation categories.

in Figure 5.3 had emerged. Interviews, questionnaires and document analysis generated further categories and properties which, in turn, modified this initial set. (See also Appendix C.3.)

5.2.3 Interviews in the Provincial Team Setting

Participant observation of the Provincial Team provided the setting against which a range of interviews was developed. The interviews were semi-structured to the extent that they each had core questions seeking informants' views on the qualities of the elite level rugby coach and captain. These questions included: What are the main roles of an elite coach and captain? What are the most important qualities of an elite coach and captain? (See Appendix D.4.)

The **Provincial Team Coach** came from a childhood of competitive spirit, noting that subsequent playing with one particular All Black forward “helped shape my attitudes, and thinking, developed a wee bit of steel in my attitudes, and led me to question myself and what other players were doing.” He believed that coaches influenced captaincy styles, with the captain having the opportunity to influence the course of a game, although most of the situations in a match are well covered at training. He was adamant that a coach could influence the course of a game, especially if he had the capacity to recognise weaknesses in his team and build players around these. This can impose strains upon the coach.

I coach to keep young! I'd finished playing rugby and took some youth teams first. I enjoy it, but I get more nervous than when I was playing. I do get upset if the players don't do their bit and I must relax a bit. I never look to the manager for team discipline: if the coach demands punctuality, for example, that'll transfer itself onto the field. Dropping players is difficult; it's the hardest thing in the world and is a reflection on your vision. In addition you've often formed an affinity with the players. Another difficulty is public speaking and this is probably the most difficult skill to acquire. It seems that when you are selected to be captain no one has an idea what you speak like. The first persons I select are the loose forwards, and then that influences my game plan. I pick the captain from the playing fifteen. In the team this season the selection of the captain was simple as we had an All Black and he's learning so much. He's one of the more experienced players and his mana helps.

The **PT captain** played “mainly for the enjoyment, satisfaction, friendship and respect. As the captain, I believe I have to lead by example. The players believe in you, and look to you for leadership and direction.”

A good captain has to read and understand the other players. Being friendly and firm is necessary and the players have to respect a captain for him to be successful. The captain should also be a disciplined player if he wants player respect and be friendly but not a close pal. He must have the players' respect. There are some guys in the team that you don't always relate to personally and the coach might have to fill in that gap, relating better to the player. Coach is really good . He asks my opinion quite a bit, it's more of a friendship than a player-coach relationship. One of the hard things about captaincy is that three or four guys can drop their heads. I try to tell them that if they make a mistake to pick it up and do something to pull themselves up. Just doing one thing better can give them more self-confidence.

The PT captain noted the most important qualities of a coach such as being a positive leader, having a good knowledge of the game, motivating players before the changing room time, and being positive in his team build-up.

He has to be respected and speak well, and preferably have been a successful player at the level he's coaching. The coach should be friendly, but not too friendly. One thing about good coaches an outsider won't see, but you will have seen already, is the way Coach is aware of social things with players. A good coach knows when to stop guys going too far or embarrassing themselves or the team. He must be able to influence the players off the field.

Onfield decision making was noted as a quality PT players desired in their captain. In one observed game, the opposition had been twice penalised in the final quarter when under attack near their goal line. The PT captain had to quickly make an onfield decision, whether to have a player attempt a penalty goal each time, (3 points), or be awarded possession and attempt to achieve a try and convert it to give 7 points. The score was 9-13 at that stage but the PT captain took the wrong options, the worst of which was not electing to go for an easy penalty goal, with eight minutes to go, which would have made the score 13-12.

I really stuffed that up! I thought the score was 13-6, and it was really 13-9, so we didn't have to be as drastic as I thought! I asked the ref. twice for the time left and he didn't tell me. That is why I took the tap kicks, because I thought we should get the six points rather than three, as we could not be sure of getting back to their line again close enough for a try.

The most well-established of the **provincial rugby officials and players** was the masseur, who had been with PT for 15 years, and provided a perspective on changes in coaching over the years. He believed that "training used to be repetitive until the players had it absolutely right, but now they do a lot of different things and hope they improve." Changes were confirmed by the

experienced manager, an ex-player, who had seen coaches come and go. He noted the difficulties of judging a coach by the results of a season or observations of public actions such as training.

You have to look behind these to know what the coach does and what has been achieved. Coach is one of the best managers of men, his personality is such that he's respected by all. I like his approach because he likes the consensus approach. He can convince by persuasion. As manager I try to see that everything goes smoothly, that administrative worries are taken off the coach, and try to get close to the team.

L1, a 26 year old All Black forward, stressed the need for elite rugby team leaders to relate to players.

The coach must communicate with players on their personal level and in the language of playing technique. He must know the players....The skipper must be a good leader. Players can't each be treated the same way, some guys will get upset at head-on criticism and others, like me, don't get too upset at that. The captain must lead by example, and be able to read the game while it is being played. If the coach has trained you to play the game in a certain way and it doesn't work, the captain must change this in the game.

Personal, rather than strategic, qualities were emphasised by an experienced loose forward who is a past New Zealand schoolboy representative. He described Coach.

He's the best I've had. He's sincere. He gave me a role as a senior player and has made me feel valued. Unlike other coaches I have had, he is simple and straightforward in the way he speaks and deals with you. He supports his team. You know where you are with him. He's loyal to the team and has helped me a lot with my own playing skills.

Other players reflected these views : "Coach is straight-up and doesn't feed you shit." "The captain is straight-up also, and leads by example," declared a loose forward. Others supportively noted their coach's personal qualities. One young All Black back commented, "I value our coach. Perhaps he's not technically absolutely knowledgeable about backs, say, but his coaching style is open and honest. I enjoy his style. You couldn't ask for a nicer guy." A team-mate added that the coach often motivated very well. "He's dealing at times with a group of kids, thinks things through, and gives us a clear game plan. He keeps things simple, and keeps pushing forward."

The veteran 27 year old second five-eighth observed, "Coach decides what game to play and forms some bond with the team. He obviously has the big say in training but you don't want it

dragging on all night as the guys would really get pissed off.” This player noted appreciation of “the coach’s honesty, the way he relates to his players, his loyalty to the team and his experience at provincial and All Black level.” A team-mate suggested :

Elite captains talk a lot, but ours is an exception as he doesn’t talk or scream as many others did. The captain’s onfield role included picking up the pace of the game and deciding on tactics to be changed if the team was losing. If you have a game plan or set plays, and these are disrupted, then the captain has to be able to adjust the onfield play.

Actions of captains in such dimensions as tactical decision-making, player support and match strategy provide field leadership insights seen by **the referee and opposition**. The Shield referee saw PT’s captain, in the traditional style of forward leaders, giving his utmost in leading from the front. “He is vocal, cajoling, treats players differently and they seem to respond to him.” The referee saw PT’s game-plan as “intending to disrupt and upset the Shield- holder’s pattern, to play at pace and do the unexpected. They had prepared their game. They had to keep it up with pressure and they stuck to their plan.” The Shield-holders’ All Black half-back corroborated this perception : “I could definitely see their game plan. It was well thought out, and they were very well organised and purposeful. They slowed the game in their half, and sped up the tempo in our half and consolidated their positions well.” A referee in a later match noted the total commitment of PT.

Anything I asked, or said, was done. The two captains had the mana which their players followed...Last week a couple of captains in one of my games struggled to have their teams with them.... one team had the game for the taking at half-time, but the opposing team’s coaches came on and, after their input, the whole game changed. We don’t need rule changes if the attitudes of coaches and players, followed by the attitude of the referee, can allow the true game of rugby. There is a reasonably well organised PT pattern of play compared with [another province] which just doesn’t seem to have a clear pattern, and another which is all over the place.

Among the members of the public and close team supporters interviewed was a motel proprietor, who was a past senior player and provincial administrator and had seen many senior provincial teams through his motel.

There is an increasing social maturity of players. Their behaviour is a lot better. They tend to stay away from home in a much more disciplined manner now. If they act undisciplined, they are quickly handled. The managers are very professional in their job. Their rooms are open to the team....If the coach has to discipline a player, the manager backs him up. Sometimes he has to keep players and coaches away from

the clutches of people, hangers-on, or media. In some ways he's a glorified baggage boy as the coach is the be-all and end-all of provincial sides. The coach is the main person of the side, in the sense that he is going to most instrumentally affect the winning or losing of games. The coach is picked first, then the manager. The same for New Zealand rugby.

His comments on captaincy were similar to those provided by players, but included a belief that the captain and coach should be fully conversant with the laws, and teach these to players as a lot of them did not know the rugby laws.

A hotel owner confirmed the motel proprietor's assertions on improved player behaviour, in a discussion at 9:00 p.m. the night before an away game, noting "PT is excellent...The coaches and managers play a vital role." A couple of the hotel staff commented on the excellent behaviour of the previous weekend's first division team. One recalled the exception, a coach who was perceived as so rude and ill-mannered to staff that some of the team apologised for him. In direct contrast was the viewpoint of a new manager at the motel where PT stayed for their fourth match, who paid for a stripper to perform for the players believing rugby teams were macho, noisy and prominent in media attention.

The PT President noted an All Black captain of pre-war days who was later seen as having become reclusive and somewhat bitter. He discussed the need for rugby administration and rugby people to retain their links with ex-players and leaders of the game, noting the value of this contact in human terms and of widening knowledge of rugby's past. Local union administrators noted coaching groups run by men of good-will on a voluntary basis but "with a lack of skills in teaching, relationships, or rugby knowledge."

The brewery representative accompanying PT was an experienced past player who appeared to be a confidant for some players. He also appeared to be an unofficial member of the administrative quartet with the manager, coach and captain in the sense that he participated informally in discussions on policy, selection, and considerations of matches and players. His views on team leadership were similar to those noted by the PT captain.

The end of season team barbecue at their Supporters Club provided a number of interview perspectives on the rugby culture from players' female partners. (These interviews are located in Appendix D.2, to illustrate their perceptions of the gendered environment in which team leadership occurs.) Overall, the women expressed surprise at rugby being more accepting of their

presence than they expected and commented upon elements of macho or sexist behaviour, noting areas of the sport which could be examined to facilitate even greater gender acceptance.

The place of women in rugby is not as simple as some outside commentators aver. This observational study is providing a range of examples to show that although many stereotypes can be found, none seem to be fully, or perhaps substantially, representative.

(Researcher's Notebook 21.9.91).

5.2.4 Interview Data : Categories and Properties

Interviews in the present phase of the research were more wide-ranging than those drawn upon for partial inclusion in this chapter, the purpose of the latter being to illustrate interviewee perspectives on coaching and captaincy, and to indicate settings for their behaviours (see Appendix D.4 for a list of the PT interview questions). These interviews generated data which were tentatively grouped into a set of categories. These categories were then considered against those generated by the participant observation, (see Figure 5.3). Categories and properties generated by the interviews, that were additional to those from participant observation, are noted in Figure 5.4, *in bolded italics*. Two new categories were generated and seven new properties enlarged four existing categories.

[1]	[Coach]	<i>Motivation</i>
[2]	[Captain]	<i>Playing ability</i> <i>Public speaking</i> <i>Learning captaincy</i>
[3]	[Social]	<i>Families</i> <i>Homosexuality</i>
[9]	[Team Culture]	<i>Rugby in the</i> <i>players' lives</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>Referee</i>	<i>Perspectives of referee</i> <i>Player knowledge of laws</i>
<i>11</i>	<i>Sport- Business</i>	<i>Sponsors</i> <i>Business and sport leadership</i>

Figure 5.4 Additional categories and properties generated by PT interviews.

5.2.5 Provincial Team Questionnaires

The Provincial Team completed two questionnaires. These were planned to complement participant observation and interviews by providing a standard set of questions to elicit

background data on the players, their perceptions of rugby team leader qualities, their opinions on ethical practices in rugby, and a survey of their perceptions of their coach's qualities (see Appendix D.5 and Appendix D.6 which also contain summaries illustrative of the findings). The questionnaire data provided important elements in data triangulation.

Questionnaire A : Provincial Team Players' Perspectives

Responses can be influenced by response sets that predispose individuals to take particular position (Kratwohl, 1993). Minor changes to this questionnaire resulted from trials with five players who played least in the games observed, three university colleagues plus the coach, manager and sponsor's representative, who each went through the questionnaire to check its content and clarity before it was given to the player respondents.

The questionnaire was read through by the researcher with the 15 players who had played the most games in the participant observation period, at a team meeting. Copies were given out with stamped addressed return envelopes and 13 questionnaires were returned. The responses were appreciated as the questionnaires had 48 questions, and informal comments from players indicated a completion time of approximately one hour. In the following discussion it should be borne in mind that the players represent 13 of the 23 players who played at least one of the five observed games, but also comprise 85.5 per cent of the 15 players who took the field most frequently. This could indicate potentially more supportive opinions on the coach being expressed by these latter players, as he has selected them more often. A pseudonym was used with each questionnaire to facilitate the checking of returns.

Player profiles.

PT players had an average age of 25.5 years, with ages ranging from 20 to 30 years. The captain was 25 years old. The players tended to have older siblings.

One player had first represented PT seven seasons previously and was now playing with teammates who were in their first year. The educational backgrounds of PT players belied perceptions of rugby in New Zealand as an egalitarian sport (Crawford, 1985b, 1985c) with eight respondents (of twelve) having attended single-sex schools. The most frequent occupation listed for players' fathers was that of manager and most mothers were at home and not otherwise employed. Both parents had participated in sport and sibling involvement was also strong.

PT's occupational range was varied. The six "white collar" workers in the team included bankers and managers, in contrast to a group of four "blue collar" workers. One player was unemployed. In their club rugby roles, five of the team were captains or vice-captains. Only three of the team surveyed were involved in community group leadership roles.

During hotel stays on tour the players were young people who enjoyed watching television comedies and, if these were not scheduled, would rent comedy or thriller videotapes. Questionnaire responses on television preferences reflected this, and also showed that players' preferred hobbies were sport oriented.

One-third of the team belonged to sports clubs other than rugby. However the dominance of rugby in players' lives was reflected in their commitment to *training* as a primary engagement in spare time, along with the valued company of friends, girlfriends, wives and family. The impression of contemporary rugby players' limited time away from rugby is reinforced by the 15 hours of time that was spent on rugby in a typical winter week. Players had their own sport heroes, who included sports persons other than those in rugby. Although cricket and league were prominent, the name of the basketball player Michael Jordan was heard most often.

The stereotype of rugby players as social drinkers may be reinforced with the knowledge that 12 of the 13 had been to a hotel in the previous month. On the other hand, a majority (69.2 per cent) had been to a gym, and the 61.52 per cent who had been to a swimming pool was matched by those who had been to a movie or a club. Video parlours drew over half of the team, as did the beach. Few attended church.

A coach can provide opportunities for team players to experience play in positions other than those for which they are customarily selected. PT players indicated they would like to have other positional opportunities. Almost all had been playing in their current team positions for an average period of over eight years. Given that the average age of the players was 25 years, this indicated a number of rugby years where their opportunities to try other field positions had been severely restricted by coaches. Eleven of the players had played in only two, or fewer, alternative positions before taking up their present position, yet questionnaire responses indicated that 11 of the 13 players wanted to play in positions other than those in which the coach had placed them.

Support for players came from friends and family, the players valuing such encouragement and support from those close to them. Approximately half of the team rated rugby as being very

important in their lives, in contrast to the other half who emphasised that rugby was not the most important feature of their life.

The Game

It may be surmised that the place of rugby in players' lives is linked with their goals for playing rugby. The PT players were almost evenly divided in expressing their most important goals: six cited game enjoyment as their first goal, but four chose personal achievement, and a further three listed winning the game as their primary goal.

Perceptions of the mental and physical requirements for each field playing position influence a coach's selection of players and playing of the game. Congruence in player and coach perceptions of positional qualities is desirable for full confidence onfield and a cohesive pattern of play. Placing a priority on selection of a player with certain desired qualities to fit a particular pattern of play possibly indicates the importance of certain elements of that game plan, and decision making responsibilities may well be assigned by team leaders to such a player or field position. Consequently, PT players were asked to nominate playing positions suggested by certain descriptive phrases or qualities. Player and coach expectations of positional qualities could well be different, with selection of a player being based upon the coach's criterion, yet the players having different expectations. The captain and players tended to select the first-five and second-five as positions requiring emotional stability and calmness in play, but the coach saw the half-back as the first position where these qualities were requisite. An onfield situation could thus be imagined where the captain expected the first-five to calm play down, but the coach expected this of the half-back.

The commonality of captain and player perceptions was noted in their agreement on the "decisive" player as one who can quickly make up his mind onfield and act accordingly. The half-back was the choice of six players, matched by a similar group for whom the first-five came to mind. The coach, however, was the only respondent who noted the centre as the player for this role. In a match requiring decisive tactics, perhaps to change the course of the game, the team could expect to develop play around the inside backs but the coach could well be directing messages to the centre. In the other perceptions of playing positions, a possible difference in approach to the game is indicated with the wing being nominated by four players (the largest group) as a "risk taker" on the field, yet the coach's response was "I don't like that kind of footballer, whatever the position."

Players indicated a need for the captain to lead by example, to be supportive, to bond with the players, to gain player respect, to appreciate player backing and to accept criticism.

Qualities of Rugby Coaches and Captains

The characteristics of an excellent rugby coach were noted in the literature review (see Chapter Three). The questionnaire explored player perceptions of the qualities of excellent coaches and captains, and their impact on and off the field. PT players emphasised : man management and player relationships (11 player responses); tactical and problem solving acumen (11 player responses); respect for players (9 player responses); personal qualities (7 player responses); and communication skills (6 player responses). Players saw their PT Coach generally possessing these qualities, except for tactical and problem-solving qualities which were not seen as strongly as Coach's personal qualities, (particularly those of honesty and fairness).

Players emphasised a rugby coach's actual influence and leadership on and off the field, with perceptions of his impact upon : tactical planning skills (12), motivating players (6), and the half-time talk (4). The coach's actual influence off the field was seen by players as being predominantly in social and game planning domains.

The characteristics of an excellent captain were indicated by the PT player responses as : leadership from the front (13); communication and motivation (9); being a respected role model (8); choosing tactics and decisions (7); and relating to players (6). The importance they attached to the onfield captain "leading from the front, by example" was not stressed to the same extent in the rugby coaching literature. The role is manifested through the captain's playing example and making the right decisions (11 responses), along with instruction and encouragement (9 responses). Three players noted the need for the captain to have a rapport with the referee and to defuse difficult situations. These latter aspects may have importance in developing captaincy skills as they were noted by very experienced players, and are virtually absent from the captaincy literature, apart from Frost and Uttley (1981). Leadership by the captain off the field was seen as having some commonality with that expected of the coach, in the social and game planning domains.

Perception of Fellow Players

The PT players were provided with particular phrases and asked to nominate a team-mate's name prompted by these phrases. The players' names that came to mind were clearly incongruent with those noted by their coach. The researcher speculated upon possible implications of such

dissimilar perceptions of players held by players and coach. For example, it may be questioned as to whether the coach knows players well enough to appreciate qualities observed in them by their team-mates, or whether he recognises such qualities in a player and other players do not.

Howe (1973, April) suggests that rugby players have similar psychological profiles despite their level of skill and playing position. The present study suggests that differing profile perceptions are held by coach and players. This may indicate that open discussion of these perceptions could assist, for example, selection, game planning and onfield decision making.

The six players seen by their peers as *idiosyncratic* were four Pacific Islanders and two Maori. No Pakeha was nominated. While this provides evidential support for a stereotypical view of Polynesian flair and unpredictability, there were five Polynesian players (of the six nominated) who were seen by their peers as the *stable* members of the team, which contradicts such a stereotype.

	Descriptive Term	Players' Choice	Captain's Choice	Coach's Choice
A	Co-operative	Player A	Player B	Player A
B	Ball Skills	Player C	Player C	Player D
C	Most Promising	Player C	Player C	Player E
D	Idiosyncratic	Player F	Player D	(No name given)
E	Stable	Player C	Player E	Player G
F	Adaptable	Player H	Player I	Players J, C, F
G	Aggressive	Player B	Captain	Players K, L

Figure 5.5 PT perceptions of player qualities.

Ethics of rugby play

Often criticised as being a violent sport which tolerates unethical and illegal play (Crawford, 1986; Sheard and Dunning, 1973) rugby has rarely had elite player perspectives recorded. "Push the law to the limit," as one PT player typically stated, reflected the prevailing team view on using illegal play to stop points being scored by the opposition. The nine players with this view were more experienced but included none of the three church goers or any player in his first five years of representative rugby. The coach sided with the majority view of the team. This may indicate that team culture is formed over time, and that a coach could be proactive in positively shaping that culture. Although PT players were evenly divided in accepting limits to illegal play, (7:6), the coach did not adhere to the view of half his team that *any means* could be employed to secure a win (Appendix D.5, Question E.6).

These first division provincial players expressed a prevailing opinion against the prohibition of punching and rough play, (11:2), arguing that there were times onfield which required such action. A typical player response expressed the belief that “you cannot lie down on the rugby field and take foul play and punching from the opposition.” The coach also expressed a similar attitude,

There’s probably a place for punching a player in rugby. I don’t think anyone’s been hurt in rugby by this. I’ve hit guys [in a match] and the ref. has said to the guy I hit, “You deserved that didn’t you?” (Appendix D.5, Question E.8).

Broadly similar player groupings were noted in those who would acquiesce to a coach’s direction to “Take a player out.” Although the major player view indicated an “Anything for the team” commitment, the PT coach did not accept this extreme stance. A possible paradox is observed in players’ responses that indicate they do not condone illegal play that is non-physical contact, (such as acting as if fouled in order to get a penalty), to the extent they condone illegal physical contact. This is an aspect of player values that suggests a need for closer examination by team leaders.

A field strategy, utilised by rugby teams who have a points advantage in the final stages of a match, is that of the legal ploy of repeatedly kicking the ball out to slow a game, in the belief that this will enhance their chances of retaining the lead. The PT players included eight who did not agree with this tactic although their captain and three other team-mates supported it. The coach asserted, “If you can control the game like that, it’s okay.”

A more marked contrast between the team and its coach was evident in perspectives on a half-back’s “dummy run” (see Appendix D.5, Question E.5). Although the players approved this move almost unanimously, the coach and a sole player opposed it: “No, we have a half-back who does that and I’m trying to break him of the habit. It doesn’t help our play.” This indicates another point for discussion about onfield decision making, as the players presumably approve of the play because it advances the team cause, but this is a contrary view to the coach’s.

According to Frost and Uttley (1981), questioning the referee should be done reasonably by the captain alone, not by players. The PT side primarily agree by 10 responses to three. The coach made the point that if players each made one error in the game, then those 15 errors might help them see in perspective the two or three errors made by the referee over eighty minutes of a full match.

Punching a jersey puller unequivocally illustrated an elite rugby team's attitudes, as all PT players and their coach said they would do this. A typical player stance was "Sometimes you need to do this so you can continue on playing the game without getting interfered with." The coach, a past All Black forward and captain, was more pungent with, "Yes, but no warning! I'd whop him!" A strong body of feeling was also evident in a willingness to punch an opponent who kicked one of the PT team. "Kicking a player is completely unacceptable so I do not consider a punch unworthy!" was a typical player response. The coach sounded a more cautionary note: "It all depends on the kick, how badly it was done and the damage it did." It would seem, then, that kicking a player is an unacceptable breach of the "unofficial code" which players appear to follow regarding onfield behaviour.

The statement that "You are entitled to protect yourself on the field" was illustrated by one typical comment that, "If an opponent attacks or attempts foul play you can retaliate in a controlled manner, not losing your head." The coach advocated protecting oneself positively by "adopting the right body position, not having a fight, but using correct tackles and correct physical play and positioning yourself."

Questionnaire B : Player Perceptions of the Coach

A second questionnaire was given to the fifteen PT players who had played most games in the observation period, this time to elicit ratings of their coach's qualities. One questionnaire was not returned, and all players did not rate the coach on every quality. Coach rated himself on each quality (see Appendix D.6b).

A range of coach qualities (37 in total) had been compiled from the rugby literature and the researcher's interviews of elite rugby players carried out to date. These qualities were refined to 22 in number. (An example of this process was the coach quality initially framed as *Does not put players down* which was seen as similar enough to item 14 to be omitted.) Once compiled into a five point Likert Scale checklist, the draft was trialled with four PT players, who would not receive the final questionnaire, and with a small group of professional colleagues. No ambiguities or difficulties in comprehension were raised.

The fifteen PT respondents had the questionnaire explained in the final match week. When read through with the team no player expressed a query, concern or lack of understanding. Some answered the questionnaire in privacy after training (7), and others (7) posted theirs back to the researcher within one week, as agreed.

The literature review in Chapter Three noted a lack of congruence between player ratings of their coach and self-ratings of that coach. The PT questionnaire indicated support for this finding, with a congruency of coach and majority player ratings on only six, (or 27 per cent), of the coach qualities listed in the questionnaire (see Appendix D.5b). These 6 categories of congruent ratings were:

<i>Organisational ability</i>	<i>Degree of concern for others</i>
<i>Accepts responsibility for team</i>	<i>Treats players with respect</i>
<i>Takes pride in player achievement</i>	<i>Has clear values and integrity</i>

Two experienced players suggested that evidence of these six categories was perhaps more readily visible in the team setting. For example, the players would note the coach's organisational ability over a series of match weeks. Treating players with respect, acceptance of team responsibility, and pride in player achievement were seen as having tangible indicators such as verbal and non-verbal language, public statements, team talks and personal actions of the coach such as "not putting down a player." The degree of concern for others may be manifested beyond the immediate coach- player environment of, say, "full-on" training. In one example the coach's telephone call to an injured player was cited and, in another, the coach's action in interacting with players' families. Examples of the coach's personal values in social settings and his opposition to onfield "thuggery" were given as evidence of his personal values and integrity.

There is an apparent contradiction, between the Coach's acceptance of onfield punching and opposition to thuglike behaviour. However, Coach "clearly" saw a difference between acceptable and abhorrent physical actions on the field.

Perhaps more significant are the different perceptions of the coach's qualities held by himself and his players. In each discrepant rating the coach saw himself at a lower rating than did his players. This may indicate higher standards set by the coach for himself than set by the players, thus providing more stringent self-ranking. It may also indicate that the coach does not realistically understand how the players perceive him and his relative strengths. Other reasons compel considerations for coach-captain, and possibly coach-team, discussions. The players, for example, may have low or unreal expectations of an elite rugby coach (and possibly of themselves), and simply rate the coach relatively highly on the basis that he meets most of their perceived standards.

5.2.6 Questionnaire Data : Categories and Properties

The questionnaire data basically reaffirmed the research categories and properties generated by participant observation and interview work. One additional category, that of *Players*, was generated. Additional properties and categories, denoted by bold *italics*, supplemented those generated by the earlier data as shown in Figure 5.6.

[1]	[Coach]	<i>Self assessment</i> <i>Perceptions of players</i> <i>Half-time talks</i>
[2]	[Captain]	<i>Role models</i> <i>Decision-making on-field</i> <i>Relationships with players</i>
[7]	[Match]	<i>Acceptance of illegal play</i>
12	<i>Players</i>	<i>Backgrounds</i> <i>Rugby time commitments</i> <i>Perceptions of team-mates</i> <i>Ethics in play</i> <i>Positional choices</i> <i>Positional requirements</i>

Figure 5.6 Additional categories and properties generated by PT questionnaires.

5.2.7 Documents in the Provincial Team Setting

Chapter Four of this study noted the relevance of documents in qualitative research. In the participant observation phase with the Provincial Team, documents and records had a dominance of newspaper sport columns, team notes, match programmes and ephemera. The sections below highlight key perceptions of the team emanating from this kind of material.

Press, Coach, Players and Supporters' Notes

Match One

The press noted the need for PT players to develop a greater effort to achieve a win and the use of a past All Black as a temporary back coach in preparing the team for one game. The PT coach was also noted for moving a player to fullback from his normal position of wing (McMorran, 1991, August 30). This was seen as having strategic implications, noting that Coach wanted to try all his alternatives before PT's Ranfurly Shield match (*ibid.*). Three days before the first game the

local evening paper (Ogilvie, 1991, August 28) noted the match would be critical for World Cup contenders as the New Zealand squad would be announced after the game.

Match Two

In their second game of the research period, PT were seen as having unforced handling errors and the captain noted as one of the five stand-out players. The PT halfback's play was noted in the participant observation as being improved by his clubmate, the PT reserve hooker, who critically evaluated videotapes, as a visual document or record of the former's play.

Match Three

Before the Ranfurly Shield challenge the coach outlined key points for the game plan, using these for the team meeting (see Appendix D.7). A copy of the notes was given to team members and the researcher, with their retention and confidentiality stressed. It may be speculated that observation of the coach in training would not have provided these key behaviours of the coach. The notes emphasised a basic game plan for controlling the pace of the game, territorial strategies, pressure over the last 20 minutes, the captain's decisions, quickness, speed of the game, individual player actions, lineouts and certain "gamble elements." The plan was clear to players, due to the coach's explication in team discussions. This game plan was to work effectively, as perceived by players, referee and the sport press (see, for example, Interviews above). The coach asked each player to consider his Shield game opponent, as noted in the participant observation. The captain's written record provides an example.

Notes on [Opposing Player*]	
Prop	Average, by Shield holder standards
Lineout	Blocks - but very rarely jumps
General Play	Tight forward - rarely runs with the ball - a strong man but does not like marking me. A weak link in the Auckland forwards and front row.
Personal	Good guy but confident. I will better him in the Shield match

(*The opposing player's name is recorded in the original)

Figure 5.7 PT player notes on an opponent.

The newspaper reports indicated the tendency of coaches and captains to comment occasionally on referees. Following the Ranfurly Shield game the holder's coach stated that he was "bemused" by the referee's rulings. The Shield captain averred that some referee decisions could not be

understood and affected players' concentration. He noted that the All Blacks in his team were worried about getting injured in the game and missing out on the forthcoming World Cup. This modified focus for the game had been discussed by PT as a point upon which they could capitalise, by playing aggressively but fairly against defending players who wished to avoid injury.

Newspapers rated the match as 8/10 (Sunday News, 1991, September 15), and the holders of the Ranfurly Shield saw the match as the hardest challenge they had. The captain's effort in "leading the charge up front" was noted in the PT's effort of "sticking to its game plan for the full 80 minutes." (Agnew, 1991, p. 58). Newspaper reporters such as McKewen (1991, September 15a) also noted the challenging skipper's leadership and commented positively upon the PT game. The rugby writers also commented adversely on the defender's professional fouls in the closing stages of the game in order to slow or halt PT's momentum and attack. The perceived disruption in PT's game plan was illustrated by the Shield holders' statistics of eleven knock-ons, off-sides or forward passes against three by the challengers. The attacking propensity of the challengers was reflected in their first-five passing the ball to his outside players or running with the ball, 20 (of 27) times whereas his All Black opponent did this only 13 (of 23) times, or 74.07 per cent compared with 56.52 per cent.

In his newspaper commentary Knight (1991, September 16, p. 22) recorded Coach's comments that, "We went out with a game plan of speeding things up and stuck to it for 80 minutes." The defending captain rated the challenge as the best of the 47 faced by his team. Cameron (1991) noted the PT effort as "one of the great fighting rearguard actions of their recent times" (Section 2, p.5). When the three newspaper documents are placed alongside the coach's game plan document, researcher interviews and participant observation of the game, a degree of triangulated support is provided for the hypothesis that the coach can influence the course of a team game.

Match Four

The fourth observed PT match saw another defeat, despite their forwards being seen as an "efficient unit led extremely well by prop and captain." (Quick, 1991, p.2). Pegden (1991) and Quick (ibid.) also noted the captain making "a costly mistake eight minutes from the end when he opted for a tap kick rather than a kick at goal" (Pegden, 1991, p.12). Knight (1991, September 23) noted that this game also saw "a series of penalty fouls" by PT's opposition (p.29).

Match Five

The final game of the observed quintet was against the provincial team which was to go on and win the National Championship. Again the PT forwards were seen as dominating the first half. Ogilvie (1991, September 30) had observed that, in the observer period, “all of these matches could have been won had PT adequately used possession and position gained by its forward pack” (p.31). The coach saw this game as the “same thing as the last few games. We had lots of ball, lots of position, we had opportunities to take points but we missed them...” (McMorran, 1991, September 30c, p.29). Following this final game the coach was quoted as having “carefully measured his comments about the refereeing, citing leniency in the lineouts as a constant problem yesterday...I felt lineouts were terribly refereed...The game was won by the bounce of the ball and the blow of the whistle” (McMorran, 1991, September 30b, p.20).

Reactions to the poor record of the season’s final five games -- all lost -- emphasised the excellent forward effort, “the best forward by acclamation” being the captain (McMorran, 1991, September 30a, p. 20). This reflected the players’ awareness of their skipper “leading from the front.” The backs were criticised for not exploiting opportunities, and “a lack of knowledge of simple techniques; of running players into gaps, creating space, getting players free on the outside” (ibid.). Ogilvie (1991, September 30) reflected this with the observation that PT’s coach had developed a good forward pack but failed to achieve this with the backs. Ogilvie (ibid.) urged PT to utilise a back coach.

The season concluded with the Saturday team dinner for players and partners at a hotel owned by the PT president, and a Sunday Supporters’ Club barbecue and annual presentation of awards. The usual pre-match information sheet from the manager noted *This is compulsory for team members and partners, and kids are very welcome. Please wear No.2s*. The PT Supporters’ Club (Inc.) membership card is a document illustrative of a dimension of rugby culture.

Match Programmes¹

In discussing qualitative programme evaluation, a typical evaluation question that may be asked is “How is the programme experienced by various stakeholders?” This may be paraphrased in the present study as “How is the rugby match experienced by its various stakeholders?” The match

¹The programmes are available from the researcher. They are not referenced in order to preserve the anonymity of the team.

context, in which rugby team leadership is actioned and perceived, is given a formal documented perspective through the match programmes. It is these documents, rarely considered in sport research, which inform match spectators, provide selected information on the team leaders, and offer a controlled portrayal in print of rugby.

<p>This is to certify that ED WARDS being a player and a stayer, who always backs up strongly, who is not afraid to tackle and lower the biggest beer, who will not get a tight head, who will not pass out.... and being in possession of his/her faculties, is passed fit to run with the pack of the PROVINCIAL TEAM RUGBY SUPPORTERS' CLUB</p>	
<p>Received from:</p>	
<p>for membership subscription for 19.... season</p>	<p>Secretary P O Box 9604 Kensington</p>

Figure 5.8 Provincial Team Supporters' Club membership card.

Five match programmes were provided by host unions in the observation period. The frequency with which the sponsor was mentioned in the Shield holder captain's speech, (see Match Three in the Participant Observation above), indicated an awareness of the financial importance of major corporate sponsors. Sponsors were evident in PT home game programmes, which also had a range of city hotels advertised whereas the rural based unions had a range of country town contractors providing support.

Perspectives on the provincial team leaders, (which spectators can read at matches and which presumably help shape their own perceptions), were similar across all programmes. Thus the PT captain was noted in two programmes for his dynamic qualities, cool headed scrummaging, bulldozing runs and lineout skills. He was seen by programme writers as "desperately unlucky to miss the World Cup" and "an outstanding performer at club level and consistent member of the Rep. squad over the past four seasons."

The PT coach was also commented upon. His home town programme noted him erroneously, as "now enjoying similar success [to his All Black captaincy] with a coaching career that commenced

at club level and has progressed to the Colts and now the ‘A’ team.” The following match saw an article in the programme describe Coach as “a wonderful leader,” and an article welcoming him and “his” Provincial Team, which seemed to indicate a perceived proprietary role for the coach. Other programme articles reflected Coach’s role as selector.

Programmes described players in certain terms which may well influence rugby followers’ perceptions of those players. As the participant observation and interviews noted, public perspectives on players may be different from those held by team-mates, the coach or the captain. In successive PT games, a number of players who had not then or subsequently, achieved All Black status, were described in match programmes in terms which were hyperbolic: *has great potential* (3); *destined for higher honours* (2); *has a bright future; unlimited potential; playing the best attacking rugby seen from any player in New Zealand.*

The Shield holder’s programme referred to PT as the “friendly enemy” and the host union president welcomed Old Timers to their special day. “The union is pleased to honour you today. Welcome, and enjoy yourselves in the knowledge you helped put the union where it is today”. Provincial Team’s welcome to opponents in their first game, however, referred to the Shield holder team disparagingly as the “Rangitoto Yanks,” reflecting an attitude discernible in the coach’s pre-Shield notes given to his team (see Appendix D.7 of this present study). In three of the match programmes, informative articles appeared on local coaching schemes. An attempt at humour in one programme indicated certain values of the rugby culture in which the team leader operated:

The coach must be shown due respect at all times, and referred to as God or Sir but under no circumstances as “Dog Breath” or “Faggot.” The captain is generally to be ignored except when he asks for three cheers for the opposition, or shouts a round of drinks after the game. It is the responsibility of the captain to institute the “game plan” which can be totally disregarded by all other players after the first one and a half minutes of the match.

Match Programme, 21.9.91, p.11.

Figure 5.9 Programme extract of “humour” on coach.

The dynamics of gender and rugby have been noted in the participant observation and interviews above. One programme listed the union's management committee, (all male), with their wives listed under their husband's initials, for example, *I. F. Field (Ian and Joan)*, implying the female partner was an appendage of the male rugby official. The home programme for PT games listed the referee and touch judges as Mr, which was not done in any other programme. This reinforces interviewee viewpoints of team settings still having certain sexist vestiges.

The researcher's participant observation notes expressed his perception of the PT coach's lack of a consistently clear game plan and unclear player understandings of the coach's requirements, apart from the game plan for the Ranfurly Shield match. The final match programme added substance to this broad interpretation of the coaching context with its observation that " PT have promised much at times but who sadly have not delivered with any consistency" (p.5).

5.2.8 Documents Data : Categories and Properties

The documents data generated a range of categories and properties which almost wholly mirrored those previously generated. A major feature of the documents was an emphasis upon the match in terms of the coach's plan or the team plan. Consequently, this was removed as a category and placed in the category of *Strategies* as a property, being inter-related with coach strategies. Certain properties, previously in the *Match* category, were relocated in the *Captain*, *Coach* and *Player* categories, or considered to be congruent enough with existing properties in other categories to be discarded (for example, *acceptance of illegal play* was seen as essentially similar to *ethics in play* in *Players*). The changes to Categories and Properties, from those noted previously in this chapter, are noted below in bold *italics*.

[1]	[Coach]	<i>Motivation of players</i>
[6]	[Strategies]	<i>Match</i>
[10]	[Referee]	<i>Behaviour of coaches</i>

Figure 5.10 Categories and properties modified by PT documents.

5.3 SYMBOLS, CATEGORIES, AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This chapter now turns to consideration of the emerging data and multiple realities, examining these from the perspectives of symbolic interactionism and grounded theory and reflecting upon the findings in terms of the research questions which underpinned the study.

5.3.1 Symbolic Interactionism

The period with the provincial rugby team brought a range of elements into focus for the researcher which, given their apparent frequency and entrenchment, reflected Blumer's (1969) contention that "conventions, and social organisation have a career represented by the passage from an unorganised condition to a set and organised status" (p.68), but also suggested that rugby comprises multiple perceived realities rather than a singular reality, as illustrated by differing perceptions of the common or organised symbol. Indeed, in the elite PT environment, rugby was many things to many people. To the players, rugby was symbolic of life opportunity, sport enjoyment, personal achievement and self-enhancement. To the supporters the game was an opportunity for socialisation and hero worship.

Ward (1977) "builds a case for studying soccer by means of participant observation, interviewing and document research" in drawing on the qualitative school of symbolic interactionism (p.5) and "linking symbols with a particular interactional setting" (ibid., p.6). In a broadly similar sport to soccer PT linked verbal and non-verbal symbols with the rugby setting. The symbols were often objects in research subject experience acting as stimuli which focused, shaped or helped control behaviours. The researcher's notebooks indicate verbal symbols such as *team*, *jersey*, *camaraderie*, *Old Timers*, *body on the line*, *the toss*, *game plan* and a myriad of technical terms which have acquired symbolic meanings through interaction over rugby generations, (such as *dummy run*, *loosies*, *find touch*, *scrum*, *ruck*, *maul*, and *penalty*). Material symbols were evidenced by the *team jersey*, *ball*, *bottle of port*, *Shield*, *sponsor's logo*, *player jersey numbers*, *referee*, *neckties*, and *the blazer*. Non-verbal symbols were illustrated by *hand gestures on the field*, *physical code signals in the lineout*, *team-mates gestured into onfield positions for a special move*, *hugs*, *disconsolate silent players after matches*, and *heads shaking at referee decisions*. Visual representations of associated meanings for three examples illustrate the richness of symbols used by rugby persons in interpreting their situations (see Blumer, 1969).

The **coach** presented a clear symbolic status. He defined the team, imprinted the play and controlled players, and the media assigned him a proprietary role in regard to "his" team. The coach and captain, however, were similarly defined by the group. The role of the **captain** was defined not only by the coach as conventional literature may indicate, but by the players and the captain himself. The players saw the captaincy role as a playing example which was symbolically expressed by many as "leading from the front." The press noted his role as a decision maker, and the match programme text viewed him as an All Black. This reflected the symbolic interactionist

belief that the categorisation of self and one's attributes are dependent upon the language of the group which shapes the framing of such categorisation.

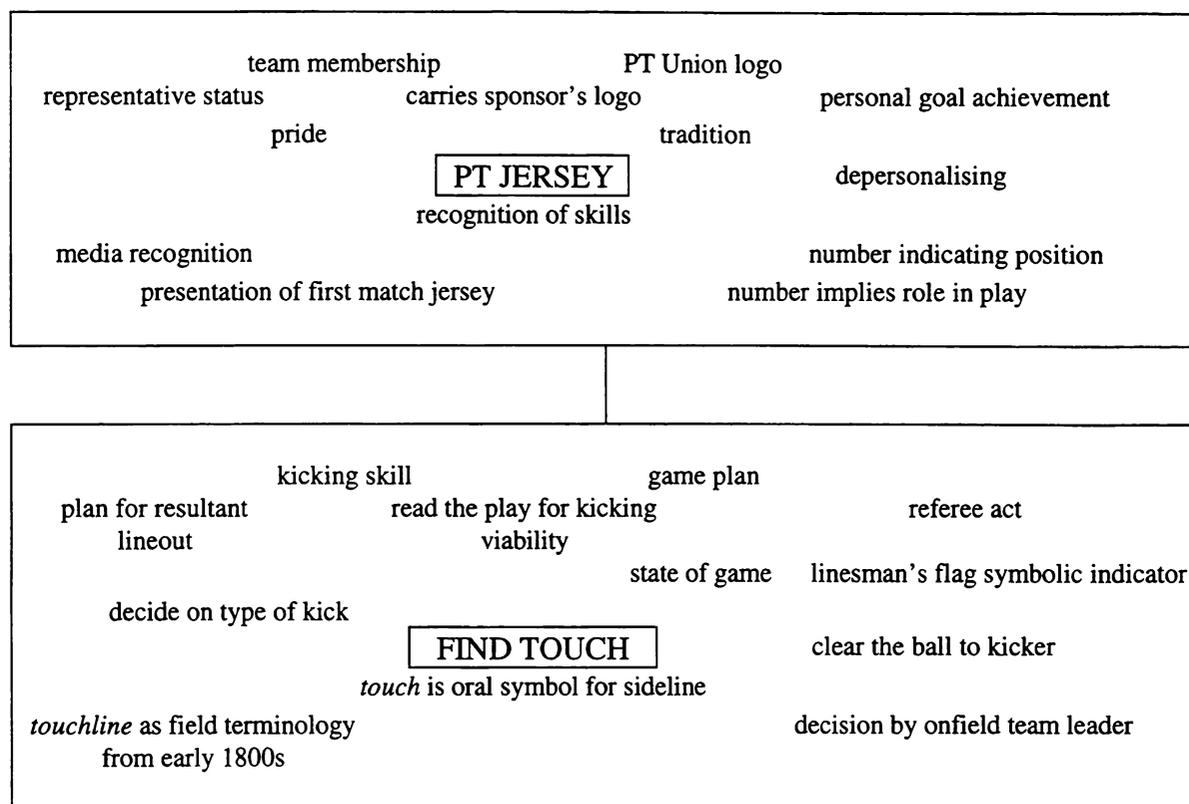


Figure 5.11 Examples of symbolic meanings from Provincial Team research.

The view of a rugby team as a sub-culture (Fine and Kleinman, 1979) with its own symbolic language and actions was reflected in the **match** context. The game plan assumed central significance, as the Shield game indicated. It not only provided a strategy for the match, but also a confirmation of the coach's role and the focus of team endeavour. The myriad of pre-match and post-match rituals revealed practices ranging from seating positions, dressing patterns, first players to the showers and litanies of exhortation, to the ritualistic passing of the port bottle. In the match itself, there were symbolic actions in the captain's play and players' physical retaliation that were not seen as transgressions of rules so much as "sticking up for your mate" or "not taking any shit" from an opposing player. The opposing sides at times engaged in obstructive actions symbolically described as "professional fouls." Referees, key figures with their arbitration and interpretations of such transgressions, assumed an unexpected additional symbolic role, for the researcher, as onfield reporters with insights on the realities of captaincy in action.

Support staff were few. The masseur, however, played a role other than that officially designated to him. Clearly, from observation and player or team leader comments, he was the team confidant,

the release valve for some players, and the voice of traditional rugby values (having been with the team longer than any other person). Unlike other elite teams, there was no physiotherapist or doctor supplied, an administrative decision seen by some of the team as an illustration of the union's attitude towards expenditure or lack of money being spent on players.

The PT game series illustrated the **public impact** of rugby in terms of symbolising physical endeavour, team effort and status at the elite level. It related to achievement, public recognition and a particular network of associates. To all players, rugby was the symbol of their major time commitment away from work. The Supporters Club was symbolic of team support, the supporters engaging in hero worship and seeking autographs, yet also providing a range of activities to support the team socially and financially. The All Blacks in the team attracted most attention from the media, being representative of rugby's pinnacle of achievement.

The team manifested a range of symbols. Prominent was "the jersey" referred to as a unifying emblem and depersonalising motif, denoting the collective PT rather than individuals. ("Look at this jersey. We're Provincial Team, eh?") In **team leadership**, emergent or unofficial leaders were listened to as voices of experience or knowledge from players who had "proved themselves" on the field. These were the first-five who was an All Black, second five and two loose forwards. The team leadership was rarely autocratic -- although the researcher perceived times when this may have been appropriate, such as the need for unequivocal directions for the inside backs to free the ball to wings and fullback.

Sponsors appeared in prominent domains of the Provincial Team. Their ultimate advertising goal was to fuse their brand name with the PT team, with a resultant symbolic congruence in public perceptions. The presence of the Sponsor's Representative with the team symbolised further the top priority rugby had for its sponsoring brewery since he accompanied no other sponsored team.

The **ethnicity** of a group of Samoans in the team was linguistically symbolised in the PT term of "the Sars." The monoculturalism of team language and culture was an over-riding social impression gained by the researcher, despite the team's cultural diversity. (This was confirmed by the PT President's review of the researcher's notes.) The communication and team culture were, except for the pre-Shield game prayer, all Pakeha orientated, which may be seen as symbolic of the assimilating and dominant social culture. The Polynesians were not typecast by team-mates as unpredictable despite certain commentators perceiving them as such (see Metge, 1967). Indeed, they were seen as symbolising idiosyncratic and stable onfield characteristics.

Communication and language were primarily oral, printed text, and non-verbal in nature. Public speaking tended to be stereotypical with a characteristic after-match speech noting the efforts of the opposition (“You really took it to us”), the team’s commitment (“The guys gave their guts”), the referee’s performance (depending upon which team won), the sponsors, and presentation of the ties and cufflinks to opposition team leaders and the referee. Exhortations in the changing room symbolised commitment and peer support with assurances that an individual would “Put his body on the line.” Print comments in programmes differed from those in newspapers. To the researcher, there was a lack of analytical discussion or team involvement in planning sessions. In the pre- and after-match settings of dressing room intimacy non-verbal communication was widespread, as represented by hugs, handshakes and eye contact or nodding. This transcended ethnic groups, playing position (although such body language was more frequently expressed towards those whose field positions were in proximity), physical size and social class. The coach engaged in limited whole team speech in the changing room before a game, this being “the captain’s time,” but did speak privately with many individual players and often included physical contact such as a symbolic hand on a player’s shoulder. The lack of skill in transmitting knowledge to players was apparent, (“Coach is a hell of a nice guy but he ain’t a good teacher”).

The **administration** was represented at the focal match for the Ranfurly Shield. Its team face was represented by the manager and the President or Secretary attending three matches. Player comment tended to see the administrators as needing a more business-like ethos. The coach and captain did not verbally criticise the administration to the same extent as did players.

The **physical environment** of the changing room was seen by players as a symbol of union administration attitudes towards them, the room having cobwebs which stayed in place over the month, one toilet, peeling paint and limited space. In the away matches the team had a “team room” which had access restricted to the team group. It was a refuge, a meeting place, a video watching location and a base for light refreshments.

The researcher’s understanding of role realities for players and coach in the context of an actual match shifted when he was taken onto the field at halftime in the final game. The perceptions of players responsible for defence of a territorial zone assumed relevance, as did their comments on crowd support, often symbolised in pungent terms as, for example, the game seen in one-to-one combat terms against a “marker” or supporters seen as “our crowd.”

The **players' personal lives** were dominated by rugby in many ways, despite efforts to keep personal-social lives separate from rugby. The questionnaires reflected this, but the interviews with family or girlfriends underscored the central symbol of pleasure and success that rugby had become for some players as in "Rugby is his life." The coach's place of business in the centre of the city, was an informal meeting place, drop-in centre and counselling site for his players and other rugby persons in the local clubs and union.

The range of team leadership behaviours was observed in the present resource study in situations beyond those typically found in the research literature. Thus the captain's verbal symbolising of his priority for the healthy birth of a team-mate's baby above the second match result, was markedly different from the public image of such an All Black forward having winning as a consuming goal. Coach's criticism of the referee and of his own players counteracted the researcher's expectation of the elite team coach being a leader who accepted the arbiter's judgement and did not voice negative comments about a player he had selected in front of reserve players. The captain's relationship with the coach was symbolised by him as "being friends." The manager saw himself in a back-up role to the coach, which was not how he was pictured by administrators but was viewed as such by players. The team Court Sessions (see Appendix D.3) symbolised the traditional days of player authority and the centrality of drinking and "mateship" rituals, in which team leadership was placed in the hands of two unofficial team leaders noted above. The questionnaires indicated the perspectives that players and team leaders held of team-mates, symbolising or personifying certain qualities.

5.3.2 Provincial Team Categories and Properties

In this study of the Provincial Team, concepts or categories were progressively developed from each of the research methodologies, with their nesting properties, and these cumulative categories and properties reached a saturation level at the documentation analysis stage. Saturation reflected the constant review of emergent data and categories or concepts against those already classified and an intellectual looping between thinking that responded *to living with the data* and deductive thinking that facilitated the substantiation and verification of collapsing or consolidating categories. The data collection, researcher response and category formulation followed the grounded theory process outlined in Chapter Four. Appendix C.3 provides an example of the process of sampling data and the resultant Referee classification, with respect to the elite Provincial Team. The categories successively generated by participant observation and its attendant interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis, were illuminated by significant symbols as discussed above. These successively considered categories were collapsed into a

master set of Provincial Team categories. (These categories are subsequently melded with those generated by each subsequent research phase in the present study to form a master set of elite rugby team leadership categories in Chapter Nine. In turn, these give rise to related propositions in the same chapter. The propositions reflect the researcher's response to the questions : *What appears to be learnt from these categories and properties? What do the data indicate that should be especially noted regarding these?* The first set of research phase categories now follows.

1. COACH ROLE AND QUALITIES

Selector
 Team strategy and game plan
 Working with assistant coach
 Social role
 Interaction with captain
 Perceptions of the coach
 Self assessment
 Personal qualities
 Coach perception of players
 Leadership
 Man management
 Motivational
 Personal goals
 Communication
 Philosophy
 Transmission of knowledge

2. CAPTAIN ROLE AND QUALITIES

Onfield leadership from the front
 Role model
 Interaction with coach
 Off-field
 Onfield decisions
 Relationship with players
 Playing ability
 Developing leadership skills
 Communication and public speaking

3. SOCIAL

Supporters' Club
 After-match functions
 Music
 Player behaviour
 Drink
 Gender attitudes
 Families
 Social attributes
 Cultural

4. ADMINISTRATION

Provincial administrators
 Quality of administration
 Team officials

5. PUBLIC IMPACT

Supporters' clubs
 Public perceptions
 Media
 All Blacks
 Sponsorship

6. MATCHES

Pre-match analysis
 Game Plan
 Training and practice
 Quality of Play
 Match day
 Individual preparation
 Dressing Room
 After-match rituals
 Ranfurly Shield
 Game reports and records
 Deviant play
 Rugby laws
 Positional requirements
 Referees
 Team talks

<p>7. TEAM Team leadership Support staff Team goals Onfield communication Perceptions of team leaders Individual player goals Rituals and bonding Ethnic identify Player backgrounds Perceptions of team mates Team behaviour Music Positional choices Language Players' personal lives Physical environment Relationships Team function</p>

Figure 5.12 Elite rugby team leadership categories : Provincial Team.

5.3.3 The Research Questions

At this stage of the research the important consideration was the extent to which experiences with the Provincial Team had answered the research questions which underpinned the study. These questions were :

1. What are the team leadership roles of elite rugby coaches and captains?
2. How are these leadership roles enacted at an elite level?
3. What are the most important qualities of elite rugby coaches and captains?
4. How are these qualities illustrated at an elite level?
5. Given the team leadership roles and qualities of the elite rugby coach and captain, how can these best be developed?

Seeking answers to the questions led the researcher to multiple realities of the elite rugby team environment in which behaviours of the coach and captain could be observed. Thus resulted the PT (Provincial Team) participant observation with its concomitant interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. Critical reflection within this research, utilising symbolic interactionism and grounded theory, generated the categories noted above.

5.4 SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

The PT phase brought to light actual elite rugby team leader behaviours, some of which appeared to corroborate the literature, (such as man management and strategic skills or the role of the elite rugby coach as noted by Rutherford, Laidlaw, and Mair, 1988), but raised elements not given substance in others. In the latter, for example, could be seen the centrality of the game plan or the captain “leading from the front”, which the literature noted as part of team leadership but did not emphasise as strongly as the PT observation suggested. The ethnographic sketch on a broad canvas provided a response also to the literature of such as Siedentop (1989) who advocate qualitative research in this field. The trial research period with a secondary school team proved of value in preparing the researcher for the PT period and confirmed the basic structure of the research from the perspectives of researcher ease and data acquisition. In the PT phase, triangulation was furthered by drawing upon the range of participant observation research modes: an example being the qualities of the captain, which were perceived by the observer, the subject of interviews, indicated in questionnaire responses from players, explicated in coach views and recorded in media print comments. At the conclusion of the observational period there was a feeling of regret that the association was ended as the interaction and acceptance had been high. Conversely, despite researcher confidence in the efficacy of the research procedures over five rugby matches, he did not feel that he fully understood all the details and nuances of the elite rugby world.

The most valued research process in the Provincial Team setting was open interaction with the team leaders which reflected lessons learned from the secondary school trial of methodology. These included the asking of questions whenever in doubt, rather than assuming answers to unspoken researcher concerns or queries would be revealed in a subsequent setting. The most valid research principles sustained and reinforced in this study were: **relate sensitively to the subjects, write down everything and, if in any doubt, ask as soon as possible.** Ethical problems were fewer than expected as no restrictions were placed upon the observer at any stage, although the PT coach was understandably apprehensive when giving the researcher the game plan for the Ranfurly Shield match some days before that “test.” Reassurance and critique oriented discussions with an academic supervisor were found to be valuable throughout the research period and also acted as a safeguard against “going native”, especially with the risk of researcher identification with the team.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.68) state "*The most important thing is to name a category, so that you can remember it, think about it, and most of all begin to think about it analytically.*" In the context of the elite Provincial Team the relationship between categories was often the cause of much self-debate for the researcher, more especially in the early stages. Once the initial assembly of properties and classification into categories had been completed from the participant observation, however, category and property generation evolved more readily as the groundwork for tentative proposition-building.

In further summary, this first phase of the research brought forward certain roles of elite rugby team leader linkages not stressed in the literature, provided insights into the operation of each leader and underscored the influence of environmental forces such as the social context and administration. The coach appeared most effective when he utilised a carefully constructed game plan for the Ranfurly Shield match and the team had a clear purpose for the match. The role of the captain in leading from the front was especially valued by players. The questionnaire indicated differing perspectives of players held by the coach, captain and players.

PROVINCIAL COACHES AND CAPTAINS

The literature on elite sport team leadership rarely considers the actualities of coach and captain preparation for competition matches, along with such leader behaviours as relevant planning, leadership expectations and post-competition reflections. Such perspectives can provide insights into the priorities that rugby team leaders have in facing, and reflecting upon, competition matches and elements of team leadership that assume importance in such context. This chapter draws upon responses of national provincial team coaches and captains to a questionnaire on their pre-match and post-match expectations and reflections centred upon realities of their match leadership for elite national championship matches. Opening with a range of practitioner perspectives on team leadership in actual matches this section of the present study then considers viewpoints of coaches and captains of opposing teams in the national rugby competition. The chapter outlines categories and properties drawn from the match focus data and considers these from a symbolic interactionism perspective. A brief summary of this research phase concludes the chapter.

- 6.1 The Subjects
- 6.2 Provincial Team Leader Perspectives
 - 6.2.1 Qualities of Elite Rugby Coaches
 - 6.2.2 Roles of Elite Rugby Coaches
 - 6.2.3 Selection of the Captain
 - 6.2.4 Captaincy Roles and Qualities
 - 6.2.5 The Game Plan
 - 6.2.6 The Captain's Leadership
 - 6.2.7 Post-match Considerations
- 6.3 Reflections on Opposing Provincial Team Leaders
- 6.4 Symbols, Categories and the Research Questions
 - 6.4.1 Symbolic Interactionism
 - 6.4.2 Provincial Coach and Captain Categories and Properties
 - 6.4.3 The Research Questions
- 6.5 Summary and Reflections

6.1 THE SUBJECTS

This chapter extends findings from the study of the single provincial rugby team in Chapter Five to a questionnaire survey of a wide group of provincial coaches and captains who were involved in the penultimate fortnight of the New Zealand provincial rugby championships. It was assumed that these matches would be a major stimulus to team performance and leadership.

Seven contemporaneous matches were selected to obtain perspectives on team leadership from coaches and captains who were not involved as subjects in other phases of the present research.

To this selection was added a third-division team, whose “underdog” status placed special demands on its team leadership in playing a Ranfurly Shield challenge against the first-division holders. The use of questionnaires enabled the researcher to canvass a wide spread of provincial team locales and thus facilitate prompt data collection. Written correspondence with the 12 coaches and seven captains involved indicated their perceptions of team leader qualities and roles, and the implementation of these in actual match contexts. The questionnaire provided responses from opposing team leaders to identical questions, which provided respondents with opportunity to reflect upon leadership in actual elite level rugby matches.

Figure 6.1 shows the distribution of response returns. Copies of the questionnaires used in this phase of the research may be found in Appendices E.2 and E.3. The response rate for the 30 questionnaires sent out was 12 out of 15 coaches, (80%), and seven out of 15 captains, (46.66%). Questionnaire data were analysed to uncover significant symbols and the generation of grounded theory categories.

PROVINCIAL COACH-CAPTAIN RESPONSES				
	COACH		CAPTAIN	
	SENT	RETURNED	SENT	RETURNED
1st Division	6	6	6	3
2nd Division	4	2	4	1
3rd Division	4	3	4	3
Ranfurly Shield	1	1 (3rd Div.)	1	0 (3rd Div.)

Figure 6.1 Provincial coach and captain responses to questionnaire.

6.2 PROVINCIAL TEAM LEADER PERSPECTIVES

6.2.1 Qualities of Elite Rugby Coaches

Findings related to the question on coach quality are summarised in Figure 6.2. Coaches noted man management as an important coach quality with understanding, and motivation of players, integral to this. (“He must be able to judge how the players are feeling, knowing which ones to lift, which ones to calm etc. He must vary the approach from game to game.”) Communication was seen as a vital quality. It may be significant, however, that only first division coaches noted

media communication as important. Personal qualities were also important, and central to these was the coach's ability to organise. The technical dimension required skills of analysing the game, the opposition and the players. ("Keep this simple but to the high standards you set.") A third division coach noted that coach qualities should enable him to, "make sure players are aware of necessary physical demands and prepare them adequately." The seven captains emphasised the coach's man management and technical qualities. The first division captains noted communication with players, organisation and technical knowledge, whereas third division captains emphasised developing player confidence, building up players. The latter captains, as with their coaches, believed players should be aware of the physical demands of the game.

A.1(a) What are the most important qualities for a rugby coach?	
COACHES (N=12)	CAPTAINS (N=7)
Man Management - knowing and relating to players (3) - respected by players (2) - psychology skills (1) - motivator (3)	- understand players (1) - developing player confidence (1) - man management (3)
Communication - communication (4) - public relations (1) - media (3) - listening skills (5)	- communicate with players (3)
Technical - knowledge of opposition (2) - practices (1) - analyse player strengths and needs (3) - knowledge of game (4)	- technical knowledge (2) - give players skills and knowledge (2) - prepare players (1) - make players aware of demands of the game (4)
Personal Qualities - philosophy (1) - friendship but not close (1) - sincere (1) - honest (3) - disciplinary (1) - self confidence (1) - organised (4)	- organisation (1)
Selection skills (4)	
Note: Numerals indicate the number of individuals noting the quality. Respondents may each note more than one quality.	

Figure 6.2 Provincial team leaders' perceptions of coach qualities.

Personal qualities were noted by coaches as significant, with organisational skills and honesty valued. ("Honesty, loyalty, sincerity, knowledge and understanding are important.") A third division captain noted his players valuing the coach's "absolute belief and confidence in members of his team." In contrast to the expressed need for player support at the lower competition level,

an All Black and first division captain wanted qualities in his coach that involved, “man management, organisation, communication and technical knowledge.”

6.2.2 Roles of Elite Rugby Coaches

The primary coach roles are noted in Figure 6.3. The selector role of the coach was noted as important by four of the five first division coaches, but this was not noted by any lower division coach or any captain as an important element of the role.

A.1(b) What is his (the coach's) role?	
COACH (N=12)	CAPTAIN (N=7)
- selection (6)	- pass on knowledge (3)
- revise games	- provide direction
- game plan (4)	- build up team
- training (2)	- make match preparation interesting (2)
- playing skills (2)	- selection
- developing team	
- develop player confidence	
- team spirit	

Figure 6.3 Provincial team leaders' perceptions of coach roles.

Almost all of the responses on coach roles emphasised the match setting in which the coach “passed on knowledge and experience to his players to achieve the ultimate we all strive for -- success!” (Division Three captain). A Division Two coach wanted “Preparing the team, so they know what is going to happen in the build up, what the game is likely to be played like, and what all of the options are, all the scenarios.” Division One coaches saw their role as: preparing the team physically and mentally, developing a strong team spirit, and being able to motivate players at training and before a game. The elite coach role of communicating technical knowledge which enables the team to maximise its potential for performance was more important to captains than to coaches. The lower division leaders included the coach of a team which narrowly missed winning its division. His primary role was, “To formulate a game plan and then the direction of training, developing playing skills and tactical appreciation, and moulding individual players into effective team members.” Other comments or descriptions by coaches were limited. A successful third division coach saw his role as, “Creating the best possible environment for players, both on and off the paddock. Giving all necessary skills and decision making processes for players to play properly and enjoyably and making players aware of the physical needs of the game.”

There was a clear emphasis upon the coach's match orientation, with an attendant spectrum ranging from selection to the tactical game plan, and on through the fostering of players' technical skills to support that plan.

6.2.3 Selection of the Captain

One third division captain believed that he had been chosen for his playing ability, experience and "ability to talk with players and earn their respect." His coach, however, had selected him because he "understood my thoughts and how I wanted the game to be played. He is also a communicator and role model." In contrast to such differing perceptions, first division team coaches and captains exhibited greater congruency in their reasons for captaincy selections. One first-division captain commented, "I was selected as captain after meeting with the coach and discussing the various requirements." Such an elite rugby captain, knowing the reasons for his appointment, may better understand the coach's priorities, expectations, and preferred style of captaincy and consequently have greater self-confidence in critical decision making. This may well facilitate an accord in the team leadership and clarity in player perceptions of coach and captain unity.

A.2 How and why did you select your team's captain ?						
N=12 different coaches (Coaches may provide more than one reason.)						
	Experience Seniority	Respected and well-presented	Playing Ability	Onfield Leadership (Reads game well.)	Positive Coach-Captain Relationship	Looking To Future
5	X	X				
4	X	X	X	X		
3	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	X	X	X	X	X	X
1	X	X	X	X	X	X

Figure 6.4 Factors considered by provincial coaches in captain selection.

6.2.4 Captaincy Roles and Qualities

The captain's onfield role was foremost for all captains, and almost all coaches and reflected this study's PT findings and commentators such as Frost and Uttley (1981). No other role element was rated by more than two respondents in the current survey. The process of captain selection presumably indicates coach beliefs in captaincy attributes. When explicated by a specific question

the most important qualities of an excellent captain clearly fell into three marked groupings. The foremost onfield qualities included decision making, option taking, changing the game plan, reading the game, and “leading from the front”. The second group of qualities was that of personal qualities, including honesty and loyalty, which engendered respect. Communication and motivation slightly outranked the coach-captain relationship as the next levels of importance for the coaches. Almost half of the coaches considered a positive relationship with the captain as an important captaincy quality, but no captain saw this as important. One captain and two coaches noted “leadership” qualities as desirable in the captain, but did not explicate these.

A.3a What are the most important qualities of an excellent captain?										
N=12 Coaches (X) N=7 Captains (O) (More than one quality may be stated by a coach or captain.)										
	Onfield		Personal Qualities		Communication		Coach-Captain Relations		Knowledge of Game	
10	X									
9	X									
8	X		X							
7	X	O	X							
6	X	O	X		X					
5	X	O	X		X		X			
4	X	O	X		X		X			
3	X	O	X		X	O	X			
2	X	O	X	O	X	O	X		X	O
1	X	O	X	O	X	O	X		X	O

Figure 6.5 Provincial coach and captain perceptions of captain qualities.

6.2.5 The Game Plan

The previous chapter noted the elite Provincial Team’s belief in the importance of the game plan in team strategy. Responses of coaches to the present questionnaire reinforced this perspective in responding to questions on describing their game plans for the forthcoming game and the effectiveness of this. The third division coach faced with the difficulty of his team playing the first division Ranfurly Shield holders believed that the captain should have a full understanding of the game plan. Despite this, the challenging coach’s pre-match comments did not emphasise the coach-captain relationship and off-field interaction of the two team leaders, as was done by the first-division coaches. The coach’s reflections upon the match indicated his belief that the team played to his predetermined plan.

In contrast to some first division coaches who set winning as the criterion of their game plan's success, the coach of the lower division challengers had the goal of his team "playing well," performing to its capabilities and attaining basic success in their game plan. This "playing to our best," rather than winning, is endorsed in sport psychology literature (see, for example, Cox, 1990; Cratty, 1989; Horn, 1992). The final period of the National Provincial Rugby Championship provided the inducement for teams to "play their best" and win the championship. A first division coach noted in a post-game reflection that his team "were very good but our opponents had more to play for." The referee confirmed the extra "edge" in the execution of the winning team's game plan.

One coach faced his second division match with a planned emphasis upon team discipline, defence, pressure, "and the captain making sure that every player in our team is disciplined to the team pattern." Looking back on the game he felt the plan had been followed well. He noted his encouragement of the team to keep going, and to maintain the pressure. Concentration had been good and newspaper reports confirmed this perception.

A third division coach expressed his game plan in detail but endured a defeat by over twenty points. This was attributed by him to factors outside the game plan such as loss of concentration, turnover of possession, failure of players defensively, lack of player commitment despite good leadership by the captain, and a lack of strength in players. Another losing coach also did not readily accept responsibility for the major factors affecting his team's result.

Our players lacked the necessary strength and understanding of the intensity and speed, and commitment necessary in rep. rugby. The game plan and tactics went well for the first 30 minutes. How do you get players to maintain maximum concentration and commitment levels? Very frustrating and disappointing.

6.2.6 The Captain's Leadership

The realities of elite competition for coaches and captains may be different from pre-match or coaching manual expectations. In this phase of the present study for example, actual match leadership behaviour desired of captains by their provincial coaches were not necessarily implemented or subsequently evaluated in terms of the coaches' pre-match expectations. One losing first-division coach, for example, did not consider results in terms of his pre-match priorities, but in reflection, expressed the belief that his opponents had greater motivation for victory which gave them the opportunity to win the National Provincial Championship. This defeated coach noted:

We needed something more to play for. That sounds hollow but they were playing for their first National title. We could not better 3rd [in that competition] or worse than 4th. No matter what the result was of this game, if they had been beaten, it didn't matter anyway. Reduction of simple errors would have kept us well in the game. We weren't able to capitalise on their extremely "wound up" state.

A losing coach and captain indicated pre-match emphases upon onfield option taking and the calling of selected moves. Unlike the coach's post-match reflections, the captain did not evaluate or comment upon these elements, which may indicate a lack of focus upon this in the reality of the match.

<u>COACH M</u>	<u>CAPTAIN M</u>
<p><u>Pre-match Expectation</u></p> <p>There will be good decisions on options. The team is to mentally concentrate. Problem solving of stoppages will be done quickly. A full range of options will be used.</p> <hr/>	<p><u>Pre-match Expectation</u></p> <p>I want to win the toss. There is every intention to continue attractive and attentive style of play. Calling selected moves promptly and accurately is critical. Seeking input from selected players will be done.</p> <hr/>
<p><u>Post-match Reflection</u></p> <p>He was firm and decisive mostly. The back of lineout play should have been changed. The captain called the wrong option at a significant stage. He made a good aftermatch speech.</p>	<p><u>Post-match Reflection</u></p> <p>I was capable overall. I did not use myself early on. Nothing more could have been done by the coach. More could have been done by myself in individual player preparation. I did not involve myself as a player enough early on. The front five did not perform well. Although I won the toss I made the wrong decision on playing with the wind - the wind shifted!</p>

Figure 6.6 Coach and captain perspectives on actual match captaincy.

The referee provided his perspective on the same game, illustrating a dimension of triangulation. He inferentially questioned the accuracy of the losing coach's perception of the winner's "wound up" state, and provided insights on the winning team's captaincy.

The winner's dressing room was electric before the game. There were many signs of nervousness, the players and management were tense, little conversation, quite unresponsive as I checked boots... their captain, was an exception to this. He appeared very calm, going around talking to all in a natural way, chatting with me normally. By the time [that team] went on the field they had the air of a team that believed in itself and its ability to win. No signs of nervousness then, just purposefully getting on with their jobs.

Lots of communication between their players, all positive and supportive. They absorbed 10-15 minutes of early pressure and then began to dominate, remaining so for rest of the game, not allowing [the opposition] to get settled. The winners constantly varied the pace of the game, alternating between quick release of ball and rapid movement along their backline and drives around mauls, using the strength of one prop, particularly, to ensure commitment of the opposing forwards. Thus the eventual losers were not able to settle, seemed affected by changes of pace, and couldn't or didn't respond quickly enough to enable them to counter the winner's tactics. Before the game the **losing** team were very chatty, seemed unperturbed about the approach of kick-off time. (Some were still getting changed only 15 minutes before kick-off.) I doubt if they were all physically prepared and mental preparedness seemed lacking. Their captain had just taken over the captaincy and I got the impression that he wasn't at all sure what to do in this role. Onfield his players lacked direction and wasted the ball they got, running it too close to set plays, allowing rock-solid defence to stop play proceeding, and the opposition loosies were always in position before the losing trio, ensuring that [the winners] inevitably won second phase possession. [The losing captain] himself drove relentlessly whenever he had the chance but seemed too preoccupied with sorting out his positional play to do much about changing tactics or addressing his team and its playing problems.

(Match referee, personal communication).

The winners of that first division game went on to win the first division championship. Their captain had been noted in the PT participant observation phase of the present study as an outstanding leader. That perception was reinforced by his provincial coach and the referee.

An idiosyncratic element of the onfield leader's personal style may be imposed upon play and decisions, as pungently illustrated by a top coach commenting on his internationally known captain:

I was a little disappointed that, late in the game when leading comfortably, we took penalty shots at goal, successfully, rather than use some of our innovative moves....however, Skipper wanted to stick it to them as they became cantankerous late in the game.

The elite coaches and captains in the present survey described the leadership they anticipated the captain providing onfield (Question A.5) and later described this retrospectively (Question B.2). Fifteen team leaders had their pre-match expectations for match leadership considered against their post-match reflections (see Figure 6.7 below). These indicated a lack of post-match evaluation being linked with pre-match expectations in three major spheres of onfield leadership.

The captain's leadership appears to be affected by the realities of competition place, in the finals stage of the championship, and does not appear to be adequately evaluated in terms of pre-match expectations. These factors did not appear in the literature.

6.2.7 Post-match Considerations

The team leaders' views on captaincy roles and qualities noted above indicate that pre-match expectations held for onfield captaincy were not specifically and consistently considered in post-match retrospect by coaches and captains. Two elite pairs of opposing rugby coaches and captains provided additional insights into their game planning and leadership expected, (and exhibited), in a key match (see Appendix E.5). The winning coach, Coach A, set out a more detailed game plan than Coach B. Given the importance of the captain "leading from the front," as suggested by respondents to the present questionnaire and in the Provincial Team phase of the present study, winning Captain A of these four team leaders commented on this leadership intention before the match. The coaches did not relate post-match considerations of the captains' leadership to their specific pre-match expectations of these leaders. The major newspaper report of the game stressed the effort of Team B in the final 20 minutes to avoid relegation. The report supports the belief expressed by questionnaire respondents that a key match result of promotion or relegation is a prime motivator for team efforts.

		BEFORE		AFTER	
		Coach	Captain	Coach	Captain
Game plan	Implement the game plan	14	11	10	4
	Make correct calls and decisions	4		5	
	Utilise team player strengths	2			
	Pressure the opposition	3		1	
Player support	Motivating and relating to players	12	5	8	4
	Keeping players on task	7		4	
Playing example		3	3	8	8
Note: More than one element of leadership may have been noted by a team leader (Four further captains and coaches are considered in more detail in Appendix E.5.) N=15					

Figure 6.7 Onfield leadership elements noted in pre-match expectations and post-match evaluations by provincial team leaders.

Team leaders of another losing rugby team in the first division had succinct reactions to their loss. The captain had approached the match aware of the strong wind and the need to “play the game tightly.” Reflecting on the close game he believed, “Players gave their guts and the team spirit just about got us through so I didn’t have to do much. We couldn’t have done more!” The coach saw his captain’s leadership as “Very good,” blaming the toss for the loss. In contrast, the coach of the winning team, saw his captain as having led well. “He played a very strong game and rallied the players when we were points down. Kept to the plan.” The different perceptions of these captains’ leadership were given apparent support by the results as the winning leader led by example, lifted the team in adversity, and followed the game plan.

Although the reality of a sports contest is that some teams may be stronger than others, match results may be considered in terms of captaincy perceptions and analyses in order to consider possible leadership factors which may impact upon match fortunes. Examples of areas of potential captain development could be considered from certain responses, as follow.

Captain A: “Players gave their guts and the team spirit just about got us through, so I didn’t have to do much.” This defeated Captain A implies a belief that if his team is playing with spirit, then a marked exertion of his leadership is not required. The analysis would gain from examining why the captain felt he did not need to provide the extra leadership and how he could do this in future.

Coach D: “A problem we have had in our team all year has been the onfield leadership. Decision making onfield has been ‘slow’ with several ‘negative’ players having too great an influence.” Coach D, a past All Black, in contrast to the previous coach, notes a lack of spirit onfield which may indicate a need to examine team dynamics, what is expected of “onfield leadership” and the critical examination of decision making realities by the coach and captain. Towards the end of the season this coach believed the “Decision on captaincy by myself should have been addressed earlier in the season.”

Captain G: “I thought I fulfilled my role capably.” Although Captain G believed his losing leadership had been capable, which it may have been, there would be value in critical reflection with the coach upon what constitutes capable and leadership if one’s team loses.

6.3 REFLECTIONS ON OPPOSING PROVINCIAL TEAM LEADERS

The review of literature in Chapter Three noted the belief that the coach influences match outcomes (see for example, Weiss and Friedrichs, 1986). Weese and Nicholls (1987) suggest that “Frequently the leadership role is significant during a team’s game” for the team captain, (p.269). Vodanovich and Coates (1982) note that rugby is an interdependent sport, the successful outcome of the team’s performance being dependent upon effective interaction among the players. Rugby, being an open sport with various skills performed in a changing and variable match environment, (Greenwood, 1985), presents the coach and captain with a range of challenges. The survey of elite rugby coaches, in this chapter, which could assist the possible identification of elite [rugby] coaches’ unique perceptions (Salmela, Draper and Laplante, 1993), may “capture the relevant aspects of superior performance and allow an assessment of the cognitive mechanisms underlying the superior performance” (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria and Russell, 1995, p.3).

Broadly, responses indicated a lack of clarity in lower division captains’ perceptions of reasons for their appointments, team leaders attributing factors beyond their direct control as significant reasons for losses, an emphasis upon the coach’s game plan and the captain’s onfield leadership, and a lack of post-match evaluation of the team’s leadership in terms of pre-match emphases.

An extant rugby aphorism or piece of folklore states that at the higher levels the coach can select players to fit his game plan, whereas the lower level coach selects players and then fits a game plan around those players. If so, it may be especially important for lower division coaches to develop their captains’ leadership, team vision, game plan, and a concordant selection policy. “There is a temptation at representative level, as at lower levels, to make an outstanding player captain. But this seldom works, unless that player has had plenty of experience...What matters is to get the blend of enthusiasm and experience right” (Frost and Uttley, 1981, p.66-67).

Although the questionnaire did not cover sufficient teams to engender completely valid comparisons of team leadership in the three divisions, the responses do suggest a greater accord of captain-coach pairs from Division One on understanding reasons for captain selection than was found with coach-captain pairings at lower levels. This may indicate that coaches at the elite first division level develop more effective communication with their captains: further, that lower level coaches do not discuss leadership requirements with their captains or the latter coaches do not see it as important that the captain knows why he is appointed. Knowing the reasons for being appointed as a team leader, it is posited, has implications for the captain’s self-confidence,

understanding of his coach's priorities, expectations and style of expected leadership. The congruence of both team leaders understanding the rationale for appointment may provide clarity and leadership strength in the team's joint leadership.

The objectives of the sport team coach include player satisfaction, individual and team development, quality of performance, and winning (Freischlag, 1985; Seefeldt and Brown, 1991). The win-loss results of a game are influenced by factors not always under the coach's control (Chelladurai, 1984; Horne and Carron, 1985). The attribution of external influences inhibiting winning opportunities was noted by respondents, reflecting literature on attribution (see, for example, Cratty, 1989). Losing coaches assigned blame for results to factors beyond their immediate control, such as the referee, losing the toss, effect of the weather, or poorly executed unplanned moves, rather than factors for which they could bear responsibility, such as preparing for the referee's style, having a game plan that is adapted to winning, obtaining the latest weather report and local knowledge and utilising this for focusing the game plan, faulty selection, inadequate training and practice drills, or an inappropriate game plan. There would be merit in coaches examining reasons they give for the course of a match and the team leaders' influence. This could lead to a critical consideration of factors over which the coach and captain have control, and implications for changes in their pre-match and in-match behaviour. Losses at the third division level were sometimes attributed to the lack of readily skilled or experienced players, but this may also reflect a lack of knowledge and training skills in physical conditioning at the rugby level from which such players are selected. This may also indicate a need also for lower division coaches to carefully consider their roles and then develop appropriate goals, strategic and tactical plans, and appropriate evaluation of these.

It is on the field, in match situations fraught with diverse potentialities, that the elite male rugby captain-leader confronts himself and the team's needs for an intense 80 minutes of play and decision making. The coach can prepare the game plan but once play begins the captain is responsible for its onfield changes (see Frost and Uttley, 1981, p.20). Also critical, onfield, was the captain's playing example. The third-division captain faced the Ranfurly Shield team: "Courage was plentiful, epitomised by [the lower division's] captain who continued on after his nose was broken, re-set and smashed again. [He] didn't stop - tackling all over the paddock and urging his men on as the scoreboard gradually told against them" (Howitt, 1991, p.90).

A referee's perspective on play and team leadership can add to perceptions of the captain's efficacy onfield, and the coach's influence upon match preparedness, as well as implementation of

the game plan. It was suggested in Chapter Five of this present study that captains and coaches could gain from discussing the referee's field perceptions of their team. This union-appointed official is the essential third party of a team contest. The players, coach and referee interact. The official's primary goal is to promote the game's normal progress in an unostentatious manner (Elite level referee, PT research phase). A further example of this unique "third dimension" perspective in team leader research was provided by a first division referee's comments in this phase of the present study.

As I mentioned before I have the utmost admiration for this captain. His leadership style is based on his ability to read a game, predict strengths of team-mates and opponents, respond quickly and effectively, and communicate appropriately. He seems to be able to command authoritatively without berating or cajoling. He gives the impression of always being in control of himself, his position and of the game. His team has the greatest respect for him and seem both inspired and exalted by his presence. From a referee's perspective he is superb. He wants to hear from you about things that are causing difficulties and immediately does something about them, accepting and understanding without question or quibble. He seldom asks about a decision you have made preferring, it seems, to sort out interpretations before a game, something he does frequently and amicably. After a game he always has something positive to say to you and I have never known him to be critical. There's something of the psychologist about him!

(Match referee, personal communication, October 20, 1991).

A further referee perspective on the onfield leadership of the top division captain of a long-term successful team was provided, raising further leadership reflection.

Has the undoubted dominance of this team, its relative stability for many years, and the long success it has enjoyed led to the development of internal structures and game patterns which make visible or audible communication unnecessary? Does this account for the team's 'invisible' captaincy? Does it also explain why, in my opinion, the captain is perceived throughout much of the country as being an inadequate captain? For [this provincial] team to be so successful for so long there must be effective decision making and communication going on. Perhaps they have developed beyond the recognised (or recognisable!) standards.

(Match referee, personal communication, March 24, 1992).

This importance of the captain's leadership is noted by Kirk (1995) and Weese and Nicholls (1987), with Kirk suggesting "A good part of the authority of leadership in sports teams arises from playing ability. It is the contribution the captain is able to make as a player to the success of the team which binds the team together in his support" (p.17). This present study may also be indicative of the need for coach and captain to focus more specifically on elements of their pre-game planning and expectations and use these as the basis for post-match evaluation. The pre-

game expectations were recorded with greater technical and specific game plan elements than were noted in the more generalised post-game reflections. Such critical perspectives may enhance elite leader priorities, provide more explicit game analysis and engender more detailed post-match reflection than appeared to be the case with these elite team leaders.

6.4 SYMBOLS, CATEGORIES AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questionnaire drew perspectives from a range of New Zealand provincial rugby team coaches and captains on the realities of leadership associated with an actual match, which were considered in the broad sequence of the questionnaire structure. Additionally, all respondent views were analysed for meaningful units and the naming of properties which were eventually subsumed into categories, following the process discussed in Chapter Four. This allows comparisons to be made with the findings of the Provincial Team in Chapter Five. Sample responses of the provincial coaches and captains are located in Appendix E.4 and Appendix E.5 to illustrate the base data which were the source of consequent property and category formulation.

Overall, the questionnaire reinforced the importance of the game plan and onfield leadership, introduced the new factor of possible promotion or demotion, underscored the need for greater clarity in captain-coach communication (such as discussing reasons for captaincy selection), and illuminated considerations for more specific post-match analysis.

6.4.1 Symbolic Interactionism

The data accumulated through the team leader responses were critically and progressively reflected upon as more responses were gathered. The 19 team leaders, all coaching or captaining teams in one of the world's elite competitions, revealed usage or assumptions of a range of terminological symbols which illustrated and affected the context and practice of team leadership.

The role of the coach was characterised by the statement that he had to provide the best possible **environment** for the team. Behind this enveloping term lies a set of roles in which coach qualities are paramount. These roles may be noted as selecting, developing the team, and preparing for matches.

The coach's qualities were outlined with virtually all requiring **communication** skills. *"If I went through the team the main word would be communication,"* was a typical response. The multi-faceted domain of demands for organisation, diplomacy, man-management and so, on draws upon

communication for its effectiveness and indicates that, rather than being a sole quality, communication is an embracing term for all coach-team and coach-player interaction.

In considering the captain's role, the symbolic expression **leading from the front**, evocative of onfield leadership, has been voiced by respondents in this sector of the study to indicate a leader whose play is committed, providing an example to his team-mates. Implicit in achieving the role of leading from the front is the singular quality of the captain's ability to **read the game**. The reading of the game implies the ability to discern influences upon the apparent fortunes of the game and to devise tactics which enhance or reduce these. This includes noting and synthesising seemingly extraneous factors from the match in progress and may lead quickly to amending the team game plan if necessary or the captain influencing certain players or passages of play, directly or indirectly. This relates to understanding the coach's requirements and engendering respect from the players who will accept the onfield leader's decisions and follow him.

The focus of the competitive coach for any elite rugby match is **the game plan**, which inscribes a wealth of relevant meanings for participants and aficionados. The plan is a total team strategy which is devised to optimise the team's chances of victory. Integral to this is an effective evaluation of the opposition, realistic appraisal of one's own team and match conditions and the consequent formulation of tactics. The game plan is explained at team meetings and has training and practices aligned to players' participation in, and understanding of, key moves. The coach and captain confer on its match implementation and possible options or changes that circumstances may compel. The involvement of team decision makers is usually integral to such understandings.

The game plan is a lodestar for further phrases which illuminate the rugby subculture. Analysing the opposition, planning to negate their key players and reading the opposition game on the field, ("**their game plan** was to play the game at pace"), are basics. Coaches and captains in the present sector of the study noted the strong motivational influence of the team's place in the championship ladder, expressed by one team leader as "**it's a 'must-win' game.**" This indicates that rather than assume a coach and team are committed at their optimum to winning a game, there are extrinsic (competition place) and intrinsic ("glory or bust" motivation) elements which may influence that commitment. This has implications also for the opposition team leaders' preparation against such a team, "**they have more to play for**" symbolising such a situation.

The game plan for many was succinctly expressed as being dependent upon the success of **the tight five**. This is further *rugby-speak*, indicating the essential need for the core players of the scrum, front row and locks, to establish parity at least, and dominance preferably, in relation to their opposition counterparts. Given this, and an intention to **keep the pressure on**, the related importance of **set pieces** (scrums and lineouts), **second-phase** and **third-phase** play unfold the symbolic terminology of game plans. The latter phrases refer respectively to match situations which are not set but which usually have a basic orthodoxy and structure, such as rucks and mauls, where key players understand their interacting roles, and to plays which are relatively predictable, resulting from expected match situations, but have a higher level of fluidity and opportunity for individual player initiative. The game plan nomenclature also refers to the first possession of the ball from a piece of play and the moving on of the ball in a second movement. **Open play** is a term indicative of a further dimension, with the ball in hand or being pursued and individual players calling upon their interactive cohesion as well as personal techniques and flair. Coaches and captains in the survey also described their intention to play **fifteen man rugby**, a statement symbolising a philosophy of involving all of the team in the game and creating a game plan based on attacking play and having implications of “running rugby,” as played by New Zealand in the 1995 Rugby World Cup. Whatever the term, it encapsulates shared beliefs and folk knowledge of the rugby fraternity.

In post-match evaluations or public comments, the team leaders indicate a lack of incisive analyses, particularly at lower division levels, reflected in their global comments or rugby clichés such as “**the toss made the difference**,” “**players gave their guts**” or “**some crummy decisions by the ref**.” The layered meanings for these statements indicate possible matters of attribution and acceptance of responsibility for sport team leaders to consider.

6.4.2 Provincial Coach and Captain Categories and Properties

The following categories were developed from the questionnaire domains and responses of the elite provincial rugby team leaders. *Team development* was initially separated as a category from *Match strategy* because of its personal and individual player dimensions, but the coaches saw these elements as integrally linked with the game plan, player effectiveness and moulding of the team in their match strategy and the researcher eventually included team development in the match strategy category.

1. COACH ROLE

Impart knowledge
 Select and develop players
 Public relations
 Organiser

Formulate game plan
 Create an environment
 Develop team

2. COACH QUALITIES

Organisation
 Preparation
 Develop player knowledge
 Communication
 Man management

Diplomacy
 Develop player skills
 High standards
 Clear philosophy
 Selection ability

3. CAPTAIN ROLE

Represent others
 Lead by example

Back up coach
 Implement game plan

4. CAPTAIN QUALITIES

Keep players on task
 Relate to players
 Exhibit playing ability
 Decision maker
 Utilise player strengths
 Coolness under pressure

Motivate players
 Link with coach
 Is respected
 Diplomat
 Communication skills
 Encouraging

5. SELECTION OF THE CAPTAIN

Mana
 Decision making onfield
 Experience
 Leadership skills
 Discuss reasons for selection

Respected by players
 Communication skills
 Self-confidence
 Consider the future
 Role model

6.	GAME PLAN	
	Transmission of knowledge	Analyse opposition
	Consider team strengths	Consider referee
	Wind and weather factors	Option taking
	Key positions	Key players
	Phases of play	Communication
	Pressure	Possession
	Amending game plan	Commitment
	Strength and physical ability of players	Risk taking
	Concentration	Tight five
	Strategic elements	Plan with captain
	Training and practice	Simplicity
	Discipline	Player enjoyment
	Plan for post-match evaluation	
7.	MATCH REFLECTIONS	
	Analysis of game plan efficacy	
	Discuss captaincy and play with referee	
	Evaluate captain's leadership	
	Analyse video	
	Analyse match with captain	
	Attribution of match result influence	
	Implications for player development	
	Implications for team development	

Figure 6.8 Provincial coach and captain leadership categories.

6.4.3 The Research Questions

The research questions for the present study were noted in Chapter Four. This phase of the research brought unique perspectives to bear on the coach and captain roles as the leaders' responses were rooted in actual elite matches. The coaches' perspectives of team leadership roles emphasised the coach's selectorial and game planning roles, whereas the captain prioritised the passing on of knowledge and making the pre-match preparation interesting. The captain's onfield leadership was critical.

The enactment of roles at the elite rugby level presents, at this stage of the research, a range of considerations which did not receive emphasis in the literature. Illustrating this, the coaches and captains did not appear to constructively and conjointly consider the factors influencing captaincy selection nor did this lead to a discussion of roles and clear understandings of these.

Captains saw coach qualities in man management and technical knowledge. Although these were important to coaches and communication was vital there were differences across elite response levels in perceptions of leadership qualities. For example, lower division leaders noted the need to make players aware of the demands of the game but this did not rate with first division respondents. Captaincy qualities were related primarily to onfield leadership. Although the coaches believed that the qualities needed in a coach-captain relationship were important not one captain noted these. This may indicate again, a need for more focused discussion of their respective roles and qualities by coaches and captains.

At the elite level the leadership qualities are illustrated in actual match contests but the clarity of this varies across the elite spectrum - arguably being clearer to perceive in top divisional leadership and in winning teams.

In developing team leadership there are clear implications for more incisive communication, clarity in match focus and more evaluation in terms of the game plan. Match evaluation would appear to be a valuable component for coach-captain education using material from this phase of the research.

6.5 SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

This chapter reinforced and extended dimensions of rugby team leadership noted from the Provincial Team in the previous phase of this study. The focus of the present provincial team leaders upon a National Provincial Rugby Championship and Ranfurly Shield match provided elements of elite rugby team leadership which were rooted in competition realities. The categories generated by the data indicated a greater range of game plan considerations and detail than was the case with the Provincial Team.

The methodology did not generate similar response rates for the captains as for the coaches, and this may influence the relative weight of comments. However, the mode of data development was consistent with that outlined in Chapter Four and followed in Chapter Five. The commonality of properties developed through the informants' statements was reflected in the data saturation, suggesting that categories developed from these data have validity and strength. Examples of responses are noted in Appendix E.4 and Appendix E.5.

Arising from those data were team leadership categories which emphasised leadership domains of coach roles and qualities, captain roles and qualities, selection of the captain, the game plan and

post-match considerations. Participation in the national competition teams leads to selection in the elite of the elite New Zealand rugby, the All Blacks, and it is to that team that the present study now turns.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A NATIONAL TEAM :**THE NEW ZEALAND ALL BLACKS**

This chapter outlines the first extended participant observation study of an international rugby team, through eight test match weeks, and three years of contact with the central subjects. The chapter examines perspectives on national rugby team leadership and its setting through observation, interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. Data from each research method generated symbolic interactionist perspectives and a set of elite rugby team leadership categories developed through the application of grounded theory. These were melded into a master set of categories. A summary and reflections conclude the chapter.

- 7.1 The National Team
- 7.2 Participant Observation
 - 7.2.1 International Match One
 - 7.2.2 International Match Two
 - 7.2.3 International Match Three
 - 7.2.4 International Match Four
 - 7.2.5 International Match Five
 - 7.2.6 International Match Six
 - 7.2.7 International Match Seven
 - 7.2.8 International Match Eight
 - 7.2.9 Participant Observation Data: Categories and Properties
- 7.3 Interviews in the All Blacks Setting
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- 7.4 All Black Questionnaires
 - 7.4.1 Questionnaire Data: Categories and Properties
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 - 7.5.1 Documents Data: Categories and Properties
- 7.6 Symbols, Categories and the Research Questions
 - 7.6.1 Symbolic Interactionism
 - 7.6.2 All Blacks Categories and Properties
 - 7.6.3 The Research Questions
- 7.7 Summary and Reflections

7.1 THE NATIONAL TEAM

The All Blacks are the elite international sports team of New Zealand. Chapter Two of this present study noted their historical development as the major symbol of New Zealand's sporting progress and their centrality to the national psyche. The leadership of this team has been the subject of speculation and debate for one hundred years, and intensified in the 1990s with media focus upon the All Black captain and coach.

A dominant force in world rugby, the All Blacks established a reputation as “the team to beat” in international competition, generating a high success level and mystique. In 1987 they were winners of the inaugural Rugby World Cup. In late 1991 a leading provincial coach, a past All Black, was appointed as the New Zealand coach. His two fellow selectors were a past All Black, who had been a provincial coach and was to become the All Black assistant coach, and a successful provincial coach who had played first class rugby. The advent of the new All Black coach coincided with the 1992 centenary of the NZRFU.

First interviewed in his capacity as a past All Black, the new coach responded positively to the researcher’s enquiry about possible participant observation of his leadership. This was the first time in one hundred years of All Black rugby that an “outsider” would be permitted to become part of that elite group. The affirmative responses of the manager, captain and coach were deeply appreciated by the researcher, who was as keenly aware of the All Blacks’ traditions and privileges as he was of the academic need for first-hand research of elite team leadership.

7.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Unlike the provincial team (see Chapter Five) which usually stayed in common accommodation only for the night preceding a match, the observation of the All Black team leaders was virtually a fulltime “live-in” research role during each test match week of the study. Access to all aspects of coach and captain behaviour was integral to the research, providing experiential insights into elite team leadership rarely discussed in the literature, such as selection committee meetings, disciplining an individual player, team talks, the captain’s “players only” meeting, the pre-match changing room and coach-assistant coach deliberations. The researcher was with the All Blacks through eight test match weeks over three years and had frequent additional contact with the coach over this time, such as with interviews and observations of the selectors’ meetings.

7.2.1. International Match One

(New Zealand vs. Ireland, June 2-7, 1992)

Tuesday

The 1992 All Black arrived in disparate groups unified by their common Steinlager sponsor jerseys. Coach made the researcher welcome and Captain introduced him on the team bus. The participant observation was briefly explained before the team travelled to a suburban training ground to make a NZRFU training video and have their first practice of the test week. The “team only” evaluation of the previous test, prior to practice, saw Coach accepting responsibility

for not fully preparing the team before that test and a veteran back noting that players had been too nice to each other. Individual players were addressed directly and critically but not left with sole accountability for their play. The most experienced back noted, “We must be realistic. It might take sixty minutes to crash a test side. If we think we can do it in ten we can easily get dinged by a team.” Other experienced players reinforced the need to take the opposition seriously. Coach, not ranting or raving or pacing up and down, stressed practices as a team for the forthcoming week. The forwards went to the video crew and the backs practised with Coach. The veteran reserve first-five provided valuable advice to his less experienced replacement on kicking, the wind and control of play. Coach checked on player alignment and the reality of a training move being replicated in the test. The new fullback received close attention from Coach and his fellow backs to ensure his ease with key moves and code calls. All through training there were public spectators, buses tooting horns in recognition and children calling out in a blend of hero worship and rugby sagacity. Changing from training video to test practice, the players asked for drinks, but none had been supplied. Researcher slipped over the road to a dairy and purchased fruit juice drinks which were readily consumed. Back at the hotel there was an evening meal, the players disappeared to the team room or individual rooms, and the selectors met informally.

Wednesday

Breakfast was healthy and hearty for the All Blacks, with a clear effort by the motel staff to meet requests for particular meals, milkshakes or health foods. Players did not appear to sit in particular groups or cliques, but filled up spaces next to each other as they arrived for their morning meal. At the 9:30 a.m. team meeting the manager congratulated the two new All Blacks, FB* and LF2. There were critical comments on the lack of fruit juice and the lifts not working. Manager said he’d checked other hotels before deciding on the present one. (“I went around and seen [sic] what there was.”) FER checked on getting gear washed. The players then edged forward a little on their chairs to listen to Coach who moved directly into brief points on the previous day’s training and then discussed the previous test. “Let’s be honest, nobody rated the Irish, except one or two senior players, who warned you that when it came to a test they would be different. Talking about attitudes, we coaches were as much to blame as you were.” He went on to criticise the forwards whose body position was too high and invited them to, “Ask yourselves how many times you were guilty of taking someone around the top. You went in as individuals and wrestled. It’s a different story if you go in with numbers so you can

* Abbreviations for players are identical with those used for the Provincial Team, noted in Figure 5.1 on p.120.

split them and blow them back, that's fine." An All Black forward responded, noting difficulty with one phase of Ireland's lineout. Coach noted the plan for an Irish call of a short lineout and told his number eight, "I want their second-five creamed as they take the ball."

Illegal Irish lineout play, lineout tactics, tackling and kicking into the box by HB were then discussed. Two quiet backs were asked for tactical viewpoints. Coach turned to CT, explaining there were times to kick with his left foot. "Maybe you weren't confident with that, so we're going to practise it more this week." Coach pointed out that with the first Irish try LF1 was present but without any supporting midfield backs. FER noted that RW had been caught in the ruck and the All Blacks were clearly outnumbered by the Irish in the scoring movement. Coach turned to FE. "When their first-five made a move did you count the players outside?" "No, I didn't." LF1, "I think we played a holding defence style, and we need to look at that." Coach responded, "I think that is right, we didn't look as if we were going to get up and smack them over."

Assistant Coach added his view, for the first time in the meeting.

It's absolutely imperative you follow your man across. I didn't hear you yelling for your man on defence. Go for the man, not the numbers. Learn their bloody names, it makes a difference. When they stand the guy wide, bring a loosie in, give them that man to mark.... You've got to practise your defence in this way and practise it at pace. Today we need to go through defensive moves on the field. We never hit the pill in that test, we went at half pace.

Coach, "Yes, and that makes us easier to tackle." He asked for the main points learned from the Centenary Tests and discussed these briefly before relating them to tackling.

If you're going into a guy and he's clearing the ball you tackle him, and that takes him out. Just after half time FE, you had a ping up the side line and you were run out over the line. It was a waste, you've got to get it back into the forwards. Cover for the wipers kicks wasn't good. You weren't good on the high kicks either. We would look at it and grab their guy high. One of the things All Black teams have always done is really drill the guy who takes the high ball. If the ball gets spilt it goes off at an angle and they can't really use it. It's an opportunity for us to use it. The first opponent taking a high ball, take him around the legs, drill them.

FER explained techniques of running and going for the ball and man. "Time your run. The rule is clear, first person competes in the air for the ball, second person drills the opponent going for it." The coach added confirmation. "FER's right. Time your run, communicate, and look. Don't

hesitate to call out 'you've got him, you've got him.' That puts a doubt in the catcher's mind. You're too nice FE, you're too nice CTR."

A prop pointed out that the Irish forwards stepped forward at scrumtime. "The referee was trying to get them around but he never penalised them. We need to go crab-wise." Coach, "Yes, but can they do that if we're really putting pressure on them?" Captain, "We've got to sort that out." Coach, "We just didn't have the variation in mid-field. The commitment to put the ball and player in the right place wasn't there. Our whole aggression factor was missing, except for Captain and LF1. We just didn't commit ourselves to the ball on the ground." *I notice quite clearly his use of the inclusive terms "we" and "our" in points made, assuming responsibility with his team for their actions. (Researcher's Notebook 3.6.92).*

AC made a point about an opposition player being danger, at times appearing to exceed the law. RW was direct, "Why don't we f--g whack him? Drill him and deal with him." FER adds, "It's urgency we need in some of those situations that we didn't have last time." The coach focused on illegal play.

We cannot go through a test match with the lineout not being refereed. You've got to do something if the ref. hasn't done anything. And with the rucks, we don't want anything dirty. It's all in the rules of the game, so you ruck aggressively as the rules allow. We can't have every side in the world making their own rules. We deal to cheats. I tell you we're going to deal with some of these guys with legal ferocity. No way does any rugby team take the All Blacks cheaply.

The team discussed the need to ruck strongly, with AC making the point:

Once you've got the ball from the ruck it's one-on-one, three-on-two, two-on-one. LW, on your side are you running for glory, or what? You've got to be clear in your mind how you're playing. We've got to get into a kicking game for variation. It's called foot-ball. You've got to get into the kicking mode where you can drill that ball. You can drill yourself to saturation point by practising yourself, chip kicks, grubbers, wipers. The Old Timers are right, you guys must work on that and get it right in your time so you're good kickers.

At practice the backs and forwards spent time separately with their coaches. After practice FER was on the field surrounded by boys. He had a string bag of eight rugby balls cutting into his shoulder, which I took off to the changing room. This player, whom I had heard the public describe as distant or rude, is virtually submerged as the boys push around him, being rude and inconsiderate. They jump up and slap his back, call out to him, thrust bits of dirty paper under his nose for him to sign, pretend to take balls out of the bag and push onto him. All the time he stands quietly signing autographs, with words to those who politely ask for his

signature. It is a different picture that I'm getting now, looking from within the All Blacks, to that which I had formed from media and public comments when I was outside this team. I can't help thinking few people would put up with such rudeness and physical attention without some retaliatory comments....Coach asked me why I don't use a dictaphone for my observation. I had considered this but feel it would be unduly intrusive in a tense changing room, and possibly distract players. In some situations the dictaphone could pick up confidential remarks or comments that the speaker would not want publicly recorded. (Researcher's Notebook 3.6.92).

Following practice, lunch and a free afternoon the All Blacks attended an evening Parliamentary Reception where the Prime Minister welcomed them and the Irish team. *His speech has a suffusing banality, and timewarps the listener back to the 1950s, in a monocultural and monolingual welcome. The Prime Minister ignores in word and deed any recognition of his country's, or the All Black's, biculturalism. He commends the work of the NZRFU. An Opposition Party speaker tells the Irish they were moral victors in the first test, and then an MP claims two Samoan All Blacks as constituents in the hour of social intercourse. (Researcher's Notebook 3.6.92).*

At 9:45 p.m. the All Blacks gradually gathered in the team room to watch the Australian State of Origin rugby league match. The two coaches and Captain discussed possible selections for the forthcoming tour to Australia and South Africa. A particular player is considered from a range of perspectives. "How would he relate to other guys on tours?" "Can he learn and develop?" "He has skills that demand consideration but have we looked at the skills of the other players for this position as closely as we're looking at him?" "What is he like as a guy to have on a team for three months of touring?" *I ask if they would prefer me to move away, but they do not. For all of AC's extroversion and Coach's conservatism, their trust in an observer's confidentiality is deeply appreciated. (Researcher's Notebook 3.6.92).*

Thursday

9:29 a.m. In the team room. Coach discussed aerobic levels, naming players who were down on fitness. "You guys have to do some definite work. You've got to keep it going fellas until after two weeks' practice on tour." He then moved to training plans for the day and elicited player perspectives on moves. Coach's plans for the lineout concluded with the reminder, "If we pick up one of their lineouts, then LF3 is straight out to second-five," before addressing the backs. "I've chatted through a couple of things with AC, moves we'll use today and on Saturday." These included greater use of the blindside, calling the runners up, going blindside on the wing,

actioning a Willie Away move, and then Captain would be in the play with the ball moving to the blindside. Coach directed his new fullback not to run the blind if it was less than 20 yards to the Irish goal line, as it would crowd the play, and reminded backs that “FE will just call ‘two’ if he goes blind.” RW looked up from his clasped hands and sought more clarity. LF2 supported him. *This is interesting. Is it just that two of the most senior and experienced players don’t understand, or are others unclear about what is to be done but don’t want to ask? The player who had mentioned his uncertainty over a move to me yesterday hasn’t raised this yet with either coach. (Researcher’s Notebook 4.6.92).*

The moves to be practised were emphasised. “It has to happen in the match so it has to happen at practice today,” with Coach citing the wing or fullback cutting in outside the first-five as an example. “If FB comes up on the outside then he’s seen a real chance and when that happens the ball goes to him. I want you to call out, FB, because you’ll be able to support him, CT. Clear with that, FE?” Coach speculated on possible Irish tactical variations from the last test and the need to practise repeated kick-offs to ensure All Black control from that set play. Other situations were outlined. “Now, if we get the ball in this part of the field, FE, what do you do?” he asked, pointing to the board. Coach attempted to reassure any uncertain player and stressed that “If anybody’s got any confusion it must come out today.” *This is a double bind for a coach with a short timespan before a test, wanting complete team understanding in discussion, and honest player responses but knowing time may dictate a predilection towards autocratic decisions. (Researcher’s Notebook 4.6.92).*

HB asked about players going to ground and options for feeding the ball back. Coach seemed to be clear, direct, and interactive.

Let’s identify again why we do the runners. We use them to take out their loose forwards, and have their backs going back a step, and then we get red hot ball out to our backs. On Saturday, Captain did it so well we didn’t need a second runner. Now you can’t muck around on a “Red Hot” call. You must make sure there are no bodies in the way between HB and FE. It’s got to be clear.

Assistant Coach recollected, “Their number four deliberately comes through to shag up the ball. He was doing it all the time. Hit him with your shoulder. He should feel it somewhere in the ribs, legitimately hard play fellas.” Selector added his observation, “We must face the ball all the time. They can’t pull these things if we keep our eyes on the ball all of the time.” The talk moved to more fluid options, after Coach’s caveat that the ball between the 22 and 10 metre marks was to

go right into the opposition corner. Captain added, "If we do that, it's vital we have the chasers. LW?" "Also RW and CT," added his coach. "The first guy forces the Irish player to the touchline and the second guy finishes him off." There were a couple of anticipatory smiles. The need for clarity in moves was revisited. "Let's hear you calling today with scrums," said the coach, "I don't want to call them." HB responded to this, seeking clarification of scrum calls, "Is it me, FE or LF2?" FER, for match after match the managing director, scriptwriter and lead actor, acted as prompt, declaring "FE, usually." Coach qualified this. "FE calls the moves, assuming he will get the ball, or if LF2 or LF3 sees a move is on, they will call it." A succinct LF2 joined in. "That's too many callers." The plan was clarified.

In the bus to training, sitting together, HB kept his eyes on FE's face while talking animatedly through set moves that he 'drew' on his arm and thigh with his fingers. By arrival time at the practice ground FE had looked directly at his partner once. *Is this an illustration of differing cultures, as eye contact is not necessarily an appropriate element of language and social interaction for Pacific Island persons? I recall one rugby administrator being critical of an Island player who "Doesn't even look you in the eye when you're talking to him." (Researcher's Notebook 4.6.92).*

At the practice ground the initial forward work lacked impact in the coach's eyes. "Let's have it harder, a bit more aggro. We're playing a test in a few days." They repeated the move with greater intensity and some onlooking boys broke into spontaneous applause. Captain, in his short sleeved jersey, threw into lineouts, leaning forward to put his weight on his left foot as the ball curved an arc in flight from his right hand. A move was rehearsed. Another throw in, and Captain urged them to "Drive it". Coach had a quick word with the grouped forwards. The onlookers could hear his final words, "We want red hot ball," before the ball was moved at pace from L1 to LF1, to HB, to LF3, and players regrouped for the next move. "LF2 drive, LF1 runner, HB out to the backs." It worked exactly as previously discussed in the team session with Captain grunting his approval. AC was with the backs watching as FB came into the back line with LF2 on his left and passed to FE. Onlookers heard the All Black coach's satisfaction at a better forward effort. "Good work LF, that's the way. Good kick, HB. Good nudge."

AC, the back coach, stood out among the backs as they rehearsed kicking for touch. Then the second-five went down on the ball with six pairs of All Black feet flying over him. The hard drive culminated in a try to Captain. Coach smiled, "Well done, that's the idea, hit those blokes, good stuff." Another move, saw a try by FB coming into the backline. Coach's, "Good call,

good call,” was supportive and specific to a key player in the move. It was this player whom Coach had previously thought might not express misunderstandings of such moves.

A further move lacked urgency, and Coach stressed to Captain, “You’ve gotta call ‘Red Hot’ to free that ball for the backs.” Assistant Coach is pleased with the teamwork of his backs, who then practised team movements with the forwards, with the right wing and captain scoring.

The forwards moved to the scrum machine, but Captain was not pleased with their setting. “We’re not set properly.” The pack readjusted. “On FR1, take it up FR, in the knees, in the knees FR.” The eight bodies heaved concertedly, taped heads strained, vasilined ears were wedged between front row bodies, and the legs of the number eight quivered with the pressure. The effort was prolonged. Coach, at the front of the machine, was down on his hands and knees, virtually in the space of the front row, watching them intently. Captain directed the next scrummage on the machine. “On their ball, LF2, we call ‘coming, weight’, okay?” Coach added to this, “Treat it is as the first scrum of the game. Their ball, let’s do it right.”

3:30 p.m. In the team motel Captain pops his head around the door and asks if I want to go with him to TV3 as they are doing an interview. What do I do? I appreciate the invitation, but I’m seeing Coach at 4:00 p.m. and Captain won’t be back by then. I ring Coach but no answer. Shall I leave a note for him? If he’s coming back deliberately for that 4:00 p.m. time or taking a break from the selection committee meeting, I should be here. I want to go with Captain, but reluctantly say I’d better stay behind and keep my appointment with Coach, knowing that he may be late or not available. Captain goes off by himself, a different life now from being one of the boys with communal command of the back seat of the team bus. I get through to Coach, “No, it’s not convenient. Can we meet tomorrow?” I check with the manager, to see if he has time to meet with me. He is in and we’ll meet in an hour. (Researcher’s Notebook 4.6.92).

After discussing their roles with liaison officers who had mismanaged part of the day, the researcher met Captain in the captain’s room. A schoolboy had come in seeking an autograph. There was less than 48 hours to a critical rugby test but the All Black captain had made time available for a researcher and a rugby-keen schoolboy. An incident from the test within the heat of the game with a fleeting time-span will receive more public attention than that hidden half-hour spent by the captain. Later, in the team-room at 6:15 p.m., players sat in a semi-circle for a ball-signing session. The balls had numbers on them so each player could sign next to his

number. This enabled all to see who hadn't signed and ensured completeness of signatures. Three pamphlets on drugs are given to the team, along with a provincial team's advice sheet on nutrition. This was followed by assembly for the team photograph.

Friday

At 9:45 a.m. in the team-room Manager clarified the masseur's timetable and availability. Coach's talk concentrated on the test ground and its features, noting the need for goal kickers to consider factors such as the location of stands, direction of the wind, and effect of the sun. Coach explained that he and AC would take the primary decision-makers, Captain, FE and HB, around the ground and discuss ground factors. He emphasised, "The key to this game is to be physically aggressive inside the law, hard and fair. The Irish have said that we're going to go outside the law and fix it, and influence the referee. That's gamesmanship, and we're not getting into bullshit like that."

There is no public relations mileage for Coach in making such statements, as there is only the team present. To an observer there is little of the macho "Kill the bastards" scenario often sketched by rugby's social critics. Indeed, the impression is of a coach who plays to the law, valuing skills, a team plan, and player commitment and fulfilment. (Researcher's Notebook 5.6.92).

The test ground was visited at 9:45 a.m. FB practised his goal kicking as FER put up-and-unders into the goal mouth. Moves were run through, with a range of game plan tactics. In the high stand a couple of boys watched the All Blacks below. The New Zealand Army Band, in their red jackets, busily rehearsed for their part in the test.

12:30 p.m. At the motel a press conference was set up amidst a background of sponsor's advertising placards. The All Black captain wore a sponsor's cap. The researcher recorded the conference. Two hours later, 24 hours before the test match, Captain and the forwards gathered in the car park of the motel for the ritual of practising lineout calls and moves and furthering player interdependence.

I wonder at the risks of All Blacks leaping on this rough surface. Is it too fanciful to have one of the fans, an All Black group person, motel staff member or liaison officer check the area first, or even to sweep the ground? At some stage a test result will be affected by a leaping lock's withdrawal through twisting an ankle in a car park...(Researcher's Notebook 5.6.92).

4:33 p.m. In the team room more rugby balls were signed by the track-suited players. The balls were not inflated as they would be retained by team members as souvenirs. Players were getting a little tense, with not as much joking as at the previous day's signing session. The researcher was given one of the signed balls. It was a deeply appreciated gesture. The team then settled to watch a video of their last test. Coach had made written notes from a prior viewing of this video, heading these with *Team Spirit* and *Attitude*. His notes explicitly covered major points for the video discussion [see Appendix F.10]. There was little comment as the team watched the video. Coach, Captain and LF2 sat in the front near each other. As the on-screen backs fumbled the ball their coach muttered, "Go down. As soon as that ball goes to ground we've just got to put a body on it."

A threequarter scored for Ireland. An All Black stated quietly, "I should have had him. I came across too quickly." FER pointed out to HB, "Don't kick with your back to the forwards, HB." Captain indicated support for the criticism, as the ball had been taken off HB's boot. The halfback replied ruefully, "Yeah, I realised that as soon as I kicked it!" One experienced All Black suggested quietly to a veteran team mate, "This is where we started to crack them, but we let them off the hook with silly mistakes."

One player was considered by the commentator to be disadvantaged by illegal Irish play but this was not accepted by the self-critical All Blacks. LW knocked on, to a low groan from his intent team-mates. Ireland broke away, and were foiled by CT. "Well tackled, CT", approved a fellow back. Captain noted the value of watching the video. "Now is the time to get focused. Collectively, as a team, we can't be happy at what we've seen." He pinpointed a veteran forward. "Attitudes have to change. If we don't harden up, FR, they'll have it over us. It didn't mean a thing to you to pull on that jersey, did it FR1? What did it mean to you, what did you feel?" The prop forward replied briefly, almost inaudibly. *This is up-front interaction. Just as the old hands have a more prominent role in discussion, so they are used as the foremost lightning rods and focus for criticism in team talks. (Researcher's Notebook 5.6.92).*

Coach was critical of a forward's lack of effort. "How much effort was our top prop putting in? FRR came on, not a full prop and our scrum improved." He continued, "I've never been so embarrassed as a coach. There were heads up all day; backs, with your alignment you were quite happy to jog across the field. If it hasn't shamed you I feel I want to get out there right now and show what an All Black is." LF2, a veteran test player, noted the better preparation of the

current team. “We’ve addressed where we lacked urgency and attitude.” Team-mates were intent upon the experienced flanker’s comments. “We’ve got to take control. The training runs on into tomorrow. When you pull on an All Black jersey...,” he began, and paused with emotion in the silent room. “An All Black never thinks ‘I shouldn’t be here.’ But you’ve got to f-----g piss blood to wear an All Black jersey.” It was an effective and direct message.

The captain eased the intensity. “Be confident to have a run. Let’s play well. Go through the moves tonight. The number one job is to hit the rucks. We owe it to ourselves. Anyone else want to say anything?” He checked with two veteran backs who had not spoken and reminded his team to, “Go over it tonight. Write the moves down. Write the calls down.”

That evening I reflect on the players’ points about rugby administration. Travel arrangements could be an index of how they are valued by the NZRFU. L2 selected for his first test this week, found out at 11:30 p.m. on Monday night about his travel arrangements for the next day. The team had been announced on Sunday afternoon television. Another new forward found out about travel on Monday evening from the All Black captain’s wife. HBR went to the airline on Tuesday and found his ticket hadn’t been paid for, and he couldn’t travel. “Fortunately my girlfriend is a travel agent so she got me a seat on the other airline after contacting the travel company used by the NZRFU.” The physiotherapist had to ring the airlines on Monday night to find out which plane he was on, as he hadn’t been told. The record I have already built up of apparent organisational ineptitude should be a major concern for rugby administrators. It appears to players that often the administrators “don’t want to know”. In accounts of cases where wives were not informed of player injury, the actions were intolerable. The players’ committee has a range of considerations, but interaction with administrators appears less than supportive, frequent or positive. Why couldn’t the new test fullback have had his All Black tracksuit by Tuesday? Why can’t the boot sponsors have access to players before a test week or, say, to the pool of kickers, and give them boots? Why can’t selectors of All Blacks be paid an annual salary or have sponsors pay for them to spend the year working with coaches and rugby development? (Researcher’s Notebook 5.6.92).

Dinner time. Players discussed memorable tests. RW recalled his first test when he didn’t feel any physical sensation of weariness in his first test as he “played the whole game in a buzz.” In the second test his legs felt so numb he thought he would have to go off. A female chef came out seeking autographs. A group of All Blacks discussed violent rugby players, including those blind to everything but “team loyalty” and others described as thugs. RW had just finished

describing a frightening incident in which a player's head was ripped open, when a brother and sister shyly approached to tremulously ask for signatures. "We are on our way to the airport but Mum saw you here yesterday and we left home early today hoping we could see some of you for autographs." Players chatted to them briefly. It was 8:12 p.m. and the test kick-off was only 18 hours away. The girl gulped, glanced at her brother for reassurance, and looked a little surprised at her own boldness as she blurted out, "Good luck for tomorrow."

Saturday. Test Match Day.

Breakfast time. In the privacy of an All Black dining room the preoccupied coach and researcher ate and talked. Coach's immediate consideration was to have a word to LF2 about watching onfield situations in order to provide leadership and support for Captain, changing the play if necessary. Captain was often locked in the depths of the forwards and LF2's experienced and insightful eyes could serve the official leader well. Coach also wanted a quiet word with HB and FE.

10:00 a.m. Forwards practised their lineouts. A code call generated the "Willie Away." Then the call "Ice-cut" saw LF1 cut between the five-eighths. The reserves were involved to ensure they were familiar with code calls in play. At 10:30 a.m., while the backs met, the forwards gathered in the dining room for a light brunch. A veteran forward urged, "Let's get into them early." His captain was direct. "Head down, arse up. Let's do the hard work at scrum time." The two flankers talked quietly about running off each other.

I'm struck by the flankers' warm interaction, fluency and affirmative body language. They discuss the weather and its possible effects on play. LF1 asks me how my research is going. I say there seems to be a special bond between the loose forwards and he explains their playing interdependence and apparently high level of personal trust. "Yes, the knowledge that you have a bond beyond the physical one of place, of space and time, of putting your trust as a person, your body, in your friend's hands...if he doesn't appear or do what he has said then you're at risk, and so is that trust. Yes, there is that dimension." It is an evocative thesis. I recall the comments of one player that, "The heritage of New Zealand rugby is a big thing for me at the moment...the first time I pulled on the jersey...when I looked down at the silver fern on my chest..."

(Researcher's Notebook 5.6.92).

It is 1:03 p.m. on test match day. The silent All Blacks sat in a semi-circle in their hotel team-room. Two players bit their nails. The team room filled slowly. Piped music was audible. LFR

sighed and blew. It reminded the researcher of the first division Provincial Team before their Ranfurly Shield game. Tense. Keenly nervous. RW moved around the room with a cup of coffee. A diagram was on the whiteboard. Captain coughed, blew and muffled another cough. He sat still, gazed ahead and down. In the privacy of this All Black team the coach spoke. "I'm looking for aggression...use the blind into the wind...use the blind side and we scrum, and we repeat it 40 times if we have to. Be prepared to graft it out for 40 minutes...We hang onto the ball. The most important thing today is to hang on to the ball in the tackle. No fifty-fifty passes." He paused and deliberately repeated his point in the stilled room and continued.

Blocks, get quickly around the ball carrier. Think, forwards, "I've got to be part of the platform." There are two runners only, Captain and LF1, otherwise LF3 sometimes, but he will be called. Otherwise, all the time, LF3, it's up the middle. Use five men in the first lineout. Aim to put pressure on that ball so they have to scramble it out. If they have the ball they get drilled. First man there, get around the legs. Attack, discipline, thinking. With the wind, first of all we get it down there, high down the middle; around half way drill it into the others...Concentrate. You're getting there LF1, FR1, FR2. We're alert to their quick 22m. drop-out. CT, you're starting around there. Go for it. If they're silly enough to do it, and you run for it, use your support. It's your day, FR1. Take our yard at every lineout. You don't come off and grizzle about being distracted, you do something about it as a team. You drill them in the tackles. They can't do anything if they're drilled to the ground. Hit everything at pace. Be very positive this time. We show them from the start, fellas, that you've got a black jersey on. You have concentration and thinking.

The 1992 All Blacks filed quietly out to their bus and travelled to the test ground with nobody speaking. The dressing room setting for the All Black team was to provide singular rituals. For over 250 times this setting had been part of New Zealand test rugby. The players headed up from their changing room to look at the ground. The "curtain raiser" participants were soaked. In the changing room, Captain emphasised the importance of possession. Coach spoke to FE who was busy rubbing in liniment, then brushed back his forelock as he spoke quietly to LF3.

The changing room was small, a concrete floored dungeon reached by concrete steps down from a corridor which led on to the union's panelled lounge. The area for the six reserves comprised one restricted bench seat in the shower area, which players brushed past going to the one lavatory which served 25 men. Cobwebs above had the same familiar location as for the Provincial Team observed in the previous season. LW worked on his sprigs. AC, standing in the doorway, had been in such test settings thirteen times as a player in an era of far fewer test opportunities. Players stripped. The atmosphere was organised and professional.

LW came to my side, asking if I was writing notes. I said "No", as I saw he wanted help to change his studs. Selector and I started to rather unskilfully unscrew the sprigs. FER leant over

me and took the boot as I tried to use the pliers LW had given me. The quick, efficient, consummate professional, FER had a small tool kit which he unrolled and then deftly switched LW's sprigs. I was impressed by the action. (Researcher's Notebook 6.6.92).

Captain won the toss. The All Blacks were to play into the wind. Coach had a word with LW about his defence partnership with the new fullback. "You have to get back and support him, LW," he said quietly. Coach had a word with Captain, who stood at the mirror with a cream on his face. His lock jogged on the spot, tossing a ball high in the air. Coach moved to his No. 8, gesticulating as he talked. LF1 emerged from the lavatory. This was his 22nd test. "Good luck fellas." "Plenty of communication," added Coach as he put his arm around the shoulder of his first-five. The reserves moved out. The fifteen All Blacks moved up the concrete steps with an uneven clatter of sprigs. Then the strains of their haka echoed in the stand, with some spectators joining in. It was cold. Rain drifted across at the 2:30 p.m. kick-off and the game became increasingly dominated by black jerseys. In the second half a reserve came from his sideline seat into the stand to tell Coach that Captain had some broken teeth. Coach was clearly concerned that his captain might be in pain or have a nerve exposed. The All Black doctor had a role as messenger. Coach directed him at 3:13 p.m. to tell Captain that, "They don't change tactics in the second half. They drive right up the middle. Tell the boys to get onto the ball carrier early."

The test ended with a 50-6 win to New Zealand. Into the post-match changing room an opponent clattered down the concrete steps asking for LF1. A Kiwi accented voice responded, "He's not in yet mate." *The private physical vignette of the next minute reflected a rare insight into the accord of elite sport team leaders. The All Black captain came in to check his teeth, and placed his arm around Coach's shoulder with a bloodied smile. His coach grinned at him, "Good stuff, eh?"* (Researcher's Notebook 6.6.92).

4:10 p.m. Photographers entered. Coach is giving press interviews. Manager brought a boy in, and a front-row forward crouched with him for a photo. The All Black captain cut plaster off his foot. He turned to the photographers, "Okay guys," and they left. Within another ten minutes steam from the showers drifted through from the reserves area. Three of the players lit up cigarettes. The special position of the All Blacks in world rugby was illustrated by the opposition player who approached the naked All Black captain standing at the steam coated mirror. "Sorry to ask you now, but could you sign my programme?" "No trouble." The All Black captain signed and resumed his shaving before gingerly feeling his mouth and asking his

forwards, “Who hit me?” They replied, “The hooker.” “But he wasn’t even the guy I tangled with!”

Over the weekend the All Black selectors were to select their team to tour Australia and South Africa. This was clearly on players’ minds. A team-mate turned to the tyro lock forward, “Well done mate, you’re in my team to go to Australia and South Africa.” Players were coming in to swap tracksuits and the sponsor’s representative asked players if they wished to ring anybody on his cellular phone. It was 4:43 p.m. Coach, in his shirt sleeves, opened a can of drink and shook hands with a three-quarter, “Well done, RW.” RW’s father came in to share his son’s 50th test occasion. Players commented positively on the new fullback’s debut.

I am standing on the reserves side of the door between the rooms. Coach came over to me. “As a psychologist, what would you do, let those who’re going to tour know about it?” I am impressed by the paradox of the All Black coach, with his mana and knowledge, openly raising such a question. My response is that if even one player is not in the touring side then nothing should be said. If they are all selected to tour, I would tell them and discuss the confidentiality and trust implicit in this. Coach states, “They’re all going to tour.” (Researcher’s Notebook 6.6.92).

5:15 p.m. Manager congratulated FB on his record number of points for a test debutant. FR2 is the “Most Valued Player” for the test. Then came the special and private team acknowledgements that come once only in players’ careers. LF presented a test tie to his fellow lock, whose test debut had been markedly successful. An experienced prop presented a test tie to his fellow front-rower after that player’s notable debut, noting that, “It gives me a hell of a lot of pleasure to present this tie to you, FR2. We go back a long way and you’ve come through.” The presentation of the third tie to the tyro fullback was made by the test veteran of the team. “Well, FB,” began RW, “I might not be the tidiest of room mates, but I’m very proud to present you with this first test tie.” Sharing the confines of a motel room this week, there was only two years difference in ages between the two backs, but also some 49 All Black tests and half a million kilometres of test rugby.

Manager congratulated RW on his 50th test. The 28 year old had built a record as one of the game’s great wingers since his 1984 debut and was acknowledged by his team mates. FER, his fellow provincial player for most of a decade, spoke warmly in congratulating RW on playing his 50th test, asking everyone to stand to recognise the achievement. The room was cleared of all

non-team persons, apart from RW's father and Researcher. The All Black coach spoke, "Thanks very much, fellas." He paused and smiled slightly. "I hope you enjoy tonight. You can all let your hair down, and not worry about tomorrow...And if you can't read between the lines, you're bloody thicker than I thought!" *Twenty-one players, aware of the impending touring team announcement, ponder on the implication of Coach's words. Some players appear to immediately relax, while others seem to replay Coach's words in their minds to confirm the message of their selection. I reflect upon Coach's action and wonder how many elite coaches would have done this, with attendant risks of a player speaking, even unwittingly, to the media. (Researcher's Notebook 6.6.92).*

A voice in my ear asked, "How's that for ultimate Yuppiedom?" and pointed to the open lavatory door where a player was urinating while simultaneously talking on a mobile phone! In the changing room, LWR had his arm around LW. The father of RW sat quietly in a corner, his pride evident and justified. The myth of remote and insular All Blacks was being challenged. A player chatted with the researcher about joining the team for dinner. Coach had a word with the team. "Enjoy yourselves tonight, but there's no going over the top like last week, and look after your mates."

At the test match dinner two experienced players discussed Coach telling them about the touring selection. FR1 commented that this gesture, "Raised our respect for Coach even more, and we have a hell of a lot of respect for him already. If you deserve the recognition you appreciate having it. I never expected an All Black coach would do that." The back supported his teammate's comments.

10:43 p.m. Small groups chatted in the bar area of the dinner hotel. One of the tight forwards commented to Coach, "It felt good in there today. Is that how you wanted me to play?" "Yes, I want you in there working hard grafting, and if a plum pops up, go for it." Another enquiring player was told, "You know I'll never criticize you in front of the others. It's always one-to-one and no bullshit." The discussion on scrummaging drew a comment from FR1 that, "When I'm last to fold in we are often on the back foot and so I'm going in earlier and calling the scrum on the loosehead." The bus arrived to take the players back to the motel.

Sunday

The All Black selectors, (Coach, Assistant Coach and the third Selector), met in Coach's motel bedroom to finalise the All Black team for South Africa and Australia. They considered a 13/17

mix of backs and forwards and focused on particular roles of loose forwards. “We’ve got that last loose forward to tidy up, first-five and wings.” They analysed a loose forward valued by Captain and discussed reasons advocated by Captain for the player’s selection. *Coach is open minded and I am struck by the weight given to the captain’s opinion, and the supportive response by the selectors.* (Researcher’s Notebook 7.6.92).

Locks were discussed with particular reference to their lack of weight, and tapping back of the ball. An experienced prop was discussed, with the need for him to contribute greater leadership within the team. It was decided that one of the forwards in the test team with outdoors interests should not go skiing or play rugby before the tour. The selectors pencilled in two loose forwards for the touring party.

Coach suggested that the New Zealand XV, to play against England B while the All Blacks were on tour, should be considered. Discussion ranged widely. Young locks were discussed, who needed experience coupled with their raw power as possible 1995 World Cup players. “Let’s develop them.” Then the balance of backs for one position was considered. “It really comes down to one option of the two we’ve discussed.” “If you take this player, X, then are you locked into one position? I’m not saying that’s wrong, it’s looking at the permutations.” “Yeah, but you’re still a man short midfield and I don’t want my test players playing midweek.” Possible implications of their most experienced first-five becoming injured were discussed.

The room was untidy, the bed unmade. An ashtray was full of cigarette butts. Outside, the harbour lay stilled in streaky sunshine. A selector’s touch of the ’flu was evident. On Coach’s desk there was a clutter of papers. An All Black tie lay on the television alongside the coach’s dictaphone. A videotape, dated 30/5/92, sat on the round table by a selector with an ashtray on top of it. On the desks were team sheets, a handwritten letter “Dear [Coach]...”, lists of players and positions, and a travel sheet with alterations.

Possible names for selection in the New Zealand XV were pencilled in. There was a clear intimation by Coach that Selector, responsible for the team, should be happy with the selections....“He distributes the ball well and doesn’t kick too badly.” “I have a concern about this guy’s ability to tackle.” “Shit, we seem to be thin in this position, don’t we?” “This guy was rated on the Divisional Team tour and we should keep him developing with the New Zealand XV. What do we see as best for his rugby development?”

A player for the tour who can cover half-back and first-five was discussed. “We have to be fair to him. He wants to be halfback. We’ll play him at halfback. He is our halfback.” Their experienced first-five was discussed, with the observation that “there’s more tactical kicking under the speeded game than we really envisaged.” The selectors analysed the opposition half-back and his key role in the Wallabies team. “At the back of the lineout we’ve got to get to him.” There was a critical consideration of one tour candidate’s ability to do this, in the analytical light of his previously observed play.

Discussion turned to lessons from the previous day’s test to possible play against the Australians and Springboks. Coach, “We must not get carried away by one game that we won by 60 points, that’s not the reality of rugby tests in Australia.” The potential danger of an Australian back was discussed and analysed. Possible All Black wings were discussed, one seemed to find favour but needed to improve his defensive work and become fitter. The tour would provide opportunity to do this.

The New Zealand XV was now tentatively framed, so that a double check could be made on back-up choices in case of injuries in the touring All Blacks. A vigorous debate developed about the backs and possible physical stresses of touring games. Coach’s pen in his fist pumped up and down vigorously on his knee. The selectors revised their progress and returned to energetic debate on back selection. “What happens if RW is injured?” A selector put the case for one back. Another selector favoured a different player. Consideration was given to the second-five choice in a test if a certain player was picked as first-five. Midfield combinations were considered. “If we take only five, then one is going to double up in the game before a test.” “Why not use a wing at centre for that game?” Potential possibilities were explored.

Debate between the selectors is engrossing. There is a frank, open, and often emphatic expression of views, but there appears to be clear intention to consider others’ viewpoints. I wonder if the NZRFU appreciate the value of the particular chemistry apparent here, with the evident mutual respect and advocacy. One of the trio occasionally acts as a moderator. Is this because of his nature or because he is not directly responsible for the touring test team? The discussion is vigorous with such strong minded individuals. Players would be surprised at the time and depth of consideration given to their possible selection. (Researcher’s Notebook 7.6.92).

The play of possible All Black test backs was analysed and related to the play of a key Australian opponent. A half-back favoured for the tour needed to improve his speed in unloading the ball. Goal kicking became a factor in considering various back line combinations. A couple of younger backs were discarded because “they’re not ready yet.” Coach noted another player as, “An interesting one. The looseness in his play worries me.” AC commented “Yeah, but when you get him away into a structured environment those sort of guys can grow.” Another contender was dismissed unanimously. “He’s got no guts when the pressure is on.”

A player was chosen as a reserve to cover selected positions. Discussion on front row players and their techniques spurred Coach into jumping to his feet and imitating the front row setting of a player making errors but blaming another in the front row. This unexpectedly humorous depiction of the forward had AC laughing aloud. Another forward was still in contention as, “He could become an ideal player under the new rules.” Then the last two loose forwards were finalised. One was seen as a probable Wednesday player, given the need to rest two of the most prominent forwards in the game before a test. “Yes, I think that’s right, even if we lose a game mid-week.” They viewed this prospect with distaste but discussed the priorities of player selection and test matches. A veteran past All Black forward was adjudged in terms of whether it would be “a retrograde step” to select him. Another player’s motivation to tour South Africa was considered against his commitment to New Zealand rugby. For one position there did not appear to be a clear selection, and transfer of a player from another position was considered, argued through and rejected. Possible All Black replacements were firmed up. The comparative merits of having a player go with the national university team to the world competition in Italy or play for the New Zealand XV were discussed. Finally the All Black team was provisionally selected.

While the All Blacks arrive at the dining room and foyer in ones and twos seeking lost gear or changing their flights home, the selectors continue to reflect upon their team. Discussion moves off-task to the new laws, the lineouts, the test against Australia with the latter team having had one week of the new rugby laws, the critical importance of the referee, and the appointment of New South Wales’ fifth ranked referee to the Queensland vs. New Zealand game. I am struck by the concern these selectors have for individuals. A young player, not selected for the tour, is given supportive planning for his immediate rugby future. They debate his motivation and personal qualities and decide how rugby opportunity can place him with support to achieve. “It will then be over to him to produce the goods.” (Researcher’s Notebook 7.6.92).

It was 11:43 a.m. The teams had been selected. Decisions were double checked, as was the proposal to keep a test team clear of the preceding mid-week game. There was only one doubtful place. One of the selectors suggested this could be confirmed later but the view prevailed against delay. “It affects perceptions, players’ work....” And so the selection was made and the 1992 home tests came to an end with the announcement of the All Black tourists.

7.2.2 International Match Two

(New Zealand vs. British Isles and Ireland, June 29 - July 3, 1993)

Tuesday

Upon arrival at the All Blacks’ hotel, I put a folder in the team room with my doctoral study overview for any players to read and gave the manager observation records from the previous test. There were warm welcomes from the players, a lack of clarity about meeting times, and player complaints of mix-ups over arrival times. Captain smiled, “You’ve certainly picked an interesting week to be with us.” The British Isles Lions and All Blacks had each won a test in this series and the home team, facing the test to decide the series, had received intense criticism for their lack of commanding victories.

Even though some players and the coaches had been delayed in travel would there not be value in organising those players who are here and getting them together with Selector? How does FE feel, in his first test, at this lack of structure? Has someone from team management met and welcomed him? I put an open letter to the team on their notice board, thanking them for accepting me this week and informing them of what I have been doing in the research. At 11:57 a.m. players arrive at the team room. I had not met LF3 before and he seems to be asking RW who I am. LF1 comes in with, “G’day mate,” to me. Another forward comes across and shakes hands, “Still at it, eh?” The others are also pleasantly welcoming. (Researcher’s Notebook 29.6.93).

Selector spoke to the team before the coaches arrived, urging them to watch the video of the second test. “I don’t get a lot of criticism because I’m the third man but they [the coaches] have copped a lot. I don’t care for that shit about you being playboys and wankers, and that’s why you’re not performing, but ex-All Blacks who belong to the All Black family have the right to make us think and examine ourselves.” He emphasised the need to consider options.

At an injury or break, think about your role on the field. The “true will to win” are my key words. It sometimes requires a bit of mongrel and an increased work rate. In their team there are guys who couldn’t tackle an old granny off a pisspot, but they were driving us backward with their tackles. Be proactive. For those of you who don’t know what that means, it means make things happen.

Selector was critical of All Black tackling in the previous test, lineouts, and the need for players to give input as, “There’s a huge amount of knowledge in this group...your defensive pattern was very good.” He noted the edge that can come from adversity and the pointlessness of carrying guilt and worry. “Do what you can about the next game. The success for this family of All Blacks is purely and utterly in your hands. You’ve got the ability...you owe it to yourselves and you owe it to the family.” There was silence in the room.

12:59 p.m. The All Black coach fronted the players with his disgust at players not following the previous British Isles test game plan. “If I could have found a hole to crawl into I would have...discipline is more important than loyalty. I have never been so bloody humiliated as to see the Poms dominating an All Black team. Poms, office wallahs...all over the top of you...Do you accept losing last week? I don’t. I don’t know why you play at this level or why I do this job, if you’re not committed. You’ve played test rugby with guts and discipline and we’ve held our heads up high and played our best -- you can’t ask more than that. I accept all the shit that’s been thrown at me and I’m here to prove those bastards wrong...I hope you’re with me...where’s your guts, your Kiwi toughness and heart? Above all you’re an All Black....” He then challenged players but ensured that he initially addressed players with whom he had built a rapport as provincial coach or who were test experienced players. “What are you going to do about it? I’m going to ask you and I don’t want cliches.” “LW, what are you going to do?” (“Make tackles, be hard, those things you said.”) “CT, I saw you in the World Cup as the best midfield back in the world.” “FE? LF3R? HB?” Coach was critical of HB not being an adequate set of eyes for the forwards as, “You’re a great player if you take control.” He then talked about decking cheats who the ref kept ignoring, but “I don’t want any bloody kicking at all.” LF2 made a point, seemingly critical of the coach’s emphasis about not being over-aggressive. The coach praised him for “not being a wimp. He tells me if I’m wrong. That was a bloody good response LF2, as I know you don’t want to be too wound up.” LF speaks. Coach asks, “How hard are you FR2? I don’t know you pretty well yet. Can you do the job we’re looking for? FR1? Technically you’re one of the best tighthead props I’ve seen. You can’t live on that. I don’t see any real fizz. I know it’s there but it’s got to come out. You’re an intelligent man. Look at the video tonight and see what you can do...” The theme continued for half an hour. “If you’ve got any comment on training or the game plan, or anything I’ve said, tell me. If I’m not doing something right, or I’ve had a miscall,

you've got to tell me." Discussion opened up with FE and the captain emphasising the need for faster rucking, speed to support, turning the ball over. Captain, "Can we just clarify that? Go to the advantage line, ball goes to deck, we go again." The need for communication, and direction from the halfback, was noted. There was to be no cutting back towards a key Lions forward. "I don't know who called that and I don't want to now -- but we're not cutting back in." Veteran players noted a need to train more as a team and less as separate backs and forwards. Detailed analysis of one-on-one or drift defence developed with the coach seeking assurances on defensive understandings, and whether the backs could tell when the opposition fullback was going to run. They could. "If you can read him I'll wear it [the defensive tactic]." Coach concluded with:

Old All Blacks came up to me saying they could never remember an All Black side being physically weak.
The old All Black fraternity, and some of you will be part of that soon, they don't want the legend to die.
The greatest part of their lives is viewing young men recreating what they did.

His fellow past All Black, the assistant coach, added a contemporary perspective about the National Divisional team, "Who couldn't believe they had the chance to play with the black jersey on. Do we, as selectors, go and pick a 'mad dog' like X who would die for one All Black cap?"

1:45 p.m. On the All Black team bus for training. The atmosphere, and direct challenge to pride and ability predicate a clear resolve. The observer is struck with the attentive body language and responses of players. The three selectors have been complementary in their pitch. The manager introduces me on the team bus, at the captain's suggestion, although there are only three new players, "Feel free to talk to him..." I appreciate such support for my presence. (Researcher's Notebook 29.6.93).

The team trained at an Air Force base with an emphasis upon clear communication, commitment, speeding up the game, lineouts, back moves, tackling, individual points of technique, scrum machine practice, and intensity in game plan moves. In the welcome showers after the energetic training the All Black captain made the telling point that, after the second test loss, "This was the first time for a few years I've listened closely to the team announcement." There were similar comments from other players. Drinks and a buffet lunch followed. The players drank cold drinks and endured the Air Force rugby enthusiasts pleasantly.

6:00 p.m. Team room. Concentration upon the second test video. There were more critical comments than in the previous test observed. Players were self-critical and direct about each other's faults and achievements. The coach froze the video to make points, such as : "In this lineout, can you see their flanker out beyond the 15 metre line, past LF 1? Can you see that? Why not hold off the throw till he's drawn in? Captain, wouldn't it be easier for the halfback to see that and call it?" The captain became a very strong figure in the viewing as he called for replays and made notes. Players believed the Lions knew the All Black lineout calls. Coach noted aspects of play where Lions loose forwards could be drawn in. "Once they're sucked in, once their loosies have been sucked in, then it's red hot ball, HB, and you send play in the direction their loosies have been pulled in from." There was humour at LF1, trying to blame the Lions for a penalty he incurred, when the replay showed him at fault. LW missed a high ball. "You didn't need to, plenty of men were there to call for it." One of the senior players confessed, "It was my fault, I called him up." At one passage Captain asked Coach, "What exactly are we trying to do here?" The video ended at 8:02 p.m.

Wednesday

10:00 a.m. team meeting. Coach addressed individuals supportively, especially FE the new second five. Training was discussed and the test team was "to run into the reserves, if it's hit or run, keep it realistic." A diagram was used to explain one phase, "Where LF1 would get the ball from Captain and the Lions LF1 will come in. He drags in their LF3, but our hooker and LF1 are there, and bang! The ball is gone! HB, you've got to be there. You've just got to be there." There was debate on runners, how wide they were going, their effectiveness and possible variations. A gap in the Lions defence had been noted from the video and consequently an All Black tactic to use a "two-four" cut was seen as a potential play-making move and variation, with the Lions expecting FE to be running with the ball so CT would be put through the gap, and not FE. Tackling and body positions were seen as critical and demonstrated by the coach. Kicking into the box was considered from various perspectives. FE's scrum calls were clarified, with their implications for the halfback and loose forwards. Detailed diagrams using player numbers were considered, slip passes debated briefly, and blind side moves specified. "Let's keep it simple," demanded Coach. "With a shorter blind you'll think of a '53' or a 'Black Rock'. Realistically we'll only get two or three chances so let's limit it to those." At 11:13 a.m. lineouts were practised at training under the lens of a television camera which was asked to move to the other side. HB kicked into the sun. "Good nudge," from Captain. When HB repeated the kick poorly the captain quietly checked, "Are you all right?" There was a discussion at one lineout of where a key opponent would be. A code was called and the cut was made but FE was not

satisfied and asked Coach for a repeat. Then Captain called the team together on the field, away from spectators. “We’ve got to take control. It feels good at the moment but we want to beat these guys. We want control and each of us wanting to win. Do the basics well.” He leaned forward in a familiar pose, hands on his knees. “You’ve got to put yourselves in the position they were in last week, of controlled aggression.” They practised “the wall” and Coach advised, aware of onlookers, “LF3 will do the split today in public, but it’s not the way we’ll do it on Saturday.”

6:15 p.m. Team room. A top trio of All Blacks discussed their feelings after the preceding test defeat. The captain was open about being “emotionally down” after that result and explained how difficult it was for him to relax. “You wonder if you’ve still got it, if you’re still a top rugby player.” LF3 agreed that he knew how it felt, as did RW. Later, Coach talked with the researcher, “The past Sunday and Monday were honestly the worst two days of my life. I was so ashamed. I’m responsible for the team. If they play to the game plan and with their best effort then I accept that.”

Before the team photograph a game of sliding coins is in progress, with the objective to be the nearest to the centre of a large circle. Eventually the researcher is invited to have a turn in the \$2 round and won 13 x \$2 to such cheerful criticisms as, “Well, that’s an end of the interviews, R,” and “I should never have invited this guy along,” from the smiling coach. This is a situation which challenges the participant observer as such inclusion may tint the neutral canvas yet a refusal to participate would be inappropriate. I usually hold back until all of the players are involved or a gap appears. The team is very inclusive and I have not felt any indication other than full acceptance. (Researcher’s notebook 30.6.93).

Thursday

9:55 a.m. Team room. A burly winger dropped into the lap of a much smaller halfback. Two players exercised on the floor. Coach noted, “We’re getting really close fellas. Practice was enthusiastic. I know you’re as keen as hell.” He addressed the reserves and the need for them to know everything their test counterparts were doing. Simplicity and clarification for individuals and team units were emphasised. Coach outlined organisation for practice.

The keys to today’s training are quarter of an hour on the lineout, all tactical options with the backs, positions on wipers kicks, definite discussion on the defensive pattern, and man-on-man variations. I want all this done in an hour and a half. Then we have quarter of an hour again going through our own options and ten minutes of match play which must be absolutely right.... Now I might get a bit carried away when we get going so you might have to remind me, or AC !

The team trained well at Captain's old school. A past All Black, famed for his lineout ability, had been called in to assist the forwards. He was skilled and specific. In rucking practice RW and CT emphasised to their forward team-mates the morale boosting play of good forward rucking. The first-five was seen as being in a "grumpy" mood by AC as that senior player has been over-ruled on some key moves. The team had an evening out, intent on the privacy of a harbour cruise. It was a welcome escape from the public eye.

Friday

The bus to the next day's test ground had a tense atmosphere, a day too early for such a state. The coach got up and slowly walked down the aisle, "Hey, what's up fellas? Is someone going to a funeral?", and proceeded to lighten up his players. Team units discussed key areas of the field and the strategic action required. "Just go from here." "A four man lineout would be on here." "Fire it right across their posts here." "Let's push their defence to that point and swing it straight back without confronting them but spread them thinly." At a lineout outside the twenty metres where HB could bomb, "You do what you see as right at the time HB. If I call something and you feel you should do something else then do it." LF3 makes sure the inexperienced lock forward has practice in the two man lineout. Back in the changing room the veteran lock of 27 tests checked with his new partner on where he liked to sit in the changing room.

1:08 p.m. Press conference. Later in the afternoon some players watched the launch of the first All Black Club video and then the forwards practised their lineouts in the carpark. Players browsed through faxes. Backs discussed going out to loosen up on the ground before test kick off, or staying in the dressing room. "Couldn't we do both?" asked RW. "Sorry RW, I've decided we'll all be in the changing room -- it's a democratic dictatorship call here, you realise that," stated Coach. The video was watched of a test win over Australia in the previous season when the All Blacks came back from a prior test defeat. Players were supportive of each other and found some humorous passages of play.

In the evening was the traditional captain's meeting. Only the 21 All Black players and researcher were present, gathered around Captain on sofas and chairs in the front of the team room. Captain talked about the test's first fifteen minutes. FE responded quietly to a point about the blindside with, "You give me the ball and I promise you we will not go back." Urgency was needed around the field. Captain emphasised, "Putting these guys away. We've gotta make it happen." He was open about being the worst offender in the previous test for conceding penalties. Captain noted that it was FE2's first test and advised him, "Enjoy it. These games are

great because this is 'our game'. Pick it up and have a go." The key words were hate, ("We all hate being poor All Blacks"), and urgency, ("Put it in front and keep it going").

After the captain's meeting I thanked Captain and FE (the "senior pro") for allowing me to stay. Captain smiled, "Well, without that it would have left a big hole in your thesis, that's fine." FE was succinct, "No problem mate." (Researcher's Notebook 2.7.93).

After dinner the team room was full of players, a card school, the masseur's table with constant customers, ("LF2'd live on that table if he could"), gear, balls and autograph books to sign. At dinner, Coach and Captain quietly talked through vital passages of play. Coach emphasised the slowing down of play or creating an opportunity in order "...to take stock of play and have a word with a senior pro, such as LF3 or FE, to reassess things, pull the game plan back into place or get FE to put up a few bombs if you feel it is needed." Coach, after an intense week of being besieged and criticised, noted "In a lot of ways I feel good. I've never been a cocky person. I just have that nagging worry..."

Saturday. Test Match Day.

10:05 a.m. Team room. The coach looked refreshed, "Gee, I slept well last night. I didn't wake up till seven and then I slept again." Players drifted in, sat, and read the test match programme. On the white board was a message:

COMMIT TO WIN

MENTAL HARDNESS - WORKRATE

HUNGER URGENCY

DO YOUR TASK AT HAND

THEIR LINEOUT THROW IS YOUR BALL - BE AWARE

REMEMBER THE "STATE OF MIND TASKS"

"SCRUM - TACKLE - DRIVE - CONCENTRATE"

WIN - WIN - WIN - WIN - The Phantom!

Figure 7.1 All Blacks motivational message.

Players were showing mild tension. Air was expelled audibly as sighs. There were few smiles. Players came in, looked around, got a cold drink and left. The team room telephone was off the hook. At the breakfast table there was speculation on *The Phantom*. Coach was happy with the

theme and doubtful that anyone other than the most senior players or a selector would write such an exhortation on test day. The later test morning was typical, with browsing through faxes, paths to the physio's room, and liaison officers being at once helpful and intrusive, eager to please but unable to read now-distanced psyches. Suddenly it was 1:00 p.m., assembly time. A brief word from Manager to the new FE2, then the All Black coach spoke to the 21 black tracksuited men. "There's not a lot to say, fellas. Every All Black in the country is looking to you today to play with pride, anger and aggression." He paused. "Let's go."

The All Black bus was silent. Veterans were still affected by such occasions. Captain and FE breathed heavily. RW bit his left hand fingernails. Then into the familiar changing room ritual: the pacing by Coach; Captain's methodical readiness and exhortations; taping; rubbing; checking the ground; coloured underwear; countdown on time before kick-off; coaches with the test tyro and pats on the shoulder for him; balls to pass and juggle; "Boots fellas." The Prime Minister came in at 2:08 p.m. (He and his wife were the only outsiders present. A player muttered "F--k off PM, you're just after votes.") "Plenty of talk eh." "No f----g short cuts." Coach, who would be sitting in the grandstand, checked with the team doctor on the cellular phone numbers so he could call "Doc." on the sideline with messages for play. There were commands by IB, LF3, LF2....

2:17 p.m. The All Black captain was putting on grease, then brushing his short hair with his hand. He went to pee and tied up his shorts. LF3 was getting wound up, but not irrationally, "Get in first eh, get in f----g first." The coach went to his new second-five, wished him good luck and shook his hand. Captain expressed best wishes to this new player. RW now exhorted his team-mates... coaches and officials left...the reserves left...fifteen young men in black playing gear huddled in the Spartan dressing room....

Some 47,000 people watched a determined and aggressive All Black team win well. The dressing room was a good place to be on that July afternoon. The guitar was busy, "Stand By Me". The Prime Minister was quickly in again. Photographers were briefly allowed in. Coach was positive about the crowd. Incidents were recalled.... Captain recounted:

Then the referee said to me, 'Shut up, you're talking too much,' and I said, 'But I'm the f----g captain!' Later in the game I asked the referee, 'How much longer to go, about one minute?' The referee replied, 'We stop when I say so -- this is my only game of the year!' We did well guys.

FB gets his eyebrow stitched. FE2 beamed, taking from his sock a \$20 note that he had picked up during a scrum break on the field! He recalled his kick which led to CT's try, "I numbered them off and couldn't see their fullback and made a conscious effort to just chuck it on my foot and put it through." The guys relaxed, sang and laughed. Red lined bodies limped to showers. "Hey you guys -- one thing," grinned Coach with a most un-humble grin, "Let's be humble, eh?" LW smoked a cigarette. Coach sat with his tyro second-five.

RW chats to me and gives me his All Blacks shorts and socks. It is an appreciated gesture. It is typical of these guys. Captain and Coach ask me if I'm coming to the next test, in Dunedin against Australia. I can't afford it but they are supportive of my attendance and talk amongst themselves on how to accomplish my being there. Then the team moves out into the carpark to mingle with the spectators. First on the bus were LF2 and HB who sit singing Samoan and Maori songs in the dusk until their team-mates arrive. I am struck by the multiple realities in an All Black's pungent comment when there are cheers from the car park crowd for the departing bus, "Yeah, clap now you bastards, you didn't clap too loudly for us during the week." (Researcher's notebook 3.7.93).

There was a formal test match dinner for the two teams and then a free evening with friends or family.

7.2.3 International Match Three

(New Zealand vs. Australia, July 13 - 19, 1993)

Tuesday

There was a crowd in Dunedin airport to welcome the All Blacks, who arrived in motley dress. AC and Captain thanked the crowd for coming. The team met at 1:00 p.m. in their motel team room. Coach informed players they were to note errors from training and the previous game and bring these to a video session which would feature their previous year's winning tests. FE was complimented on a good debut but too much scrag tackling. At training there were warm ups, grids, a game of touch and a crowd of spectators. The tackle bags were central to practice. "Skipper, LF3 and LF1 are the designated runners. I don't want LF2 hanging off, he's to be in there doing the hard work." Speed was emphasised. "Clear fast ball...red hot to HB." Successive tackle bags were utilised for runners. A provincial forward pack arrived to provide opposition and both sides relished that reality. The practice was long, incisive and organised on key points.

6:00 p.m. Team room. Clear points about practice were made by Coach and Captain. The players critically watched the video of their last test win against the British Isles. Coach was critical of opposition players “not being put on the ground fast enough and there was too much sloppy ball.” FB began the self criticism...L1 noted two of his errors and introduced a touch of humour by stating, “I did have down my fault for a penalty but I saw on the video it was really FR1.” There was laughter at FR1 getting the blame and coach turned to him with a smile, “What did you have on your list?” “Well I didn’t have that penalty!” Team laughter. The captain recorded his errors as: “Discipline. A couple of lineout throws. I could have put more pressure on from the front of the lineout and controlled aggression.” Coach, “Let’s not get too carried away on controlled aggression. We want aggression.” Coach was pleased at the responses. “We’ve got a good deal of honesty in this team. We’ve got to cut out 90% of those errors.” AC pointed out, “If each player can correct two errors then that’s thirty for the team.” Captain, “That’s achievable”.

Tuesday night was a social time and the coaches coped with injury problems, replacing one forward. A late dinner for the coach, team management and local rugby administrators ended the day.

Wednesday

9:30 a.m. The team viewed the Australian game against Tonga, then moved off to training. There was more urgency this day and an emphasis upon clarity for lineout ploys to combat the taller Australians. The captain checked at various breaks to examine specific understandings. The afternoon was free. Some guys played golf, others saw family and friends or were in their rooms. The team room had rented videos: *Year of the Gun*, *Lethal Weapon 3*, *The Abyss*, *Under Siege*, *The Babe*, *Wayne’s World*.

In the evening there was a mayoral reception in the Octagon and mayoral chambers. Girls and boys from school rugby teams were invited guests. Three days into the test week, LF2 had only just received official test week information from rugby administrators, but one lock had not been told at all. Coach informed the team about the NSW vs. Queensland video being shown at 9:30 p.m. in the team room as it included the new opposition test first-five. The video was watched by the three loose forwards, reserve loose forward, a lock, first-five and Captain. (The lock forward, a senior player, had had pressure put on him by the coach to make a greater contribution to the team effort.) The loose forwards left before the end of the video as they

believed they understood which ways the first-five moved and which foot he kicked with or usually stepped off.

Thursday

8:45 a.m. Coach discussed the week. At 9:30 a.m. lineouts in the carpark had the new reserve hooker learning the calls. Thirty-five different lineout calls were practised. Adding complexity to this was the reserve halfback's observation that such code calls were different at club, province and All Black levels. Calls could have three components -- a code to inform the forwards to whom the ball was being thrown, a key word added to indicate a move from the forwards after the throw, and a personal indication from the recipient of how he wants the throw, such as low and fast. Often the four digit code indicated the first two of these.

10:04 a.m. Team meeting. News was given on injuries, and the team was finally confirmed. An injured lock was replaced by an inexperienced player. The coach addressed his team, "We know exactly where we're going. I won't deny that I was shitty all day yesterday. I wasn't much company for the people I had dinner with." He explained his concerns at attitudes and individual mistakes disrupting the team, then elicited player perceptions of reasons why "the whole of New Zealand rugby expects a top performance from the All Blacks on Saturday." He saw the Bledisloe Cup as the biggest thing outside the World Cup for New Zealand rugby. He noted the immense feeling around Dunedin for the All Blacks. Coach moved on to discuss individual Australian players, being careful to build up each of his players in comparison. He covered related tactics of the overall game plan:

- Using two runners.
- Opportunities for wingers. ("If RW is there on the outside, he's got to have the ball. If you see a big gap use it, otherwise it must go to FB and you back up inside.")
- Run at them with forwards. ("Be quick, drive over the ball, quick ball, red hot ball.")
- Use high kicks, especially to their LW.
- Stop their two-man lineouts.

At training there were warm ups, scrum moves, tactics for various parts of the field, kick offs and simulated match practice situations. The team moved back to the motel and then went out on a harbour cruise after a number of media interviews. Players read, watched the seals and sea life, did puzzles, and a big group played *Scattergories*. Some simply sat and chatted. Later in the

evening, there was rugby ball signing. Before it began, LF3 was explaining lineout tactics and codes to a new emergency lock.

Friday

Coach reviewed essentials of the game plan:

1. Runners - what they do, who does it, support, opponent targets.
2. Winning red hot ball going forward.
3. Running at them with our forwards.
4. Playing for position on the ground so we can get these tactics moving.
5. Strategic kicking -- especially to [opposing left wing]. ("Get to him just as he gets the ball.")
6. Thinking of targets. ("Whether it's a 1 in 3, or even a 2 in 3 cut off a Moonlight 5, you think specifically of targets.")

Captain: "You trained well yesterday, the feeling's good, just keep building it up toward tomorrow." Coach added, "Is everybody 100 per cent clear about the plan and their role? If you have any doubt, or I've confused you, then ask. Is any one in doubt about the plan?" His notes for the day's assembly at the test ground related to discussion on the Australian lineouts and "Talk through options." At the test ground the players, often in units, planned specialised moves within the game plan. One, for example, involved the three loose forwards to combat an opposition break near the All Black line. Coach discussed the reality of winning five rucks or phases of play before scoring, "Punch through the first-five, it's pick-it-up-and-go, and pick-it-up-and-go. If we've got a pick-up-and-go there, then they're on the back foot and it's red hot for the backs...."

Coach explains his limited use of the whiteboard as he doesn't like too much repetition. We discuss reinforcement and whether some guys may have a visually orientated learning style. Given the immediacy of players understanding the test tactics, Coach reflected on "wait time" which he found to work so well in his Match Two team talk, allowing players to assimilate a question and reflect upon it before answering. The All Black questionnaire last year had asked players about preferred learning modes. At today's team talk Coach shifts his style a little. "I'm just going to ask you a couple of questions and want you to have a think about them and your response: what is our result in the game, what is the most important task you are going to achieve to ensure that result?" He has a substantial pause before asking a player. Players respond and Coach makes the point that they have given a public commitment. Rereading

today's notes I am aware of my possible influence upon Coach's teaching style. He was trained as a teacher and had picked up in my observational notes last year the lack of "wait time" players had in considering some key questions. Coach has an emphasis on orally teaching new moves. There seems to be a real need for coaches to fully understand essentials of teaching and players' learning styles.

(Researcher's Notebook 16.7.93).

Back at the hotel there was a press conference. The afternoon was free before a lineout practice in the carpark at 4:30 p.m., then the team photograph. The captain's meeting was similar to its predecessors. Captain noted the need for patience and pressure. "It might take five rucks -- how much do we want it?" The television was turned on after the talk and a current affairs show had a focus on the test. There is silence when the local mayor says millions will be watching.

Saturday. Test Match Day.

Breakfast. Tension was evident but not as marked as for the Lions test. The manager chatted to players but they didn't respond. At 10:00 a.m. the forwards were in the car park. Captain checked with them on "the wall" move. They practised 29 lineouts. The morning threaded its way through the preparation, with a lot of time spent in rooms until 1:00 p.m. The coach's team talk, before the bus trip to the test ground, was brief. "We play with real aggression and destroy their mauls. When we chase kicks we bury the guy with the ball and we shut down their counter-attacks. Every one of you made a commitment to yourselves, to this team, to All Black rugby..."

1:18 p.m. The ground was fizzing. Out with the players on the ground the researcher could hear the buzz and crowd noise, over an hour before kick-off. The Australian coach came up to the injured All Black lock and wished him well in recovering from his injury. The dressing room was redolent of previous tests with its tensions and pattern, its rituals and realities until 2:25 p.m., when fifteen familiar young men ran out through the cheerleaders onto Carisbrook. Some ninety minutes later Captain was drinking champagne from the Bledisloe Cup, which was passed around for each of the All Black group. Cell phones were used to ring parents. There were grins and recollections of match incidents, "Ice was on fire out there." The five ruck phase to score had come true.

4:41 p.m. The All Black captain, naked, stocky, pock-marked with studs and bruises, headed for the shower carrying a whole crayfish! There was a press conference, media interview, and Moet. Lots of Moet! At 5:56 p.m. the team bus departed for the hotel, with a carton of Moet

and Chandon and a crate of crayfish from Fiordland. The team reassembled in the team room for a drink before the formal team dinner.

Sunday

Guys left in taxis and mini-buses for the airport. Their coach loaded the Bledisloe Cup into the back seat of his car to take home and savour. "They say this is an amateur sport, something played for pleasure and it doesn't matter who wins," says his voice, but his grin says, "Like hell it doesn't matter." He opens his car door and we farewell each other. (Researcher's Notebook 18.7.93).

7.2.4 International Match Four

(New Zealand vs. Western Samoa, July 27 - August 1, 1993)

Tuesday

After team assembly and a training run today the team have had an evening out playing snooker. The week poses challenges for the All Black coach. How does he refer to the opposition team, of whom he is often very critical, when he has four Samoans in his own team? After the three Lions tests, with that unusually tense national focus on the All Blacks for the third of those and the traditionally high focus Bledisloe Cup match, how does the team meet the challenge of Western Samoa, a world force in rugby? I note that my name is on the motel's All Black team room list, listed with "official" members of the group. The path of vigilance as a researcher to ensure neutrality in recording is still demanding. (Researcher's Notebook 27.7.93).

Wednesday

Breakfast time. Manager was critical to the players of the national Colts selectors. His coach colleagues shared this responsibility which made his negative comments surprising. The team room meeting was addressed by a nutrition expert. Some comments on meals engendered grimaces from All Blacks with traditional meal preferences. At times the terminology was esoteric. Smiles were engendered at the need to maximise muscle and liver energy stores before the game by reducing the volume and intensity of training for two or three days before a match. Similarly, given the coach's propensity for pushing bananas at this team, there was a ripple of laughter at the nutritionist's support for Coach's query about bananas. "They're excellent, especially if they're ripe." The statement, "On match day you wouldn't want to be having bacon for breakfast," raised a slight smile from a veteran back whose test match breakfast is invariably bacon and eggs. He later declared quietly to the researcher, "I've never done anything different

and I'm not starting now. I'll still have my bacon." The team meeting then moved to consider specific individual errors from the previous test. Some players hurried away to get their notes for this. Wednesday training was similar to previous tests.

Thursday

The day's practice, team photograph and social evening at a sponsor executive's home, held familiar patterns.

Friday

10:27 a.m. Team room. Some money had been stolen from players' rooms and all of RW's training gear was gone. T-shirts from the NZRFU were given out. Manager suggested the All Black haka be performed before the Samoan war dance. Coach responded, "I disagree with that. Visitors do their haka first, they're the guests. It's like the visitors tossing the coin first. The haka is a New Zealand haka belonging to the All Blacks, it's not a Maori or Polynesian thing."

The manager addressed me directly, asking for my view as he had questioned the haka precedence with me this morning and I had rung a local Maori professor to check my understanding. I respond to his direct question by saying that I'm not part of the team and do not wish to comment. He probes the issue and asks if I agree with Coach. I express the view that the challenge is firstly a local statement by visitors but did not like being involved. Thankfully, RW suggests if the haka is first the team can stand proudly while the Samoans do theirs. LF3, the New Zealand Maori captain, is clear in his opinion: "We should go first. It's our challenge and we're the tangata whenua. If we went to Western Samoa they would go first. This is our country." Captain states, "We'll go first." Coach concurs, "Righto." This raised an unwelcome involvement for myself and is the only time this has happened. The manager, who is responsible for the team, did not express any view on the issue today. There is clearly a need for better communication from administrators on the haka and its meanings and history, but the episode is also revealing of cultural perspectives held by Coach and players. (Researcher's Notebook 30.7.93).

The team meeting focused on reasons for winning. These were based around player pride in the All Blacks, a hate of losing. The reserves were told, "You could be on in the first ten minutes," and checked for their tactical understanding. The team then bussed to Eden Park, where the next day's test would be played. Coach wanted the NZRFU to rule on the haka precedence, "It's not a Maori thing." Captain checked with his forwards on tactics. He was confident and believed the

team were in a sound state although, “It would be easy to take Samoa too lightly and have false confidence.” He noted the way Samoa sped the game up and what his team might do to negate that. The press conference back in the motel at 12:33 p.m. saw Captain asked about the team’s motivation to play Samoa as many New Zealand and Samoan test players were provincial teammates. He noted that, “It’s a test match and you’re playing for the All Blacks.” Coach noted that the Samoan style of play had more improvisation so players in his team were encouraged to be more communicative and “talk it up.” The evening was free and the team relaxed in the motel.

Saturday. Test Match Day.

Test day breakfast. Coach was tense. FE had his bacon. A lock breakfasts on baked beans. AC was effusive. Faxes abounded. Players drifted in. Later in the morning there was a lineout practice in the carpark. A group watched TV in the team room. Players sat in their rooms and gazed at television. Captain, in sweat top and underpants, walked along the path to the physio’s room. The researcher met with the All Black coach three hours before kick-off [see Interviews below].

12:31 p.m. As usual, there were 21 chairs in a circle and three chairs at a table in front for Coach, AC and Manager. Glasses of water had been placed on the tables. The duty boys, who were always the test match reserves, set the room up. Manager spoke briefly, noting that the support staff and coaches had done all they could to get the best result. The coach was brief. He read out two quotes supportive of Samoa and noted each All Black player’s commitment given to the team. “It’s bodies on the line. You have pride.” Then onto the bus and to the dressing room, with familiar progressions in familiar settings.... A Christian winger put a white tape on his wrist. He came over and silently indicated he wanted a pen to mark his symbolic cross on the tape. He then moved to the doctor for his injection, silently pulling off his jersey. With tears in his eyes, he bit on his jersey as the needle went right in. Virtually all the urging came from the Captain, his Number 8, and the other most experienced forward, a lock. There was an additional comment from the veteran first-five. The final words from the All Black coach were, “Absolute discipline. Get low, low bodies and drive under.” At 2:22 p.m. all non-test players left the dressing room.

4:14 p.m. The privacy of the elite team room is suffused with relief, a sense of achievement, rather than elation at a test victory. The All Black coach’s first words after the test win were, “Thanks very much guys, it’s been a bloody tough day. You kept your discipline very well.” The room is relatively subdued...five minutes later the coach is asking “Did someone die in

here?" The mood lightens up as LF1 picks up the guitar. A surfboard is presented to a winger for his record 54 tests. That veteran presents a forward with a tie to mark his first test. The songs build up. There is an abbreviated team court session with two judges, and twice each of the All Black group has to provide a comment on the game with an accompanying drink. (Researcher's Notebook 31.7.93).

7.2.5 International Match Five

(New Zealand vs. South Africa, July 5 - 10, 1994)

Tuesday

After welcomes to two new players and mention of organisational points, the need for team improvement was noted and importance of the new three-test series against South Africa stressed. Explaining practice for the day, Coach addressed the new caps, "What about you, FB? You know the basics. Is there anything you want to know? CTR, what about you? Do you want a chat after practice? Do you want to go over what your role specifically is?" *This illustrates a change in the coach's behaviour, as he had not evidenced this direct check so clearly with new players in the first tests observed. (Researcher's Notebook 5.7.93).*

Later at training Captain was very supportive of his players. "Go RWR, go RWR...Good work, RW...Good work, CT." At certain points, Coach pulled the team together to emphasise key elements. On the dot of 4:00 p.m. he was demanding a player's perception of a team error. "LF2, you tell me what happened here." Practice moves were rearranged and a tighter sequence recommenced. Five intense minutes later the team discussed the need for clearer communication between backs and forwards. Points were emphasised by Captain, especially about communication and clear body positions when the ball was cleared. "FE, if that's a lineout get alongside LF3." Then, on the scrum machine, expectations of team mates by each other were high. The sweating scrum broke up and the forty test veteran prop was directly critical of the six test lock. "Get down, L2." "L2, we're playing f-----g South Africa, you're just too high, your shoulder is right up Captain's arse." The scrum set and reset. The lock was really getting into his job. The coach gave a rare individual compliment, "I can see you working in there, L2, that's bloody good." The captain's voice came from a heaving body, "Good work, L2, that's really good work." The previously critical FR2 added a grunt of approval.

5:30 p.m. The team prepared to watch the video of their second test loss to France, three days ago. Coach observed, "Captain and LF3 went through the video last night and noted key points of our play." He read from their list of notes: knock-ons by players (recorded by the number of

their jersey), eight tackles missed, and poor kicks. LF3 added a point that “As a forward pack we thought we played all right, but there were 34 errors there.”

Wednesday

The team met at 9:20 a.m. The backs had a quick group discussion with AC and there were laundry details to track down missing gear -- and sort out LF3R cutting up FR2's shirt! Coach revised key points from the previous day and observed that the scrummaging was “...the most aggressive we've had. L2, when you scrum well, we scrum well.” He also commended FRR. Other points included the key relationship between HB and the forwards, and essentials of their communication. The media would observe practice and the All Blacks would thus concentrate on defence and keep tap kicks and a new move for Thursday's private training. “There's going to be a lot more bloody sting and hunger in this Springbok team than the French had.” Training was competitive at a wet drizzly ground. The spectators included a 52 year old sales rep., whose boss “thinks I'm on the road this morning,” youth reps., a 33 year old mother, and a couple who “saw the practice listed in the paper and came to support them.”

Captain shared Coach's concern that, “The boys might be down after the French loss. I really thought we had a team that would do it. Deep down it's still hurting although I'm philosophical about it.” He discussed the mutual trust he had with Coach and Coach's capacity to reach players. I recall one player leader in the team saying that Coach had a private word of appreciative support with him after a team talk. “It just made you cry.” Captain noted that he had to play well to captain well. Asked about his input into team talks, he emphasised that, “Unless I have something to say I am not going to say anything.” (Researcher's Notebook 6.7.94).

6:02 p.m. Team room. LF3 criticised players talking when the team is “numbering off”, and Coach had them do this again. Coach was supportive of the team. “You've just got to have the confidence that you're here for the remainder of the year. If you do the job we've asked you to do that's as much as we can ask. Nobody is dropped for doing the job we've asked him to do.” He commended yesterday's back training as the best for the year and noted, “The scrummaging was the most aggressive and unified in my time with the All Blacks.” Captain agreed. Coach noted positively the young team members calling the scrums and complimented the tight five. “It's bloody working from the front right to the base. There are players in this side who are, and can be, an inspiration.” He gave LF3R as an example at training. LF3 picked up on the scrummaging, putting responsibility on greater player self-expectations. “If you want to do it

you'll get low. Not because Coach wants you to do it, or Captain wants us to do it. Otherwise step back, and give someone else a crack.”

Wednesday night had a team only dinner of sea foods in the nightclub room, followed by a team karaoke contest with hotly debated results.

Thursday

Breakfast was relatively quiet. Coach sat with a new player, quietly going through moves. Two guys had gastro upsets. At ten o'clock there was a team meeting. The manager, perhaps the greatest ever All Black, quietly emphasised points about playing South Africa, the team reliance on younger players to lead the way, and some historical pointers. Coach discussed specific players, the team pattern, the need for clear onfield communication, and the special nature of tests against South Africa. Coach demanded absolute commitment at training. Training was positive, although at one stage Captain pulled the team in closely and bluntly criticised them for sloppy communication. They markedly improved.

6:30 p.m. Team meeting. A move was discussed which involved a variant with the blindside lock running the line, looking to see who is tackled, and consequently involving LF3. AC went through key back moves and a forward leader asked for clarity. A plan was set out on the whiteboard for RW to score. [This was to actually occur in the test.] Implications of two different lines for the two flankers to run were talked through until they were absolutely clear. The moves had familiar names. Diagrams were drawn on the board, such as in Figure 7.2.

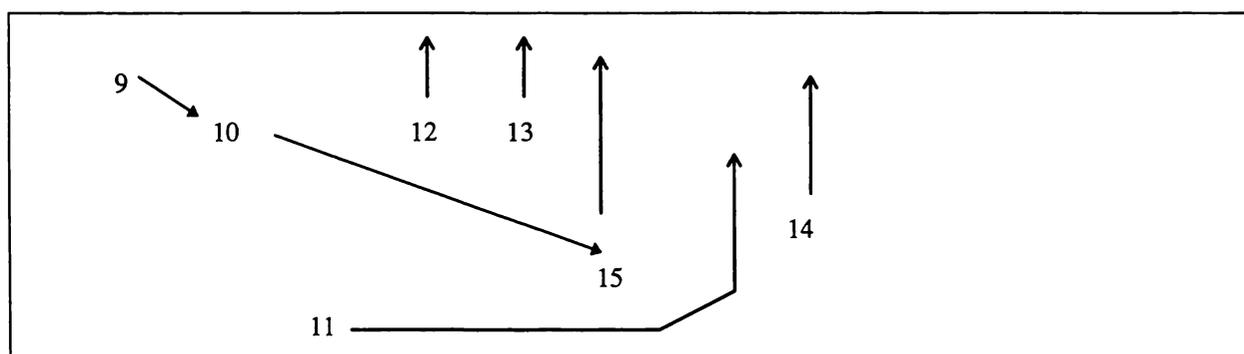


Figure 7.2 Whiteboard diagram for All Blacks back move.

Friday

The team visited the ground and checked out the dressing room and conditions. All Blacks in the team familiar with the ground discussed the wind. In the afternoon team room the discussion

focused upon a video of South Africa playing England, with All Black viewers intent upon opposition tactical moves. After the video Coach asked for a look at a South African blindside move. Discussion was clinical and clarified by the key players' input. Lineouts were discussed in detail. Key opposition moves were replayed from the video. Players were intense. There was a break for a cup of tea. Players stood at the window and watched the falling snow which CT had not seen for 16 years. The video showed the opposition wing caught in a maul. "What's he doing in there?" "Hang onto him in there, Front Row!" "Hell, there must be a big blindside in his spot."

I am struck by developments in Coach's "teaching style." Today he said to LF1, "Think about it for a minute then tell us about their loose forwards off the scrum," and drew a wider involvement than seen in 1992 and early 1993. He has checked on understandings of the two new players quite deliberately and supportively, through the week's buildup. His moves are specific, clear, and part of tactics that, "Quite specifically I'm drip-feeding because you can't listen for more than half an hour and expect to take it all in." He partly explained this development by his use of a range of experts and consideration of a wide range of viewpoints. (Researcher's Notebook 8.7.94).

Friday night in the team room. Coach briefly addressed the team, concerned at their lack of mental hardness. He showed a brief clip of South Africans stomping players and demanded "a bloody commitment to do something during the game that's going to win it for us." He asked players directly what they would contribute, "And I'll tell you something bloody good about this morning -- every lineout forward, every forward had something to say unsolicited." Coach's whiteboard revision was brisk:

I just feel at times we're doing things in our armoury instead of thinking and using them. FE, they dropped 50% in their back three, we must bomb and bomb them. If LW starts screaming for the ball, when [opposition wing] is caught in a ruck, and starts calling an "88", he's gotta have that ball red hot, FE. There's gotta be clear communication at the back of the lineout, LF2, between you and FE. FE, you need plenty of talk tonight with LF2 about lineouts. We've got FE2 who's very good at wipers kicks so we're gonna use it. If they slot their loosies out there in the backline -- and their LF3 is a good player, he's a good player with a strong upper body -- then loosies, you've gotta pick him up.

Captain's meeting in the team room. Captain opened with a fax, "That sums up where we're at." He emphasised his confidence in his players. "RW also has total confidence." New Zealand rugby had waited thirteen years for this test. "It's not another test, it's South Africa, and it's special." He talked about the South Africans being confident. A young All Black bit his lip and frowned.

The two neophytes were absolutely still, sitting in seats by themselves in the grouped team. Older players tended to sit on sofas together. Captain stared at his team and spoke deliberately.

As FR2 said, we're going to hook into them from the start...It's the biggest game of our lives, the biggest for me, the biggest for RW. We must win, it's a vote of confidence, enjoy it. Really want it, eighty minutes of wanting, not ten minutes at a time. We want to nail these bastards. Go away now and think, think about each other and support. Aggressive. Totally aggressive. They will be.

Captain stared in silence as his words lingered. "Anyone want to say anything? You right, LF3? LF1? RW?" Nobody responded. Captain noted lineout practice at 10:30 a.m. the next day. "You can relax guys, be totally confident in what you're going to do. Think about your own job. Be totally confident for eighty minutes, and then we've got two weeks off. Okay?" It was the signal for the end of the meeting. As an afterthought, Captain audibly sighed and declared, as much to himself as to his players, "We must score early, we must score early." A senior player said strongly, "We don't need a meeting tomorrow, we've done enough f-----g talking." The All Blacks filed out.

Saturday. Test Match Day.

Breakfast with the three All Black selectors. Six hours to kick off. There was concern at an apparent story that an ex-All Black had advised a South African lock on how to counteract an All Black lock. The coach decided to say nothing to the All Black captain or lock before the test. The guys drifted in to breakfast, and did not talk much. Later, at 10:30 a.m. in the carpark for the traditional test day "loosener" and final lineout practice, it was snowing lightly. Some backs practised a move. They wore hats to keep warm. Moving indoors, the researcher met with Coach in his room from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m. Coach believed the team was not quite ready, but in a better position to lift themselves than if they were over-peaked. The team room and bus ritual were tense, with an internal focus for each player. At the ground a noticeable crowd of students chanted Coach's first name as he came onto the field in his full length black coat. Then they switched to "All Blacks, All Blacks" as the team moved out to check the ground.

4:15 p.m. Dressing room. They had done it. RW scored his try, FB kicked his goals and the first test was won 22-14. Captain wanted his team to "be humble, it's only one down and we've got two to go." LF2 slumped on the concrete floor, feet out in front. FR1 sat next to him with his arm along the seat. LFR, who replaced LF1 early, limped gingerly with ice on his knee. The unfailingly pleasant reserve hooker got cups of tea for LF1 and LF3. RW relived phases of play

with a provincial team-mate, noting areas where they could have done better. The South African manager came in. “Well done, you’re on the winning side for a change.” His captain added, “Thanks a lot for the game, after your three losses.” An experienced All Black forward commented wearily on the NZRFU chairman, a council member and the Prime Minister being in the changing room, “We never saw them when we lost to France, f-----g fickle public leaders.” Captain kept smiling.

As the team relaxed in the victory, LF1 turned to a prop. “Where’s FR2? Hey FR2, why didn’t you give me the ball on the goal-line?” “Because I didn’t want you to score against South Africa!” “I just had to rip, spin and drive.” “Well, why didn’t you rip, spin and drive me over!” Then FR2 just sat, and stared at nothing. And then slowly grinned. He’d beaten South Africa. LF3 telephoned his injured All Black brother at the other end of the country. CT slowly cut tape from his knee. LF1 just sat. His cheek was badly swollen. Coach was putting jerseys in a gear bag. The fullback, after his first test, called to the manager, “Hey, I’ll keep this one”, and gestured to his All Black jersey. A veteran player, LF1, did not want to swap his jersey either. “No way, this jersey’s a f-----g boyhood dream. I’m keeping this one on. It’s a test against South Africa in New Zealand, my first test against South Africa.”

7.2.6 International Match Six

(New Zealand vs. South Africa, July 19-24, 1994)

Tuesday

11:00 a.m. The All Blacks arrived and found their motel rooms. Coach sat in his motel room making notes from his dictaphone for the day’s team talk. AC had been in with his big folder. Coach’s tea was cold. The rain was insistent. It was a dismal day to begin a test week. Coach voiced clear concerns to Assistant Coach and the researcher about one of the tight five forwards who was not playing with the same effort given in last year’s games. To a lesser extent he was also concerned at another tight forward not producing his maximum in second phase play. He was unsure about an apparent replacement.

Captain called into Coach’s room to pick up his videotape of the previous test for the in-house video channel to reach all players’ rooms. He was accompanied by a team-mate whom Coach asked to stay behind to speak to personally. The coach was analytic, concerned, but very direct in voicing concern at the player’s apparent lack of commitment and the loss of a hard edge to his play. “Whether it’s having no job and consequently no set routines in your daily life, league offers, or whatever, you’re not producing the quality of play we both know you can deliver.

Certainly it's not up to your 1992-93 standard." The player agreed that his play and focus had not been consistent. Coach offered help but the player said he would prefer to sort it out as he knew what was required, rather than come back later in the week for a big talk with Coach.

1:37 p.m. The coaches arrived at the team room with all of the team to watch the previous test's video. Coach noted:

We did play okay, but there are a hell of a lot of collective and individual things that we need to do. The South Africans will be fighting with their backs to the wall, far harder than any other team would do in this situation. They're desperate and they'll bloody well throw everything at us.

Coach drew a parallel with the All Blacks' defeat in the second 1993 Lions test when four Lions committed eight All Blacks in the forwards.

Sure we trained well, but we trained mechanically, and didn't take it out onto the track. We have to confront them head on, let them know in the first ten minutes we are more willing to confront them physically, not by putting the shit in, but by getting in lower and getting in first. We've got to show them we're out there to do the business, we have to bloody win, so get that in your head now.

He covered the driving in second phase play, urgency, reasons why South Africa scored and its implications for players, counter attack, peaking, and discussions on strengths of South Africa. "We identify these as a team and take them away." He pinpointed practical aspects of technical needs and South African play not negated by All Blacks, and was critical of needlessly giving the opposition the ball. He put his own players under a critical spotlight and exhorted pressure onto a South African who lacked conviction in taking the high ball, "So we bomb him and we screw him. He hasn't got any bottle."

There was a team practice in the afternoon and at 8:00 p.m. the All Blacks assembled in the team room. Manager had an admonishing word about players taking more freebies and perks than they should and Coach supported this, before moving on to examine in detail the team perceptions of South African strengths and how these would be negated. Typical of players' observations were : front of the lineout (noted by Captain); moves around the base of the scrum (LF3); breaking out and counter-attacking from All Black errors (RW); switching to the blindside and "putting numbers on us" (LW); their kick offs (HB); and South Africa reading New Zealand's kicking game (LW). Coach noted the potential danger of one South African opponent. "Their wings were all over the paddock," stated Coach and, although an experienced

All Black back saw this as a weakness, the Coach saw it also as a potential attacking strength. Coach ran through specific methods, naming individual All Blacks to negate perceived South African strengths. The discussion moved on through a systematic analysis of the opposing team and All Black tactics.

Wednesday

Breakfast was in a public dining room in the hotel, within an area reserved for the team, and at 9:05 a.m. a senior group of players met in Coach's room to discuss speeding up All Black play in the test. Captain, LF3, LF2, HB and FE were present and the plan was intended to be briefly explained before training but, with the public present at that practice, the team wouldn't show the faster phases of play. They talked through a range of strategies.

I am impressed with the individual and collective rugby wisdom here. Details such as exact player positions, matter of fact alternatives if plans don't work, utilising "sevens kickoffs," and knowledge of South African moves in provincial games, were obviously familiar to this group who wished to speed up the lineouts. They discuss this and code names are assigned for moves. LF2 is insistent on "Fast-it-up" as a code for a quick throw-in and this is agreed upon. The captain and his primary onfield support, LF3, check on this lineout plan vis-à-vis decisions from the previous night on lineouts. All is clear. The coach seems to have developed the team involvement far more than in the early period of this present study. The team meeting follows immediately. Coach outlines the plan for today and speeding up play in the test. "Security is vital. It is imperative you don't tell anyone our plans for the game." He outlines basic plans. At one stage the senior player trio are not happy and query a point about the game plan and this is resolved. The coach details critical elements of the Fast-it-up tactic. (Researcher's Notebook 20.7.94).

Thursday

Team Meeting. Captain hadn't slept well. Coach was supportive of the team commitment. He noted points from the previous day's training and covered key points of the game plan. A recent All Black, present as a technical advisor, believed the All Blacks were a day ahead of where they were on the same day in the previous test week.

The team meeting covered 28 distinct points of play before the team was off to training. The scrum machine training saw a veteran front row forward demanding more of a lock, and the captain expecting a fuller contribution from a flanker. The tense expectations were clear but

practice did not gel. On returning to the motel Coach called an unscheduled meeting and expressed his dissatisfaction with the training. Later in the afternoon the forwards walked to a nearby school and practised their lineouts, whipped by a cold wind swirling in from the harbour.

In the evening there was a parliamentary reception at which the Prime Minister and an Opposition member spoke, and South African and New Zealand team managers responded. This was followed by dinner at a harbourside restaurant. Coach was insistent that players were not to drink wine and the team's humour overflowed at Coach's expense when he castigated players with wine bottles -- which they had filled with water.

Friday

There was the team photograph, a bus to the test ground, lineout practice in a nearby school-yard. Coach met with the reserves earlier to discuss their roles and noted his appreciation of their roles and efforts in practice.

On Friday night there is a taut captain's team meeting with a prominent past All Black speaking to the team on playing South Africa. It has impact. The team talk is tense. I had pins and needles in my leg but I didn't move at all. I was worried that I would get cramp, which would have been a disruption given the gravity of the setting, as I had a crunched-up position wedged in with players. There has been 13 years since the last traumatic South African tour in New Zealand. There is anxiety and confidence in the side. I think it's an excellent move by Captain to bring the past player in who has struck the exact level in his comments. He doesn't speak unnecessarily, so the guys attend to his message. Coach and Manager would have been pleased. How strange that tomorrow a country of 3.5 million people will focus so intensively on the 21 men now compressed into this motel room. The only guys who ever speak in the captain's meeting are the senior or key players, the unofficial team leaders: LF2, halfback, the test veteran wing, veteran prop, LF3, and occasionally the centre. My test win money would be on the All Blacks now. In the evening some of the team watched a video of the first test. An injured lock, who is out of this test but still with the team, ostensibly assisting the manager, returns from a golf game and asks the researcher, "How are the guys?" We discuss this. (Researcher's Notebook 22.7.94).

Saturday. Test Match Day.

Ten breakfast tables had been set up in the team room from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Through the week the team had eaten in the public dining room. Coach called a meeting for 10:00 a.m. to

clarify a couple of points. His captain sat in the front row of his team in a dark Steinlager jersey, white cotton shirt, light tan shorts and sandals; his legs were almost thin. Coach covered defence against a possible “Willie Away” variant by South Africa around the front of the lineout and kicks into the box by the opposition. The forwards then moved to lineouts in the carpark. Earlier in the week, the coach and researcher had noted a solitary figure sitting in the team room watching lineouts from the first test video and making notes on a pad. It had been a tyro test lock. In the carpark, Captain called the forwards into a huddle, away from the desultory smattering of watching passers-by, and stressed how to play into the wind. Then it was the lock who added clear authoritative points he had noted from the video. Two senior players gave him full attention and nodded briefly at each other, with a verbal recognition of, “Good on you, L2.”

12:58 p.m. The team room. Players, in Number Ones, read the faxes spread out on two trestles. The test centre and his understudy are first in, followed by LF, FRR and the manager, who whistles tunelessly in more of an exhalation than a whistle. At 1:07 p.m. Captain takes a seat next to RW. He shifts and jiggles in his chair, leans forward, bites his lip, and looks impassively to the Coach. I am here with 21 All Blacks, three selectors and the manager. It is the latter, with 133 games for his country, who speaks.

Okay, fellows, it's a pretty tense time and I just want to wish you well. It's a day like many years ago and the team talk then was “Take no prisoners.” It's that sort of day. We're not going to give it to them.

Coach paused before speaking. “There's an awful lot of books written on contests between New Zealand and South Africa. I just want to read from one of them.” He reads the “quote” in an attentive room. “There are rugby playing countries, and there is South Africa. They stand alone as New Zealand's greatest foe.” He warms to this theme with succinct points. “Look at Skipper here. He's a great All Black. He's going to give everything he's got for his country today. Can you do it with him?.... It's time to stand up and be counted. Remember [past All Black captain].” It is a signal day in rugby history. Manager, Coach and Assistant Coach, all of whom have played in losing test series against South Africa, are acutely aware that a win today will mean a series win over South Africa and give the team an unprecedented (with 1992) three consecutive victories. Training this week had not been perfect and, partly because of that, Coach had sat down and emphasised basic game plan points and basic individual responsibilities. A lock, L2, had been seen in a new light by his peers because of his previously unsuspected commitment and thinking skills. At the other extreme, the “hard nosed” prop had been demanding of the tight five forwards until they met his approval.

The “quote” from the rugby book was manufactured by Coach as he had unsuccessfully sought a genuine piece of writing that evoked the mood of All Black-Springbok tests. [See Figure 7.17.] In discussing his test day team talk, Coach had asked team management and the researcher for ideas. This raises again the parameters of the participant observer role. Here it had become, briefly, a participant mode before reverting more to an observer of the adapted suggestion and its impact. The suggestion was made that the captain could be noted for his effort, which all the team are aware of, and that such a brief appreciation would give the captain greater self-confidence and commitment. At no time was the participant aspect of the researcher’s suggestions made known by the coach, consequently the perceptions of the researcher by players were not apparently shifted. The fact that this Coach-Researcher interaction existed, reinforced for the researcher the need to maintain a critical review of his role. It was felt by the researcher that any suggestion accepted by the coach then became the coach’s action, as did the manner of its implementation, but the researcher had become involved in the coach’s action causing a possible shift in team dynamics. (Researcher’s Notebook 23.7.94). [For critical discussion and self-reflection on the researcher role see Chapter Ten of the present study. For Coach’s reflections see Appendix H.1.]

The bus was quiet. The team was tense but not over-aroused. As the bus stopped at lights the onlookers waved, stared, shouted encouragement, or simply passed on their way. The guys did not respond. Public property, they were in a private world. There was a crowd on the pavement where the bus pulled up. The All Blacks filed inside to supportive calls from the fans. Gear was settled into the abattoir-like changing room. One toilet. Grimy ceilings. No whiteboard. Players moved up through the catacombs to look at the arena. Captain returned quickly. Some guys stayed inside the changing room.

1:35 p.m. The coach and captain talked quietly. Then Coach was pacing in the limited space of the changing room. Captain carefully taped on a right leg shin pad. The rituals of an All Black dressing room were evoked. LF1 sat next to the team veteran. CT tossed a ball and kicked it up into his hands. Repeated this. And again. “Pace and enthusiasm, eh? Let’s have enthusiasm with the ball all of the time,” from the captain. Sprigs were checked by the referee in sandals, who greeted Coach in an Irish accent. A forward pulled off garish orange underwear, to be replaced by sombre black.

1:42 p.m. Coach, “Bodies on the line. Any loose ball, just dive on it.” The doc sat next to FR and put his arm on the prop’s back. LF3 taped on shoulderpads. FE came down the concrete

stairs and turned on the wall heater. AC came in and talked animatedly to Coach...tape...grey slacks hung on pegs...field position units quietly checked tactics together...no towels available. "We're going out at 24 minutes past, so be ready at quarter past," from the captain. It was his team room now. He jogged on the spot, facing HB who did the same. "Pace of the game, pace of the game...Playing well won't win us the game. You have to play better than that," urged the All Black captain. FR1 taped his left thumb. Coach stood in a long black coat and rubbed his hands.

1:51 p.m. "No loose tap ball in the lineouts." "Right, we suck it in," agreed Captain. "And get the ball to the back of the maul quickly," added the coach. "First scrum we scrum well, we all talk, 'whose scrum?' It's for 80 minutes, we've never played this well before." The injured lock moved around shaking hands. Coach and Captain talked quietly while the skipper juggled a ball in his hands behind his back.

1:55 p.m. The coach stood silently as the physical and emotional rituals continued, his hands clasped behind his back. He jiggled his left foot a little, paced a couple of steps, leaned against the wall, edged forward, folded his arms in front. The physio taped a player's arm. A loose forward headed for the lavatory. Liniment threaded the air. A ball was passed to and fro. AC had a word with FE in the shower area. Two players checked on the precise call for a move.

2:05 p.m. The toss. "We're going to play into the wind," informed the captain. The coach added, "We're going to attack. We're going to attack. We attack going into the wind, guys". A little later he emphasised the scrum and the hit. Stepping forward he moved to the halfback and privately reminded him not to rush the sevens kickoffs. He then moved on to give a quiet message to the oldest player, "You were the best bloody trainer this week, FR1." Now the coach urged team support for the ball carrier.

2:08 p.m. The two team leaders were now together. The Chairman of the NZRFU, and a Committee member who was an ex-All Black and All Black coach, came in with good wishes. They were not heeded. Coach moved past the researcher saying quietly, "Why do we put ourselves through this, R?"

2:13 p.m. Captain urged, "A couple of minutes, guys. We're f-----g hungry now. We play better when we're all playing well." "Out of your skins fellas, attack them in everything you do," added his coach. Then the All Black team warmed up in the dingy room. Assistant Coach made a point

about depth into the wind. Players' voices threw encouragement around the room. The coach was speaking more than before any previous test, "You run bloody hard at them, you communicate, you stay on your feet...tackle everything that moves."

2:16 p.m. The reserve halfback went to the first choice halfback and quietly patted his back, "Good luck mate". The sole lavatory was constantly occupied. A senior player exhorted, "Everything you've got, guys." He paused and reiterated deliberately, "Everything you've got." The build up continued. At 2:19 p.m., the referee came in to ensure he knew the direction each team would play. Captain then checked LF3's understanding of the two-man lineout and his role in conjunction with HB. Captain reminded the team that South Africa would have two national anthems. The reserves had gone out at 2:23 p.m. Now Coach moved up the stairs. "Good luck, fellas. Take no prisoners!" Only 15 test players were left. The All Black forwards grouped momentarily and the veteran prop spoke, "Eight of us. We need it, every f-----g one of us". His captain added, "Don't give away any silly penalties, just f-----g hook in sensibly." The 1994 test team filed out through the stand, with LF1 at the tail. The ground announcer at 2:27 p.m. proclaimed the two South African anthems...flags were unfurled by supporters. The haka, "*Ka mate, ka mate.....*" The Springboks turned their backs on the All Blacks and drew their wagons into a circle.

The game raced by with many seemingly intermittent phases. Coach was concerned at Captain being too slow at lineout time and muttered for him to hurry up, but onfield his captain had not been able to hear the code moves called because of crowd noise. Reserves growled out approval of their scrum or criticism of the referee. (This was often hasty and unfounded, and perhaps indicated that more team time was needed to discuss laws and the referee.) The All Black left wing scored from a pass by LF2, reflecting the precise discussions between that blindside flanker and wing over the past two days. Four-man lineouts were used, as in training.... With some eleven minutes to go, Coach echoed his team talk, "Come on guys, give it everything you've got, everything you've got." They did. The All Blacks for the first time, under this coach and captain, had now won three consecutive tests against their most demanding international opponents.

The dressing room was untidy and awash with players, a Prime Minister and national rugby administrators. Jerseys were removed to swap, and cellphones pulled out of bags. A magnum of genuine French champagne appeared. Coach came over, "The wonderful thing is that we're all in this together." There was chatter now and laughter. The series had been won. A prominent

player told of needing three tickets for partners of players and ringing the NZRFU Chairman who allegedly said he wouldn't give the All Black any tickets unless he was paid the \$150 first! "So I went to Manager, and he said, 'Bugger that. Tell him to put them on my account', so we got the tickets." The PM was still in the room at 5:03 p.m. At 5:05 p.m. the doctor was needed for Captain's ear, but the medic was on an urgent phone call elsewhere. LF2 talked of the awesome crowd, "You could feel it on the field, just like the old days. It was a wonderful feeling, the best part of the game." Captain told of his ear being bitten by an opponent in an incident near the halfway line. A normally reserved prop was expansive, putting his arm around the first season fullback and patting his head in approval of the latter's play. The prop then smilingly declared being, "pissed off at RW not passing to me to score in the second half." At 5:15 p.m. Doc worked on the captain's ear. Some players had gone to the All Black Club function as a public relations exercise.

The All Blacks arrived at the Springbok hotel in the team bus with wives and girlfriends where the teams, without partners, would socialise for an hour. The players mingled and chatted, with a clear rapport evident between the two managers. The opponent who bit the All Black captain, chatted in a group with him but did not mention it or apologise. One of the Springboks collected waitresses' name tags, pulling these off their blouses despite requests to leave them. The managers spoke, and the socialising concluded with a beer drinking competition between team representatives, with the final between an All Black prop and a South African wing.

At the All Blacks' motel there was a team gathering. The three veteran All Black players were set to run a court session. The manager was against this as he did not want to see All Blacks, especially the young ones, at risk of having too much to drink before they were with their families. It was a clash of formal and informal authority. Vigorous points were made to claim control. A toast was suddenly proposed to Manager and the team jumped to their feet with feeling and respect to toast "The Legend", "The Man". The decided compromise was a little uneasy -- of a quarter hour court session, then a free night. The drinking penalties were done by mouthfuls, not the usual jug, glass or can. There was a brief clash of control between the court judge (LF1) and his captain who, happily and verbally combative, supported the manager. That night Coach, Captain, Researcher and wives relaxed in a team dining room and reflected upon the past two years.

Sunday

8:58 a.m. Manager greeted the players, who were in varied states of dress and physical weariness. He briefly discussed player contracts, tickets and the previous day's win. "Got anything to say Coach?" "No, I haven't got anything." "Okay men, let's enjoy yesterday and travel safely. We've still got one test to go."

7.2.7 International Match Seven

(New Zealand vs. South Africa, August 2-7, 1994)

Tuesday

The week followed the usual pattern of assembly. At the team meeting Coach was critical of players who had not followed his request to limit their play between tests, who had not timed their training or done their aerobic training. He noted the chance to win 3-nil in a historic series, and talked of past All Blacks who had rung him with emotion, to urge the team on. He spared no players in critical incidents noted from the second test video, and was concerned that players were not taking this test as seriously as they should, or did with the first two. He pungently emphasised criticism from former players about some aspects of All Black play. The team watched the second test video and headed to practice. In the late afternoon they watched the Springboks' final pre-test match.

Wednesday

Breakfast. The coach discussed the need to keep building up simple moves and continue the progression of play. *I appreciate the continued acceptance of my presence. At breakfast LFI checks my room number to ensure I receive the daily team notices and a duty player asks if I want an allocation of tickets, as I am "one of the team." The greetings yesterday were warm and friendly, a hongi from a Maori player and confirmation from the manager that I was booked to Australia with the team for the Bledisloe test. I am still checking my observations with Coach and my research supervisor to ensure accuracy and awareness of possible over-identification with the team. The fear of "going native" has been an increasing cause of self vigilance! (Researcher's Notebook 2.8.94).*

The team trained, attended a corporate lunch, met in the team room for evening drinks and then had a free evening. In the afternoon the researcher met with the All Black coach.

Thursday

Breakfast discussion centred on players' experiences in Italy. The team then met at 10:00 a.m. in the team room, and travelled by bus to an Air Force base to train, before returning home for media interviews. A message was placed on the team board by a duty player under a mythical name.

Have no fear of perfection.

Never give in. Never, never, never.

At 9:30 a.m. Coach and three young backs at the dining room table used salt and pepper shakers to check on field tactics. An experienced loose forward had recovered from injury and joined the team. LF3 went through moves with him, strongly articulating these with little diagrams to illustrate points. Before training, Manager and Coach covered a range of motivational points, with the former drawing on great names in All Black tradition that had the players nodding in recognition. "I always think of [past captain and coach] and the other old All Blacks..." The coach presented detailed and compelling statistics on second test lineouts, second phase, and an apparent dropping off of All Black dominance in the last quarter of that game. Any concerns the coach had were not allayed at the practice when LFR, a reserve forward in the small opposition group of players, ran through the test fifteen, to the accompaniment of crowd laughter, and passed to a fellow reserve on attack. After a lineout a reserve back did the same and passed to a fellow reserve on attack again. It was too much for the coach, who pulled the All Blacks around him and handed down some elemental reminders. It was not a convincing morning session; nor did it have the gut intensity of its parallel day from the previous test week. Practice was followed by an afternoon hour of signing balls and autographs, and an evening dinner at the home of the major sponsor's Chief Operating Officer.

Friday

Breakfast. This was followed by a lineout practice, a team room assembly for photographs, then light training. The day has the right requirements but the insistence is not quite there from the coach and manager as it was for the previous test. LF2 is criticised by Captain in the carpark lineout practice for trying something he wouldn't try in the test...Coach tells the team at Eden Park that, "It feels too loose to me"... out on the park the second-five surprised his team-mates by taking a high catch behind his back, and I wonder at the "switched on" level of such play. There is another lineout practice in the carpark at 5:00 p.m. with South African tourists watching, including one who videotapes the practice. I'm not sure about this week. In

the team room Captain asks me how the players are. It's hard to tell. Coach has noted the difficulty of telling if they are quiet because they are internally focused or "if they are not themselves, and that's not good." The captain thinks they are a little restrained. He discusses possible motivational phrases for his team talk. I support the phrase "Never back down, back each other" as being appropriate. I am aware of my involvement with the team at such times. The dichotomy comes from my full participant acceptance by the team and their use of me as a resource, provider of speech making advice, an empathetic and confidential listener for the coach, a sensitive source of feedback to the captain, and a compiler of quizzes for the team's lighter moments. This does present a constant self-questioning to ensure neutral observation, and has led me to maintain a high level of questioning and conversation with other persons, usually players, to double-check my observations and interpretations. I am asked, "How do you think they are?" by team leaders on the Friday of each test week, because "You are independent and neutral and don't have any need for selection!" The knowledge that I will be asked that question does compel me to examine team indicators more closely and I have developed a tentative set of informal criteria which appears to have some validity in judging the state of the team.

(Researcher's Notebook 5.8.94).

At a Friday night team meeting, moves were checked and discipline emphasised. "Sensible rucking. We don't want more of this bloody mountain climbing. One foot on the ground. When the whistle blows, you stop, that's bloody discipline." Coach reminded a veteran front rower to "not run shotgun", and added a piece of psychology towards the end, noting the difficulty of selecting the two locks ahead of the lock who played so well in the preceding test and who was in the reserves. At another stage he underscored the aggressive play, "Let's get clear, we're hooking into these bastards right from the start, legally. We don't get involved in dirty play."

6:14 p.m. The theme of Captain's team talk was "we're playing for ourselves and our families...At Athletic Park I felt more confident than at any time since 1992. Shit, I thought, I've got a real All Black team."

Saturday. Test Match Day.

A short pointed team talk by the coach noted aggression, "Get off the deck, support, and lineouts." At 10:28 a.m. Captain asked his forwards to go for a walk, and they slowly moved around an adjacent public golf course. Casual golfers wished them well. Two rugby balls were passed around in a circle that becomes edgily competitive. "You're just picking on someone." "You f-----g bunch of cheats." "Let's go, that's a shit game." A front row forward relished

being the judge, but was countered with “Shut up, FR.” LFR disagreed with being put out of a game. *I wonder what this does for the absolute team trust and unity needed in three hours. (Researcher’s Notebook 6.8.94).*

Coach’s team talk before the bus departed for the ground was similar to that of the last test. At 1:24 p.m. the All Blacks arrived at Eden Park, with a big crowd around them as they disembarked. The dressing room scene was similar to all others. The test was drawn 18-18. The post-match dressing room was very quiet. The guys felt they had blown it. The series was there for a clean sweep. “Thanks fellas, a bloody good series,” from Coach. Captain shook hands with each player.

7.2.8 International Match Eight

(New Zealand vs. Australia, August 11-18, 1994)

Thursday (Auckland)

The players were relaxing in the team room at 5:00 p.m. There was some humour at Coach’s approach as one of the forwards dug into a large packet of unhealthy chips. The team bus took the team to evening training at an Air Force base, to adapt to playing under lights in Sydney. At training some moves used against South Africa were modified, including blindside scrum moves and the use of runners. By 6:55 p.m. there were 20 young men with steam rising off them as they paused to listen to their coach. After practice the team had an appreciated private time out on the night harbour, on the 20 metre *New Zealand Challenge*, with drinks and a meal. A card school flourished with three spirited young backs and three veteran forwards. On return, the Steinlager bar was visited where LF3 eagerly tried a motorised child-size scooter.

Friday

The weary coach missed breakfast, and announced the Bledisloe Cup playing team at 9:27 a.m. in the team room. Today there was training, lunch, a signing session, a commercial promo, 6:00 p.m. training, and a free evening. In the signing session of commercial cards which generate some income for the team, there was banter at the change to commercialism. A couple of hours later players were at the practice ground where the commitment of team leaders, Captain and LF2, was clear. A handful of Air Force spectators watched the half-hour practice. The forwards geared up their effort when Captain and LF1 become critical of the lack of drive into the scrum machine. At one stage in the touch game LF2 called across the field to a fellow forward demanding better play. At another the captain raced with an all-out effort to cut down the flying fullback. Captain complimented his young fullback who scored, and training continued.

Saturday

Team meeting in the team room. The veteran FR came in proclaiming, “Good morning fellow athletes, medical staff and scribe.” The team waited for LF1. Captain carried his little daughter out to his wife. There was annoyance among the team at the seemingly poor deal done by the NZRFU marketing staff over certain commercial ventures. Travel information was provided. Lunch at 11:45 a.m. and travel in Number Ones at 12:15 p.m. At 11:30 a.m., passports had to be in the team room to go out to the airport. Coach checked on these at 11:43 a.m. All 30 were there: the 21 players, 3 selectors, manager, two medical staff, media liaison, masseur and researcher. The inevitable poker school operated on the plane. On arrival in Sydney at 5:15 p.m. a group of New Zealanders welcomed the team as they passed to their airport bus, and Coach was interviewed briefly by a television reporter.

Sunday

The All Black coach was into his stride at the team meeting. “There’s something wrong, fellas,” followed by warnings about being players being in holiday mode in the hotel and consuming inappropriate food at McDonalds two days before a test. Personal discipline was essential: “We’ve been too keen to accept the kudos of being All Blacks without doing the hard yardage... I look around and I can see the professionals.” He recalled the previous year’s performances.

That third* Lions test, we pissed blood for a week. The Bledisloe* last year in Dunedin we went through every man and what we were each having to do, and we did it. At Wellington this year* against the Boks you were as shitty and focused as you’ve ever been. It’s not good pissing blood on the day, it’s got to be a few days of build up.

The forwards’ lack of “edge” at training annoyed a senior player who was critical of the lack of “niggle”. “We’ve got to get ascendancy over these c--ts and let them know how inferior they are.” There was not enough calling of the scrum to meet with Captain’s approval.

The team went on an evening cruise on Sydney Harbour. Some read. Some did puzzles, and all enjoyed the range of drink and food on board. Two of the tight-five forwards sat on deck gravely concentrating on their chess game. The card school flourished below deck, and a prop forward won the electronic skeet shooting in the final against Captain, Researcher and HB.

A team conference in the afternoon, and at 5:45 p.m. Coach checked on his team. The guys were

* These are, respectively, Matches Two, Three and Six of this chapter.

amazed at the difficulty of getting tickets, and only receiving two tickets each. The game plan was outlined and tactics initiated. “What I want to get clear before training tonight is that everyone understands the pattern and tactics. I need to understand it from you guys, so that I know in my mind that you know what is involved...” The team discussed players, wiper kicks, absolute control of the ball. LF3 had an objection to one move and Coach discussed this. This room was hot, with no tea or coffee, as there was no team room where the team could meet, watch TV and relax together. The urge to attack with the ball in hand was strong, and LF2 stated his belief that “60 metres out, we can score against these guys.” Coach asked the team units to focus on the game plan, on the opposition, opposing units and individual responsibilities.

I might single out individuals and ask how you’re going. Get together in those units and be ready to tell me tomorrow about your opponents and how you will negate them, and your strengths. I don’t want any bullshit. I don’t want any pie-in-the-sky things. I want the rest of the team to understand what you do, how you work in with them and your commitment.

7:00 p.m. Sydney Cricket Ground. Night training. At 7:29 p.m. Coach pulled the team together and was strongly critical of them as they started well in practice but faded away. “Are we going to be a 15 minute rugby team?” He leaned forward with an admonishing finger. “What I said to you today was that you’re holding back...we need guts. You’ve gotta die for that black jersey.”

Monday

There was a team talk at 9:00 a.m., preceded by Coach and Assistant Coach meeting while Captain took the team for a walk. The two coaches discussed tactics, especially in countering an Australian wing. The pair had a clear concern for the winger’s mercurial capabilities and unpredictability. There was no morning training. The two coaches revised the game plan progress at breakfast, and Coach explained his reason for cancelling morning training. They believed that the night’s training would be videotaped by the Australians. Coach accepted the reality of this, adding, “There was so much done yesterday at practice that, if they tried to combat everything we did, the Aussies would get lost.”

9:45 a.m. The All Black team met to watch passages of play from the last Australian test video, after which they broke into team units to discuss themselves, opponents and the game plan. Coach gave out, and read from, selected newspaper articles. The two coaches chatted as the players assembled in the room. Assistant Coach checked with Coach, “You wouldn’t mind if I told HB to have a go at some stage would you?” Coach replied, “Hell no, it’d be good to see.” AC suddenly

realised there were no papers and pens available for the players so they could make notes from watching the video. A supply of pens and pencils was quickly gathered up and distributed.

Here the coach had developed an excellent teaching device, utilised group discussions and decision making, but the recording and reinforcement modes are prepared for inadequately. I notice that only LF1 and LF2 make notes at early critical stages in the Australians' play until others become aware of memory overload and start to jot down key points from the video. Some simply doodle on paper. Do they even know how to synthesise information or do they work from experiential knowledge and visually process only new information? The Australian number 8 scores a try on the video but only the two flankers make notes. One player is reading an article about an opposition player. (Researcher's Notebook 15.8.94).

10:27 a.m. Coach: "Righto, if you just get into your playing units now and talk about what you saw. You've met last night or earlier this morning so you have ten minutes eh? Then we'll come back together." Groups spread through the room and outside on the balcony. The inside backs seemed to lack the incisive discussion or depth of analysis apparent in the front row. The inside backs appeared too general in their strategies, whereas LW was direct with comments in his group, such as "What are you going to do about this, CT?" when discussing an opposition winger's attack. When the team regrouped, the discussion was dominated by experienced players such as Captain, LF2, FR, L1. When the back group spoke, the only one silent was their reserve who had made the most detailed notes. Coach attempted to pin down specifics of opposition tactics, All Black recognition of these and their own counter-moves. He emphasised clear communication, "HB, you've got to be heard saying 'Willie O coming back, Willie O coming back,' so your mates hear that." Specific players were discussed, the whiteboard used, and there was an emphasis on discipline. "Legal play, legal play...we've gotta have discipline -- one silly thing and the umpires get into you." Tackling was an imperative. Coach checked his notes, "What did you see that they did from set play?" The various units were checked. The meeting concluded on two different notes. The coach read a Wallaby player's quote that, "I feel like I can play blindside flanker, even as a second rower." He snorted in disgust. "What sort of man says that stupid sort of thing?" A prop, often criticised by the Australian media, grinned sardonically and replied, "An Australian." Coach ended with the reminder for players to ask themselves at times during the day, at golf or wherever players were, "What if they did this? What would we do?"

The coaching idea of putting responsibility upon the players is excellent, as is utilisation of their analysis and discussion of their skills, but their presentation is accepted, I feel, too uncritically. Some players virtually did not contribute, and there was no apparent monitoring of time on task. (Researcher's Notebook 15.8.94).

Golf in the afternoon was played by about 20 of the All Black group. LF3 and LF2 were very competitive. They bet on holes, needled each other and put the pressure on. In the early evening, there was a dining room meeting, as there was no team room, and then the team went to the test ground for practise. Lineouts did not use code plays at practice to avoid being recorded on video. Three key backs were told where to practise kicking. At the ground LF3 sought clarification from the coaches on a move in which he felt one player would be better used than another. A tour group came in with video cameras to Coach's annoyance. The team management was annoyed with the inaction of liaison officers. AC was angry with a senior player who often played an unofficial leader role, "That f-----g X is starting to piss me off. He annoyed me last night trying to give orders. You can't have two captains running the cutter."

Tuesday

Team meeting. Coach was critical of the media reports of the All Blacks as favourites. He addressed the team.

What test rugby does is expose you, to yourself, to your team-mates, to your team management, and all the people out there. What gets exposed is what you do on the paddock, what pep you've put into it, what laxness in that top echelon of intensity, if you get beaten in a ruck, if a guy beats you...I'm looking at you CT. You're bloody good, the best international centre. But I'm telling you, if you haven't done the hard yards in your training you'll be found out. How much do you want to win this game for yourself and the team, and for everyone else who's important to you? In all my coaching career I've only ever wanted what's best for any team.... I don't tell lies, I want this most of all for you guys as All Blacks and as individuals.

Training was watched by a visiting New Zealand school team. This was followed by a midday press conference and a meeting with the referee at his hotel. That arbiter emphasises he wants the ball cleared. "When a maul is stationary I will be telling the boys to use it, use it." The two All Black coaches checked on tackle interpretations, rucks and mauls, driving over the top and taking the opposition out. ("Clearly, if they're on the ball, that's okay, but not if they're a metre or so away from the ball, that's pure obstruction.") Binding was discussed. ("Specific laws must be followed, bind the arm or get back, bind on or piss off.") Sprigs were discussed. ("Is the 21 mm

length okay?”, from Coach, led to some debate on sprigs with the referee calling on a fax sent out from the IRB.) Coach noted that, “Nothing collapses a front row faster than a short sprig that can’t grip.” The referee wanted communication and discipline from the captain, and checked on the coach coming on at half-time, “As even a coach saying something positive to the referee at half-time is important.”

Both All Black coaches are happy after the meeting, and discuss the referee’s comments positively. I am not so sure. It appeared to me that the coaches would raise some points and the referee would initially agree with their perspective and then rephrase the statement giving it a different and terminologically important shift. Ruck ball is one example where the referee stated, “You’ve been rucking for years and there’s nothing wrong with that,” but indicated differences from customary practice in his acceptance of blowing over an opposition player. An international official who feels that positive reinforcement from a coach is “important” at halftime would concern me as a coach! The meeting, for me, underscores the importance of the referee. I wonder why the referee’s last test matches are not observed on video by the coach and key players and why the meeting today is not taped for reflection. (Researcher’s Notebook 16.8.94).

6:00 p.m. Captain’s team meeting. The emphasis, with the test possibly being the last game for this team or its coach, was on playing it for Coach. (“I think we owe him one, he’s taken a lot of shit, so have we, but not a quarter of what he has.”)

The captain’s team talk does not have the fusion of compressed energy and confidence evident in the tension of earlier season South African tests. I wonder at the idea of playing for the coach; how personal is this on the field? I have no doubt of the team feeling for their coach, but in terms of intrinsic motivation does this have a strong personal relevance? LF3 felt confident about “hooking into them for 80 minutes” but I don’t feel the team were “there”.

(Researcher’s Notebook 16.8.94).

Wednesday. Test Match Day.

Players met for a team walk, half an hour before breakfast. Regular patterns emerged, with lineouts at 2:30 p.m. Before the walk the coach mentioned calls of support. He reported on the referee meeting. Sprig size was queried and the manager was to check this with the Australians and referee. On the team walk the coach talked quietly with LF1 and put his arm around that player’s waist, “I appreciated your mother’s call and was really touched, LF.”

The time until the night match moved through its usual cycle of lineout practices, on the motel tennis court, and pre-match build-up. Then it was 6:20 p.m. with a crowd cheering the All Blacks as they got into their bus outside the motel behind two motorbike police to lead the way. At the ground the reserves had a separate room but shared the showers and lavatories. The changing room build-up was familiar and then the team was out under lights, earlier than expected. The record crowd of 41,197 saw an Australian team rampant in the first half and a resurgent All Black second half, with the game lost in a desperate final minute tackle. The changing room was muted. Two players were throwing up. The presentation of the Cup outside drew intrusive cheers. Coach: "You played bloody well in that second half, fellas. You couldn't have done any better than that, it was just too big a gap." At 9:21 p.m. Captain thanked the team for their second half. The veteran FR, and LF3 for the sixth time in 1994, went to be drug tested. NZRFU councillors came in smiling and uttering "Well played," completely misreading the unsmiling mood of the room. The Chairman of the NZRFU was smiling and talking while the players sat slumped. Coach stood by himself, drinking water from a plastic cup. An Australian winger was present, frowned at by the Chairman. The councillors talked to each other. An Australian prop came in to see his counterpart. It was 9:37 p.m. Coach muttered to himself, "I'd better go through and say G'day to the Aussies," with a sardonic aside to Researcher, "This is the good bit." There was an inappropriate burst of laughter from the NZRFU councillors' conversation in the middle of the room. In the corner, with his back to the team, a young player in a black jersey wept into his towel....

7.2.9 Participant Observation Data: Categories and Properties.

The participant observation data generated a range of categories and properties. These were developed as outlined in Chapter Four and continually worked and reworked. Although the process led to virtual saturation by the final two matches observed, there were emphases generated by those matches' data, such as the use of field units to plan points relating to the game plan and the lack of a team room for the final match.

1	Coach Role Selector Develop game plan Organise training Technical guidance Motivator Link with team management Relate to media Coach-captain Coach-assistant coach
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2	Coach Qualities Analyse game plan Technical knowledge Clarity in team talks Personal qualities Teaching skills Cope with time demands
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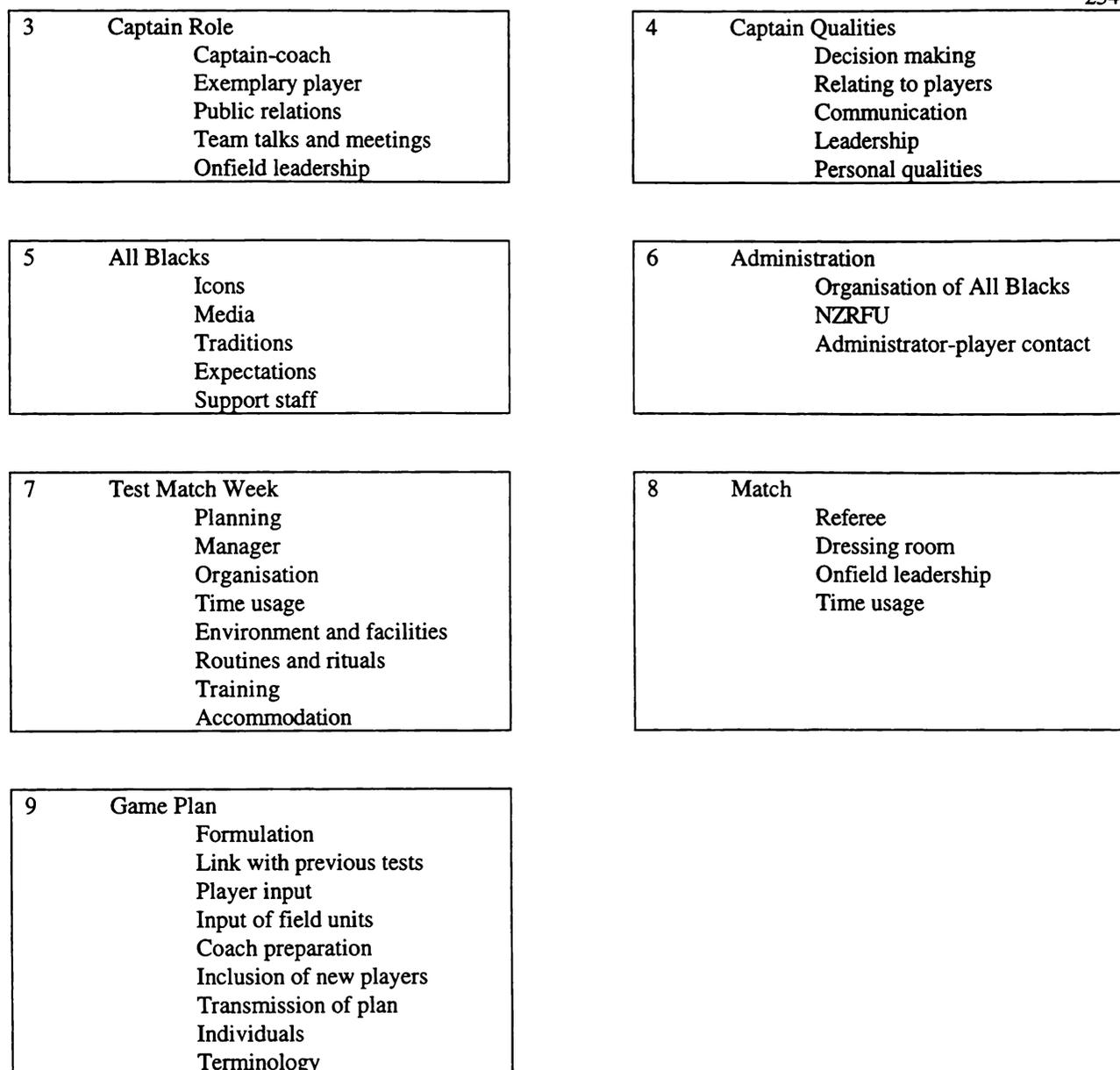


Figure 7.3 All Blacks participant observation categories.

7.3 INTERVIEWS IN THE ALL BLACKS SETTING

Given the importance of the coach as a sport team leader, as noted in the literature, the interviews in this phase of the present study had a particular focus upon the All Black coach and, to a lesser extent, the captain. Semi-structured or informal interviews with Coach provided opportunities to explore interpretations of his behaviours and allowed the coach to reflect upon beliefs which governed these. Given the researcher's biases, world view, values and relationships, and the attendant impact of these upon selective decisions to observe, record, interpret and converse, the interviews allowed the central figures of the observation, to provide their views of their immediate All Black world. As with the Provincial Team the interview elicited interviewee perspectives on roles and qualities of elite rugby team coaches asking identical questions. Interviews with Coach, (and Captain to a lesser degree), ranged widely over perspectives of elite rugby for three years.

7.3.1 Team member interviews.

All Black Coach

The social realities of the researcher-coach relationship over the three years must be recognised honestly and directly as the participant observation was not a value-free form of research, nor was it always neutral in its interpersonal relationship or framed in a single layered reality. The researcher had open access to the coach for interviews, usually informal and conversational, which ranged from checking on the accuracy of a training observation, to perceptions of the captain's qualities, to an outline of personal concerns about the team or team members. [Possible mutual and reciprocal influences in this relationship are acknowledged and discussed in Chapter Ten.]

1992a

My mother's family came out from England and were missionaries in India. Her father fought in the Boer War at age 16. My parents were Otago people. My father played senior rugby at 17, but damaged his knees while young. My mother was supportive of sport. I was fourth in six children. I was brought up very much as a team person and my father had strong qualities of loyalty and team spirit. I was guided to the rugby club I joined by my father. Even when I was a kid when I got my teeth into something I'd go 100% and give it everything. I know you can't always do that, and as an adult I do get really intense at times! Rugby has certain special qualities. Aggressive body contact provides a quality of play and allows all body types. I played first-five until college when I was changed to fullback...I was an absolute fanatic as a kid, kicking a rugby ball and developing a high level of kicking and handling skills, and not having much pace, I guess I made fullback the logical choice...

The second senior game of rugby I played for our club was the first time Vic Cavanagh [see Chapters Three and Eight] had watched us play and he sent a message, via my father, for me to turn up at his office at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, which I did. We talked about a whole lot of things, but he really impressed upon me the need to know exactly what was going on in the forwards if I was going to be an effective attacking fullback. In other words, I had to know who was going to win the ball and how things were being set up. And that made a lot of sense to me, as well as asking myself a lot of questions about what the opposition were trying to do, such as how players were standing...the other thing that came to me during my playing years was that if the forwards weren't doing very well and winning good quality ball the backs were no use anyway...

When I took over the Otago team as coach I had two principles: to have a nucleus of home grown players and to pick university students who were so good you couldn't leave them out. Once we established that nucleus of the Otago team then we trained the shit out of them -- team discipline is critical to a team. Hard training, players understanding the plan, and team spirit. Nobody criticises another player on the field. That's one of the things I didn't like about the play of X [a recent All Black player]. I told him he f---d up his inside player and dominated the player outside. That's why, when I took over the All Blacks, we got rid of those who didn't provide the team spirit we wanted.

With the Otago team it was a learning process as a coach. In 1988 we played the Australian Barbarians and then the ACT in the wet. The manager said to me after the tour, "I've just seen the way rugby should be played." It was the turning point in my coaching career. I had this bloody vision. The loose forwards were the key to my vision of rugby,

the joiners, the creators of the unity. It all suddenly happened in Sydney and I had this vision of where rugby should be going. It was a marvellous year's rugby. We never had a pack that could give us dominance in the tight five. I'd always been a believer that loose forwards were the key to the game and I always studied loose forward formations.

In Otago we had a really distinctive loose forward pattern...we had to be 100% technically correct, play the game at pace, and have continuity. It was critical to have the loose forwards linking with the backs, have very specific lines in the defensive pattern, to run the ball and create opportunities such as using the loose ball or creating a blindside where you break ground and feed the loosies...I think I changed quite dramatically in choosing to have athletic skills, to make rugby faster and more attractive. In 1989 we were devastated by injuries, came second in 1990 and won the national championship in 1991. In that last year I reckoned you could play all-out attacking rugby without compromising defence. Apart from creating lines, with the resultant tackles and turnover for attack, or creating an overlap, the players are using their natural abilities and creating an attitude in their minds. AC had basically formed the same ideas on loose forward play.

When I looked initially at the All Black selectors in 1991, I developed more self-belief. Otago were playing well, I got informal comments from senior All Blacks and it suddenly dawned on me that I could do an All Black selector's job well. I thought that would be good, a couple of days here and a couple of days there...

1992b

The coach has to be very single minded, having the ability to assimilate information and formulate a clear course of action. Has to have self-discipline before he impacts discipline on his team. The elite level coach needs time and planning ability, and to be a hardnosed bugger. You have to be close to the players and be some distance from them. Being hard at practice is not as tough as having to drop a player. The coach has to have high knowledge of technical aspects of the game and an understanding of units and defence and attack patterns. He also has to be innovative and get new ideas into a workable plan. Communication skills are important, to get through to the team, and the coach needs to be a bit of a psychologist. He has to be self-analytical and self-critical.

[Coach emphasised the critical nature of the coach-captain relationship, where honesty is essential, as are accurate information and perceptions.]

The captain has to have many of the same qualities as the coach: honesty, discipline, and the ability in the heat of the game to make rational decisions. Leading by example with strong discipline, he is the coach's extension on the field...I would never send a team onto the field with only one game plan, and the captain, with his own experience, may change the game plan in action. I've always used some of the senior players to put responsibility on some of them during training. This is an important thing to do as it gives players, other than the captain, the opportunity to be decision makers or leaders. Sometimes the captain might not be reading the game accurately and it gives other players the knowledge that the captain has confidence in them. The decisions on the field have to be made within a pattern. Sometimes things happen in a game apparently by accident, or something comes off effectively, and you think you'd have it in your game plan. Coaches must be aware that they operate in a rugby environment and have an understanding of this, political dimensions and administration included.

1993

Three reporters ring me and I'm on the phone for about two hours a day to them. Some ring up with no real question, they're fishing and all of a sudden they create an issue. I accept that they have a responsibility to the people of New Zealand to explain about the All Blacks and what's going on, except when it's a reference to a specific player situation.

The man or woman out there who loves the All Blacks has a right to a fair bit of information about what's going on, the sort of people who'll accept we did our best and say, "Yeah, yeah, go the All Blacks." We have to respect them. We have to keep up the Divisional [lower provincial division] teams. Only through these unions will we get the Lochores, Meads and others. My concept of the Divisional XV is that it's more important than the Super-10 or CANZ. We did an exceptional job selecting the Divisional team. Our All Black commitments were over, and we saw every team. The fact that AC and I went and coached them is significant.

Looking at the World Cup over two years ahead, deep down, it would be great to last that long and be there and see the team you've developed be there. I have to believe absolutely that I'm the best person in New Zealand to prepare the team and the players for the World Cup. If I wasn't, and such a coach was available, I would step aside. The only thing that matters to me is that the All Blacks are given the best opportunity to win it. No, to perform to their maximum potential, because that doesn't necessarily mean they will win it. There is public recognition of the All Blacks. If you're ego driven to coach the team you won't last with the guys, and such an ego drive breeds dishonesty. I do appreciate the respect for the position and small signs of recognition for this. The stress is enormous. What the players think is important. If I get the vibes coming through from knowledgeable players that they were not enthusiastic about what we were doing, or who did not believe in me as the coach, I would be influenced by that. The stress is awesome. It's not a personal setback if we lose, but it hurts the guys and the media make it a national disaster. It's a bloody reality of our society, it's not just me and my 21 players preparing for a game and going out and doing our best.

There are effects on my business. If I'd stayed put and worked on from where we were I could have expected the opportunity to retire soon, but now my business is bloody near in a holding pattern for the duration. In some ways the time is stressful for my family. Of course the demands and timetables place a real strain on relationships. Lately, it's been away ten days, home two days, away to a NZRFU Council meeting, home for Sunday [See Appendix F.15.]...The stress factor on me sometimes makes it bloody difficult for my family. At the end of the 1992 tour I went off to Australia by myself...to have time by myself...I don't want stress to affect my performance or the players. I'm still angry at the way we were treated by the media in Australia in 1992.... . It seemed to be deliberately orchestrated...

The All Black coach provided examples of what he saw as inconsistent citings of players, the Australian Rugby Football Union ignoring similar behaviour by their own players, irregular use of citing procedures, and the lack of NZRFU comment. Coach noted, "It was frustrating to me that the NZRFU never publicly chastised the Australian Union for what went on...they didn't come out on our side."

We're certainly conscious of the 1995 World Cup. To my mind I've got the plan of a three or four year playing style for the team that would climax then if I was the coach. We certainly achieved Stage 1 last year [1992], this year we consolidate Stage 1 and move on to Stage 2 on the England-Scotland tour. Certainly we're looking for the type of players we want to select for that plan. That's not to say we're not picking the best players now but our selections are influenced by our style of play in mind. I would like to think the selectors of the day in 1995 would be happy with the team and style, and add one or two players to enhance the particular style of play they envisage.

The present All Black selectors gel well in selecting and in a social sense. We get on bloody well. In times of stress there's a hell of a lot of trust there. We have a high degree of respect for each other and I've got no doubt that the three of us would remain as friends

for a long time after doing this job. None of us take selection debates to heart personally. Sometimes I have to consider my own knowledge of the players...and I think, "I'm going to pull back here and listen to how you guys see them." Others provide viewpoints. [A prominent past All Black] rang up saying, "Would you be interested in what I have to say, you probably have a fair few nutters ringing you up..." I think about someone's view and portray it as honestly as possible to the other selectors, then I'll comment upon it. I keep asking myself, have I got a hidden agenda? I take a great pride in being as honest as I can. I'd be really disappointed in myself at the end of the day if I wasn't. It all comes back to doing the right thing. In that sense I'm more committed than [the other two selectors]. We reassessed our requirements after the Centenary Tests and in hindsight, we lost too much planning time through Selector's involvement with Sevens when we could have been together. Basically we are behind where we should be. Selector is under awesome problems with time off his work, AC is hit-and-miss with his dental practice, and I'm not hands-on with my business....

AC wanted *B* in the backline as he saw him having power and pace. He didn't see *D* as the difference between our backline and another. I thought that *B*'s defence was not good enough, he wasn't perceptive enough and his ball distribution skills were not of the quality that would free his outside players. AC argued that *D* would not break the opposition line. I argued that our defence must be rock solid and that a player like [an Australian back] had never outplayed *D*. It was a bloody heated debate. We slept on that one overnight. AC never said *D* was the best player but he accepted the decision. Now, a critical thing for a coach about the assistant coach is that AC would never go to practice and indicate in any way that *D* was not his first choice. He would never, with body or words, indicate anything other than full support for that player.

I wasn't sure about Player E. I had a negative feeling about him and we hadn't picked him for either of the Irish tests. The captain came to me and said, "We've got to have E." I explained my reservations. Captain replied that E's provincial team did not pull him into the hard work, that E had not been coached and he could do anything an All Black coach asked of him. I told Captain that there's absolutely no bar on any specific player and we'd consider E. At the selection committee I told the others what Captain had said and that I accepted it. It was one of the best things we ever did...I knew that picking E would also put a bit more trust in the coach-captain relationship. Players, and especially the skipper, need to know that we're not infallible and we know it. On that tour E did exactly what we asked of him. He said to me that he'd never been coached in his role and that was apparent. I realised that he was good value, and we got tremendous satisfaction out of that selection. I listened to Captain and I was pleased I wasn't rigid in my assessment of E. The way he played gave me great pleasure. He doesn't bullshit me and I don't bullshit him. He's welcome to question me at any stage about selections.

Captain and I are developing a good relationship. In a test match week like this I always discuss the plan for training with him.

I was very keen to have LF3 in the All Blacks as he is very good at reinforcing player perspectives of the way the coaches wanted the game played. The team is developing without him, though I miss his intelligence and help in assessing what's going right and what's going wrong. He's outstanding as a motivator, quite a cruisy guy who can speak to a dinner the night before a test and then play a great test. When switched on for a big game he can become very abrasive and intense...

Coach had a voluminous batch of files on sponsorship, media, coaching committee, selectors and All Black file, players and minutes from the NZRFU Council. Examples of this, were: the draft of the 1994 French and South African tours of New Zealand, comments on the tours to the NZRFU,

three hours chasing up an All Black who was advertising boots other than those used by the All Black team, a letter from a player seeking advice, hours vetting the proposed English and Scottish tour, telephone calls to London to check on details...and coping with administration.

The Council were going to change their meeting date to allow the Central Zone trial to take place on a certain day, so we arranged the trial day. Then the Council didn't change that meeting so we had to change that trial date and we copped flak when we notified the locals and they thought, "Shit, can't the selectors make up their minds?" The trials in 1992 were another example of what we, and the players, put up with from administrators. The scrum machine was meant to be ready but nothing was prepared. No balls even, despite my telling them! That's when I got pissed off and it leaves organisation to be done.

At trials and other games we use [a past All Black halfback] who is very good on halfbacks; [a past front-row prop] on front rows; [a famous All Black loose forward] is a very good analyst of the back of the lineout and good technically on loose forwards; [a legendary lock] on locks...I wouldn't worry too much about closely watching the locks' development of second phase play as he's doing that. Overall, these guys provide a back-up to our judgement and in many cases do have an effect upon our selection. We also ask all trial coaches to comment upon a range of specialist skills. A typical interaction would be my asking [legendary lock] to comment upon the workrate of locks, if they're not getting ball; are they are getting around the field, how are they in the tight five...I'd really appreciate that. We'd be very naive to think we can see it all. We plan how to watch the All Black trials and then say okay, we need to have guys watching these things specifically. It helps that, despite rule changes and shifts in styles of play, the basic roles of players don't change too much. Whatever you do, you are criticised by someone because the All Blacks are the focal point for the whole country. For example, we have been publicly criticised by the coach of province X for not looking at his players. The reality is that we watched that team several times. They also had four players in the Divisional XV and that team played three games. Then we had the Zone trials and seven or eight of their players were included and then the All Black trials for those good enough. We have got 27 unions to cover and have seen that coach's team five times! He hasn't rung us to check his facts. On the day he says we should be watching his team we have a long standing duty to be at the New Zealand Maori game against another province!

I have an ultimate aim for each part-year that I want to achieve, but this is influenced by referees, rules and players. Consequently I continually readjust the style and reassess the way we play. In my mind I visualise what I would like to achieve with this team. I would describe the game of rugby that I see, my vision for the All Blacks, as having a great deal of purpose and activity going on -- that creates such pressure on the opposition by retention of the ball, and the speed with which manoeuvres and moves are carried out, that their defences cannot keep regrouping to stop us scoring. Technically, everything being done right. Everyone knows what he has to do in each given situation and it's brought about, not by showing each player a hundred different situations so that he has to remember how to do a hundred things, but by building on a basic philosophy so that he can make his decisions at the time when he needs to.

Playing in this plan needs confidence, self-knowledge and very good vision, and therefore taking the right options, but paramount to it all is communication. This is so important in rugby as the ball carrier often cannot see the best options and so his support players have got to be his eyes. But time is so short! So little time is really spent on vision, being your team-mates' eyes...The reality is that we can spend several hours to create a game-like situation of three minutes' relatively effective practice. Training is discussed beforehand with [the co-selectors] and always with captain. I run everything past him before we do it. I discuss new ideas with the players concerned. There are experienced honest players in

every team...At the All Black level you'll have team discipline and conforming to the team level but you don't step in and say, "Don't have a go yourself". It's more a matter of pointing out the wrong options. Player Y is a classic example of a player making a break and instead of drawing a man and getting the ball out he tries to beat the next man...It may take two or three seasons for the balance to be acquired. If a player is greedy he gets a tune-up, but if he takes the wrong option then he needs talking with. When we look at the options that players take, we have to get to the decision making process players go through, rather than making hard and fast rules.

I'm very much against any acts of foul play. There are certain accepted acts in rugby, such as legitimate acts of rucking, to clear legs and bodies out of the way so the ball can come out. It doesn't look pretty, and clearly some people get carried away and call rucking foul play. It acts as a disincentive for the opposition to be there. As long as it's done in a sensible manner it's good play. Planting feet near heads is a no-no and unacceptable as far I'm concerned. Rep level rugby is very competitive, and if you've got a top level lineout forward being held down and the whole test could hinge on his ball winning, there are times when maybe the player has to take the law into his own hands to stop that happening. You always give the referee the first option to stop it...We have to understand the physical nature of rugby. Rugby is physical and aggressive. Reactionary backhanders and punches do sometimes occur, and I think we have to accept that where it deals with a cheating player. However, there is no place in rugby for premeditated punching to soften someone up. That's where I draw the line. Prevention is always better than cure and I always attempt to spell out the guidelines very clearly to my players. If a player commits foul or bad play I want to know why. At this level there is generally a reason why...but if I'm not satisfied I would be prepared to take disciplinary action against that player. There are times, diving into a ruck or maul, when you actually stand on people, but standing on people is not doing any harm. I do not encourage standing on people when the ball's not there, very clearly that's another example. You ruck for a purpose and that's to clear the ball, that's within the laws of the game. If the ball is near a player's head then quite clearly there's a great deal of caution required because you do *not* have an excuse, whether the ball is there or not, to stand on anybody's head...There can be no mitigation for stomping on a player's head.

Coach looked at some of the players he was "slated" for dropping, but who by now had been dropped by their province. He noted, however, that the media may raise a valid point about a player, as they saw a lot of rugby.

Player R seemed marginally supportive in his early days with us as a reserve. Then, in the build up to the second Irish test [1992] he was helping the inside backs sort out their game. I said to myself here's a real change, this guy is a real man and a real model to New Zealand kids, helping his competitors for his All Black position to make a real success of their jobs, after being the top dog for years. Often we don't learn about the nature or character of players until adversity. I would like to think it's because I'd been honest with him. I was delighted with the end result.

You have a huge responsibility if you're in charge of New Zealand rugby...I get tremendous satisfaction when the team perform well...at the end of the day all that matters is the way that the All Black team played. Test match rugby is measured by the win-loss ratio, and you can't argue with that. Quality rugby is important, but I would generally rather play scrappy rugby and win, than play good rugby and lose. Overall I want the team playing quality rugby, the winning will come. The rugby must be entertaining for the players, spectators and sponsors, and exciting and challenging for the coaches. The national team has got to be a leader in quality rugby.

25.2.94

Before the final season of the observation period was underway, the researcher and coach met for an in-depth perspective from the All Black team leader on the recent tour of England and Scotland (in New Zealand's summer) and prospects for the 1994 season and 1995 World Cup. The interview also ranged over administrative, disciplinary and contentious issues in which the coach had been embroiled, and a focus upon particular players. The interview-conversation was drawn from an afternoon and evening punctuated with Coach's incoming business calls and cooking of the evening barbecue.

As a private person Coach loved fishing, river or ocean, and "recharges his batteries" by getting out in his boat. A member of Greenpeace who has spoken out on a major environmental issue Coach relaxes at home with friends, and music such as pan flutes, orchestral music or Waylon Jennings, the country music singer. He runs his own business. (Researcher's Notebook 25.2.94).

Rugby has got to be entertainment, for the sponsors, spectators, players etc. It's got to be exciting and it's got to be a challenge to coaches. The national team has to be a leader in quality rugby...When we look at the players we're looking to the Cup also. Captain is a key figure. I told him he shouldn't worry about the World Cup and try to play only about ten first-class games, say, and play some club rugby. He said to me that we've got to find out who is staying until the World Cup and who will still be available.

The coach's place of work does not provide release from the demands of his national position. During a twenty minute period there was a query from a reporter about the Council's apparent lack of consideration for play preferences of Saturday tests, a query on a new product in his building business, a phone call to the NZRFU to track down the Coaching Convenor, checking with his secretary on travel arrangements for attendance at a sevens tournament, and a phone call from the All Black doctor.

The discussion was wide ranging. Coach wanted to locate research on hand-eye coordination, improving jumping skills and expanding players' field vision. Looking to the World Cup Coach had developed graphs from the 1995 Cup finals back to the present year's tests and the All Black trials. He reflected upon players and the recent tour.

Among things I learned from the England and Scotland tour was that under the new laws a team can kill the ball and that England have no will to play attacking rugby -- they totally play a negative game. There is a challenge for us to negate their negative tactics and be much quicker mentally in the forwards and deliberate in our play. There is a fine balance there of when to win quick ball and when to drive it. We need an experienced or skilled option taker at first-five who can kick well, and strong tackling backs. We only had five tries scored against us on that tour.

Decision-making needs to be more sophisticated. We have to teach players how to make decisions and used mental skills and exercises for this. The mental preparation is extremely important in creating the right environment leading up to a test. Preparation for the Scotland test had everything right and we were in the same hotel for a week. We had an intensive and thorough build-up. In the test match week for England we met the Queen on Monday night and got to Gloucester about 11 p.m. We had a tough night game in poor weather, then into an unfamiliar and spaced-out hotel. There was no gelling effect on the team and we were disrupted through injuries.

Mentally the guys never quite made it. We took advice on the length of the bus trip to the test ground and left five minutes early but still arrived twenty minutes late. And there was an incorrect hotel booking so we tried to book back into the hotel we had earlier stayed in. So I was really concerned about attitudes by Thursday. The training venue was hard frozen and we had had a big win over Scotland. With the bus being late to the ground the changing room was unsettled and some routines hurried. Then the referee changed his style in policing the lineouts, from the way he had ruled against Scotland.

The coach discussed the controversy surrounding the selection of a loose forward for a key final game, disciplining a player for rough play, and the roles of the manager and Council members in the decisions, and in response to them. He then reviewed the players taken on that tour, and questioned players' use of trainers.

We've had a lot of difficulty having some All Blacks get fit and fast when provinces or personal trainers appear to have a strong, and often negative, influence. Others seem to find the All Black and provincial fitness requirements to be compatible. One province used a trainer last year who worked on Player X. We accused that player of not trying [at one particular setting]. We gave him a hoozle-up and then it turned out he'd been doing [that trainer's] training stuff. That province started off with a hiss and a roar but then fizzled... We found that player Y had been in tow with this guy and was rapt in the fitness training. Then Y convinced his provincial coach to use that trainer. We tested Y's speed, critical in his position, and he's slower over a standing 40 meters than last year!... I just don't know how New Zealand rugby has got on as well as it has. They get relevant research reports at the NZRFU and shelve them...

On the 1994 season:

We've got to look at our lineout, that's the one area that's cost us in every test, apart from the first test against Australia in 1992. It's been a critical element in our losses. I check the videos of each test, and the players' techniques are always 100%, so perhaps it's the bad choice of options. We need to look at the player interaction, especially between the key lineout guys and the decision making. V hasn't selected the lineout options wisely, that's been disappointing. It comes down to the role of player W as he's the only one with the right decision-making capability. Player W has to have back-up though, and that's a problem. You need intensive mental preparation between the lineout decision maker and the coach. There has to be intense mental analysis, mental awareness and preparation. We'll look at simplifying the calls so there is no margin of error in relaying calls, and possibly using physical signals as we don't want to simplify calls so that they become detectable. We need to look to support players earlier. Referees are not doing anything about the illegal play of other teams doing this. I think we've got enough good lineout players.

I haven't wanted to show too early what we're taking into the World Cup and we have tried out tactics over the two years without persisting with them. We need big men to put pressure on the opposition and they must have mobility and ball skills. We used runners

quite effectively in 1992 until they were countered by other teams. We attacked Australia closely and punched through the middle, so we dropped that after being effective against Australia and Scotland. Player T was excellent in these. Then we found a fault in the test against England, when the tight five were a yard off the pace and couldn't get the whole thing started...The England-Scotland tour helped us with some players and we have real hopes for E as an inside back for the World Cup. We'd had our doubts about L fronting up in the tight five as a good All Black, but as the tour progressed from a game where he gutted it out, he clearly improved...I want to look at some of our training and introduce some variations. We need to develop our warm ups.

Coach spent considerable time discussing the impact of fixtures and itineraries upon the All Blacks. Requests by him for changes, such as having a fortnight between the two forthcoming French tests, were ignored. Night test arrangements had been changed to the perceived detriment of All Black chances. The administrators arranged for the national team to play six tests in eight weeks.

You can't do it at peak performance. We must win the first two tests against South Africa...Then you add in New Zealand trials and Super-10 finals on 7 and 14 May....the best thing that could happen to the All Blacks now would be for no New Zealand teams to be in the Super-10 finals. At the end of the year we'll pencil in a World Cup squad. The politics of rugby, with the way administrators almost crucify the team because of the test and tour programmes they set, prevent the World Cup being the prior and ultimate goal.

Coach noted satisfaction with the captain, "Perhaps he's not a great tactician, but he was never intended to be." Similarly he had a deep appreciation of the new manager who had been 100% loyal and supportive.

23.4.94

Coach discussed the need for variety in training methods and equipment to enhance player involvement and realities of match situations.

We have to break second phase right down into all of its elements...First of all the ball carrier and his presentation of the ball -- what are the most important things that he does to give us the advantage to win the ball? Then the first support player, what is the most important thing he does? Then the second support player, then the bulk of the forwards. Having broken that down, it all depends on what the bloody ball carrier does, he either stays on his feet or, if he goes to ground, what does he do? But I want to get even more specific than that. I'm going to develop some practice drills one-and-a-half times faster than in a game.

The coach discussed development of a circuit for more effective training which offered challenges and skill enhancement, and development of a separate range or battery of unit training drills.

Specific drills could be drawn upon for a test match week which were directly relevant to the opposition and immediate team needs for that game. I think we can get a professional and structured approach to this without getting boring. In our present time on the paddock training we're as accurate in what we do as any other team in the world, and I think this [enhanced training drills] could give us a real edge...The funny thing is you'd only have it for a year...I will demand that players do not take it back to their provinces before the

World Cup...The most difficult aspect of coaching is developing the ability to accurately read the deficiencies of the team and individuals on the paddock. When you're not out there it's different...so you have to discipline yourself as an observer to watch for specific players or groups of players...obviously video is a great help...When it comes to forward play anybody who sits in the grandstand and thinks he knows exactly what's going on is fooling himself, but he's not fooling any of his players...I've always developed a players' committee of experienced and trusted players.

The coach mused on the past two years. Losing one of his two co-selectors from the panel had a profound effect on him. "He was so strong on basics and kept reminding us of where we had come from. He had balance and selecting was a positive, not defensive, activity." The coach felt his own coaching personality had softened a little, but he had lost a belief in rugby's administrators. "Peripheral things have affected me, things largely outside my control."

Coach discussed his relationship with his captain. "I think there's a great deal of trust there between the two of us. Both of us have come under a great deal of pressure. I've got a great deal of confidence in Captain, he's very professional. Anything we discuss doesn't go back to the players. It's a partnership that has grown." On his manager he noted that, "[Former All Black] is a very supportive manager, although maybe he's not quite as modern in his realisation that things have changed." Coach gives quite substantial time to test day team talks, "Not to kick arse but to encourage. It's awfully important that I'm not hounding them all the time. I don't want to be the ogre all the time or put undue pressure on players."

2.8.94

The All Black coach was in his room three days before the third test vs. South Africa. His goals for the first two tests were:

To get some confidence and combination so they play the rugby they were capable of playing. This test I'd like to see some quality rugby with urgent support and build up the attack. Give everyone the chance to show their skills and be involved. Basically the team needs to have the concentration and option choosing to facilitate the quality of the game we are willing to play -- and the urgency to do it. I was disappointed at the lack of confidence of senior players when I took over. They started at a lower level than I had expected. In the forwards we are using quickness and bulk and getting the balance right, knowing they have done as much as they should. In the backs we need to get the ball through HB when they want it. The ability is there. Need to choose the right options. The greatest frustration I've had for three years is that we can't yet get the players to do that...There are some priorities for players. LF3 has to continue lifting his work rate and contribute opportunities for LF2 to get wide where the value of his support play can be utilised. HB has to cut back his errors, for example, his problem at the lineout still needs improvement, as do his tactical kicking from behind the base and his domination of the forwards. IB needs to build on his game by playing his natural game more and becoming tighter in his option taking.

We thought the South Africans would run the ball more at us, with their slower loosies, that they would run it through the backs. Their front row was not as physically strong in the first two tests. Our strengths are: strong set pieces; ability to control possession; our midfield backs; our defensive performance and individual performances in that area; good support of the ball carrier; and driving play.

Coach was critical of the test match week organisation, with the regular corporate lunches, need for opposition in training and lack of top administrator support. Looking ahead to the World Cup he saw another five or six possible Cup players.

12.3. 95

The researcher met with Coach, reviewed the 1994 season and looked ahead to the 1995 World Cup.

Team Management

Assistant Coach's advocacy of thinking and open play in the All Black backs was reflected in an interview (12.3.95). He recalled negative experiences of making errors in an All Black match "But nobody ever told me what to do or how." What did he want for the test, now four days away?

I want the cerebral part, I want to see FE getting back under pressure and clearing the ball effectively. We're not yet playing to a pattern because of the dominance of individual skills. We can't wipe a ball across to their wings and haven't used the blind. We'll be working better to get the ball faster through to RW. We would like to see the tight five driving and not standing off so much and watching the other poor bastards working, giving HB a decent ball. FE, I expect, will take more right options. Part of the difficulty is having had him at second five eighth for two years but he can open up guys at the national level and away he goes, can't be stopped!

The All Black manager considered (8.7.94) "Coach is very deep, very sincere and demands loyalty." Manager noted the All Black selectors' skills at the All Black trials.

The players had a big down after the second French test and you've got to admire Coach and the way he didn't come out blazing. I rate him as a coach, he sums up games very well. Captain is very demanding upon himself and the team. He tends to rely on LF2 but leads from the front.

The following month Manager noted Coach's role in working on the Tours Agreement, discussing the day and time of a match out of New Zealand. As a NZRFU Councillor, Manager noted the inaccurate image of Coach held by Council. He had found Coach adaptable and, now, more accepting of the role of the media.

He is much better with them, I have no criticism of him for that. Coach has had a hell of a work load and it's not surprising he's uptight now. I think he's been sucked into the syndrome that too much team work is boring...I've always got on well with Coach. It was

through him that I stood for manager. I suppose we've grown together, he's an excellent coach, I think he's ideal. AC is a very deep thinker, I wish he would spend more time with the players; he doesn't always express himself well but if you sit down with him he's got a vast reservoir of knowledge. They are an amazing pair of guys to work with, chalk and cheese. Captain was a boy who's grown into a man. He seeks advice from the Whinerays and those sort of people. He leads by example -- marvellous.

Captain

1992 Early Season.

The All Black captain in the early days of his national captaincy saw man management skills as critical. "My major aim, on appointment, was to improve my play so I'd be more committed and lead from the front." He reflected upon All Black captain predecessors.

Captain D was a very articulate captain and assessed the game well, also having man management skills. He got caught in the controversy over the [unofficial national team] and that influenced some attitudes toward him. Captain E was totally committed to the All Black jersey and led by example. He would basically die for the All Black game. I thought he could relate to all players, from the senior players to the new boys. Captain F had man management and playing skills. He was always talking of perfection and the fact there is no reason why it couldn't be attained. Captain G didn't say a lot on the field. He was fortunate having experienced players in the team, but was a good motivator.

In my first test match as captain the players were unsure of me, and I was uncertain about them. As the week drew on we became more confident and drew together. I was going into the unknown and so was Coach with me. We'd sit down and talk through what we'd do at training. He's been very good at training and team talks, very good in assessing the players and AC complements him well. For me the coach must be able to put his ideas and strategies onto the training field and into a game. A lot of people have ideas but can't translate them onto the field. They have to relate to people and know when to be involved and when to hold back. Leadership is being able to relate to players and lead by example.

All Black Coach Four was a father figure as coach. I went through '86 with him, a lovely guy and a good coach. Coach Five was an honest man who told you what he thought, and a good coach. Coach Six was a great motivator and tactician.

I have had to come to terms with handling different personalities in the All Blacks. *Player A* needs to be told to keep up his effort through training and into the game. He trains hard for five to ten minutes and then drifts so he needs the pressure on him. *Player B* likes to go out at night and drink, so he's had the acid put on him.

If you are the leader you are captain of the ship, captain of that group. I enjoy the power of being able to make decisions, having the power to do things and I'm prepared to use that as I've seen segregation in top teams and young players being left out and not being part of [a provincial] team, for example early on...I remember RW saying in '86-'87, "This is what rugby is all about - playing for the All Blacks." We've got away from that, moving from pride to arrogance. I want everyone having an input. I hate All Blacks going into bars and being arrogant...Enjoyment is the number one factor.

October, 1992.

Captain was interviewed after the 1992 tour of Australia and South Africa. He saw New Zealand as having a sound team with reserve depth being built up. "It's also a different All Black team

now, they really want to be All Blacks and they have a better focus, not on monetary things.” He discussed South African rugby, professionalism, and the All Blacks often mixing with spectators after games instead of having a team session.

30.6.93.

Reflecting upon a second test loss of 7-20 to the British Lions the previous weekend, the team leader reflected on his captaincy in that test.

It was pretty average, I didn't do it well. I didn't play well. I pride myself on playing well and that is part of leading well. This Saturday I must concentrate more on playing my natural game, to relax and play my game well and the leadership comes with that...Now I look back on the last test match week we were not concentrating, we were drifting through training. I might have been trying a bit too hard.

I'm a bit more confident now as captain than I was at the start. The guys respect me and that's important. My biggest strength as captain? I don't know really, being part of a team that's confident and realises its ability. The relationship with Coach is pretty good, quite compatible, we both think along the same lines in our approach to the game. On the field this Saturday I've got to play well and lead well. FE and LF2 have key roles. Coach's targets are to instil confidence and belief in ourselves, play fast controlled rugby to beat these guys...I've got to relax and get my confidence. I was pretty shattered after last Saturday, and that really affected my believing in myself. I've been developing positive thoughts and write down the things I take pride in. I made notes from the video on things I did wrong and different options I could have taken...overall though, let's keep a sense of proportion, there're other things in life than rugby.

In his team talk before the 1993 Bledisloe Cup test, the All Black captain told the team to, “Play well for us, the guys here, for the selectors and especially for Coach...he puts in so much, like us.” At the conclusion of the team meeting the Captain's final comment is, “Coach's had a hard week, let's pay him back for that.” He added, “We hated the f-----g Australians, didn't we LF2? We f-----g hate them tomorrow, not for ten minutes, controlled pressure.”

1994

Through the season the researcher met with Captain. The interviews were informal and the content is reflected in the Coach interviews, Captain comments in the participant observation phase and his increasing confidence in the team's development.

Players

1992.

RW, before his 50th test, commented upon the qualities of an excellent coach.

Man management skills are critical. The overall ability to read the game and sum up the opposition, but also to be able to relax and have a beer with the guys. It's important that the All Black coach played the game to a reasonable standard himself.

He noted one coach who had most of these qualities.

You know at school we had a time “doing words” when someone says a word or words then goes out in front and does them to illustrate the meaning of the word. The coach needs to not only know the game, but have the perception to read the game and be able to do something about it to give others, the meaning they have got from it. Coach has the ability to say to you, “Go out and do it the best of your ability.” He has the ability to say the right things to the right people. I think it’s important to redefine the goals -- redefining the goals so they’re still relevant. Often we’re defined into positions when we come into rugby, and that affects our perceptions of the game. I can’t appreciate FR1 because I don’t know him. I could relate more probably to the role of a loosie or number eight or halfback. That doesn’t mean someone else couldn’t.

He comments that an All Black coach has to probably compromise in team selection anyway, which could influence the way he defines play. He has encountered a range of coaching styles. Whatever the style, how does a coach best relate to RW’s play, and to RW as a player?

He doesn’t ball me out. He’s concerned with maintaining confidence and gets me involved on and off the field. I want to get totally into a game, I guess. Be nice, just a common human decency. We’re a sensitive bunch of people.

A very experienced inside back, an onfield leader, provided elite rugby team leadership.

Captains at this level need exceptional leadership qualities. Captain E was under threat to lose the All Black captaincy in 1989 and responded superbly on the tour of Ireland and Wales...As a player I want to be involved by the coach and know what’s going on, be part of the planning process. I like to be encouraged as opposed to having bullets fired at me. I want to be criticised one-on-one by a coach away from team members. I’d regard him a lot more if he took the time to take me away from training and tell me...Coach initially didn’t like [my province] but that’s better now. He certainly brought new things, elements of his philosophy, such as the use of runners, and thus we became better than we had been for some years. Coach is trustworthy and honourable.

At the elite level the coach should seek input from players...part of their motivation and desire is fostered by their being involved in policy matters and team tactics, it helps to keep them interested -- often the coach is an expert on all positions and master of none. To my mind the major quality a coach needs is man management, being able to coordinate the team and get them to achieve goals. The coach has to cope with his own make-up, external elements such as the media and players’ input so communication skills are vital. These are almost more of a prerequisite than rugby knowledge, the players have the knowledge and the coach has to coordinate them. The guys know what it takes to succeed at the top -- that’s how they got there. They don’t need a rant and rave coach -- nobody’s going to change you two hours before kickoff...

The manager needs to be complementary to the coach, to also know the players and seek knowledge from them, balance up the coach’s strengths and needs. Manager X was very much hands-on, who left the press to the coach, whereas Coach Five was basically shy, being at ease with the team rather than external elements, so he needed a manager to do this.

Man management is bloody important for the captain as he has to relate to everybody on the field. Captain and coach must be able to communicate. It is better to locate the captain at loose forward or inside back. Captain E was not a skilled communicator like Captain F but led from the front as Captain H did. Captain D had more of a chain of communication,

effective in its own way, whereas Captain H would tell us onfield of major moves, Captain G generated hand signs. Each was effective, these captains were there on merit. If the captain is an inferior player then he needs extra special leadership skills.

When they play the anthem before the game, when it's on, you're choked with emotion. You carry a huge weight...the pressure and expectation...both from within and from outside. All of us go through self doubt...thinking "am I good enough to be here", wondering "wouldn't it be better to be at home at home..." We all hate the waiting part, especially Saturday mornings. [On such mornings, this player and Captain walk to each other's room, laugh, say little, and follow test day rituals.] The thing I enjoyed most about test rugby was the dressing room after the game -- that's what I'll miss most of all. In the ten to fifteen minutes after the test, with only the team in the dressing room, you feel relief first, then satisfaction for getting the job done.

One of the team group who had experienced different All Black coaches found the previous All Black coach easy to describe as autocratic, but a shy person who hid behind a domineering exterior.

He wasn't frightened of change. Think of his use of [a trainer] with his provincial team and the expansive play of that team, but he was surprisingly indecisive. I think that was shown when his LF2 was obviously injured and yet that coach still bracketed him with LF2R. He was very fortunate to be coaching a very good side. I felt he went on for a year or eighteen months too long, and it became Captain G and FE who ran things. I believe, however, it's easier to be coach of the All Blacks than an Under Sixteen side, as each of us has a role and knows it. The coach has to have empathy for the game, and I think he has to want to coach to develop players and a team, not do it for his own ego. He has to understand the game and people and yet be a coordinator.

5.6.92. Number Eight (L F 3a).

[The All Black team, through the participant observation period, drew upon three very experienced number eights.] One saw the elite rugby captain's skills as the ability to read a game properly, to have the respect of players, to do himself what he says for others, and to have discipline and good relationships. The coach, he believed, should be a good communicator, the necessary coaching skills and personal qualities of consistency, honesty and sincerity. He had a special insight into his All Black coach whom he finds, "Straight up, honest and technically sound." He had found both his provincial and All Black captains to be outstanding, and "had no problems with either of them."

26.6.92. Front Row.

FR was a prop forward, thought by many commentators to deserve more test matches. He saw an elite coach as, "needing an understanding of the game, good communication with the guys and observing they have to have new ideas." Some captains were "able to ignite with words, and others lead from the front. As a captain, I have two goals of wanting the win, obviously, and to

perform to the best of my ability.” A fellow prop forward saw the coach and captain having similar roles. “They have to get the team focused on the job.”

26.6.92. Flanker.

An All Black flanker of the 1990s, not selected for major tests by the current All Black coach, expected coaches to communicate strategy and personal pointers, to motivate and instruct players on correct technique.

The captain needs to lead by example. You might get a captain who doesn't say a lot but when he's on the field his play will have you following him. I appreciated [an All Black captain] who led from the front and was a good motivator. By contrast, one past All Black coach never said anything to me while I was in the team, except once when I was told off for being a larrikin. The coach needs to stand up ready to lead the team, make the hard decision, motivate the players.

29.7.93. Number Eight (L F 3b).

I always craved to be an All Black...It's history making when you pull on that black jersey...You've got a piece of space in New Zealand history...this is like a payback for my Mum and Dad who gave us every opportunity a family that wasn't rich could afford.

29.7.93. Number Eight (L F 3c).

This loose forward was one of the decision makers in the All Black side. He was interviewed in his room two days before the test against Western Samoa. FE, the backline decision maker, suggested this player call the lineouts, and Coach agreed. This would save the captain having to concentrate on what to call and mean a greater sharing of responsibility among the senior players. This loose forward was the New Zealand Maori captain. He noted his coach having strong qualities of loyalty and honesty.

Coach honestly fronts up to mistakes. The biggest asset of a coach is communication, along with giving individual coaching and feedback. Flexibility is also required. The present three selectors work well together. Coach can be a bit intense, AC is flamboyant and the third selector is in the centre. One thing I like about Coach is his openness to ideas. The captain has to have a key quality of communicating and must be respected by the players. He should lead from the front, set standards and communicate on and off the field.

In his emergent leadership role, having input at team meetings, and calling the lineouts, LF3 was assisted by having played in the coach's provincial team.

I know Coach's style and what he wants, and I have had a good model from my provincial captain. Captain's been very supportive and believes I have a good understanding of forward play. The whole team this year is taking more responsibility and you can see the results. An example was FR calling a short lineout on our line in the third Lions test. The players are now contributing and putting forward their own ideas.

6.7.94. First-five.

This inside back was not initially part of Coach's team. Having played for two countries he described the qualities of an excellent coach.

The main qualities are being well organised and providing sound technical and tactical advice. He needs to have new ideas and be able to inject these, instilling confidence and letting the players know what he wants. As a player I want him to tell me what he wants me to improve in and what I'm doing wrong. The captain should lead by example and be firm in his leadership. His leadership should demand respect.

7.7.94. Front Row.

The country's most experienced prop forward noted the first requirement of the coach as selection skills, then to have the team perform at its maximum.

This is facilitated by the coach's ability to relate to all players. All players are different and some coaches can't relate to certain players with an understanding of them as individuals or in their positions. The captain should be a person respected by the team for his ability as a leader on, and off, the field. Although he would ideally come from the inside back positions to be captain, it would not be productive for the team having a half-back or first-five as captain if they lacked leadership ability...players as individuals in top rugby have the ability to lead or they wouldn't be there.

Turning to an impending first test against South Africa, this front row forward noted the critical need to follow the game plan requirements of "urgency and the necessity to cut mistakes. We need to perform for the whole match with urgency and aggression and carry out all instructions to the full with maximum effort."

4.8.94.Lock.

LF was inexperienced at test level, and played in the first South African test as the premier lock was injured. He was then in the second test in place of the other injured veteran lock, but was out of the third test team as the top pair were available. He explained that Coach rang him on the Sunday morning before the public announcement of the test team to inform him that the experienced pair were the locks for the third test.

I was shell-shocked, I didn't really discuss it with him. Then, when we got here on Tuesday, Coach got me in his room and explained why the other two were selected. I appreciated him doing this and I felt a lot better. To be honest I was pleased at the thought of being in the top three, and above the rest of the New Zealand locks. I was pleased at Coach's honesty and support, and it did make me feel valued.

14.8.94. Centre Threequarter.

An experienced back, who had been in and out of the team, discussed his role in the team, primarily to spread the ball wide and to show a strong defence. "Coach hasn't changed much over the three years but has grown into the job and relates much better to the players. We are more likely to approach him now than we would have been a couple of years ago."

12.3.95

At the close of the observation period the standard of the elite was succinctly underscored when one of the new players, declared at an All Black World Cup camp. "I haven't trained like that. I didn't know you had to train like that to be an All Black."

7.3.2 Interview Data: Categories and Properties

The observation had generated categories and properties on the roles and qualities of the team leaders, (Figure 7.3). Data from interviews within the All Black team generated a clearer demonstration of these roles and qualities and added substantially to properties of the coach qualities and game plan. The category of "Match", recorded in the Participant Observation categories, was subsumed in the Interview category of "Test Match Week". Properties generated by data from the interviews are signified in Figure 7.4 by bold italics in conjunction with participant observation categories and properties.

1	Coach Role
	Selector
	Develop game plan
	Organise training
	Technical guidance
	Motivator
	Link with team management
	Relate to media
	Coach-captain
	Coach-assistant coach
	<i>Selector group relations</i>
	<i>Develop player skills</i>
	<i>Co-ordinator</i>

2	Coach Qualities
	Analytic
	Technical knowledge
	Clarity in team talks
	Personal qualities
	Teaching skills
	Cope with time demands
	<i>Philosophy and vision</i>
	<i>Long-term planner</i>
	<i>Assimilate information</i>
	<i>Self discipline</i>
	<i>Analytical</i>
	<i>Provide major feedback</i>
	<i>Video analysis</i>
	<i>Cope with various demands</i>
	<i>Organisation</i>

3	Captain Role
	Captain-coach
	Exemplary player
	Onfield leadership
	Public relations
	Team talks and meetings
	<i>Power</i>

4	Captain Qualities
	Decision making
	Communication
	Relating to players
	Leadership
	Personal qualities
	<i>Cope with major personalities</i>

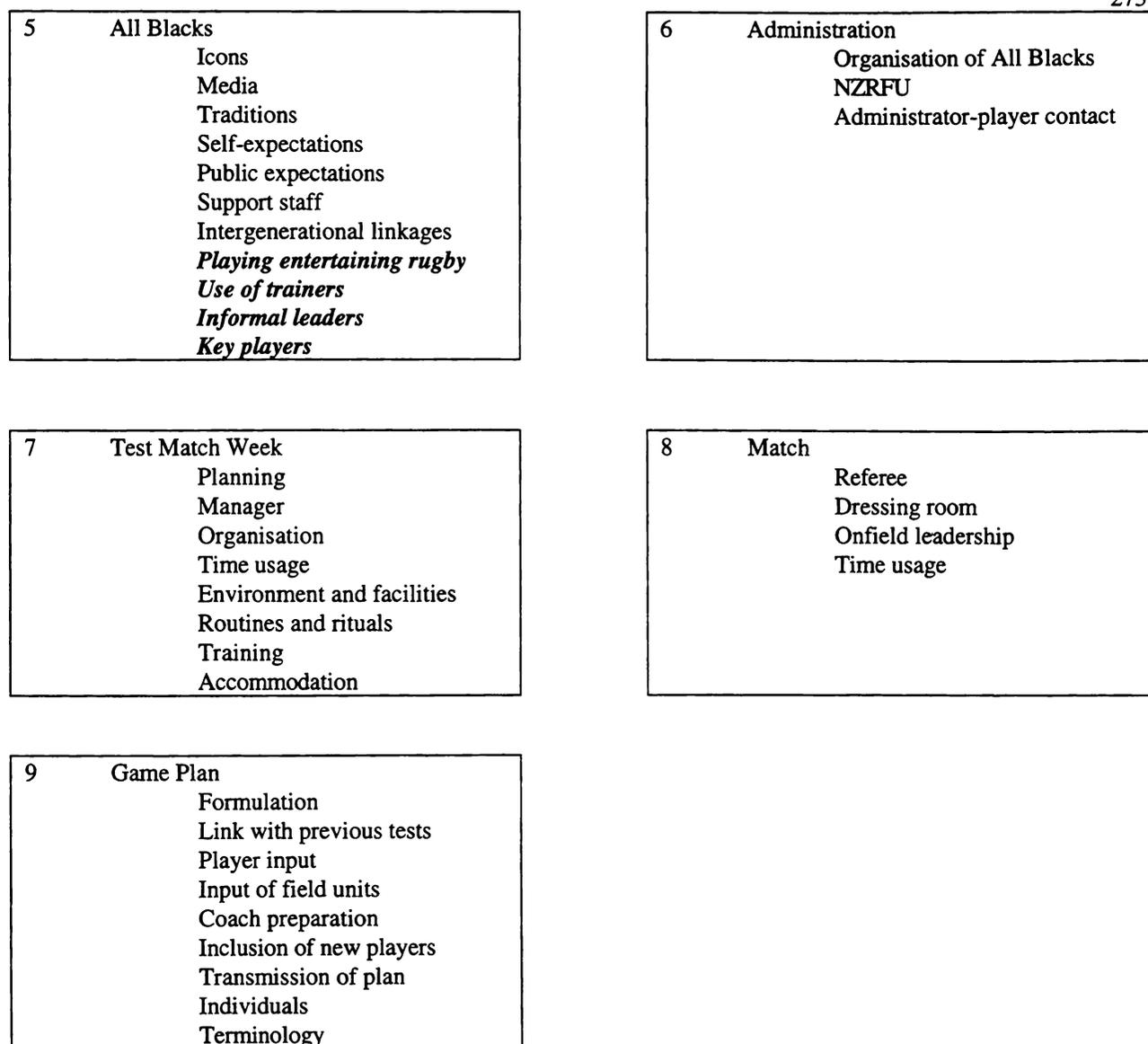


Figure 7.4 All Blacks interview categories.

7.4 ALL BLACK QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire One

In September 1993, the All Blacks were surveyed by the researcher to ascertain their perspectives on coach and captain qualities and domains of elite rugby. Coach checked the draft questionnaire and discussed amendments to elicit information, such as player perspectives on test match weeks. The questionnaire was trialed with two players who had played a limited number of tests and checked with an experienced colleague for unambiguity and clarity. The slight revisions led to the final questionnaire being checked again with the All Black coach and mailed to the 17 All Blacks (other than captain) who had played the most tests during the research period. Support for the questionnaire from the coach was expressed in the accompanying letter (see Appendices F.4 and F.5 for the questionnaire and accompanying letter). The researcher and captain agreed that the

views of the captain had been expressed in a range of situations and a questionnaire response from him was not necessary. Apart from the All Black captain all players returned their questionnaires

Four All Blacks regarded themselves as single, five were married, and eight were single but had a partner. Their educational qualifications ranged from five university graduates to five players with three years of secondary schooling. One All Black included a note with his questionnaire which underscored a player's concern:

My greatest ever regret is that I left school too early. I completed my 6th form year but left before the exams. I wish I had carried on with my studies and would now jump at the chance of further education. I'm lucky I have rugby. I didn't realise then how much I would need being educated and how much I miss it. I wonder how many others there are?

Most players (12) came from homes where both parents had occupations and only two parents, of 32, were in a profession. Three parents were in business positions, but 18 were in a labouring, farming or physically oriented occupation. Approximately half of the team had been educated at private schools (five) or single-sex schools (four) whereas eight players were educated at state co-educational schools. The players' commitment to rugby was reflected, in the pre-professional era, in Figures 7.5 and 7.6.

Hours Per Week	Number of Players (n=17)
0 - 5	1
6 - 10	10
11 - 15	6
16 and over	0

Figure 7.5 Time spent on weekly training by All Blacks.

Hours Per Week	Number of Players (n=17)
0 - 5	3
6 - 10	7
11 - 15	3
16 and over	4

Figure 7.6 Time spent by All Blacks on weekly rugby activities other than training.

The All Blacks were asked to rate their coach on a 1 - 5 scale, in which 1 was the lowest ranking of "Very Poor" and 5 was the highest ranking of "Very Good." The responses indicated above average ratings, by the team overall, for the coach in the qualities noted in Figure 7.8. The "average" rating of "ability to communicate effectively" was linked to interpersonal elements, as explained by some players, such as their desire to have more one-on-one feedback. In terms of game plans and tactics the players felt the coach had above average communication.

ii.	Communication of clear goals
iii.	Willingness to work hard
iv.	Knowledge of rugby skills and techniques
v.	Organisational ability
vi.	Degree of conviction in his own beliefs
ix.	Acceptance of responsibility for the team
x.	Relationships with assistant coaches
xi.	Relationship with captain
xiii.	Motivation of players to attain goals
xv.	Fostering of positive team harmony
xvii.	Treating players with respect
xviii.	Taking pride in player achievement
xix.	Giving clear feedback
xx.	Perceptions of factors that affect team performance
xxi.	Willingness to consider adapting a game plan as a result of player input
xxii.	Is consistent
xxiii.	Has integrity
xxiv.	Shows the ability to make clear decisions
xxv.	Is imaginative about game possibilities

Figure 7.7 Above average All Black coach qualities.

There was no coach quality with an overall team rating of Below Average.

i.	Ability to communicate effectively
vii.	Degree of concern for other
viii.	Understanding of people
xii.	Sensitivity to players as people
xiv.	Interaction with players
xvi.	Involving players in goal setting

Figure 7.8 Average All Black coach qualities.

Players were keen to have an input into the game plan, accepting that the coach must have the final say. A typical player response was, “Players know their own strengths and weaknesses, and through various other avenues are able to study the opposition. Therefore I think players should have a major input but the coach has the final responsibility.” This process was seen as being limited by the nature of the test match week but overall provided good opportunities for player input under Coach. Players indicated that, at times, there was too dominant an input by a small group within the team. This would appear to have some validity given the researcher’s observation. For example, the match against Australia noted the work done by some “junior” players who did not contribute to team discussions.

Players’ expectations of the All Black coach had a concentration upon personal qualities (See Appendix F.6). These were heavily oriented towards the personal rather than technical, with a strong emphasis upon honesty, consistency, motivation and organisation. Almost all the players,

15, believed that Coach achieved their expectations often or always, which reflected the participant observation understandings.

The questionnaire sought player nominations of the coach's strengths. Qualities emphasised were the coach's honesty, discipline, determination, commitment, analytical skills and loyalty. The aspects they wished to see developed more by the coach were those of greater relaxation and communication with the players on an interpersonal basis. (A typical response was, "I want to know what I am doing well, what I am doing wrong.")

On a wider administrative front the players wanted fewer formal functions in test match week and more support from rugby administrators, such as combating the threat of league, taking action on rugby violence and reducing a perceived over-expenditure on administrators.

The self-assessment of players' skills indicated that the coach had five All Blacks who rated themselves as having good personal playing skills, and ten who were very good, but no player considered himself to have "Excellent" personal playing skills. Most players were average-below average in their knowledge of the NZRFU. More than half of the players rated themselves in a similar low grouping for their understanding of self-relaxation methods and knowledge of physiology. The players' use of time management was primarily below-average to average.

Strong self-ratings of Very Good and Excellent were evident for competency in social and informal communication, knowledge of rugby laws, onfield effort as All Blacks, ability to concentrate on team talks, understanding of game plans and ability to concentrate onfield. Of concern for the coach could be the six players whose rugby law knowledge was only average or good, eight players in a group who were less than very good regarding their ability to visualise, and three who were self-rated as having an average or good understanding of team game plans at the All Black level. Each has implications for playing within the laws, enhancing possible performance and achieving a full grasp of all game plan elements.

The critical aspect of a coach's ability to transmit knowledge, usually in terms of the game plan, was considered in terms of players' preferred learning modes. Learning a new move by walking the move through at practice then done at speed with an oral explanation was most preferred by players. Explanations which were provided orally and on paper were also favoured. The preferred combination of methods was to have an oral explanation, a video clip with explanation,

whiteboard illustration, and walking through the move at practice before carrying this new move out at speed.

The players would welcome material on concentration, self talk, physiology and nutrition.

Questionnaire Two

Having completed the three year research phase with the All Blacks the researcher, in December 1994, surveyed the players with a similar questionnaire to that of Questionnaire One, above, which had been completed in September 1993. Questionnaire Two had three major purposes: to indicate possible shifts or continued validity of player perspectives on team leadership; to obtain player viewpoints on the captain, as Questionnaire One had a particular focus upon the coach; and, to provide the All Black coach with player opinion on a range of matters relevant to the ensuing World Cup.

Questionnaire Two (see Appendix F.7) was sent out with a note from the coach to the initial World Cup squad members. Within the squad of 31 there were 23 All Blacks who had been in the 1992-94 observed All Blacks. The captain was not required to return the questionnaire but of the 22 other "observed" All Blacks, 14 returned their questionnaires -- giving a response rate of 63.63%. All players, except one, within this group had completed the previous Questionnaire (September 1993).

Part A indicated general satisfaction with the test week preparation but players still indicated a need for less outside commitments and greater team time. Test match plans were clear but three players indicated a desire for greater full team involvement, feeling that this had been a positive but not constant element of the previous year.

The coach's qualities were seen similarly as in responses to the previous Questionnaire. Changes, however, occurred in: i (ability to communicate effectively), xiv (interaction with players), and xvi (involve players in goal setting), which were now seen as above average, (taking "3" as average). These had been average on the earlier questionnaire.

The perceived strengths and needs of the coach indicated a lessening of players' emphases on one-to-one interaction and interpersonal contact as perceived coach development areas (Questions B.4, B.5) but these were still noted as needs by four of the players. Strengths were

consistent with previous Questionnaire responses. Part C.2.1 of this second questionnaire indicated all players, except one, had had one-to-one discussions with Coach on their playing position, but the same range had not had discussions with Coach on their roles as team members. Although most players had such discussions, responses varied. All players expressed support, need and appreciation for such coach-player interaction in one to one meetings.

Coaches at provincial and All Black levels were valued for the qualities noted in PT and All Black observation/interview categories, especially the quality of honesty. Three players noted the difficulty for some provincial coaches to obtain players of the requisite skills and experience which facilitate the coaching role.

(Responses to 3.0 and 3.1 in Part D of this questionnaire reinforced the All Black participant observation and interview data outlined in 7.2 and 7.3 of this chapter.) Players' expectations of their All Black captain were clear, as Figures 7.9 and 7.10 indicate.

i	Decision making	12
ii	Playing example	11
iii	Control of team play	7

Figure 7.9 All Blacks' expectations of All Black captain : Onfield.
[N = 14. Some respondent listed categories other than the above.]

"My main expectation at this level is that he leads us to win!" was a typical response. Players were strong in their recognition of the captain's option-taking implicit in his decisions -- which relates to the game plan and possible onfield changes of this.

i	Represent team well	14
ii	Work with coach	11
iii	Role Model	8

Figure 7.10 All Blacks' expectations of All Black captain : Off-field.
[N = 14. Some respondents listed expectations other than the above.]

Players appreciated the qualities of the coach that had them feeling involved and valued. Technical knowledge was mentioned by one player only, but may have been implicit in the four players who were illustrated by the comment that, "I want to know how I'm going, what I need to improve

on.” All Blacks wanted the coach to have a clear plan with players involved onfield in a positive playing style. Four of the players looked upon the off-field coach as a friend. Attribution theory influenced the inclusion of Question G.2.1. The overall results indicated a strong level of self-efficacy but one player provided concern for the coach as he indicated a clear belief that factors other than player qualities strongly influenced a result. He attributed 35% of the factors influencing a test result to the coach and players and 65% to external factors. (This was reinforced in an interview in which this player, more than any other, indicated that forthcoming opponents had daunting attributes.)

Players did not reflect the belief of some coaches that a pre-match team talk had a marked personal impact. Of 13 responses, nine selected answers iii and iv to Question G.2.2, thus indicating that a team talk was not needed as much as brief personal contact in the elite team dressing room.

7.4.1 Questionnaire Data: Categories and Properties

The All Black player questionnaires did not add substantially to the data on elite rugby team coaches and captains. New properties added to the categories generated by All Black participant observations and interview data (Figure 7.4) are noted in Figure 7.11 in bolded italics.

2. Coach Qualities <i>One-to-one interpersonal warmth</i> <i>Determination</i> <i>Present new material in relevant ways</i>	5. All Blacks <i>Rugby Law knowledge</i>
6. Administration <i>Decrerase onfield violence</i>	8. Game Plan <i>Input from all players</i>

Figure 7.11 All Blacks questionnaire categories and properties.

7.5 DOCUMENTS IN THE ALL BLACKS SETTING

The print dimension, with its related video and photographic record, adds to the researcher’s All Black data. As the premier sport team in the nation the All Blacks generate a range of records and artefacts. The researcher collected an available and detailed range of documents as indicated in Figure 7.12. This section of the research drew upon four categories of these to illustrate All Black leadership. These primary document sources of data were (i) newspaper reports, (ii) match

programmes, (iii) public communications (faxes and letters to the All Black team), and (iv) team leader and team notes.

Newspaper reports	Television comment	Radio comment	Magazine reports
Coach notes	Captain notes	Faxes and letters	Itineraries
Team notices	Quiz sheets	Travel plans	Team lists
Hotel notices	Letters	Advertising	Sponsor material
Match programmes	Autograph books	Test dinner menus	Books and articles

Figure 7.12 All Blacks documents.

Selection of the All Black coach is a matter of national interest. The All Black coach who was the object of this participant observation was selected in contentious circumstances in December 1991 (see McKewen, 1991, December 1). Support for him came from a past All Black captain, “I think he’s a fine coach. He’s very well organised”; and a recent selector: “He deserves his chance as coach. In the last eight years he’s been behind the rejuvenation of Otago rugby” (“Mixed reaction”, 1991, p.51).

The 1992 All Black captain had been expected by observers to be a loose forward (noted by referees in Chapter Five as an outstanding leader) but injury led to his non-appointment and the new Captain being selected. The former, noted in this Chapter’s participant observation as an informal team leader, was described in one typical report:

LF2 is of the same stamp as great All Black captains such as [Captain A, Captain B, Captain C, Captain D of Chapter Eight]...LF2 on and off the field was a surrogate leader anyway for much of the time, cajoling, urging and praising players during games, setting examples on tours...even as early as 1986...it was often LF2 who, at stoppages in play, made the forceful points with the forwards grouped around him, and this trend continued (Palenski, 1992, April 12, p.32).

Match One

(New Zealand vs. Ireland, 6 June 1992)

Newspaper reports noted the need for All Black improvements in lineouts, rucks and ball retention for this match (Knight, 1992, June 6, p.40), and “a difficult task facing the All Black selectors in building a team” (Editorial, 1992, June 5, p.4).

In test week the pattern of play and long training sessions were noted. The coach wanted a long session to establish our pattern. We wanted the players to understand what tactics we had on various parts of the

ground and be encouraged to think two or three movements ahead. On [previous test] Saturday we were doing things spontaneously and not thinking ahead two or three moves like we should have been (Knight, 1992, June 4, p.24).

Practices were also held with opposition to compel All Black midfield backs to reorganise. The Coach noted the importance of a loose forward in a “senior pro” role. Nearing the test day there was media speculation on Coach’s criticism of the need for the referee to tidy up opposition obstruction and offside play. Training was impressive, with an emphasis upon “setpieces so we can dominate the game” (Fitzpatrick, 1992, June 5, p.37). The match resulted in a win for the All Blacks, 59-6. One match report noted an experienced loose forward as the “influence and guiding hand in the back three [which] allowed [Captain] to lead as he knows best - from right in front.” The “ball handling was superb, the team pattern was better established, second phase ball was produced and used better and lineout play improved considerably” (Ogilvie, 1992, June 8a, p.24). The press noted the tight five, inspirational play of the captain and foraging constructive play of two loose forwards (Gray, 1992, June 8; “What the ex-All Blacks said”, 1992). The captain had four teeth broken by an opponent’s punch, saying “these things happen occasionally in rugby” (Ogilvie, 1992, June 8b, p. 24).

The match programme had 14 of its 32 pages in advertisements, five rugby articles and spelling errors. Half-page advertisements prominently featured computers, accountancy, clothing, a hire firm, sport footwear and electricity suppliers.

Following the test was an All Black tour of Australia, where two tests were lost (of three) by one and two points, and South Africa where the sole test was won. Captain consequently discussed in print his role and that of the coach.

The captain’s job is made easier because of the quality of blokes he’s got around him. My job was made easier in that regard especially through the efforts of [Coach]. He’s a hard taskmaster but he’s fair and honest with it. You can only respect blokes like that who are straight-up and they found they had a real ally in [Coach] if they were honest with him...[Coach] is always willing to learn new things, which is important for a coach and this is one area that certainly impressed me. He made everyone feel important, from the youngest guy to the most senior. Sure he’d give you a rev if you stuffed up something, but there was always praise for a job well done (Fitzpatrick, 1992, August 21, p.37).

Match Two

(New Zealand vs. British Isles, 3 July 1993)

The selectors were perceived, from 1993, as having their minds turned towards the 1995 World Cup (Gray, 1993, May 12) but Coach had indicated perspectives on this to the researcher as early

as 1992 and had seen the 1993 Lions tests as integral to the Cup build-up. Articles in one tour publication (Lee, 1993) noted the failure of previous Lions' teams because of "ill management and leadership" (McLean, 1993, p.6), the metamorphosis of the All Black captain "from tearaway to tactician, from larrikin to leader" (Quinn, 1993, p.9), and the Lions captain saying his coach knew how to get the best out of players, understood people, paid attention to detail, was disciplined, and suggested valid options (Thau, 1993, p.14).

The first two 1993 tests against the British Isles and Ireland team ("The Lions") saw a win to each team. The coach wanted his team's play to be "a model for New Zealand rugby players" in the second test but this was lost ("The bottom line", 1993). The captain's leadership, seen to be critical for inspiring players, was seen (Fitzpatrick, 1993, June 18) as having had deficiencies for the second test. Captain noted that his lack of playing form affected his captaincy in that test. The day before the third test (Match Two in the All Black participant observation) he commented, "I lost it for a while. I didn't take the right option and I didn't lead from the front. It was a bloody awful experience" (Golightly, 1993, July 2, p.40). Criticism of the team and its leaders was trenchant, with Johnstone (1993, June 27, p.B1) being typical: "Devoid of imagination they face a severe test of character and strategy if they are to secure the rugby series." Wilson (1993), an ex-All Black captain, criticised the selection of a tyro second-five as ludicrous and Gray (1993, June 29, p.13) noted "Both the coaching and the captaincy will come under the most intense scrutiny after the direction-less second test effort." The second-five played well and the test was won.

The difficult third test week was one "I don't really want again," according to Coach ("Black to the future", 1993, p.1), who noted that "players were reminded of the tradition and history of the All Blacks and of the commitment being an All Black required."

Of the seventy faxes received in the two days before the third Lions test, thirty-two were addressed to the All Blacks, eight to the captain and team and six to the coach and team. Typical of the comments was, "Give 'em cold steel - spare only women and children!" from a real estate firm. An observer may wonder at the sport priorities of the fax writer who saw the test as "a matter of life and death."

A fax was received from a recent All Black, whose position was held in this test by a team-mate [called by the pseudonym "Tallman"].

To the All Blacks and Selectors
 All the Best for Tomorrow
 Reach for the “HUNGER” and “ANGER”
 which made you All Blacks.
 Tallman, have a good one.
 Regards,
 Bluey.

Figure 7.13 All Blacks’ fax from a team-mate.

Another fax, from a sender in Paraparaumu, stated “Be proud, be fair and beat the Lions.” A radio station in Christchurch, where the recently deposed All Black halfback lived, sent a 100cm x 60 cm card with such messages as, “Bring back HB2 [another halfback]” and “HB1 who?” Asked if a fax made any difference, an All Black wing on test day replied, “Yes it does. It makes you fully aware that you are playing for New Zealand, and you are also aware you are playing for all the other guys who have gone before.”

The match programme incorrectly named the test as New Zealand versus British Isles. No referees or touch judges were named and no photographs or information provided on the coaches although this was done for the players. Of the fifty pages, nineteen were utilised for advertisements.

The test was won 30-13 and “the great mystique of All Black rugby so battered after last weekend’s loss was preserved at Eden Park yesterday” (Knight, 1993, July 4b, p.40). The Lions were criticised for negative play but the All Blacks were seen to play at pace, vary their game and negate Lions tactics. The captain saw the lineouts and faster speed to the ball as critical. “I knew that if we played as well as we trained then we would win” (Knight, 1993, July 4b, p.40). Coach also noted that the most satisfying aspect of the test win was, “Going into the dressing room and having so many players express delight that they’d achieved the game plan.”

The selection and play of the new second-five was praised by Coach and commentators. The thought that had gone into the game plan was noted by an ex-All Black and past All Black captain (“How they saw it”, 1993). Such reports also noted the game plan elements of flair added by the second-five, speeding up the game, varied options, greater use of loose forwards, improved lineout strategies and tackling (see Knight, 1993, July 4a; Knight, 1993, July 4b).

One past All Black captain from a provincial coaching position provided faxed support at each test. Typical was his fax to a back playing his first test:

My personal congratulations
on your deserved All Black
selection.
Best wishes for a memorable
First Test and a successful
beginning to an illustrious All
Black career.
Have a great eighty minutes,
Regards,
[Past Captain]

Figure 7.14 Faxed support to a new All Black from a past All Black captain.

Test match dinners brought a contextual dimension to the team leadership roles different from that of the contested eighty minutes earlier in the day. The emphasis upon administrators, council members and their partners, and media persons, along with the speeches, may reflect prevailing NZRFU attitudes and values. The third Lions test was typical. The NZRFU president, (an ex-All Black captain), noted the need for tours to be long enough “to allow the players to be blooded.” (This was an allusion to players proving themselves in combat, as for a blood sport initiate whose face is smeared with the blood of a kill.) The manager of the Lions team noted the All Blacks had their backs to the wall. He noted that his team were the British Isles and Ireland, a point not apparent to the NZRFU in producing programmes, dinner menus etc. The Lions captain spoke, criticising an administrative decision not to allow a Lions player to rejoin the team after he flew home to attend his father’s funeral in England. The New Zealand captain commented favourably on the opposition efforts, “I also pay tribute to you, [Coach]. In the mornings [Coach] came around each of us with a smile on his face.”

Match Three

(New Zealand vs. Australia, 17 July 1993, for the Bledisloe Cup)

The test was expected to bring \$3 million into the southern city of Dunedin, and credence for this was generated with figures of 10,000 visitors to the Steinlager village, 15,000 extra litres of the local Speights brand of beer and 20,000 pies (Gormon, 1993). The build-up saw inevitable public pressure. With the All Blacks “goes the pride of a country which places huge expectations on its sportsmen and women - particularly on those in the national game. Every time the All Blacks take the paddock they are expected to win” (Tipa, 1993, p.21).

Expectations of team leaders and the team were amplified in the match programme. The union president noted that “the winner takes it all” and that individual and international rugby reputations were at stake. Sponsors noted the pride of Australian rugby at stake, which was reflected in an article that this test was “a personal Australasian war”, in which “the battle lines” were drawn (McLaren, 1993, July 17, p.7). Some players had “changed” weight and/or height from previous test programmes. The programme included eight rugby articles and nineteen advertising pages of fifty, for the \$5.00 cost.

The test was won 15-10 with the coach noting “the entire pack were outstanding” although the team was only halfway to its full development (Knight, 1993, July 18, p.44). With only the captain and a loose forward having played more than ten tests, it was thought that “fifteen bodies and minds will need to work in perfect harmony if the All Blacks are to beat the Wallabies” (Edwards, 1993, July 17a, p.39). That this happened was seen, after the test as meaning the All Blacks were, “Back on top of the world” (“Back on top”, 1993, p.1). Captain was noted as stating any test win was great, “but to get the Bledisloe Cup back was something else” (McKewen, 1993, p.21).

Faxes from the public were predominantly from workplace individuals and groups, with as much support from netball groups as from provincial rugby unions. The faxes ranged from Freemasons to Wheel Blacks (national representative wheelchair rugby players) and supporter groups to rugby clubs. The faxed support was: Team, 60%; Coach, 18%; Individuals, 12%; Captain, 9%.

Match Four

(New Zealand vs. Western Samoa, 31 July 1993)

The press focus for the test was similar to that of preceding tests, except for some speculation on the feelings and intensity of play by Samoans in the All Black team. The faxes included a number for the Captain, with a range of public expectations. A senior club manager in Invercargill asked Captain to send a fax of support to a club team in its semi-final, with “maybe a little phrase or comment that the All Blacks use in motivation prior to a game” (Fax, 28.7.93). There was a request to speak at a rugby club, a message of goodwill from the captain’s father’s old provincial rugby union and a fax from his mother.

The team had a considerable role to play, as individuals and units, in critically examining their test play in retrospect and by video analysis. Player notes were succinct and provided a focus for their

self-improvement, as well being the basis of a “public” commitment of new effort to the team. FB provided an example in his self-review from the previous test as in Figure 7.15.

Pressure: I put the team under pressure when I wrongly tried a chip kick. Twice I should have gone up in the air to take the ball and from one of these [Australian centre] scored.

Figure 7.15 All Black player self-criticism from test video.

Coach’s notes for the Eden Park visit one day before the test against Western Samoa were succinct: “Defensive - halfback around back - blindside moves - scrums.” Captain’s notes for his team talk on the night before the test noted urgency, pressure and lineouts, scrums, slow down if necessary, change if not working, confidence, arrogance, run, enjoy. His lineout code notes indicated the roots of complex moves with a lineout order of FR1, L2, FR2, L2, LF3, LF2, LF1 and R=Drive, S=Feed, T=Willy Away. (Coupled with these are the types of throw for the Captain to implement, and the need amidst the crowd noise, for all of the forwards to understand their role consequent to the numeric or alphabetic code called.)

The formation of the All Black Club, to assist financial support and commercial opportunities for All Blacks, led to the first All Black Club official newsletter. The theme was indicative of the national team’s standing, their captain noting, “As we are the All Blacks, we are always striving for perfection on the field, being mindful of the game’s great tradition in New Zealand” (Fitzpatrick, 1993, “Exciting times”, p.1).

The same newsletter featured an interview focus with the All Black coach upon leadership:

The present All Blacks don’t have any experienced, campaigned, natural leaders...and that, according to [Coach], is why the team is taking a while to gel at the commencement of a new series or tour...we just don’t have world class leaders at the moment...who can bring a team together almost instantly (ibid., p.3)

Following the home tests the All Black selectors selected the touring team for tests against Scotland and England. The first of these tests (against Scotland) was won but the second (against England) was lost. Moving into the new 1994 season a recently retired veteran All Black commented on All Black coaches:

Each All Black coach I had was different, and they all had good records. These days an All Black coach needs to be a coach, a PR man, an expert in management. I suppose Coach Six was the closest to fulfilling all these needs. But a coach's first ability must be to coach a side and in that I rate [Participant observation Coach] very highly (Cameron, 1994, January 5, p.1, Section 3).

The match programme and faxes were similar to those of previous tests.

Match Five

(New Zealand vs. South Africa, 9 July 1994)

The All Black team room list indicated ten rooms with two players in each, but single rooms for the captain and assistant coach. Coach and manager had two rooms each -- one personal and one for media interviews or other meetings. Inaccurate spelling was again a characteristic of team lists. Coach had prepared a list of mistakes from the previous test (see Figure 7.19).

"Life as we have come to know it will probably cease to exist if we lose the next test," indicated an editorial perspective on the national team (Editorial, *The New Zealand Herald*, 1994, July 6, p.8, Section 1). The coach was the central figure in media comment, having (Edwards, 1994, July 8, p.27) "suffered vitriolic comment from some media and radio callers." A Sunday News poll indicated that Coach should be replaced and 44 per cent wanting the same action with Captain. Despite these polls, faxes, poems, letters and telephone calls exhibited a wide-ranging public support for the All Blacks. "This was written as a sort of thank you to all All Black players over the years who given us a great deal of pleasure and enjoyment," came from a South Island family; and a letter from a North Island priest, "You are a great role model." Some ninety faxes from all regions, from firms, families and individuals, dispensed a range of messages with the biggest number to any individual, 21, being to Coach. A number of messages noted their support for the coach and team, "unlike the media." Two national figures, one of whom was on a family television programme, sent faxes containing swear words.

A typical All Black duty list for a day in this test match week indicated domains of team behaviour and organisation in which the leaders operated (see Figure 7.16).

An article (McLaren, 1994a) described rugby in the two countries as being "much more important" than life or death to many citizens and noted that "it is not only the teams which come under the magnifying glass, but the two coaches" (p.49). This ultimate test of the All Blacks and Springboks was noted by the media (Edwards, 1994, July 10; McMurrin, 1994, July 10b). The New Zealand win of 22-14 was "a physical encounter, but that's what test rugby is all about"

(McMurrin, *ibid.*, p.4). Captain was seen to have “laid his body on the line yesterday and held together a New Zealand team” (Edwards, 1994, July 10, p.3).

<u>Thursday</u>	
7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
10:00	Team room. Training gear. Training at a high school.
12:00 p.m.	Interviews (Captain and two players)
12:45 - 2:00	Five players for secondary school lunch
1:15	Lunch
2:30	Dunedin prison (5 reserves)
2:30	Afternoon tea with sponsors (Captain and 6 players)
2:30	School visit: 3 players
6:00	Team room for ball signing
6:00	Team photograph, Chinese restaurant meal.

Figure 7.16 An All Black test week day.

Individual responses to the win came from such players as the fullback, who noted that faxes had come in from all over the country and “the build-up was like nothing I have ever experienced” (Lose, 1994, p.22). Perhaps the most famed of past coaches declared that the All Blacks coach should be proud of a win that showed great character from the All Blacks (*ibid.*).

Match Six

(New Zealand vs. South Africa, 23 July 1994)

In the week leading up the second test against South Africa the faxes included a message to Manager from the Minister of Sport with, “Best wishes for a series victory tomorrow. [Coach] deserves it and the country needs it.” Other faxes reflected support for the All Blacks, along with requests for tickets, thirty balls for signing for a Springboks Supporters Tour Group and autographs. One fax on police paper to Coach wanted the team to “kick their arse again tomorrow and the win will stick it up the noses of the knockers out there”. There was the usual mixture of schools, firms, workplaces and players’ friends with comparatively few from national and provincial union administrators.

The test was won 13-9 with a commitment that “was a delight to see” for a famous past All Black coach (“Experts’ verdict”, 1994, p.24). A past test player noted that the All Blacks “dug in deep

and won a test series against South Africa. They have proved themselves to be a good team and they deserve a pat on the back from the media who have been their worst critics” (ibid.).

Coach had sought a motivational tool for his brief team talk before the team went to the test ground. Emphasising the test in the context of ongoing rugby history he read the following which “was taken from a book on All Black-South Africa rugby.” (In reality he had constructed the “extract”.)

There was an overwhelming desire to win for all those All Blacks who had gone to conquer and been beaten by impossible itineraries, Springbok fervour and biased referees. This was our chance to play for them, to show our pride in being an All Black.

Figure 7.17 Coach constructed motivational “book quotation”.

Match Seven

(New Zealand vs. South Africa, 6 August 1994)

Public support through faxes, cards and letters lessened for this test, presumably as the series had been won. The media saw a “classic rivalry poised for its final drama” (Gray, 1994, August 6a, p.1, Section 2). The All Black captain, “acknowledges the black jersey adds another dimension to his rugby operation. It lifts him. It motivates him...the ultimate in rugby is just to play for the All Blacks.” (ibid.).

The Friday team notice had a quote from the duty players: “Keep your fears to yourselves and share your courage with others.” On test day the message was, “You’re only as good as your last game. Anything needed, please don’t hesitate to contact the duty boys. Rawbone, Chiller.”

Captain noted in the media that:

Last year I might have tried to do too much in leading the side on the field instead of playing my rugby...This season I have always looked at [Captain E] and the way he led - that’s the way he led - that’s the way I like doing things (Gray, 1994, August 6b, p.1, Section 2).

Captain was later recorded as stating, “when we didn’t beat the Springboks in that Third Test it was crazy...It was like the whole country had gone into national mourning or something” (FitzSimons, 1994, p.71).

Match Eight

(New Zealand vs. Australia, 17 August 1994, for the Bledisloe Cup, Sydney)

The final match of the All Black observation period was a test against Australia for the Bledisloe Cup. The media noted dissatisfaction with the All Black coach's record and selections (see, for example, Gray, 1994, August 13; Knight, 1994). The pressure on the national team was noted by the captain who observed "The Prime Minister himself recently said that when the All Blacks are winning he'd rather be the All Black captain, and when they're not he'd rather be the Prime Minister" (FitzSimons, 1994, p.71). Coach, whose record was under criticism from many quarters, was seen positively by Captain.

[He is a] very good coach. Very good on preparation on tactics, on taking care of everything that needs to be taken care of before a test, but there's nothing he can do once the whistle blows to begin the game. That is our responsibility as players, and it's up to us to get it right. He's done everything he can but ultimately it's got to be up to us (ibid.).

In the preparatory days to this test the team units (i.e. field playing position groupings) were asked to meet and express their roles and skills. Viewing a video of the Australian team's latest test match led to notes, such as those in Figure 7.18, by two All Blacks.

Daily team notices were clear and used nicknames for players, such as "Rambo and Wheels report to Coach about drop-outs, 9.30 a.m." The test match programme had 30 pages, of 64, in advertisements and noted that the Wallabies had "killed the French team." Occupations listed for All Blacks included twelve in promotions, marketing, or sponsorship and two as coaching co-ordinators. The A\$6.00 programme had ten rugby articles.

The All Blacks were 6-17 at halftime in front of 41,917 spectators and after a resurgent New Zealand effort in the second half, lost 16-20 in the final minute when an attempted dive for a try was thwarted. A former Australian captain noted that, "For New Zealand supporters who have already sharpened their knives it may be worth considering what courage and commitment it takes to come back from 17-3 down against the world champions and go within one placed ball of victory" (Slack, 1994, August 18, p.22). The All Black coach saw the second half as "the best forty minutes we have put together this year and the players can look forward confidently to the World Cup knowing they can put football together like that" (Gray, 1994, August 18, p.15).

1st try Mistake - Australian RW outside.
 2nd try Mistake? - Switch by Aussies - their RW outside again, draws FB.
 3rd try Unorganised defence by the opposition. Australian RW outside 2nd.
 Kick off after opposition penalty - Defence to be
 RW > FB: Australian First-five.
 Short side Australian RW - meet him - tackle.
 Mistake: Opposition 1st Five not marking up. No. 8 not off.

Player A.

Pressure on set pieces.

Put the ball carrier on the ground. Tackle. Tackle.

Defensive line to mark up and knock over backline or runner.

[Their 1st 5/8] is weak on defence.

[Their 1st 5/8] takes the ball flat on his advantage line.

2nd Phase

Miss 2.

Kicking

From where? Who? Box.

Tramlines. From where? Who?

Posts. From where? Who?

Kick off - short right to 6.

Player B.

Figure 7.18 All Black notes from opposition test video.

Players noted typical faxed sentiments from two New Zealand families: “As long as it’s an exciting game we don’t really mind what the score is”; and, “Go to it you wonderful team...all we ask is a good clean game equal to the one you played last Sunday. We appreciate how often the outcome is decided by luck. We believe in you.”

The period following the final test week observation saw media comment upon Coach, the impending selection of the All Black coach for the 1995 World Cup and public debate on the major contenders for the position. The comments illustrated the central role of rugby -- and the All Blacks particularly -- in New Zealand society.

Meeting with the coach in a review of the season, the researcher noted Coach’s detailed self-analysis and team assessment. Ironically a press report (Mitchell, 1994, August 21) believed Coach “lashed out at everyone without looking at himself” (p.24). Coach emphasised support for Captain: “I’m satisfied that [he] is a good captain...with my captain from the tight five, there are a lot of aspects of the game that he can’t read accurately and that’s where the senior players have to accept responsibility and assist him in that area” (Matheson, 1994, September 18b, p.23). After

Coach's reappointment he was to emphasise Captain's retention, stating "I have complete confidence in his ability" (McKewen, 1995, p.3, Section B). Reflecting on his position Coach noted, "I think it's a legitimate criticism that we didn't spend enough time moulding the team together...I am one of those coaches who believes in sitting down with your senior players and talking about game plans and strategies" (Matheson, 1994, September 18a, p.23).

KNOCK ONS	BAD KICKS
8 Kick offs	10 - 10m > middle of the 22. 2 in kicked
8 Scrum	10 - Drop kick
7 Pass from 12	11 - Tried to kick up touchline, out on full
8 Off a bulldozer	15 - 2r to touch
13 After a good tackle	9 - Kick from ruck
12 Knock on in midfield	10 - Kick from ruck
12 Knock on in midfield	11 - Defensive kick
8 At lineout	10 - Midfield scrum went right, not far enough into corner
MISSED TACKLE	KICK OFFS
9 on 10	5 Knock on
7 + 12 on 8	4 Good down 6
11 + 6 on 14	4 Knock on
12 Last try	
11 Last try	
13 Last try	
MISTAKES	
6 - Kicked ball at ruck, on ground	9
9 - Option passing open when 12 knocked on	
11 - Lost ball in tackle	
13 - Intercept try	
7 - Killing ball, 8 Tackle - France - <u>3 Points</u>	
11 - Late tackle on 14	
8 - Playing ball on ground	

Figure 7.19 Coach's analysis of mistakes from previous test.

Ironically, with the Coach selected, the NZRFU took full page newspaper advertisements, "Now, as any good coach would growl at his team, it's time to put our eye back on the ball and get on with the game" ("Now, as any", 1994, August 16, p.19) which emphasised their anachronistic perspectives of coaches growling at teams and being unquestionably male.

[Coach and the All Black team went on to a series of summer camps and played an acclaimed style of rugby in the 1995 World Cup which had been the vision of Coach since 1992. The final of

the World Cup saw the team, suffering from severe food poisoning, defeated in extra-time, the first such extended playing period in test rugby history. Coach and his team were accorded singular recognition by international commentators for playing open, fast paced, constructive and exciting rugby at a level beyond that of any other country.] A few months later, after the tour of Italy and France, Coach's four year term with the All Blacks concluded with an expansive win over France. "It was all about doing it for [Coach]..." (Gray, 1995, November 20, p.11, Section E).

7.5.1 Documents Data: Categories and Properties

The analysis of documents yielded data which added a limited number of properties to the preceding categories noted in Figures 7.5 and 7.11. The additional properties are denoted by bold italics.

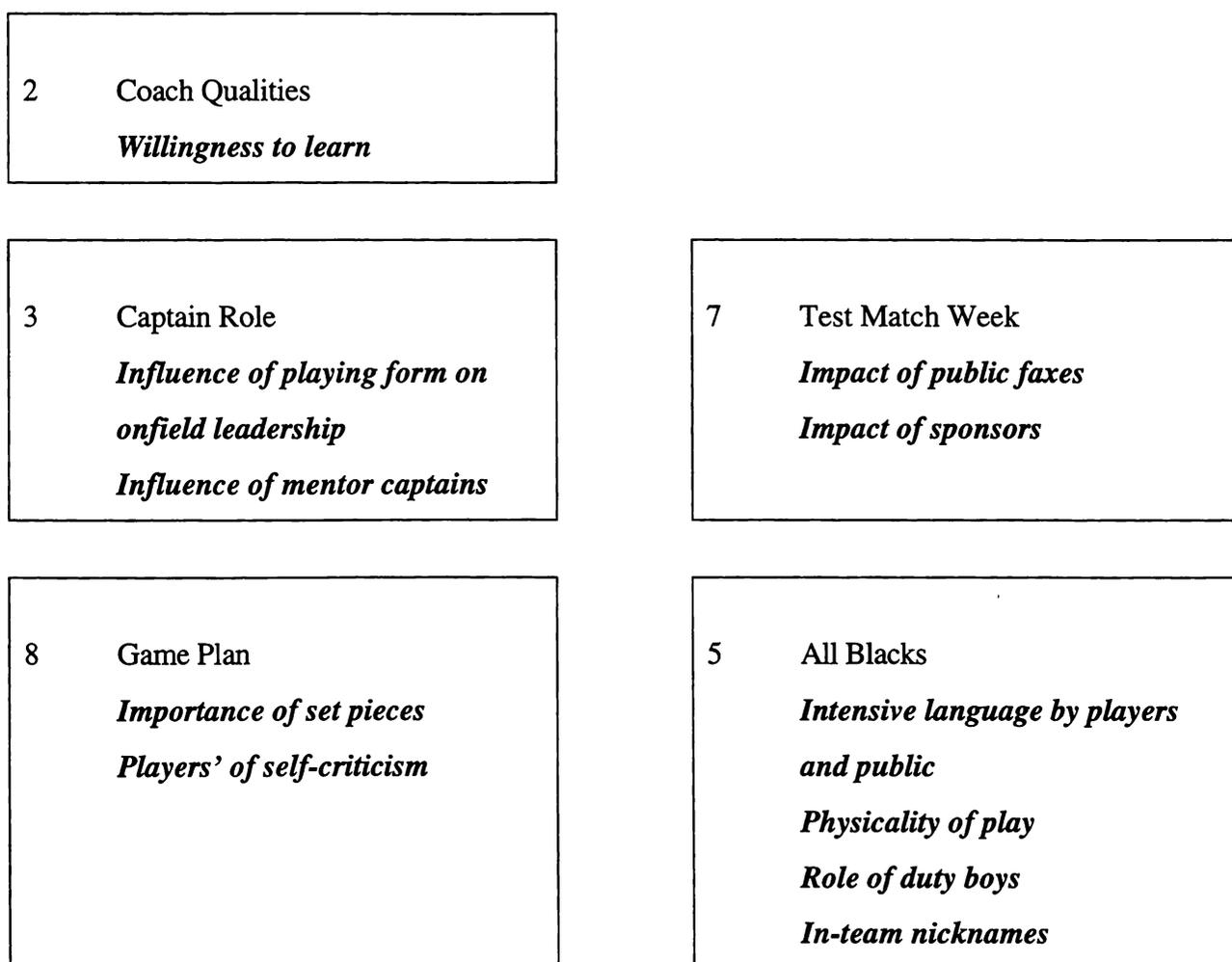


Figure 7.20 Additional properties from document analysis.

7.6 SYMBOLS, CATEGORIES AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

7.6.1 Symbolic Interactionism

Chapter Two of the present study noted the iconography of the All Blacks, and Document Analysis above illustrated their symbolic status in New Zealand sport. Public and team recognition of symbols was apparent, for example, in the Bledisloe Cup being seen as “a symbol of the match between Australia and New Zealand” by Coach, (on TV3 Nightline, 1995, July 26). The team also used symbols in their language and illustrated symbolic behaviour, often exhibiting a **symbolic oral code**. One player recounted how an informal All Black team leader expressed extreme All Black commitment and discipline to him upon his selection. “There’s no point being just an All Black. You must be a good All Black. To do that for **the black jersey** you’ve got to be prepared to piss blood.” The symbol of the jersey was frequently drawn upon in terms of tradition and an obligation to past All Blacks to maintain a standard of excellence and realisation of a rugby player’s ambition.

The **All Black Coach** was seen by sport commentators as holding the country’s premier sport coaching position. Controversy over the coach’s appointment illustrated the prominence of this role in the public eye. Perceived qualities and role behaviours were discussed in the media and ascribed to contenders for the coach position.

The **game plan** was the embodiment of the Coach’s efforts in the short-term and relevant to long-term World Cup planning. In the test match week it was central to training and was the subject of post-match reflection by past All Blacks and media commentators. Coach wanted his team to play as a model. Integral to the game plan is the basic pattern and pressure fused in an outline of test match tactics. Planning drew on senior players’ team involvement, coach philosophy and strategic planning. The game plan increasingly symbolised the coach’s vision of All Black rugby.

The game plan implementation is influenced by the opposition’s play and the referee’s decisions. A wealth of often unspoken assumptions about a **players’ code** underlay match behaviour. If the referee did not take action on illegal opposition actions then players would take retaliatory action, even if transgressing rules of play. A very clear limit on such action was clear, such as a symbolic parameter of “no kicking an opponent”.

Terminology and nicknames within the team provided a virtual alternative language, particularly when associated with codes and names for game plan moves. Team members were often known by nicknames. Some of these were obvious and known nationally, often being based on players' names, and others had developed over years. Some were virtually known only within the team. Whereas a winger was known throughout the country by his nickname, (his initials), another player was known only within the team by his nickname. This private nickname was not found in any media comment or situation external to the team in the researcher's three years of All Black observation. Unlike predecessors known primarily by their nicknames, the coach was always referred to by his first name and had no team nickname. When players were questioned by the researcher on this, they opined that it was "because he's a straight-up sort of guy, what you see is what you get." The All Black manager was known universally in rugby through his nickname. At one team session young All Blacks spontaneously jumped to their feet with a toast, "To The Legend."

Players exhibited a repertoire of often intricate **code moves** which required knowledge of their own position, the movement of the ball, placement of team-mates and interchanges of position or repositioning. Moves were known by codes such as *Selwyn*, *Comet* or *46*, and when called in play, demanded an instantaneous comprehension of a strategy signified by its symbolic title. Team leaders faced the additional complexity of having a full knowledge of all past moves and applying their relevance to a forthcoming test. Variations were sometimes called or code moves combined. One move involving *Ice-cut* illustrates the oral shorthand. *Ice* referred to the Number 7 or openside flanker, whose nickname was Iceman. This has convergent meanings, with one drawn from his high frequency of physical involvement and consequent use of *ice* to combat bruises and potential injuries in the physiotherapists' care. The other meaning is that of *being as cool as Ice*, as this player is noted in the elite team for his field vision, rapid decision making and self-control. The cut refers to a specific line of running the player will engage in to change play and set up an offensive play by his team.

The **in-team naming** symbolism was observed in terms such as "the senior pro's," which referred to veteran players who approached internationals with test match experience and serious commitment and were valued for their perspectives and leadership qualities, and "team units," (sub-groups of players who operated in cohesion or interdependence and had particular roles within the field positions and game plan). Symbolism onfield included: "running the lines," (scanning the field of play and moving at speed to certain positions, with team-mates having an understanding of the lines that will be run and the purpose of these); "the bomb," (a high kick,

usually to the opposition fullback, which has a strategic purpose and consequent roles for each player in individual action); and, “red hot ball,” (when the All Blacks had possession and sought to clear the ball immediately for attacking play). These imply decision-making skills and a knowledge of attacking roles in particular situations.

The **All Black tradition and continuity** was readily apparent in the participant observation, a sense of “the guys who have gone before” being evident in player comments. Zavos (1995) noted the second half of the final test of the researcher’s observation period when “the All Blacks reached back to that New Zealand genius for rugby and played a magnificent 40 minutes” (p.182). At the team discussion on 2.7.93, a veteran, FE, was critical of the number of penalties conceded in the first two tests, “That doesn’t happen to All Blacks, fellas.” This symbolic view of traditional standards was again illustrated in the press conference prior to the third Lions test (Match Two) when Coach noted, “What is important is **the tradition** of the All Blacks and that the All Blacks play well.” Coach drew upon this awareness in his motivational team talks and examples were noted in Coach’s and Manager’s comments to the team before tests against South Africa. Integral to this was the iconic silver fern emblem of national representation and the black jersey. The **black jersey** represented a successful record and utter commitment of players, as illustrated by the veteran player comment that his jersey was a boyhood dream (see 7.2.5). **Willie Aways** drew on tradition for a move named for an All Black captain of some 30 years previously, whose team first used the move. The move was drawn upon in observed tests, one variation using four lineout forwards and the number eight transferring the ball to the open-side flanker who ran along the lineout and around the back of it on attack.

Selection and playing for the team was not the only perceived purpose for effort. Others included playing for one’s country, for recognition as an excellent performer and, as one observer put it at a press conference, “Players playing for their All Black career.”

At this elite level **gender oriented language** was noted infrequently, usually in terms of assumptions that only men played rugby. Environmentally, the All Blacks were confronted with faxes, advertising and slogans of a sexist nature. In rooms where the team changed for training, the corridors were replete with one-liners which could be read as having racist or homophobic overtones. Wives of males invited to test match dinners were invariably listed as appendages of their husbands, with their husband’s initials, not their own.

Administrators evoked frequent, invariably critical, comments from players. Frequent spelling errors in team lists, travel tickets not delivered, Council decisions which appeared to have little or no consultation with players, and the inappropriate actions of Councillors chatting and laughing in the All Black dressing room after the lost final match, each illustrated negative perception of administrators. In Sydney, 1994, August 15, Coach sought extra tickets for the players, who had been limited to two each. He expressed disgust at the players being the drawcard for the revenue generating test and perceived inadequate support from the New Zealand Rugby Football Union. "I'm calling their bluff, we're not playing if we can't get more tickets. I'm telling you so you know what I'm up to. I'm pissed off about it," declared Manager. The presence of the NZRFU Councillors and their wives at test match dinners, and staying in what were perceived as top hotels at Rugby Union expense, was seen to symbolise administrator priorities. The South African third test dinner had media persons and local rugby union members as invited guests but two past All Black captains against South Africa living nearby were not invited, despite one having also been the most successful past All Black coach.

The iconic **status of the All Black coach** was inescapable. The literature review noted Sage (1980) indicating that coaches are the high priests of contemporary sports. In so acting out their roles the coaches conduct activities with power over the fortunes of a group representing the national sport. In the media, in airport lounges, walking down the street and drinking in a private bar all saw recognition of Coach and resultant verbal interaction. The only public setting in three years of study in which the researcher observed the coach to be anonymous was when shopping in a mall in Sydney. The New Zealand basketball coach commented (Butcher, 1994, pp.109-110), "I deeply sympathise with coaches who are heavily in the public eye like [the observed All Black coach]...I think the media attention they get when their team loses is unwarranted." His netball counterpart also stated, "I sympathise with [Coach] - I think many people have been unfair in their criticism of him, he's only human too, and public expectation is sometimes very unrealistic" (ibid., p.111).

The media are inescapably linked with the status and national prominence of the All Black coach. Often the All Blacks passed generalised criticisms of "the media" without differentiating or being specific in reference to a medium or journalist who had triggered such comment. The media produced comments or statements of opinion reading as fact which were at marked variance with what the researcher had observed or recorded in the All Black environment. Emotive language was also the province of others beyond the media. At a diplomatic function on 1994, July 20, for

the All Blacks, hosted by the South Africans, the New Zealand Prime Minister noted that now, “battles were on the rugby field and not on the streets outside.”

If rugby in New Zealand is a religion, as critics observe (Lalanne, 1960), the All Blacks and Coach acted out their roles in conducting activities in places of assembly-cum-worship. These have attendant sub-cultures replete with idols, proverbs, scribes, symbolic phrases, and emotional commitment. Sage (1980) noted symbols of fidelity such as athlete commitment to the cause and the strengths of community involvement. Rituals and beliefs were seen to strengthen team identity, foster unity and induce a desired mood and motivational state. The test match day illustrated these with such ritualistic observances as the test eve captain’s talk, lineout practice in the car park, seating on the team bus, silence on the bus, prescribed identical dress, regular places to change in the dressing room, consistent patterns of exhortations, “pep talks” by senior players, and the exit “procession” of reserves and team management before the test team ran out.

7.6.2 All Blacks Categories and Properties

The categories generated by participant observation data were not substantially modified by data from interviews, questionnaires, or document analysis. Thus, the following resulted:

1	Coach Role Selector Develop game plan Organise training Technical guidance Motivator Link with team management Relate to media	Coach Captain Coach-assistant coach Selector group relations Develop player skills Co-ordinator Impact on private life Rugby life history
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2	Coach Qualities Technical knowledge Communication Clarity in team talks Personal qualities Organisation Teaching skills Cope with time demands Philosophy and vision Long-term planner Single minded Assimilate information	Self discipline Analytical Provides major feedback Video analysis Cope with various demands Willingness to learn Draws on specialist advisers One to one interpersonal warmth Determination Present new material in relevant ways Man management
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3	Captain Role	Captain-coach Exemplary player Onfield leadership Public relations	Team talks and meetings Power Influence of playing form on onfield leadership Influence of mentor captains
4	Captain Qualities	Decision making Communication Relating to players	Leadership Personal qualities Cope with major personalities Playing skill
5	All Black	Icons Media Traditions Self-expectation Public expectations Sport staff Intergenerational linkages Playing entertaining rugby Use of trainers Informal leaders	Symbolism Rugby law knowledge Player interdependence Team ethics Player accountability Multiculturalism Political usage Socialisation World Cup linkages
6	Administration	Organisation of All Blacks NZRFU Administrator-player contact	Decrease onfield violence Marketing

Figure 7.21 All Blacks categories and properties.

7.6.3 The Research Questions

The team leadership roles of the elite rugby coach and captain are rarely given more publicity in the international rugby world than are those of the All Black coach and captain. The categories in 7.6.2 note the elements of those roles. The participant observation provided the first field research data on the “realities” of those roles being enacted. At the elite All Black level the coach and captain had a focus upon the test match, were cognisant of the need for long term team development and had a clear concern for team dynamics. The role behaviour of the All Black team leader was perceived supportively by the players and team manager, and the questionnaires and interviews confirmed the high ratings. The team leadership roles were often enacted away from the training or competition environment, such as the selection committee meeting, coach’s team development notes, changing rooms, captain’s test eve team meeting, confidential coach-player interactions and “in-team” build-up on the test match day.

The research questions led to the focus upon the team leader roles and qualities. The rugby literature noted en passant the captain's playing example but the centrality of this to elite rugby team leadership was markedly reinforced by the All Black participant observation and interviews. Similarly, this research phase emphasised the personal qualities of the coach at an elite level, ("First of all I want him to be organised and honest"), and the desire of players to have a clear game plan to which they all had the opportunity to contribute. Given the apparent emphasis upon elements such as tactical communication and motivation in rugby literature (see Figures 3.7 and 3.11 in Chapter Three) the All Black research has related these to the apparently critical context of the game plan.

Qualities of the elite rugby team leaders are relatively clear and the coach as selector and game plan agent has need for personal qualities, particularly communication and organisation. The captain has a prime role of onfield leadership and off-field role modelling. At the elite level the leaders' qualities have been illustrated in the participant observation of this Chapter.

7.7 SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

The present phase of the research provided the first extended participant observation of a national sport team and its leaders. The research data and symbolic interactionism generated a range of categories and properties noted above. These materially contribute to the formulation of consequential theoretical propositions on elite rugby team leadership noted in Chapter Nine.

The participant observation provided a rare entry for an outside into the All Blacks. The process was completely open with Coach and Captain fully accepting the researcher's presence. (Coach's reflections upon this process are noted in Appendix H.1.) The researcher noted that certain stages in the research process presented challenges to objectivity and neutrality. Examples of these were noted 7.2 and the methodological implications are considered in Chapter Ten.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES: PAST AND PRESENT PARTICIPANTS

This chapter draws together a range of rugby and non-rugby perspectives on elite team leadership. The past All Blacks are icons in New Zealand sport and world rugby. A small group of past and great All Black captains provide perspectives on captaincy and coaching. These are supplemented with views from, and about, elite New Zealand rugby coaches, and perspectives from interviews and surveys of some 231 All Blacks. Their experience and knowledge of elite rugby team leadership is recognised in the rugby world through appointments to coaching and administration positions, media attention to their viewpoints and comparisons of them with contemporary All Blacks. Overseas test rugby opponents (i.e. from countries other than New Zealand) were surveyed to provide further perceptions from the wider rugby elite and their views indicated common perspectives on elite team leadership roles and qualities. A further dimension to the present study is added with the voices of national team leaders in winter team sports other than rugby. The chapter concludes with symbolic interactionist considerations on the expressed perspectives and an outline of the categories and properties drawn from this phase of the present research.

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Voices of Great All Black Captains
 - 8.2.1 Captains' Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Captain
 - 8.2.2 Captains' Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Coach
 - 8.2.3 Selecting and Developing the Elite Rugby Captain
- 8.3 Voices of All Black Coaches
 - 8.3.1 Coaches' Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Coach
 - 8.3.2 Coaches' Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Captain
- 8.4 Voices of Past All Blacks
 - 8.4.1 All Black Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Coach
 - 8.4.2 All Black Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Captain
- 8.5 Voices of International Rugby
 - 8.5.1 International Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Captain
 - 8.5.2 International Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Coach
 - 8.5.3 International Perspectives on New Zealand Rugby
- 8.6 Voices of Non-rugby Elite Team Leaders
 - 8.6.1 Non-rugby Perspectives on the Elite Team Coach
 - 8.6.2 Non-rugby Perspectives on the Elite Team Captain
- 8.7 Symbols, Categories and the Research Questions
 - 8.7.1 Symbolic Interactionism
 - 8.7.2 Multiple Perspectives Categories and Properties
 - 8.7.3 The Research Questions
- 8.8 Summary and Reflections

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Rugby, as discussed in Chapter Two of this present study, is the dominant sport of New Zealand. The story of this national game is inevitably shaped by its participants who inscribe winter turf with physical effort, and influence aspirations of their successors with well chronicled legacies of effort and achievement. Past All Black players and team leaders are called upon by sport writers, talk-back hosts, editors, television producers and publishers. Their impact is often informative as

the revealed “communitas” of past privilege and the voices of “authentic individuals” (Turner, 1974b, p.14). Turner suggests that the culture of any particular society is impacted upon, and shaped by, past ideological systems more than it exists as a coherent whole. In today’s rugby culture elite players read the views of their predecessors, mix with them at after-match functions, watch them in televised discussion, and have close contact with them as administrators, coaches, mentors or even as family members. Past All Blacks influence the present identity formation and public construction of rugby.

“But for Cavanagh and Finlay there may not have been a successful [All Black Coach] Fred Allen”, argues Thomas (1970, p.217). Allen, in turn, “deeply influenced” All Black captain Whineray (Mulligan, 1964, p.26) and extended that sphere of influence to Lochore, the 1966-70 All Black captain. Lochore, became the 1986-88 All Black coach and would have a positive impact upon the 1995 All Blacks as their World Cup Campaign Manager. (Personal communications from players and coach.) It is suggested by literature that each significant coach or captain sculpts an identity of the rugby team (see, for example, Cameron, 1981; McLean, 1964). Exploring these may be seen as the task of interpretive research, to discover the specific ways in which local and non-local forms of social organisation and culture relate to the activities of specific persons in making choices and conducting social action together. (Erickson, 1986, p. 129.)

The 1990s All Black captain Fitzpatrick, whose father was a provincial player and All Black, illustrates the cross-generation legacy and influences extant in New Zealand rugby.

For me, All Blacks were the ultimate heroes. I can still visually recall the centenary at College Rifles. Grant Batty, the All Black, was invited. It was amazing to see an All Black...it happens to me now...you’re somehow keeping the All Black dream, the magic, alive (O’Meagher, 1994, p.102).

The national game has an ongoing life history, replete with family mythologies but virtually untouched by the academic researcher, despite its potential richness for recording influential accounts and viewpoints of key figures in that “rugby family”. “It is therefore essential to talk to as many relatives as possible, because discrepancies may be resolved by further questioning of other relatives” (Colwell, 1980, p.30). “Sometimes they may even conceal unsavoury facts or distort the truth to put themselves in a better light. Wherever possible corroboration should be sought either from relatives or from documentary sources” (Steel and Honeycombe, 1980, p.108).

The first part of this present chapter considers in some depth the views of the small group of “great” captains from the All Black “family” (see Match Two, 7.2.2 of Chapter 7 in this present study, for another perspective on this family concept). All thirteen living All Black captains who

have led the country in 5 or more tests, were interviewed. Perspectives on rugby coaching and captaincy from all living All Black coaches, and the majority of past All Blacks are examined. Perceptions of rugby team leadership from elite overseas rugby players are then considered, along with their particular perspectives on New Zealand rugby. These elite rugby players, who include test captains from six countries, have playing experience covering the span 1924-1995. The chapter's multiple perspectives conclude with the views on elite team leadership of elite non-rugby team leaders. It was believed by the researcher that the views of such sport coaches and captains could indicate possible commonalities of elite team leader roles and qualities across team sports.

The multiple voices served a range of research foci. They have the potential to further develop the researcher's understandings of elite rugby leadership, raise matters which have not received prior or adequate consideration in the present study, and clarify contextual considerations of rugby team leadership. The researcher holds the belief that past elite players:

- can reconstruct their own team leadership experiences and reflect upon meanings of these.
- provide discursive accounts of their own career paths and critical incidents and consider meanings they ascribe to these.
- have a genuine sense of being members of the elite community of the black jersey and a concomitant desire to assist its current principals.
- have often earned reputations which cause their voices and viewpoints to be considered by other elite players, team leaders and administrators.
- influence current perceptions of rugby by their voiced comments.
- often have positions as "significant others" through their roles as team-mates, coaches, commentators, or administrators, influencing present-day players and the general or rugby public.
- have often established reputations with their successors as knowledgeable and skilled elite rugby observers.
- distanced from their playing years at the elite level, have had the opportunity to reflect upon rugby team leadership and its important elements.
- provide perceptions which have a relevance for contemporary rugby team leaders, given that the basic nature of the game has not changed.
- have faced similar demands or challenges as present team leaders, and their views may add a dimension to present-day leadership considerations.

- stand with a symbolic importance and mana of achievement which impacts upon the attention of present achievers.
- provide insights for the researcher into present day rugby, and of traditions and critical meanings of rugby.

The All Black team, whose coach and captain were the major subjects of the present study's participant observation, did not exist in an environment of elite rugby walled off from the past. In their personnel they illustrate the rugby linkages.

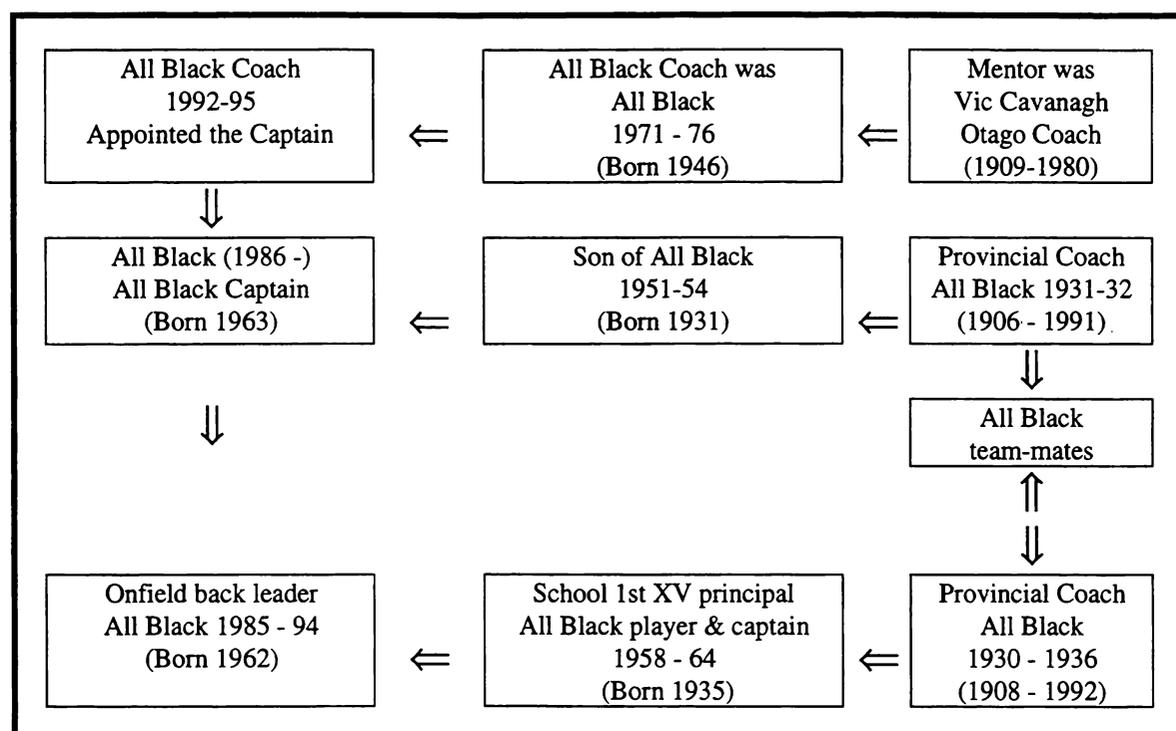


Figure 8.1 Example of intergenerational elite rugby linkages.

The past player interviews reinforced this perception of connections and relevance across All Black generations. For example, the oldest All Black, an All Black captain of the 1920s, shared the views of his present day successors on a range of rugby matters, despite the virtual 70 year gap in their rugby test experience. He expressed similar beliefs about the ethos of rugby and an opinion that rugby demanded too much financially of its players and “the league fellows” had the right approach with payment to players, foreshadowing the advent of rugby professionalism in the final year of the present study.

8.2 VOICES OF GREAT ALL BLACK CAPTAINS

The great post-war All Black captains, acknowledged in an accord by elite players and rugby commentators, are noted in this study as Captains One, Two, Three, Four and Five. Knight (1991), for example, notes that “Some have achieved results that were at least as good or even better [than Captain One]. But Captain One’s special niche in this august company is that he set the benchmark by which all All Black captains are assessed” (p.41). Given that such selection is subjective, the researcher sought judgement from the NZRFU historian, and three of the most published contemporary New Zealand rugby writers. Agreement was unanimous on a select group of captains, One through Four, but opinion was divided on the merits of Captain Five. He was included in the “great captain” group by the researcher on the basis of his outstanding winning record and the fact that experts as different as Captain One and a recent All Black selector (Personal communication, August 16, 1993) rated him as comparable to the other four exemplary All Black captains. This part of the study now considers the qualities of these select leaders and their perspectives on elite rugby team leadership.

Captaining his country for 30 tests, 1958-65, Captain One is seen by many as a great captain (Evans, 1964; Holmes, 1960; Mulligan, 1964; Parker, 1960; Thomas, 1974). In Captain One’s team a player emerged with similar leadership qualities. He became Captain Two, for 18 tests a superb All Black captain over the years 1966-1970 (Edwards, 1987; Frost, 1968; McLean, 1991). The legacy of special rugby chieftainship was next borne by Captain Three through 19 tests in the years of 1977-82. Norrie (1980, p.124) saw this captain “as an All Black captain to rank with the likes of [Captain One and Captain Two].” (See also, Edwards, 1987, and Reyburn, 1968.) Captain Four, in his 17 tests of leadership 1981-1985, was in the “elite bracket with the likes of [Captain Three, Captain One and Captain Two]” (Knight 1991, p.112). The final elite rugby team leader included in this small group is Captain Five, captain in 14 tests from 1988-90. “He was a very good captain because he had presence,” declared Captain One (Personal communication). Captain Five’s provincial coach, who was also an All Black selector, believed “Unequivocally, he is the most outstanding captain I have seen in the 30 years that I have been playing, coaching and watching senior rugby” (Gray, 1990, p.13). Anecdotal interview evidence from past All Blacks emphasised this placement.

Whatever the era in which the elite rugby team leader flourishes, the foremost characteristics shaping the ethos and parameters of the team’s leadership have, arguably, remained constant. All five great captains expressed interview comments similar to the following on elite captaincy.

It's experiencing honesty in a team, the integrity and teamwork, the team spirit. In leading a team in any era you set a common goal effectively and see how people react to this. Their contribution to the teamwork mirrors what we give to the community generally. A rugby team has differing ethnic and religious groups with a whole range of personalities and jobs - - it's wonderful ! Added to that is the discipline required, to play within the rules. It's probably the only consistent discipline a lot of the young people get, the discipline in rugby, given that it's there. There has to be support. In a professional game the money has to come down through the ranks... (Captain Four).

Captains One, Four and Five also emphasised a long-prized major value of rugby being its inclusion of all physical shapes and sizes, and the centrality of continuous play and running with the ball.

The Formative Years of Great Captains.

The formative years of the great captains provided some common themes. These great captains grew up in home environments with fathers, especially, keen on sport as an outlet for young boys, and parents who supported sport involvement. All captains were given opportunities to assume responsibilities as leaders in their formative years, at school or early in their careers.

Captain One's father was active in swimming and as a boy the future rugby captain played soccer until secondary school. He felt "something calling me into rugby, the hurly-burly or something" which drew him out of soccer. This Captain also enjoyed boxing, at which he had success, and secretly cherished the belief "that I could have gone further." Captain Two's father had his sport restricted by the war but his mother was an outstanding tennis player and later golf player. Captain Two grew up in a sporting community wanting to be a rugby team back, preferably playing at first-five. He was an outstanding tennis player. Captain Three's father played rugby until he broke his collarbone and got married, and his mother's family also played sport. In his rural community, "The game [rugby] was played at school and that's the way things were." Captain Four as a schoolboy leader, was described in a 1969 programme as, "A fine leader, dynamic when necessary and diplomatic always." Captain Four's father, a past All Black vice-captain, noted his son's leadership even earlier.

He was always a leader. As a father I didn't notice it in the early days but when you reflect back he was always leading his younger brother...invariably it was he who was leading. I recall a woman at a play-centre run by Dr. Neil Begg for his studies. This woman took great interest in [the boy Captain Four] and said, "He will make a great leader and will make his mark in some way."

Captain Five's schooldays featured sport, especially rugby and rugby league, often with his brothers. His parents had both been active in sport and a cousin became an All Black.

8.2.1 Captains' Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Captain

The captain's role at the elite level presents challenges across a range of leadership domains. The five captains noted a primary role of confident leadership but emphasised the demands of a captaincy role on tour.

The true elements of a rugby team - - training, game and social dimensions - - need balance, need a oneness. Players have to be at one with themselves and the team and the coach and captain are critical in this, along with the manager if you are on tour (Captain Four).

As captain, your prime role, how you are judged, is to win a hell of a lot of games with dignity and style. There is pride and people at home feel good. You've got to have a hand in the preparation of the team. It's hard to take a team onto the field that you haven't been involved with. In New Zealand you were seldom asked anything by media in my day. You need to be confident in your team and to have an onfield pattern the team can be committed to (Captain One).

Captain Two usually exerted a similar presence on the field as Captain One, and noted the need to change the game plan if thought necessary. "If you find in the game that the plan is not working then, clearly, at the first opportunity you get the team together and say 'look this is not working so we're going to change what we're doing.' Obviously the senior players may have an input into this." A successor added to this:

At the risk of being thought arrogant, I believed I was able to make a team more effective when I was captain... making all the right little decisions because they're the hard ones to make. I think my style of captaincy was very much a 'hands on' style... 'Okay, at this scrum we're going to do this, at that lineout we're going to do this'... reading the direction of the game on the field, changing the tactics at the right time (Captain Three).

These leaders agree that the captain's onfield requirements haven't basically changed although the role demands, in terms of media exposure and public communication, have increased. Captain Four saw his role basically involving liaison and motivation.

Captains Two and Four noted the demands on those close to elite rugby leaders. The obverse side of the accolade of greatness in All Black captaincy may be reflected, at least partially, in one leader's comment that "retiring as All Black captain left a hole in my life that will never be filled...everybody likes to be important and the centre of attention at times, that's human nature." The five captains each emphasised the captain's onfield leadership role, making decisions through analysing the game, and off-field roles of representing the team and working with the coach.

The 1924 "Invincibles" test captain believed that "it's your own personality that comes to the fore in captaincy", rating leadership qualities above playing ability, although a captain had to read and direct the game and play with effort "fast and well." One of his great successors concurred, "I wouldn't say I was the best, but I tried my best." In onfield play and off-field interaction,

communication qualities were important for each captain, with Captain Five emphasising the need for team leaders to follow their natural styles.

[Captain Four] was a soft spoken guy, but effective. He'd get his point across without raising his voice too loud, whereas I grab the team by the scruff of the neck and give them a boot up the backside and that would get them going as well. As a captain you wouldn't expect of the players what you didn't expect of yourself. It was very different captaining a Maori team, letting the guys with excitement use that excitement, enhancing that sort of game, letting the free spirit go, all flair, individual skill and ability but subtly controlled so they play within a pattern. I was conscious of not remaining static in my thinking. It was important to enjoy what we do and to enjoy the means to be successful. Enjoy yourself. Kia kaha [Be strong].

Social skills are important, particularly on tour, whether it is “the little things on tour you learn from” or meeting social demands. An elite captain comments:

Some people are captains and enjoy it and some aren't prepared to put up with the social side, such as a predecessor of mine, [Captain S]. Being a gregarious fun-enjoying person I would look down the hall from the front table and see my mates David Brady and John Walshe getting nicely pissed while I was up there with Colonel Howsyourfather!

The All Black captains felt that team people can become too close: “You need to have a little distance from your team-mates.”

You have to get on with people and communicate effectively, while at the same time you have to stay a little aloof. At the end of the day you have to be friends, and have their respect. Different leaders demand respect in different ways. Coach B and Captain Two demanded respect for different reasons, for the nature of the person, for their humility.

Concern for players and positive captain-player relationships were integral to captaincy. Captain One recalled being unaware that, “Player X had never played on Cardiff Arms Park and I was offside with him for a couple of years and I never understood why. It was because playing there had meant so much to him and I hadn't realised it.” One of the captains was critical of a successor. “It was absolutely criminal the way [an All Black captain] publicly criticised his young player after a lost match in France.” In apparent contrast, relating to young All Blacks had been a deliberate action for Captain Five.

I made an effort with young players, to go and have a drink with them. A lot of senior players won't do that and I get pissed off with that. I was not just there for myself, I was there for the team. I tried to sit with different people at various meals, especially with young guys coming into the team as you may not really know them. I suppose I was lucky as an All Black captain as I wasn't an Aucklander. They usually stand by themselves. Same on the bus, sit with different players. Before games on a Saturday morning, go around the boys and see how they were.

Captain One noted, “On a mental level, looking at the opposition, and analysing their strengths and weaknesses, was very important, the planning.” “ The other side was putting the team

together, in terms of the social part, the training side, and the challenge you set yourself, beating the guy you're tackling" (Captain Three). A noted All Black believed that even in the cauldron of a New Zealand-France test, a sense of the captain's values could prevail.

You would often see [Captain Three] or the French captain smile when one had beaten the other to a loose ball. They both had a tremendous capacity to pat each other on the back and that is great for the game
(Bills, 1986, p.71).

This illustrates an important dimension. "The physical exhilaration of doing something well, whether it's scoring a try or making a tackle. I think it important having standards of excellence that you wanted to attain as a person" (Captain Three).

You are aware of the other captain, you're matching tactics with the guy and may well respect him. Captain X of one opposing test side was suave and urbane but you'd never trust him off the field whereas [Captain of France] and I had a mutual respect for the way we each played. We were small guys in a big man's world! [England skipper] and [French captain] had the respect of their own players and the opposing team. [Australian captain] was an outstanding sort of person also (All Black captain).

The quintessential quintet rated themselves on a 1-5 scale (5 is highest) on rugby team leadership qualities (see Figure 8.2). ("Please tick the rating which best indicates how you perceived yourself at the All Black level.") The high standards and self-expectations of the select respondents may be reflected in the less than complete ratings they give, which appear to be lower than those accorded to them by commentators or fellow players. Captain Four, for example, rated himself as "4" in the first category, *Commitment To Team*, as "I always felt a greater commitment to rugby." *Creativity, Sense of Vision* and *Sensitivity to Players' Needs* appear as the qualities of leadership which national team coaches could examine in order to facilitate full development of their All Black captains.

Despite having similar qualities, captains' leadership styles may contrast. "[Captain Three] was obviously a great thinker of the game but I always found him very aloof. He and I had a distant sort of relationship, he's not the sort of guy I got along with. I still don't know what or who [Captain Three] is. That was his style" (Captain Four). Another captain from this select group commented.

[Captain One] had a lot of respect. To be a good captain you have to have respect. He was articulate, a sound person and a good player and those qualities should be considered. A captain gains players' respect through playing ability. It's easier if you're quite a good player and being able to get the players to work for you when you give instructions on the field. They need to be happy about following those instructions, to feel comfortable about that. Off the field you need to set high standards for yourself in all aspects of your life.

All Black players have been seen to respond to the mantle of elite team leadership being placed upon them, and their commitment has earned respect from their players. "I think of Captain Y.

Once appointed as All Black captain he rose in stature and provided effective no-frills leadership” (All Black, personal communication, May 20, 1993). A similarity of leadership under pressure in high intensity sport and war was seen by Captain One.

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Commitment to Team	5	5	4	5	5
Communication Skills	3	4	5	5	5
Knowledge of Rules	5	3	5	4	4
Achieving Team Goals in Games	5	4	4	5	5
Maintaining Best Traditions of Rugby	5	5	4	5	NR
Sensitivity to Players' Needs & Perceptions	5	5	4	4	4
Relationships with Coach	5	5	5	5	5
Onfield Leadership	5	NR	5	5	5
Creativity	3	4	4	4-	NR
Sense of Vision	3	4	4	5	4-5
Personal Playing Skill	3	4	4	4-5	4

(NR = No response. 5 is highest rating)

Figure 8.2 Great All Black captains' self-ratings.

When you decide on what success is, then the qualities of a captain likely to help you achieve this can be better decided. Whatever qualities I might have being captain helped me find confidence. It's a bit like going to war. For those who came out of the war it must have been a wonderful strengthening experience. Leading the All Blacks on tour has something of that.

Captaincy as Leadership In Action

Research in this present study on the Provincial Team, the All Blacks and the provincial coaches and captains, indicated the importance of onfield leadership. This is reinforced from the vantage point of the longest serving past All Black skipper.

On the field the captain is really of value when there is trouble. When you're getting beaten that is trouble! Discipline was never a problem for me as we had standards. We had good relationships with the referees and that helped. The other side is the hard part, when you have to change the game plan. There was an example of this when [the captain] changed New Zealand B's tactics at half-time against Australia and that was the difference in that game. You have to change course when you are in trouble, you must have fallback positions. You have to have players who have faith in you when you want to change. It's like the military thing under fire, when you really need to rely on others when you say something. From the media point of view you're a good captain if you win! A baboon could have captained most games I played with the All Blacks, but some of my best games as captain came when we were losing but pulled the margin back. You

don't really notice the clever captaincy from the sidelines or the pressbox. [Captain SA] the South African test captain was a charming man, but the guy I had the highest regard for, and still do as a friend, is [Captain of Australia]. He was also so good on the field. If both captains are friends that influences the teams.

Captain One may have presented himself a little modestly as Parker (1960) believed, "You always knew there was a captain on the field when [Captain One] played, something that was not always apparent in his absence" (p.230). This rugby leadership theme -- that captaincy affects the onfield play, atmosphere of the game and team's sport values -- rarely appears in research literature, although it was noted in descriptive rugby writing.

Captain Two, expressed his belief that the captain influences the game's direction,

You can lose direction if the captain is in the forwards and is perhaps more worried about his forwards instead of his backs. It just takes a good captain with overall vision to look at where the strengths and weaknesses are of the opposition and say "Right, let's change our tactics and use the blindside instead of the midfield hits. We've tried for 15-20 minutes to break through in the centre...why not change it." Usually a forward captain relies on his flyhalf or experienced back member.

Sport ethics underly respect for opponents and self-imposed limits of onfield behaviour, of the "players' code" of acceptable physical aggression and retaliation. "I don't think kicking is acceptable, I don't mind getting rucked or the odd clip...I don't think players, in general, have the discipline of 10 years ago...a lot of respect from younger players is missing," observed Captain Five. In his final years of elite team captaincy it was the inculcation of rugby values and skills that brought most satisfaction for this team leader. "In my last two seasons, it wasn't so much the winning that I found enjoyable as watching the team on the field doing their things successfully."

Responding to potential and actual behavioural or value judgement situations is a constant possibility for the captain. A 1920s All Black captain recalled one of rugby's most lasting ethical controversies, the ordering off of a New Zealand player in the England test of 1924.

I was told by the referee what had happened. He told me [an All Black] had kicked someone and I asked [the player] if he had kicked someone and he said no. I appealed to the ref. to not send him off...I had to reconstruct our team and the methods we used. In the dressing room after the match we were mostly all sympathising with [the punished player] and believing him. The British didn't come up to our dressing room...

This captain's ability to adjust the team's onfield organisation was facilitated by his going into each test with a number of game plan variations (Personal communication, May 1992).

For Captain Three the success of the coach is probably judged on three levels. The public assessment of the way the team performs, the private success within the team of whether it's a happy team, and the image of the game the team generates at the top level. Captain Two suggests that, "You can get an idea of a well coached team by watching a rugby game. The first thing is

the team discipline, how they arrived, how they ran out and warmed up and then the telltale signs of how they moved into their positions.” Captain Five finds the indicators of a well led team “in the style of play they’re trying to play, how successful that style is, how correct their techniques are in scrums and lineouts, the way the backs run...even in the captaincy you can see if he’s calling the right moves.” He further notes that:

You need to be able to teach players, give commands and lead by example, as attributes for the onfield leader. Don’t accept the view that the captain is “the be-all and end-all” of the match team, but you do need an onfield leader. Basically the captain has to have vision to see a game changing and change his game tactics. He’s got to lead by example, the way [current All Black captain] is, and call the right shots at the right stage of the game.

Captain Four recounts a test series against Australia.

We had lost the first test, and in the second test they were 12 points up in ten minutes. I remember looking around the faces of the players, there was absolute devastation. The guys had just given up and I got them together and quickly said we’re not going to change anything in terms of our tactics, they’re still the right tactics, let’s go out and do them. I told them not to worry about the conversion, just let them take that...in fact, we came back and won that game. We had discussed at some length the fact their loose forwards were faster than ours so we wanted to roll their loose forwards around and tie them in and that worked, so [open-side flanker] had a good game.

Changing the tactics is illustrated by Captain One.

We lost the third game of our British Isles tour and then played a combined team. We were struggling in that game in the forwards and it was a hard slog. They got in front 9-0 or so and then [centre] hurt his knee and [flanker] had to come out of the forwards and play at centre. (I never liked putting a forward on the wing, I would rather cover the missing player in the centre.) Then it started to pour down with rain, which flattens everything out, and I thought “Christ...!” I needed more horsepower from the forwards; we kicked the ball into the corner, ran the blind side and incessantly brought our fullback in with a big blind side and had to take the risks. I had to get us back, as captain, to where a converted try could win the game. We pulled them back and eventually won 11-9. I was sitting in the communal bath, after the game, with senior players, and a glass of beer, and I remember one of us saying, “By Jesus that was a close run thing!”

A further example of the rugby team captain’s onfield leadership influencing the course of an All Black game, in Great Britain, was recounted.

We were down about 0-15 at half-time. I thought, “What the bloody hell is this?” You can’t just say, “Let’s get stuck in.” (I don’t know what that means.) “Can we score a try in the next ten minutes? Christ yes!” We scored in five minutes. “Now we need another try...” The guys responded. We rolled them totally. That’s really where you are of value as captain.

Mulligan notes Captain One’s personal play in this match and “one of [Captain One’s] halftime sermons, which one had to be seen to work with such devastating effect”(1964, p.135).

8.2.2 Captains’ Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Coach

“New Zealand’s methods are hard and concentrated, but the sustained efficiency produced through the power of the coach, which is the nearest thing to the coaching autonomy in American

professional football, is the one certain way of succeeding at international level,” (Thomas, 1966, p.23). Despite the overall perception that coaching is a modern facet of rugby, a 1924 All Black captain described All Blacks undergoing coaching and training by Don Stuart, a 1905-06 All Black and 1921 selector, and Alf Griffiths, for the test match weeks of the 1921 Springbok series, the captain working in coordination with them. This captain noted the importance of the coach preparing the captain to go into the game with variations of the game plan which the captain could implement on the field if necessary.

A key role of most elite rugby team coaches is that of selection. Captain One argued for selection skills in choosing the right players to fit the coach’s intended team style of play but also advocated consistency, fairness and player confidence in the selection process and the coach’s decisions.

The coach must be fair and be seen to be fair from the players’ point of view. Put yourself in the place of fullback L who played for *New Zealand B* against *Australia B*. He scored well but the *A* team was picked and they won their game. Then M, the *A* team fullback, is injured but N is put into fullback. Player L thinks, “It’s a bit of a blow but I guess I’ll be an emergency,” but O is put in. So O thinks he’s in. Okay. Then O and M see P put in and you think, “What the bloody hell is going on?” Or you take the example of J in the grandstand as reserve halfback and then they play K, or the example of forward S in the All Black reserves for two tests and then they pick forward R. You must be able to see the logic of the coach.

Captain Five believed that playing at the elite level provided a great deal of experiential knowledge for players. The coach should draw upon this, and learn as a playing coach or by “getting on a close footing” with his captain. The great captains speak with a common voice on considerations of the coach’s role, reflected by two of their number.

Rugby needs coaches who have thought about the role of the coach. An example of this that’s never given much thought is the coach’s task of how to maintain the interest of players for a year, or even a season. Some coaches do not value the input of others and see getting others in as a weakness. The more they build themselves up in the eyes of the players, the more they fail (Captain Three).

We really don’t do our homework on how to coach and too often people do it because it’s their turn. Many coaches are too noisy or don’t know how to transmit knowledge; for example in team talk situations you can find no actual knowledge is being transmitted to the player. You’ll see a coach shout, “You Joe, tackle”, but too many coaches assume the player’s knowledge about skills and tactics, even at the All Black level. Coaches often blindly label all of the team as being the same, for example, in handling a team talk. They need to understand the quiet guy, those who are steady, the guy who needs a kick up the jacksie and another guy who virtually needs an arm around him. The coach must understand each one (Captain Four).

The support staff assisting team leaders rarely appear in research literature. The captains noted the critical value of the rugby team manager. One latter-day skipper comments, “ If you’ve got a weak manager, Jesus it’s hard. An outstanding manager is a Godsend. A lot of those guys, however, may have never attained management roles in their own particular private or employment roles.” Although their role was primarily organisational it was also critical that managers related to players. Another captain noted an outstanding manager who was, “utterly straight, loyal to everybody and intelligent.”

Captain Five stressed the need for the coach to gain the respect of the players and respect the players as well.

He's got to be their friend, their mother, their father and he's got to be their enemy at times. A lot of coaches are very friendly with their teams but you can get too close. The coach is there for one purpose, to select the best team possible. A good coach must know the game, know the complexities of forward play and back play. Coaches gain respect when they can be friends off the field and have a drink, not take offence at a social jest but be as hard as nails next day. You can't readily compare coaches, for example, Coach Three was quiet and Coach Two was extroverted, while Coach Five was very direct. Coaches W and X are the type of persons to pull a player aside and say, "This is what we'd like you to do..." and to tell the player if they're not playing well, such as, "You're not making that easy yard." A big part of the coach skills is working with the individual, and individuals collectively, as team units. You only need one person to fall down and you could be [at a serious disadvantage] all the time.

Less pungently, Captain One noted the need for the coach to adhere to certain standards or principles. Observing that the coach's team has to win games and please the patrons, he is critical of a game plan that embodies, for example, "continual booting upfield and kicking five penalties by the first-five. That's winning, but you need a better balanced style, to win with style."

There is also a moral dimension to rugby and you cannot compromise on illegal or dirty behaviour on the field. The higher the level played, the less negotiation there should be on bad behaviour. The sinbin and ordering off should be used more. Everyone in an elite team must stand-up for good behaviour and personal standards. An additional demand on today's coach, more than in my day, is that the team leaders and touring team management group must be able to talk effectively with the media (Captain One).

Captain One led touring teams in which Captain Two was a player who revealed potential leadership abilities. Becoming the next great All Black captain, and one of New Zealand's most acclaimed coaches after his team won the inaugural 1987 Rugby World Cup, Captain Two emphasised the need for the coach to get on with people.

He's got to be a people's man. He must be a psychologist and understand what makes people tick. The coach needs to get on with, and motivate, people. He has to have all of the qualities of a captain and realise that all players are different and so you've got to be conscious of their wellbeing. The coach must understand the game. As a coach I learned a lot about players. You had to be a motivator, a leader, a manager and a social butterfly!

This elite leader's skills were further reflected in his role as the 1995 World Cup All Blacks' campaign manager. His interpersonal emphasis was observed in the final team-only session of the All Blacks' Auckland World Cup training camp when he emphasised the importance of every squad member.

The extra 20 are very important to the squad. How well you play in March and April will dictate how well the final squad will play in the World Cup... the more responsibility the individual can handle, the better the result.... remember you are representing all New Zealand.

Captain Four, who became a provincial coach, perceived the coach needing similar qualities to the captain.

There is, however, frustration in not being able to get out there and being able to say “come on, this is the way we are going to do it.” It’s a humbling experience. The demands upon the coach are heavy, especially upon his time. There is the media and public pressure, millions of watchers, and the sponsors having a go...I tried as coach in my first year to aim to establish the team’s position in the competition and in the next two seasons to improve on that. Set a goal, say, of beating five or six teams and coming in a certain place in the championship. But it’s also a case of seeing what’s available, and the best method of using what is available. For example, as coach you need a strong front row for the modern game. And the players must be motivated. It’s difficult to change other players’ intrinsic motivation. Some players expect support and things to be done for them. Guys would ring me up if I dropped them for a game and say they wouldn’t come and train with the team!

Coaches vary in their strengths. Provincial Coach A had a wonderful ability to communicate with people. He was a guy who could bring a team back from King Country “as full as boots”, stop them outside the mountain at Taupiri, the burial ground for Waikato Maori, and explain how important it was for the Maori people. This was at 12 o’clock at night. You could hear a pin drop on the bus, but that’s the sort of respect that guy had. A great experience to be with him. My coach at University was a wonderful guy at creating a team atmosphere and getting everyone working together. He taught me how to enjoy the game. Provincial Coach B coached me for the first time ever on positional requirements and where to go from set pieces...

All Black Coach C was effective with a quiet manner, whereas All Black Coach B, who was limited in technical coaching ability, had a wonderful ability to collaborate and assimilate the thinking and abilities of people in the team. The planning behind our second test against the [opposing European team], was a tribute to the man. It was a radical change of style. Had he not had the guts and style to do this we would have been done like a dinner! When I became a provincial coach it was a pretty sobering experience for me as my expectations were higher than those of the players...the management and I would be shattered after a lost game but the boys would be saying, “Well, where are we going tonight!”

The most outstanding record for an All Black captain over an extended period is that of Captain Five, with 29 unbeaten games. He stressed the critical aspect in coaching of match analysis, and preparation which is reflected in the coach saying “This is the way we’re going to play the game.” The captain then says, “This is what we’re going to do on the field to the coach’s pattern.” He emphasised the two team leaders working together.

Captain Five suggests different emphases may be required of the coach at junior levels of play, although the basic requirements of coach qualities are evident. A predecessor of Captain Five commended him for onfield leadership. “He could take a side from being down and put them in front, it’s leadership from the front, ‘follow me fellas’. It’s also tactical and mental.”

Generally, I think coaching is great in this country at the higher levels but at a lot of lower levels, club rugby and second tier teams it is quite poor, and when the players get through to rep. rugby on skill and sheer ability they lack a lot, such as in playing skills, basic tactics, body positions...I spent about four weeks at [an elite English side] trying to teach this one guy to drive straight. By being on the field I could see all the faults they made. A lot of senior players could have passed their knowledge on but didn’t, and I get really brassed off with them not doing this (Captain Five).

8.2.3 Selecting and Developing the Elite Rugby Captain

Selection of the captain, with attendant complexities of recognising aspirants' qualities, is rarely considered in rugby coaching manuals. Captain One recalls, "I remember when I retired from the All Blacks and the question arose about who was to follow me. I was on a good rapport with [the coach]. Who would become the new captain? Two senior players were probably ahead of Captain Two, in the public mind. But Captain Two seemed to have the potential to become a good captain." The process is not always clear-cut, as Captain Four found when he moved from leadership as captain to that of elite coach. He illustrated Captain Five's belief that "giving the captaincy to young guys is a risk, as is the selection of a very young player and placing him under unnecessary pressure."

As a coach I couldn't see any player who stood out enough to be captain. In my first year I had Captain Q who had a wonderful ability to communicate. I picked a young fellow who had experience with a younger representative team, but he didn't have the respect of his provincial team-mates and struggled for form. It's very hard to mould a captain, you have to have an individual who fits the scene. I had experienced difficulties as a young captain "learning the ropes". My most difficult year as captain of [a provincial team] was my first year as I was a younger player and not ready for it. There was an age problem, but one player was a strong person who had an influence on others and gave me his support. I lacked confidence. You really need, as the captain, to have the confidence of the person who put you there (Captain Four).

The great All Black captains saw the leadership role being located around the back of the scrum.

The captain can't get too far away from the forwards. It's very important that you get the feeling you're winning the game...the ball gets quarried out from the rucks, you're winning more lineouts... by God we're starting to get on top of those blokes, you're in control! A half-back could probably feel this but certainly having a captain out beyond first-five hasn't been too successful. If we lived and played in a perfect world then a loosie is in the perfect position. He can talk to others and liaise with the half-back (Captain One).

A loosie, half back, first-five or second-five is the ideal area, or perhaps the hooker at a pinch, as they play modern rugby as a loose forward. You could have the captain in other positions but then need another onfield leader in a central position. To be a good captain you need to have a good overall appreciation of what is happening (Captain Two).

Captain Five endorsed such a view although, "At representative level the honour goes to a very experienced player but four or five All Blacks could probably captain the team." He sees the loose forwards, as the best positional area for captaincy as, "You're where the ball comes, you can see what's developing in the backs offensively and defensively."

Captain Five further noted he had not captained many teams prior to his All Black leadership tenure. "I think everybody's got the ability but must develop it." Such development could be enhanced through learning from exemplary predecessors, as Mulligan (1964), an Irish rugby test player and writer, implies. He says of Captain One, "...any future leader would have done well to spend time in his company...and listen to what he said about leadership. It is an art you grow to : there is no such thing as a born leader" (p.40).

Captain One noted the relevance of his academic study with its focus upon interpersonal skills. “All Black captains have no leadership training. There are aspects of leadership that can be taught.” A starting place could be a role description. Captain Two, for example, was given the responsibility of captaining his provincial team at the age of 21 or 22 years, “ But I was never given any explanation of the captaincy role by any coach or official. I think that such a discussion would certainly help a new captain.”

Another great captain reflected, “I found that I wasn’t analytical when I started. The thing that got to me was that I didn’t particularly want to be captain!” Captain One noted the need for rugby team leadership development, raising pertinent points for administrators to consider in advancing leadership skills of elite captains.

I think I became a good All Black captain. I had a learning curve from when I was at Harvard doing a Master of Business Administration. We spent a lot of time on interpersonal skills. I think I realised when I was appointed to lead the team to Japan in 1958 that the duty of being a captain was a responsibility. (“Christ, this is real!”) I realised that the dignity of New Zealand rugby was, in part, resting in my hands. At times I wanted to belt someone, given the friction of the front row, but the thought of the All Black captain being ordered off was unpalatable to me. All Black captains have no leadership training and there are aspects of leadership that can be taught. Even making a speech is not easy. When you really scratch the surface of a 22 year old, you’re pretty insecure. At that point I started listening to speakers. In 1960 came a big mountain to climb. I would be better equipped three or four years later as a touring captain. In Africa there is, physically, an endless stream of big guys being thrown at you and you’re almost worn down by attrition. It’s a hard tour and a flinty tour in that the media are looking for angles all the time (Captain One).

The Coach-Captain Relationship

The coach-captain relationship is seen by the captains as critical, and must be very strong, with the coach having confidence in his captain on the field.

[All Black Coach] trusted me all the way. We both wanted to do the simple things well. Good teams do the simple things well. The forwards get the ball and the backs use it. He was a good man and had a bit of dignity. [Coach B] was more one of the boys, a wonderful motivator even if a bit of it was by fear. An example of this was his saying “There’s nothing that clears a man’s mind quicker than watching a game from the sideline”. He was wonderfully loyal to those who performed.

Captains worked very closely with their coaches and learned some leadership skills from them.

You’d sit down with the coach and say okay this is what we’re going to do, and if it doesn’t go right you can change. You also have players on the field with a bit of history and you can say, “Remember that move against so and so?” It might even be from three or four years ago (Captain Three).

Developing the game plan must involve the captain. You have to know the opposition and moves that will work for your team. He should have an influence upon the tactics. You look at the opposition, work out your team plan and go over it and over it at practice. You need to have an alternative in your mind (and even practice it). You might think you will blow the other team away in 20 minutes but when you find that doesn’t happen you must change your tactics (Captain Two).

Coach B was very much a man-manager and I learned a lot off him in that area, his ability to be consistent, good communication, how to run a team, and those sort of things. What I learnt off [Coach F] as a technical coach was what I put into practice while playing for [Coach B], particularly in the forwards (Captain Four).

There was unanimity in the captains' beliefs that having a knowledge of the rules of the game was important.

Leadership

Each of the outstanding captains concurred with Captain Five's views on the broad sphere of business leadership and rugby team leadership being similar.

Once your goals are set out and done collectively, whether you are a business or a rugby team, once everyone is geared up it's using the same skills, although you might be a little more distant from a business or shop than the rugby team you are leading.

“Captaincy on the field is very similar to captaincy or leadership in business -- you've got to be able to lead, to motivate, to help people set goals”(Captain Two). This perspective prevailed with latter-day captains, an All Black skipper of the 1990s declaring, “If you weren't succesful at running a business you wouldn't be successful as a top team leader.” Another captain averred that, “Leaders get the ear of people...the ability to communicate, the respect they are given, individual characteristics, knowledge of the field they are involved in, ability to handle people, courteous under pressure...”(Captain Three).

The support of skilled team players facilitates the captain's leadership role. Captain One, had five or six provincial captains in the forward pack and they were men of character. “We laughed a lot.” Captain Five observed that:

Team spirit comes from your captain and your coach and, possibly, your senior members. Winning helps this a lot, having a loss or losses can make spirits go down individually and collectively, and coaches really come into it then to provide real leadership.

One captain recalled a lasting memory of this.

In the [unofficial national rugby team], the team spirit was brilliant, absolutely brilliant, better than any All Black team I've been in. There were a lot of senior players and junior players. The junior players were made to feel welcome. Success is not just winning, it's also the enjoyment on tour, the camaraderie and the friendships you make.

Leadership exists in the players' socially constructed worlds, rooted in participants' cultures. Maori culture was manifested in the symbolism of the haka for these particular elite captains. Captain Three saw the haka as a forthright traditional challenge, with residual memories of “we live, we die, we're coming to plunder and kill.” Another saw it “as a sheer challenge. We were

giving a challenge and the challenge was rugby. It's not so much the words in the haka but the impact of a challenge." Captain Five brings his Maori perspective to this traditional act. "If you weren't going to do the haka properly you denigrated Maoridom. If I was involved we had to do it properly. If they weren't going to do it properly I wasn't interested in doing it." The captains indicated agreement with the opinion that, "The majority of the All Blacks don't know much about the haka." This could be, in part, because the same haka has been performed for decades and may have lost its cultural significance, becoming an empty ritual with only residual vestiges of meaning. Captain Five observes, "It was there when I got in, it was getting boring and I would have liked to have introduced them to a new one if I had stayed as captain."

Reflections on Voices of The Great Captains.

The elite of the elite bring common perspectives on team leadership. Such captains exhibit onfield leadership, playing to a high standard with the prime capacity to read the game and make sound decisions. They sometimes call upon valued peer opinions and change the game plan, set previously with the coach. Ethical values were emphasised, on and off the field. Off-field leadership had an extra dimension on tour, with the need to be strong on interpersonal relationships and relate to all players. A cadre of experienced players provided an important leadership dimension in the team. Loose forwards and inside backs were preferred positions for selection of the captain. If another position such as hooker was held by the captain then a field leader in the backs would also be needed. Training in captaincy was emphasised by all captains as a real need, although none had been assisted in acquiring their leadership skills other than through experience.

The coach-captain relationship was important. The coach must strive for 100 per cent effort, team success and the development of a team ethos, with the group and individuals being valued. Relational skills were emphasised as a coach priority by each captain. Respect for the coach was essential, as was ability to analyse the team and opposition, and prepare a resultant game plan which had player commitment.

8.3 VOICES OF ALL BLACK COACHES

The selection of the "great" All Black captains whose views were considered above was comparatively simple, unlike that of determining "great" coaches. In determining the latter group, in order to elicit their perceptions on rugby team leadership, the researcher sought the views of writers who had determined the group of great captains. There was no common agreement, apart from the unanimous choice of Coach A. Responses of past All Blacks to their questionnaire, (see

Appendix G.3), also clearly confirmed the same five captains but were not conclusive on coaches, apart from Coach A as their first choice and Vic Cavanagh, who never coached New Zealand. (It is noted that such classifications may not be conclusive as the questionnaire response rate varied across rugby generations.) This following section now considers views of, and on, the All Black coaches rated most highly by past All Blacks and the “expert” commentator group. (These leaders are referred to as Coaches A through E.)

The New Zealand All Blacks did not have an official assistant manager appointed to undertake the coach role until their 1938 tour to Australia. In home series, the team’s convener of selectors undertook the coach role from 1956 and in 1973 the term “coach” was first assigned to an All Black team official (NZRFU Rugby Operations Officer, personal communication, November 27, 1995). (No record of All Black coaches was available from the NZRFU.)

8.3.1 Coaches’ Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Coach

Coach A saw the key to leadership as discipline in the team and oneself. Important also were teaching techniques.

It was important to teach them by walking through the moves, and the knowledge of how to get through to individuals, as long as you are fair and just and have a clear goal. You have to adapt the way you treated individuals. Players X and Y, for example, would get pretty tense so you wouldn’t wind them up, whereas Z needed a kick up the arse! You can’t kid to All Blacks or go behind their backs although, psychologically, you might have to tell a little white lie now and then.

Coach A emphasised getting the basics right and developing techniques, even at provincial and test levels. At the interpersonal level he believed the reason for a player’s poor form nearly always lay in a cause beyond rugby.

Even at the highest levels you do have to develop techniques. For example, some players needed to fend properly and know where to hold their hand, to use the arm and body as a spring and push the other fellow downor team techniques...Not every good All Black makes a good coach, it’s just the way you imbue the players and impart the knowledge.

Coach A has the most outstanding record of international rugby coaches with 37 All Black matches, of which 36 were won and one drawn. This record included 14 tests, all won. Captain Two noted that this coach possessed discipline, tactical ability and rugby knowledge. Coach A “had a terrific ability to get the best out of players. He gave some terrific team talks before a game and had a deep knowledge of rugby.” Players saw this coach as an outstanding motivator and, “When he took training sessions you always learnt something from him. You hung on every word he said.” An astringent rugby critic and writer (personal communication, June 23, 1994), “Came

to realise [Coach A] was a real bloody pro on the job.” This coach was a hard worker, volatile and knowledgeable. “Well into retirement Coach A retained the ability to coach young players and motivate them,” remarked one latter-day All Black captain. At the elite level the judgement of a coach’s success, for Coach A, “Lay in the facts, figures and results”.

Coach A considered Vic Cavanagh as the greatest coach he had seen and had a high opinion of Coach E’s provincial record of Ranfurly Shield defences with “some of the most magnificent rugby any team can play.” Past All Blacks recalled the impact of Vic Cavanagh, 40 years on, regarding him as the greatest of coaches, in his communication, simplicity, and “His psychology of the team, ability to get the respect of everybody and his aim of lifting players, not slating them.” Cavanagh was skilled at “reading the opposition, analysing them thoroughly and getting the fundamentals right.” He was described by Thomas (1970) as “the most clear thinking of coaches” (p.216), influencing Coach A and consequent New Zealand rugby successes. A player recalled a 1950 Lion saying of Cavanagh’s team that he couldn’t believe all players would think as one. An All Black recalled Cavanagh’s words advocating coaches to read widely: “If you can’t wait to learn through your own experiences you can learn through someone else’s.”

In the pre-war period and into the 1950s, coaching input usually came from the variable skills of past players and selectors. The assumption that playing experience and expertise would lead to coaching success was not borne out by such great players as Mark Nicholls or Billy Wallace who were seen by respondents as lacking empathy and teaching skills. The influence of administrators as coaches was unsuccessful and led to criticism of team leadership, for example, in the All Blacks of 1935-36, 1949 and 1960.

An All Black coach of the late 1950s was extolled for his qualities.

He sat by you as you changed and talked to you quietly. He was a brilliant coach, but [on tour] in South Africa we had another coach who gave the same team talk before each game and lacked the skills of [Coach A and Coach B]. It was a very good side that could have been successful with a better coach.

The All Black manager of that same team had also been a prominent coach.

He was a table thumper with a loud rasping voice, choice language hammering away at you, treating players as though they had no brains. By contrast, [Coach A] I regarded highly as a team coach. He commanded respect and was a very good analyst of the game and knew how to handle men.

Similarly, another All Black coach, not prominent in the literature, was recalled with commendation by players for his practical knowledge and concern for players. This coach, who

coached the All Blacks on an unbeaten five test tour, saw his role as “convincing players you had a game plan and knew the opposition and what you were going to do about that.” He preferred half back or number eight for the captain’s position. Players saw this coach increasingly positively as their association with him increased, although one player noted that it was a little difficult to understand this coach’s ideas.

Captain Three noted the role of Coach B, as All Black coach:

He epitomised to me the ability to look at our team, assess its strength and then play a game according to that team’s strength...I always felt that [another coach] was a bit maligned by the rugby playing public and people in top rugby. He took the view that, “I’ve got a pattern of play which is based on that of [my province] and you guys fit that pattern, and I’ll put the best players there that I can to play that pattern.” I felt [two All Black coaches] were five years past the best time for them to coach at the top level.

Coach B was described by one All Black captain as his mentor. This captain saw his coach having, “A strong belief in the team concept, encouraging the group to use their talents. Players such as [G and J] used their individual talents within the team talents ...[Coach B] never abused a player or shouted.”

The role of selector was seen as critical by one All Black coach. “I made a bloody mistake as selector, picking player X, in the same way as my predecessors had in picking Y for the previous tour, as Y was an absolute bloody flop.” This coach detailed his All Black selection of an “architect” of successful Ranfurly Shield matches because “I wanted him to help me with the backs but on tour he was out injured, overweight and a lazy trainer.” Criticised for his training methods but acknowledged for his personal integrity, this coach was “never confident that I was doing the right thing as far as fitness was concerned” and advocated dual coaches as his own back coaching was not skilled. Another All Black coach noted, “Looking back [on a tour] I should have taken Player FE as captain...I should have known how great he was from the team talks that he had always contributed to with real insight.”

Coach C saw the ability to lose as an important coach quality. He wanted his players to demonstrate open and clean rugby “for the players of tomorrow” (Hopkins, 1977, p.86). His All Black players noted his abilities as enthusiasm, a sense of the adventurous, development of team spirit, involvement of players in decision making and allowing players to express themselves on the field. Coach C was seen by McLean (1976a) as the inspiration behind New Zealand being positively encouraged individually to get the utmost meaning and value from the game. All Blacks noted this coach’s tactical skills, understanding of players and thinking skills.

“Coach C could move with the times and had clear communication skills,” asserted one of his All Black players. Coach C pungently described the game plan challenge of “organising bugger-all people in a hell of a lot of space.” Tactics for this were clarified at a Friday night meeting where opposition players were discussed, strengths considered and details reinforced. This coach saw Coach A’s book on rugby as still the best coaching book on rugby. Although supportive of onfield communication by his captain, Coach C asserted, “You can be the best talker in the world but if you tackle the wrong joker you’re no bloody use,” implying onfield practical requirements were a priority.

I think the qualities of leadership apply right across the field, right across your life. Leaders are born not made made. It’s like a sidestepper -- you can make certain skills possible and improve what the player’s basically got, but he can’t reach the pinnacle unless he’s born with it (Coach C).

All Black Coach D, had been a noted New Zealand team captain.

Too many coaches don’t know how to transmit knowledge - - they may talk too loudly or not know how to get the information across, such as in the team talk situation when actual knowledge might be assimilated by the player. Too many coaches assume player knowledge about skills and tactics, even at the All Black level. The elite coaches need to give thought on how to maintain the interest of the player for a year, or even a session. We don’t really do our homework on how to coach. Too often people do it because it’s their turn...

The whole guts of coaching is to get 100% effort out of the players. If they get beaten they can handle it, that’s the ultimate in rugby. Even if a team is winning at 80 per cent effort I find that annoying. A good example is New Zealand vs. Italy in the 1987 World Cup when the guys went at it for 80 minutes.

A coach of the 1980s selected players for his pattern of play, “picking the loose forwards as the first hinge and then the half-back and first-five as the bottom hinge.” He noted the impact of senior players, “You couldn’t change some of the old hands. You could talk to them but they’d played the best in the world and beaten them.” Experienced players were sometimes called upon to help their team mates. “Team leader R was bent over many times and I could hear him say, ‘Come on [legendary All Black] don’t let him do that to me,’ and [legendary All Black] would take action against the opponent.”

In coaching, the set pieces were basic, then second phase, then moves and options. Coach E was critical of an elite coach having a co-coach and noted the very difficult task of dropping players. “The coach must be willing to listen to anyone, as there’s always the opportunity to pick up something from someone. Listen to your players. You must have discipline but can’t run the team like a military camp.” Evidence of Coach E’s provincial coaching skills came from an All Black Captain. “When he took over as coach we were a shambles in terms of discipline and organisation. Within twelve months we had won the Ranfurly Shield.” This coach inhibited some players from speaking up but was respected by Captain Two who had full confidence in him

(Stewart and Saunders, 1991). Coach E argued for elite coaches to move around the country and hold coaching seminars to utilise their knowledge of the game.

8.3.2 Coaches' Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Captain

Coach A, acclaimed by the majority of past All Blacks in this study and acknowledged in the literature, commented upon outstanding captains.

[Captain One] was one of the ideal captains and had all the qualities: an excellent speaker who understood people and had a way with players. A captain has to have some trials, errors and experience. If you're been and done things you learn to weigh up the rights and wrongs. Leadership is very important in captaincy: he must be able to lead, to understand players, get along with them and, like the coach, be with them but a little aloof. He should hold a secure test position and lead by example, be able to make decisions on his own and stand by them Captain Two, who was firm but allowed players some individual expression, and Captain Three, who was a good speaker and drew out player qualities, were both bloody good captains also.

Selection of the captain was seen by coaches and captains as requiring playing ability, potential to develop, communication, experience, "an individual who fits the scene," and strong personal qualities. "When the coach decides on what success is, then the qualities of a captain to help you achieve that can be better decided." Coach A looked to half-back, the inside backs, or loose forward for the captain's position, as did the other elite coaches and then gave his support.

The last thing I say to any team is "the captain's the boss and anything he says has my support" and that's the way it is even if it ends in disaster. The captain is the onfield boss. He's got to be able to do things and make decisions. For example, if you are on a ruck on the 20 metre line and it's your ball, what pattern are you going to play, what tactics, what play or strategy will you call -- would you run their forwards off their feet or, perhaps, get the ball wide. What does this mean? Do the players have a common understanding of this? One tactic is to pass the ball ...within that is a variety of passes, (what are they?), or you could kick to move their forwards or to get the ball wide. (If you are doing this, then you must know who, how, when, the angle and what individual players are then going to do.) But, if it's their ball, there's going to be different set of tactics, a different set of patterns.

What if there's a wind, what if it's a high wind, if the wind is with us, if the wind is against us? What alterations to the game plan, to the tactics and patterns if it's raining, if it's heavy underfoot? How does the score affect itwhat if we're two points down and there is two minutes to play?....How different is our response to that situation if we are two points up with two minutes to play. Ireland lost a bloody test match because they were not able to know that. They were up with four minutes to play....They should have played another fifteen seconds. They should have laid on the ball, questioned the referee, got injured, got up late just in time to stop the whistle, piddled around, lay on it, lay on each other. They should never have lost the game as they hadn't thought these things through. THINK IT THROUGH! (Coach C).

Coach C outlined his requirements for an elite captain.

Leadership, charisma and social skills but he can't be a bloody pisshead! I don't really know the qualities of a top captain. What I have always tried to do is match the guy to the personalities and contingencies of the team at the moment. The planning has to be done before the test, the "chess" of the thing. I like to set a game with patterns in it and then help players within that and with their technical problems. The role of the coach includes the grave responsibility for developing the right team attitude and sense of sportsmanship.

Coach A saw a priority for the elite captain's relationships. "He must be a bush psychologist and understand what makes people tick, get on with players and motivate them and understand the game." Another elite coach reflected his peers' perspectives:

This captain must lead by example -- there are other players who can assist in changing the onfield game but there are not many who can read the game well -- the captain has to be able to lead, to have the other players look up to him. The way he can take pressure, a loss, is vital. He leads by example, both on and off the field. Playing under [All Black Captain] you knew where you stand with him. The team have to know what it's all about -- you couldn't get better off the field leadership than Captain Two but he had some aspects of tactical needs, such as when we should have changed tactics in South African tests. Captain X led by example and Captain Y found it hard. He played off people and went the way the game went.

The captain's qualities are revealed under pressure. The captain and coach must use the ball ... There will always be times to play with "shit ball," the bad ball to be played well often makes good ball further outside. In coaching you've got to get the set pieces right, the foundations, then the second phase, and then build on that. You have the moves and give them their options. A lot of coaches try to make their teams into robots but you have to give them the chance to do something. And then, after all that, the most difficult task for the coach is dropping somebody.

The best positions for captaincy are halfback, first-five or second five or the loose forwards, especially number eight. The number eight can feel how the team is going, if your scrum is good, the driving from the back of the scrum -- without the team leadership role a half back can be free to be dominant in his play (Coach E).

Reflections on Voices of the Coaches.

Recognition of Coach A as a great coach was clear but respondents varied in their views on other elite coaches. The All Black coaches, however, had common emphases on selection, teaching skills, choice of captain, utilisation of player experience, discipline, coach-player relationship, motivation, tactics, basic skills and tactics, and training. Onfield decision-making skills were critical in the captain, linked to off-field planning.

8.4 VOICES OF PAST ALL BLACKS

The New Zealand Rugby Almanack (1994) sanctioned by the NZRFU, listed 469 living All Blacks, of whom 33 lived overseas. Figure 8.5 indicates voices provided by past All Blacks in the present study.

Research Mode	Total	Appendix Location
Semi-structured Interview	124	Appendix G.1
Questionnaire Survey Responses	107	Questionnaire copy Appendix G.3
Overseas (not contacted)	33	
Address Changed	67	Questionnaires returned unopened
Non Involvement	112	Questionnaires not returned
	443	

Figure 8.3 All Black participant voices in present study.

[An additional 26 All Blacks were observed and interviewed in Chapter Seven.]

This section now draws from the interviews and questionnaires of 231 past All Blacks, the original data of which are available in a series of notebooks, cassette tapes and completed questionnaire forms. The 1992 NZRFU centenary address list had been used to progressively contact All Blacks for interviews from 1992, and of whom 124 were met with. This list was used to contact a further 286 past All Blacks in 1995, by sending them a questionnaire to elicit perceptions on elite rugby team leadership (see Appendix G.3). No questionnaires were sent to the 33 All Blacks living overseas and 67 questionnaires were returned “address unknown”. Thus, of the 343 All Blacks in New Zealand with available addresses (in addition to the 26 All Blacks of the participant observation phase in Chapter Seven of this study), 257 (74.93 per cent) provided input into this phase of the study, as past or present All Blacks.

8.4.1 All Black Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Coach

One player reflected widely held views on the coach. “He needs selection skills, to consider the team’s relationships, get player confidence and plan a pattern which takes account of his team’s abilities.” All Blacks’ views associated with their nomination of outstanding coaches were reflected in the comment that, “Coaches must have the ability to impart their thoughts and knowledge to others.” These skills were reflected in a 1980s All Black description of an elite coach being able to transmit his knowledge so well “that he could teach an old dog new tricks!”

Representative viewpoints on elite rugby coaches were expressed by a selection of past All Blacks who reflect data saturation in perspectives of such coaches.

At the top level the coach’s main job is to blend the players into a team. He also sets the team pattern to the strengths of the players in his team. His training should be intense enough to keep fitness and skills sharp, yet the players’ minds fresh (1950s All Black).

I had a high regard for [Coach A's] ability as a team coach. He commanded respect and was a very good analyst of the game and knew how to handle men (1960s All Black).

As an All Black forward I saw [All Black coach] as taking the whole part, putting all parts into a whole thing (1970s All Black).

To be able to recognise the tenacity and talent in players that sets them apart from the other players. To know the requirements needed in players for test match rugby and to be able to get their selected players to contribute to the evolution of the game (1980s All Black).

8.4.2 All Black Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Captain

Attaining the All Black captaincy was frequently equated with the achievement or bestowal of mana. A rural All Black saw the captain, "like the driver of a team of horses. He is in control and sees where to go." In achieving this, captains were seen as having (or lacking) clearly noted qualities. "One captain could bring a dead All Black team to life, whereas another just could not bring us together in tests in my last year. He blew that. We were complacent and he couldn't lift us." Knowledge of the test opposition was important for the captain. The 1924 "Invincibles" captain recalled that his team studied press reports on various opponents, "So we knew their games and could counter-attack those. You don't go in with your method and play a certain plan without being able to change it."

A clear impression emerged of a 1930s All Black captain as "The best captain. He was fair and told you once and that was sufficient, he never really told you, he asked." Another past All Black recalled this captain as "Giving direction to his forwards which, if ignored, meant you were liable to get a boot up the arse from the skipper, even in an All Black match, if we didn't do what he said!" A prominent All Black of the 1930s, who was also a Maori All Black captain, emphasised the contribution of successive persons and leaders upon a team leader's achievements.

ite ta takitahi	[it] is not of my own
e ngari taku toa	but the greatness
he toa takitini	of those who have supported me

One pre-war All Black captain, praised in rugby literature by writers who did not see him play, was criticised by players. "He was always in the way and criticising players excessively. He would berate players who were really trying and say, 'Oh Christ, why did you do that?', and that would affect your play." Another New Zealand captain, "Should never have been appointed -- a nice bloke but no bloody brains. Player Y should have been captain, he had brains, character and playing ability." Yet another All Black skipper was pungently described as "not even a captain's bum" for his lack of playing skill and onfield leadership. In contrast, pre-war All Black players emphasised the qualities of Lawton, New South Wales and Australia, as epitomising the best

opposition captain of the pre-war era. Lawton was seen as a gentleman, intelligent, knowledgeable, having strength of character and excellent playing skills, and showing outstanding onfield leadership.

The post-war era saw All Black captains maintaining work careers disrupted by demands of rugby test series. An All Black captain of the 1950s believed his experience shaped his life.

I was just an average bloke around the farm with no great prospects but I thought if I could do well in rugby then I can do something else. In the war there was the same feeling of comradeship and confidence in being able to do something.

Another 1950s All Black captain, acknowledged by a number of players, “Was a hard little man, a thinker and thorough gentleman. He led by example, a great little man. The captain should be a leader of men.” This was in contrast to another post-war captain described as, “A political appointment who could speak well but could not communicate with younger players.” A leading All Black’s reflection, “I think it was a period when captaincy was stifled”, illustrated views from that era. Another All Black captain of that time, much respected by his players in the present survey, was seen as a greater influence upon his team’s winning tactics than was the coach. A further captain, and later All Black selector, saw captaincy essentials as image, character, discipline and a tactical ability (Thomas, 1970).

A sense of ethics and respect for the referee’s authority was noted by many respondents. In contrast, one rugby legend, “Who was a very good leader for his province, ran around behind the referee in the first test as captain, calling him a little c--t!” A lack of appropriate leader behaviour, in a tactical sense, was noted from the early 1960s by past All Blacks. An example was seen in the slow response to the challenge of an innovatory [opposition] two-man lineout in a 1960s test.

Those were the days when you battened down the hatches and bashed on. When the edge went off for one side in the match context the initiative went with it. We did not discuss an opposition team or study them as we could have. We could have found out more about South Africa and done something about it.

Captain One was seen by one All Black as, “Lacking tactical skills at the highest level. In the third test in South Africa, for example, when there were a few minutes to go he said that we should throw the ball around but that decision should have been made earlier.” Another player suggested, however, that having sought an extra effort, “[Captain One] got it because you looked up to him.” Another player thought that captain’s field playing position “mitigated against him seeing the game’s overall direction at times and doing something early enough.” One All Black contrasted this with a different captain’s inspirational play, and onfield leadership.

Captain X was the best skipper I ever had. He was a hard All Black. I learnt a lot from him about what modern players call running the lines. In one game he grunted, "You went the wrong way son." "But," I said, "That was where the ball was." "Yes, but that's not where it's ending up." The captain often centre-kicked and urged me on, "In the guts son, in the guts son," to get me racing up the middle.

One captain considered Captain Two as one of the great rugby captains. "He was the ideal captain in every way, very friendly, great player, unselfish, the last of our number eights to cover behind the backs." Another captain reinforced this view.

He was the best captain I saw. Very firm, very knowledgeable, and he set a good example both on and off the field. A good leader in a decent sporting way. I've never seen him do his bun [i.e. lose self-control]. He was always demanding on himself and modestit's for real.

Reflecting on his role, Captain Two believed an elite captain, "Has to be a good player, have the ability to make others work for you and set a high standard for yourself off the field." He wanted to be an example on and off the field and influence the team's tactics, being ready to change the game plan.

One of his team, a later prominent All Black leader, stressed the captain leading by example, taking pressure, reading the game, and being respected.

You couldn't get a better off-field leader than [Captain Two] but he had some tactical needs, such as when he should have changed tactics in South African Tests. Captain Q led by example, but I found it hard as captain and tended to go the way the game was going.

An All Black coach, other than those noted above, indicated necessary onfield qualities of an elite rugby team captain.

In [that particular] series we had the opposition really and truly gone up front and there were lots of opportunities when we could have moved the ball and didn't. They were big and bulky and if [Captain R] had been there, we would have moved the ball out, but we didn't. If [Captain R] had been there we would have run the ball all over the field and run them off their feet.

Captain Three was commended by a range of players for his intelligence, onfield example, decision making, and ability to draw out top performances from team mates. His input into the captain-coach relationship and influence on match preparation were noted as team leadership strengths by players of his era. A past coach commented upon this captain's ability to "get alongside young players and give them confidence to play their best." An All Black team manager endorsed this. Captain Four was seen by his coaches as a man of few words but every word counted. This captain's personal sensitivity to players, praised by one of his All Black coaches, were recorded by a past All Black.

You knew what he wanted, he never shouted or put you down. He was a bit more relaxed than Captain Three, who was similar in personal qualities but totally absorbed and single minded. Captain Three was brilliant at picking things up and changing a game plan, being willing to use new ideas and seek them out.

Captain Five was cited by past and present All Blacks as one of the great All Black leaders, being especially commended for his example, onfield play and ability to lift All Black play and influence the course of a match. Support and evidence for this were volunteered from All Blacks across seven decades of elite international rugby. As with his peers, he handled well the complexities of play, relationships and onfield decision making.

All Black captaincy imposes demands which are not always perceived by those external to the team, or who only observe the team leader at practice or in competition. A captain, rated highly by his early post-war peers, was markedly affected by onfield and off-field pressures on touring New Zealand's greatest rugby opponent country.

I was playing well enough as captain. I felt I couldn't do any more. I was doing my best and we were getting all sorts of critical mail. At the next team selection meeting I said, "I can't do any more so we'll start with my position, so I'm out." I knew that if we ever could have won, then [vice captain, as acting test captain] would have won it for us. I pulled out of rugby for some time, that's how deeply the tour had hurt me deep down. It really shattered me....I blamed myself for that tour but I really had no reason for that.

The above captain's successor described captaincy.

The captain is more than a figurehead, he must lead by example and do the right thing at the right time -- and lead a winning team! You need the respect of the team, which you get by your actions and attitudes on and off the field, be a thinking player who can sense the nuances on the field and sum up the opposition and exploit their weaknesses.

Stresses upon players, captains and coaches were also quoted by a range of past All Blacks. Personal support for a captain may help to lessen leadership pressures. A captain, not one of the perceived great quintet, recalled, "I was relatively young and had extremely senior players in the team. One was arrogant and upset by my appointment. I probably made a mistake in distancing myself, as some senior players would fill a void and have an important support role." (An All Black coach in this present study, however, observed that this particular captain did not have the status to be an All Black leader.) An All Black who did experience public recognition and acceptance, noted the need for a mature coach to guide players and, sometimes, the captain. "Coming to grips with public adoration was difficultThis affected my personal security and gave rein to character traits and actions which weren't good. I learned not to give up, I learned that from rugby."

One legendary "hard man" who became an All Black captain, was reluctant to accept the honour and did not feel that he led the side well. In contrast, one of his team saw this leader as "an idol.

He was positive and down to earth, strong and kind hearted.” Another of the team saw this skipper as, “A very good captain. He never moaned or groaned or bawled anyone out.” It appears that the virtue of personal leadership qualities may not be fully recognised by those who possess them. The contrary is seen in a prominent test referee’s perception that, “The first thing that destroys a captain is his own sense of bloody self-importance, [Captain Z] was like that.”

Captains learn other lessons also. For example, one All Black captain believed that changing his priorities as leader influenced personal satisfaction and team achievement. “Towards the end of my career, my emphasis upon enjoying the game with plenty of positive reinforcement, made results more noticeable. Winning should not be at all costs, particularly not at the cost of team unity.”

The All Black vice-captain’s role was rarely discussed by team leaders with their deputies. One such leader saw his role, and that of his captain, as “the ability to make a player feel part of a team, that he won’t let the team down, to generate respect and have a certain generosity of spirit.” One national vice-captain, had discussed this role with his Captain [One]. “In essence, his advice was to be yourself, provide the support and leadership when we run into the inevitable sticky patch, keep open communication between us and the group, and have a key role in the selection committee.” Similarly, the role of informal or emergent leaders was noted by a range of players. A past All Black, later to be an All Black coach, noted the onfield impact of players “who always had that extra bit of authority to run the show if the captain was buried.”

Similarly absent in survey comments was consideration of the team’s cultural dimension. One prominent past rugby leader took pride in, “Treating all players equally. I recall the way Maori players would joke about their colour, and they knew I was joking at practice when one of them had a big hangover and I said ‘Get up you black c--t.’ He didn’t mind.” This contrasted markedly with a later All Black captain, who emphasised the need for “sensitivity to the different dimensions added by players’ cultural backgrounds.”

In reflection, respondents who had been rugby team leaders noted their growth in elite rugby team leadership roles , and dimensions of life beyond their elite sport. “If you weren’t successful at running a business you wouldn’t be successful as a top team leader” (All Black captain 1990s).

Rugby taught me to organise my workplace people like a team--certain people to certain jobs. Management staff provide the leadership...There are four different teams with overlapping at work, so they can move people from one position to another....More than that, it’s how I handle people. I think I can relate to and work with my Polynesian staff because of what I have learned through working with Polynesian players. I think I’ve learned team skills in getting people to work together....You learn to deal with conflicts, when to drive team members and when to walk away.

A New Zealand rugby legend who was a past All Black captain declared, “Captaining is very hard. I didn’t realise how hard it was until I took it on. You can never trade the mana, the history, the honour of being the All Black captain.” This captain emphasised the need for coaching courses, with simulated realities of coach-team interaction and the opportunity for the coaches to employ what they learned.

An All Black captain of the late 1980s, respected for his intelligence and articulation, asserted that all players had leadership potential.

It’s very important for a team to have a diffused responsibility for leadership. Leadership is a quality rather than an attitude and is based on character and the willingness to do things for other people. It involves confidence, decisiveness and knowing what you want.

He shared his belief that New Zealand rugby administration had no vision or cohesion in its planning. “Where is the game going and what are the key three or four things we want for elite rugby, for youngsters ...?”

Captains and coaches emphasised the limited guidance given to prepare them for team leadership. “When I became an All Black captain nobody ever talked with me about it and what was involved,” declared a 1960s All Black captain, reflecting expressed viewpoints of all decades of elite rugby captains. A 1990s captain suggested team leader skills could be enhanced, “With schooling and education, understanding what makes people tick, communication, and social development.” This captain, in hindsight and learning from experience, would now handle young players differently and relate in different ways to his coach and administrators than he had done as All Black captain.

Reflections on Voices of Past All Blacks.

There was a very strong body of opinion in the past All Blacks that captaincy skills demanded onfield leadership, reading the game, motivating and relating to players, and decision making. Off-field demands and media focus on the captain had increased over recent years. Coaching was still an art, but now encompassed more technological dimensions such as the use of support staff and video analysis. Unlike the immediate post-war years, the elite rugby coach of the 1990s was seen to have a greater responsibility for the team’s leadership than the captain.

The interviews and surveys of 231 All Blacks who represented New Zealand 1924-1994, provided a strong consensus of opinion for the present research phase. The responses to questions on qualities of captaincy and coaching were all listed, collapsed into common groupings and key

words for each group (as in Figures 8.4 and 8.5, for example), were listed. The process was replicated by two fellow researchers working from the base data, which led to minor modifications only. The most important qualities of an excellent captain are noted in Figure 8.4.

Leadership / Leading from the front	156
Communication	143
Respect	126
Read and change game / onfield decisions	122
Motivation	70
Above average playing ability	69

(Respondents may nominate more than one quality. N = 231)

Figure 8.4 All Black perspectives on elite rugby team captain qualities.

Underscoring the qualities were requirements for the elite captain to have knowledge of the players, knowledge of the game and the ability to handle pressure. Captains seen as most emphatically illustrating the primary qualities were All Black Captains Two and Three.

The most important dimensions of elite coaching are indicated in Figure 8.5. The past All Blacks provided a broadly consistent picture not markedly varying across their diverse backgrounds, eras of All Black play, or length of elite playing experience.

Complete knowledge of game and tactics	176
Plan and implement game plan (including training)	164
Communication	140
Develop team around its strengths	121
Respect and discipline	117
Leadership	84
Selection	80
Man management	67
Organisation	62

(Respondents may nominate more than one quality. N = 231)

Figure 8.5 All Black perspectives on elite rugby team coach qualities.

Additional qualities noted included vision, empathy, setting firm but fair clear goals, analysing the opposition, maximising of player skills, loyalty and honesty, and developing positive relationships with players. Coaches who primarily embodied such qualities as these were Coach A, Coach C, Coach D and Vic Cavanagh. (It is noted that the irregular spread of responses across decades and All Black coaches' years does not ensure these are conclusive ratings, but does offer support for the grouping of coaches in this present chapter.)

The All Blacks, virtually without exception, noted the camaraderie and friendship gained through elite rugby. Past All Blacks were disadvantaged financially, "But I loved the game. Tests were a

grim and earnest combination of factors, as life was, and didn't have the champagne feel of top university rugby."

A prominent post-war All Black reflected perspectives of past All Blacks from eight decades of New Zealand rugby.

Great captains and coaches are not different. I believe teams are still trying to play the game in a similar manner to what Saxton, Allen, Vic.Cavanagh Senior and Vic. Cavanagh Junior were trying to achieve. They encouraged flexibility, playing the game at speed in forwards and backs, and believed all players should be mobile and fit...They all preached the same theme: run hard or drive forward until the ball is held up, then spin it. Forwards must be quick to the breakdown. Last to the ruck is first away. A ruck is a drive not a kicking match....Fifteen man rugby, as we saw with the All Blacks in the 1995 World Cup, is the realisation of all of these.

8.5 VOICES OF INTERNATIONAL RUGBY

Rugby literature indicated broadly common perspectives on elite coach and captain roles and qualities from New Zealand, British Isles and Ireland, South Africa and Australia. A sample of international rugby players from those countries was surveyed in the belief that their views on rugby team leadership could add to the present (New Zealand based) research study or indicate a possible relevance of this research to elite rugby leadership beyond New Zealand.

Overseas rugby players surveyed spanned playing decades from the 1920s to 1990s. An arbitrary decision was made to send 80 questionnaires, based upon ten for each of the eight decades as names of only ten survivors of the 1920s decade were located. Questionnaires were spread across rugby nations, with 40 questionnaires to be sent to South Africa and the other 40 to Australia and the Home Unions (Great Britain and Ireland). This was also an arbitrary decision, based upon indications in the literature that New Zealand's major rival in world rugby was South Africa. Each questionnaire had a letter of explanation, stamped addressed envelope for return, and the appropriate number of International Reply Coupons.

The questionnaire is located in Appendix G.9. The response rate was 51 of 80 (63.75 per cent). South Africa respondents returned 67.5 per cent, despite Reply Coupons being found to be invalid in South Africa at the time of the research, although the researcher had prior contrary advice from New Zealand Post. South Africans provided 27 responses, England returned four questionnaires, Ireland eight, Scotland four, Wales four, and Australia four. The players, apart from the 1920s, were selected as those who had played the most tests against New Zealand. Significantly perhaps, 21 of the 51 responses were from those who had captained their country in an international match in the period 1935 - 1995.

8.5.1 International Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Captain

The foremost captaincy roles perceived by elite overseas players were those of leading by example and encouraging players, while maintaining an analytic overview of the game as the basis for tactical decisions. “The captain may have to make rapid and intelligent and often intuitive positional changes in cases of injury, decide on the calling of moves and make tactical changes” (Australian captain). Communication onfield, with an emphasis upon encouragement, was needed to ensure that players gave their best with effective support of each other.

The captain’s off-field role should include relating to players, being supportive of them but exhibiting frankness and honesty, working with the coach and representing the team positively and articulately. In doing this he should not completely be one of the team on a “buddy-buddy” basis but a little distant, although socially integrated with his players. The elite captain was seen as a role model in behaviour, engendering respect from all. As a team leader he should be a spokesperson prepared to represent team interests.

The captain’s qualities, noted by a 1928 adversary of the All Blacks as “sine qua non for a successful relationship between captain and players,” were agreed upon by elite players of the succeeding seven decades. In this relationship, critical personal elements were noted as integrity, team loyalty, communication skills, “leadership”, confidence, humility, enthusiasm, discipline, relating to each player, and a capacity for analysis. Rugby specific, were the capacity to analyse or ‘read’ a game, application in match training, positive interaction with the coach, playing ability, leading from the front and knowledge of the game. “He should have a vision of what each man can become. Although at times he will be ‘one of the boys’, his demeanour should be such as to maintain the respect and loyalty of his team-mates” (Australian captain). “To gain respect as a rugby player is easier if there is respect for the person as well” (South African captain).

Lead by example	36	Analyse opponents	9	Leadership	5
Change tactics	23	Maturity	9	Discipline	4
Encourage	19	Communicate	9	Link with referee	4
Decision making	10			N=51	

(Respondents may indicate more than one quality.)

Figure 8.6 International rugby players’ perspectives on elite rugby team captaincy roles and qualities.

Leaders of all kinds are born. Leadership is such an enigmatic concept and is extremely difficult to define. Selflessness is a prerequisite. Total commitment is another. Loyalty to team and coach. Total honesty in team selection. Ability to take a decision and live with it if you know it is right -- others will follow. But there is an indefinable quality that all great captains have -- a charisma that causes others to look up to them and to have confidence in them. Perhaps personal discipline is the key, an unwavering commitment to something bigger than oneself (Scotland captain).

Captain 1930s England Halfback	We had no coach in those days so he led our planning. We only met a day or so before but he nursed his team, being particularly encouraging and helpful to first-time internationals. He was respected by everyone and a great scrumhalf as well. Onfield you felt that he was in command.
Captain 1950s Ireland Hooker	Was an outstanding captain, who led by example and brought the best out of all resources. He had our respect and led from the front on the field.
Captain 1970s South Africa Lock	Well respected by all players and opponents -- dedicated, skilful and disciplined, with a quiet likeable way of leading that oozed confidence and pride; a gentleman; could combine all players of different language barriers and religions into a team. He, above all, led by example on and off the field.
Captain 1980s Australia First-Five	Not a ranter or a raver but smart enough to know some players need to be ranted or raved at. A good listener but happy for the buck to stop with him. Ensured everyone felt part of the team and constantly encouraged the injection of ideas. His onfield decision making in a key position added to our respect for him.

(Descriptions may draw upon more than one informant.)

Figure 8.7 International rugby captain exemplars.

Respondents (41 of 51) emphasised the need for the captain to lead from the front, (reflecting past All Black perspectives in Figure 8.4), and to have leadership qualities but rarely explained this although five of the elite internationals associated leadership with vision. Certain overseas test match captains, cited by their players in this present survey as possessing such qualities, are illustrated in Figure 8.7.

8.5.2 International Perspectives on the Elite Rugby Coach

“The defining of the word ‘coach’ is important. There are many coaches who are trainers, others who are teachers of skills, others are analysts of the skills and weaknesses of players...and some are able to put together tactics...International coaches tend to concentrate on strategy and tactics” (Welsh captain).

The coach’s onfield influence fused: preparation, player skills, commitment and tactical understandings, the coach-captain relationship, players’ self-perceptions, and training.

All his efforts have gone into the game before the game itself. It’s up to the players to do the job. He must trust his efforts and players. Apart from the odd message sent out and the important influence of his halftime talk, he can only sweat, bite his nails, smoke or have a heart attack (South African test player).

He must ensure that every instance that could occur on the rugby field has been covered at practice and subjected to all situations under pressure (Australian test captain).

Off-field, the coach’s role has a focus upon match preparation and player development, as described by an Australian captain.

To manage the team's preparation, including the analysis of strengths and weaknesses of team and opposition. In this way his strategy will evolve. Where deficiencies are found he should be able, and concerned, to correct these deficiencies. This applies to individual skills as much as to tactical shortcomings, although at the highest levels the correction of individual skills should be limited. He must set high standards of personal discipline and, with the captain, police these. He is not, and never should be, considered one of the team. Hopefully, he must have an objective view of the players, be able to convince them they can win, and articulate what they, and they alone, can and must do to achieve it. He should identify with the team in defeat and yet avoid receiving equal praise in victory.

In achieving this, other international players suggest the coach should analyse the opposition, structure challenging practice sessions related to the game plan, and engage in long-term team development. The role of the coach as selector has been noted in each phase of the current research. A South African test player provided an opponent's perspective on an All Black selection.

Our coach and myself attended the All Black practice two days before the final test. We especially noticed that the All Black star brought in especially for the match had a strapped finger which caused him to wince every time he caught the ball or had to tackle someone. We decided to try breaks at centre from the start of the game. [Injured All Black] just could not cope that day and we burst past him time and time again. We scored five tries that afternoon and that has not often happened to an All Black team. It also proved, do not play an injured player no matter how famous (South African test player).

Coach qualities were clearly explicated by the international elite, being noted in Figure 8.8.

Management	41	Tactical skills	23	Upholds spirit of rugby	12
Game Knowledge	38	Knows players	21	Imagination	11
Organisation	34	Discipline	19	Team spirit	11
Communication	34	Strong personality	17	Friend	8
Selection skills	34	Teaching skills	16	Structure training	7
Respected	32	Knows rules	16	Sense of humour	7
Analytic	32	Motivator	14	Sensitivity	6
Honesty & integrity	31	Loyalty	14	Charismatic	6
Decision making	30	Consistency	14		
Coach-captain relationship	27	Hone player skills	12	N=51	

(Informants may make more than one response.)

Figure 8.8 International rugby players' perspectives on elite rugby team coaching roles and qualities.

The coach must have a thorough knowledge of the game, rules and techniques in all positions. After analysing the opposition he must be able to plan his match tactics and put over his plans and ideas in a way the players understand and accept. It is very important that he works with his captain and has the players' respect (Scotland captain).

A legendary South African captain, coach and administrator noted, "The coach must be a practical psychologist and educator or leader." Overseas respondents provided typical examples of coaches who illustrated the above qualities, as in Figure 8.9.

Coach 1950s South Africa	He was very committed and a great listener. With each practice session you knew he had done his homework from previous years. Coaching was often individualised. If he couldn't coach technical skills of a position he would call on someone who did. He had great respect for his players. You felt you could call on him 24 hours a day
Coach 1960s Australia	Gave us confidence in our personal and technical abilities. He convinced a number of us forwards that the All Blacks were ordinary people with an extraordinary desire to win. This, to some extent, took away for us the All Black's aura of invincibility despite our being aware of the win-loss ratio over the years. He coached [state team] to a most unanticipated victory against New Zealand.
Coach 1970s British Isles	The best coach I ever played under. He was a psychologist as well as a great technical coach.

(Descriptions may draw upon more than one informant. N=51)

Figure 8.9 International rugby coach exemplars.

Changes and Values in Rugby.

Respondent viewpoints varied but an overall perception was that players were fitter today and professionalism presented challenges to those wishing to retain traditional rugby values. Rule changes had improved rugby as a running game. The qualities in rugby most valued were the opportunity for all body types to have a place in the game, camaraderie and friendships. South Africans noted the need for rugby to be free of politics and all countries wanted better administration. Concerns were expressed over professionalism's impact on the game's essential values and perceived elite rugby team environment.

Rugby is a philosophy: rugby is a field or arena of initiation. This game demands physical and intellectual involvement. It demands precisely what any society would demand i.e. to be an individual and to be a member of a team simultaneously. In this game you are "on show". You can't fake it, you can't wish that you were someone else or somewhere else. However talented you are, you can't play it on your own. You are dependent and you are depended upon. I value a particular attitude in this great game -- that you go out to beat your opponent because you love him, not because you hate him...this changes the game from war to poetry (South African captain).

The quality I valued in rugby was in belonging to the group. In "belonging" I include the qualification that if one did his job, to the best of one's ability, for the group or the team, the success of his contribution, though important, wasn't the end of the world. It also showed that to be successful in that group one had to have regard for the rights of others in the group. Many players who weren't altogether selfless, although successful at "the game", never made it to the belonging status. As the years have gone by the difference between the selfish players and the real "team men" has, for me anyway, become even clearer (Australian captain).

Respondents agreed team leaders should emphasise "sportsmanship" on and off the field.

8.5.3 International Perspectives on New Zealand Rugby

"What distinguishes New Zealand rugby from any other is its innate understanding of the totality of the game of rugby" (Irish international player). Respondents emphasised the physical nature of New Zealand rugby, with its player athleticism, pride, discipline, uncompromising play, forward

power and integral role in New Zealand society. Critical comments were made on the lesser quality of All Black back play prior to that of the 1995 World Cup team, which was noted by nine respondents as being imaginative and “by far the best team at the World Cup.” (Substance for this impression of restricted back play was offered, in part, by past All Blacks who saw coaches and forward captains over-emphasising forward play in the post-war decades. One loose forward remembered, “Once I appeared in the back line and [the second five] said, ‘What the bloody hell are you doing here?’ We mainly played to a pattern which lacked encouragement and initiative.”)

Overall, overseas respondents were illustrated by the following:

When touring New Zealand or just playing the All Blacks we expected [the physical style of play] and weren't disappointed. New Zealand play is much more clever than is generally supposed. I think the attacking skills of New Zealand forwards have been totally under-rated over the years. Physical intimidation is a cornerstone of the game. As far as New Zealand is concerned, it is the most critical thing in national esteem. Yacht races and cricket at the highest level may touch all the populace but almost as novelties. Rugby is deadly serious stuff (British Isles captain).

A range of examples illustrated perceived dimensions of All Black rugby, emphasising hard but fair play, friendship after matches and the commitment of New Zealand rugby teams. “The most outstanding performance I have seen was by the tiny Taranaki [New Zealand province] team who held the 1956 Springbok [national South African] team to a 6-6 draw! I have never seen such commitment like that from anybody!” (South African test player). It may be argued that such matches test onfield leadership behaviour and reveal qualities of the rugby game.

The third and final test between New Zealand and South Africa in Auckland in 1981 had even more than all the qualities of rugby : the fantastic forward play of New Zealand in the first half, our great comeback with tries in the second half through our backs; the energy sapping battle; the aching muscles; the ten minutes overtime; the blood, sweat and exhausted limbs; the crooked referee; the fairy tale do-or-die last minute penalty; the camaraderie and festival afterwards (South African test player).

International rugby captains recalled New Zealand rugby tests and leaders.

In 1936 at Twickenham, New Zealand and England were two fine sides. Not a fist was raised nor any boot driven in. The New Zealanders were fine sportsmen and great players who played rugby in a fine spirit. This left me with a profound lifelong respect, warm regard for New Zealanders, and gratitude too (England captain).

[Coach A] understood and knew the game, a man of great rugby knowledge. [Coach C and Captain Four] both had the capacity to separate a no-holds-barred, take-no-prisoners approach to winning, from real life where their pleasant demeanours masked an astonishingly competitive edge. Both are gentlemen you'd rather be with than against (Australian test captain).

I thought [Captain One and Captain Two], the only All Black captains I faced, were both outstanding, not only as players and captains but as men. I had and still have the utmost respect for them. I was fortunate to be captained by [Captain Two] in 1971 in the President's XV at the Centenary of the Rugby Union. The team comprised players from New Zealand, South Africa, Fiji, France and Australia. He showed in a couple of weeks all the attributes of a captain I have noted, a difficult job considering the diverse group. His ability to analyse the trend of the match and convert

it to specific instructions for individuals was astonishing. His method of conveying this made the recipient wish to thank him, even if the analysis was critical (Australian test captain).

Possibly the most famed international rugby test captain, coach and administrator, a South African, stated that leadership is illustrated by the precept that, “The way you live is the way you play rugby.” New Zealand elite rugby team leaders most commonly admired by elite rugby opponents for embodying this were Coach C and Captain Three. A typical respondent comment illustrating such regard was, “He was a great captain, who knew his players’ strengths and led by example on and off the field -- an outstanding player and captain who always stayed on his feet in support of the ball, leading from the front.” A test opponent: “I admired [Coach C] for his technical knowledge and man management skills.” “[Captain Four], was always a good player and great captain,” and Captain Five, “Was a gentleman off the park but an outstanding player and motivator on it.”

There is one word that epitomises almost all All Black captains and that is character: they are friendly but tough and uncompromising. And when (and if) they lose, they give credit where it is due without complaining. They look for the fault in themselves, and then go and correct it (South African test player).

The major criteria for judging such elite rugby team leaders, as noted by the international players, were similar to those indicated by the past and present All Blacks in the present study (see Figure 8.10).

Onfield	Team Leadership
How the team develops	Leaders’ interest in players’ wellbeing
Team’s playing method and style	How happy players are with the coach
“Sportsmanship”	Motivational skills of team leaders
Accept referee rulings	Team unity
Reading opponents well	Respect for team leaders
Game plan effectiveness	Coach ability to impart knowledge
Results	

Figure 8.10 International rugby players’ major criteria for judging an elite rugby team.

8.6. VOICES OF NON-RUGBY ELITE TEAM LEADERS

The present study has drawn upon team leadership perceptions from elite rugby team coaches, captains, and players. It was felt by the researcher that emerging categories of team leadership could be relevant to other elite team sport settings. Consequently, the national coaches and captains of field hockey, soccer and rugby league were interviewed to see if their perspectives were similar to those of their rugby counterparts. Each interview was semi-structured and approximately one hour in duration (see Appendix G.12 for questions). These sought the six

interviewees' views on elite team coach roles and qualities, team captain roles and qualities, and the coach-captain relationship. As with the All Black team leaders, each interviewee was found to come from a family background which provided sport involvement, and had parents who had played sport.

8.6.1 Non-rugby Perspectives on the Elite Team Coach.

“The coach must have the ability to coach, manage, organise and utilise people to achieve a positive result. Does the Coach have a dream? Can he verbalise and structure that into reality?” (Field Hockey coach). Elite non-rugby team leaders valued the coach's personal qualities. “He should be a straight-up person you can trust, that the players can come to in times of need” (Rugby League coach). Such a coach “has a way of getting a player's best without making him feel it's a matter of life or death” (Rugby League captain). The personal skills of communication and man management were important, along with match related qualities of knowledge of the game, analysis and selection. Although only one of the six respondents specifically noted teaching skills of the coach, optimal understanding of a game plan by players would require these. “Coaching is just an extension of teaching.... I am a great believer in the discovery method, prompting them into discovery but not telling them the answers. The emphasis is upon technical discovery at the senior competition level and tactical discovery at the elite level” (Soccer coach).

Senior players can assist the formal team leaders in raising the quality of play. “As you get older or you involve players more in decision makingyou realise the amount of football knowledge you have access to.... At international level good players play well themselves, but great players get other players to play better” (Soccer coach). Despite such beliefs and team leadership behaviour the result is not always as the coach would wish. “The worst thing of all is when you think you have the team prepared and they go out and play like a bunch of shitheads” (Rugby League coach).

	Elite Coach Responses			Elite Captain Responses		
	League	Soccer	Hockey	League	Soccer	Hockey
Confident	x					
Knowledge and understanding of game	x	x	x		x	
Leader	x	x				
Fairness	x					
Personal qualities	x	x		x	x	x
Experience as elite player			x			
Organisational skills			x			x
Analytic skills				x	x	x
Technical knowledge	x		x			
Sets out game plan and tactics			x	x		x
Selection skills	x		x		x	
Match decision making			x			
Respected	x	x		x		
Teaching skills		x				
Involves players in planning		x		x		
Communication skills		x		x	x	x
Firmness and fairness	x	x	x			
Man management	x	x	x	x		x
Identifies player strengths & needs		x		x		x
Relates to player				x	x	x
Motivator				x	x	

Figure 8.11 Non-rugby national team leaders' perspectives on elite team coaching.

8.6.2 Non-rugby Perspectives on the Elite Team Captain

The elite team leaders had a strong belief in the importance of team spirit, and common perceptions of the elite team captain. Essential was a good coach-captain relationship which includes explanations to the captain of the reasons for his selection. "I asked the captain to write down what he wanted to do in his role and I did the same. Then we sat down and talked through things" (Field Hockey coach). "When coach first made me captain he explained his philosophy and we met to discuss players, the match and tactics." The captain's onfield influence, noted in all other research phases of the present study, was illustrated by the national captains.

We played one test and were running away with the game. Team confidence grew and we began to throw inaccurate passes and holes appeared in our play. I knew we had more demanding tests coming up so we had to tighten up and try moves from our training. Within six moves we called our forwards back into place and called a set move on the blind-side, over ruling wayward players to enforce this (Rugby league captain).

When we played [Country X] we were leading and getting too enthusiastic, getting the ball up front too quickly without support, so I had the players slow down a little and shorten it up....make a great tackle and it flows through the team (Soccer Captain).

	Elite Coach Responses			Elite Captain Responses		
	League	Soccer	Hockey	League	Soccer	Hockey
Leads by playing example	x		x	x		x
Excellent player			x		x	
Tactically proficient			x	x		x
Motivator			x			
Accepted by team	x	x	x			
Field position		x				
Personal qualities		x	x	x	x	
Strong personality		x				
Respected		x	x			
Acts as a sounding board			x			
Excellent relationship with coach	x	x	x	x	x	x
Communication	x				x	x
Composure - withstand pressure	x			x	x	x
Decision making			x			
A little distant from team	x				x	x

Figure 8.12 Non-rugby national team leaders' perspectives on elite team captaincy.

Training to enhance the captain's leadership, suggested by the great All Black captains, was supported by the three non-rugby team international captains.

Coaches should progress through successive representative team coaching responsibilities, have national academy roles and then move to national teams. In a similar manner, potential captains could be assessed at various team levels. Possible indicators of captaincy qualities may be seen as a player's onfield attitude, not giving up in adversity, discipline, and trying to lead from the front, which is an important element of captaincy. Observing a potential captain in off-field situations could indicate his ease socially with other players (Field Hockey captain).

8.7 SYMBOLS, CATEGORIES AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

8.7.1 Symbolic Interactionism

The multiple perspectives framed by research participants in this phase of the study did not generate the range of symbolic elements recorded in preceding results chapters, nor add substantially to those. The past All Blacks did emphasise the *mana* of All Black captaincy. This Maori word, meaning 'integrity, charisma, prestige' is found in the terms *mana a ake*

(uniqueness), *mana heke iho* (inherent dignity), and *mana tangata* (integrity, status) (Ryan, 1995, p.176). Mana could be inherited in Maori society -- a concept paralleled in elite rugby by a player being seen as heir apparent to the All Black captaincy -- or earned by deeds, as with exemplar rugby captains whose achievements bring accolades. The term is not bestowed lightly and indicates the prestige and special leadership position of All Black captains. "The All Black captain's mana is critical, through his knowledge of the game, sufficient playing skills to make his selection assured, personal integrity and maturity of judgement under pressure" (All Black test veteran). "Captain [F] was appointed All Black captain and suddenly he got that mana, I've never forgotten that ... Captain [Two] was picked out of the ruck and earned his mana" (1970s All Black).

The test opponents of New Zealand rugby teams surveyed in this research played in eight decades of international rugby. Virtually without exception, the 51 respondents described **All Black rugby** in terms of what it meant to them. The expression symbolised a particular style of elite rugby play characterised by aggression, powerful forwards, hard but clean play, pride and a tradition of excellence.

I have always regarded New Zealand rugby as the pinnacle of the game throughout the world, particularly in respect of forward play and probably more particularly, back row play. Although I would just say that during the last [1995] World Cup I think the New Zealand back play was as good as anything I have seen... interest in the game of rugby is such that there is an intensity which is unrivalled throughout the world I have always felt that, historically, although New Zealand players are technically better they have also shown more dedication and worked harder at their game (Scotland captain).

Test team leaders of all codes noted **distributed leadership** in a range of forms. "The captain should make use of other natural leaders within the team" (past All Black). This action may be deliberate or may arise through the strength of emergent leaders within a team. "If a coach is weak and loses respect, especially on tour, someone else will emerge as the leader, the person with mana that the guys respect."

The data emerging from the multiple perspectives generated a range of categories on elite team leadership. These were fewer than those resulting from the participant observation phases of the present study, presumably because the past All Blacks' semi-structured interviews and questionnaires did not cover the range of settings and behaviours noted in the elite rugby team observations.

8.7.2 Multiple Perspectives Categories and Properties

The multiple perspectives which provided the focus for the present phase of the research did not substantially alter the categories and properties generated by previous research phases. The questionnaires to past All Blacks and international rugby opponents sought perceptions on changes in elite rugby coach and captain roles. The responses added depth to the present literature review discussion of the shift in team leader responsibilities and the response data generated a category on such role changes.

1	Coach Roles	Game planner Analyst Utiliser of team strengths Selector	Team developer Controller of training and practice Relationship builder
2	Coach Qualities	Vision Hard work Discipline Great empathy Leadership Teaching skills Organisation Knowledge of players Technical skills developer Psychology Analysis	Motivator Communicator Fundamental skills Rugby knowledge Get best out of players Respected Seeks information Man management Encourager Training courses needed
3	Captain Roles	Team leader Motivator Liaison with vice captain Developer of team spirit	Off-field role model Captain-coach interaction Onfield example
4	Captain Qualities	Personal philosophy Leadership Decision making Understand people Relationship skills Enthusiasm Mana Fair but firm	Supportive Intelligence Character Playing ability Tactical awareness Lead from front Leadership across settings Media relations
5	Team Leader Change	Art of leadership unchanged Emphasis on fitness Use of specialists Technology Role of media	Greater man management Higher public profiles Recognition of coaching as teaching Coaches now dominate captains

6	Evaluation of Team Leaders	Game plan effectiveness Coach ability to impart knowledge Respect from players Respect for the coach Match results Team morale Ethical play Decision making Reading the game	Getting most out of team Onfield player commitment Make clear onfield decisions Accept referee rulings Player development Team development Leadership by example Style of rugby played Team enthusiasm
7	New Zealand Rugby	Impact of senior players All Black tradition Aggression Hard but fair	Gracious off-field Driving forward play World Cup back play

Figure 8.13 Multiple perspectives on elite team leadership: Categories and properties.

8.7.3 The Research Questions

This chapter provided multiple perspectives upon elite sport team leadership, primarily drawing upon the voices of overseas international rugby opponents and past All Blacks to provide elite rugby perceptions. The complementary views of national team leaders in New Zealand's other major winter team sports suggested relevance of elite rugby team coaching and captaincy roles and qualities to non-rugby elite team settings with similar perspectives to those of the rugby elite.

The research questions underlying the present study sought to clarify the leadership roles of elite rugby coaches and captains. The responses were broadly similar to those generated by the previous research phases of the present study. The qualities of these leaders also have a common theme with those generated by the provincial and All Black phases. The qualities were illustrated through interviews, particularly those with the set of great All Black captains. It may be significant, in terms of relating the present study's findings to other team sports for their consideration, that the international team coaches and captains interviewed in this present chapter presented perspectives on elite team leadership similar to those expressed by the elite rugby persons.

The research question seeking responses on the qualities of elite rugby team coaches elicited strong indicators of the value of teaching skills from the non-rugby team leaders, just as the All Black captains emphasised the lack of preparatory development in leadership to assist their assumption of elite captaincy roles.

8.8 SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

The present phase of the research drew together the voices of various elite athletes or players, with great All Black captains, All Black coaches, past All Blacks, overseas international rugby players and national team leaders from non-rugby sports providing perspectives on elite team leadership. The resultant data generated properties and categories which indicated a commonality among the different groups in their views and responses to common semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix G.1 and Appendix G.12). The rugby players, across international boundaries, indicated broadly similar expectations of team-mate qualities (see Appendix G.4 and Appendix G.10) and those seen as essential in the elite rugby coach and captain (see Appendix G.5 and Appendix G.11). Although not discussed in the present chapter, it was interesting for the researcher, given the literature emphasis upon epochal New Zealand-South Africa encounters, to note the similarity in responses between All Blacks and Springboks in their attitudes and expectations.

This phase of the research provided a wealth of respondent perspectives on the perceived influence of elite team leaders upon rugby matches. (Samples of these are found in Appendices B.1 and B.2.) Such cited perspectives were rare in the research literature. Saturation of data was noted in terms of the roles and qualities of coaches but the evaluation of team leaders was given emphasis by the multiple respondents. It is acknowledged that this reflected the orientation of researcher-interviewee conversation which often moved to discussion of, “How do you judge a team’s leadership when you see a team onfield?” and the specific questions on judging the success of team leaders which were included in questionnaires sent out in the past player surveys (see Appendix G.3 and Appendix G.9).

In terms of the original research questions on developing elite rugby team leaders, the respondents provided clear evidence of the need for developing training of such coaches and captains, especially the latter. The ability to teach was stressed by one of the non-rugby national coaches, supported by All Black coaches.

RESEARCH RESULTS: CATEGORIES, PROPOSITIONS AND A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP IN ELITE RUGBY

This chapter draws together the present study's research findings in a master set of categories derived from the categories generated by cumulative field data in each of the four research phases. Theoretical propositions, grounded in the master set of categories and properties and their root data, outline the study's theory of elite rugby team leadership. These propositions then become the key components of a proposed model of elite rugby team leadership which is presented as the basis for a programme to develop that leadership. The model and programme are seen as having relevance for the development of elite team leaders in sports other than rugby.

- 9.1 Background to Results.
- 9.2 Categories of Elite Rugby Team Leadership
- 9.3 Elite Rugby Team Leadership: Theoretical Propositions
- 9.4 Reflections on the Propositions
- 9.5 A Model for Developing Elite Rugby Team Leadership
- 9.6 From Model to Developmental Programmes : Some General Principles
- 9.7 The Research Questions
- 9.8 Summary and Review

9.1 BACKGROUND TO RESULTS

The present study originated in the belief that, given the centrality of rugby in New Zealand, elite coaches and captains in this sport receive considerable public attention, are in positions of influence, and have important team leadership roles (Knight, 1991; Laws, 1993; McKewen, 1994, September 11). This influence is observed not only in elite and lower level rugby teams, but also in various sectors of New Zealand society such as the media, education or politics (Crawford, 1986; Phillips, 1987). Illustrative of the societal locus of rugby are the four consecutive All Black coaches and four captains of the decade of elite rugby seasons, 1987-1996, who have each been the subject of a published biography on sale nationally and overseas.

Leadership, for the purposes of the present study, was defined by the researcher as "an influence relationship through which leaders and followers intend real changes, that reflect their mutual purposes and individual commitment" (after Rost, 1991, p.104). However, rugby team leadership has rarely been examined in the research literature and discussion on rugby coaches and captains has been virtually limited to international player biographies and instructional texts. The latter sources have rarely moved beyond personal perspectives on elite rugby coaches and captains.

Despite the seeming importance of elite team leadership roles, identification and examination of their specific behaviours in the literature appears to be based primarily upon the assumptions and perceptions of athletes and coaches, observation at training or competition, or at sports levels below the elite (see Chapter Three). Research studies of the actual behaviours of elite team leaders are restricted, although a range of viewpoints is available from non-interdependent sports such as wrestling and gymnastics through the work of such researchers as Côté and Salmela, or Gould and Hodge, and their respective associates.

While the literature noted the importance of coaches and of leaders the two were rarely joined in discussion, apart from writings of commentators such as Anshel (1990) and Iso-Ahola and Hatfield (1986). Other commentators have emphasised the need for research into coaching and the coach as leader. Danielson, Zelhart and Drake (1975), for example, noted that “various investigators have stressed the need for research into the domain of leadership and personality in coaching” (p.323) and Salmela, Draper and Laplante (1993) argue for research to provide data which informs on coach behaviour and perceptions (see also, for example, Alderman, 1976; Anshel, 1990; Cratty, 1989; Gould, Hodge, Peterson and Petlichkoff, 1987; Horn, 1992; Jonassohn, Turowetz, and Gruneau, 1981; Kimiecik and Gould, 1987; Kuklinski, 1990). Despite an emerging picture of elite coach knowledge and perceived behaviours (Salmela, Russell, Côté and Baria, 1994), the research at this level rarely delivers an *in vivo* view of “the coach in action”. In contrast to the elite coach’s idiosyncratic self-portrait, a close observation of the chiaroscuro of team settings may well reveal shades of behaviour which deepen understandings of the coach as leader.

From such considerations as the above and the survey of relevant literature (see Chapter Three), the following research questions were framed to guide the present study:

1. *What are the team leadership roles of elite rugby coaches and captains?*
2. *How are these leadership roles enacted at an elite level?*
3. *What are the most important qualities of elite rugby coaches and captains?*
4. *How are these qualities illustrated at an elite level?*
5. *Given the team leadership roles and qualities of the elite rugby coach and captain, how can these best be developed?*

The consequent framing of methodology to seek answers to these questions is outlined in Chapter Four. The research drew on qualitative methodologies to ascertain elite rugby coach and captain

behaviours manifested in the public and private spheres of team settings, as well as player perceptions of such team leaders. "It is rare to find observational studies in leadership that include supplementary methods such as interviews with key figures to discover the context and meaning of events" Yukl (1989, p.278). Jonassohn, Turowetz and Gruneau (1981) argue that observation, participant observation and intensive interviewing are most appropriate for such sociological research in sport, noting that "The nature of such a social world (e.g., a sport organisation) necessitates that the researcher develop access to a contact network" (p.188). Such a network has two groups, the network of communicators and the network of legitimators. The communicators provide information to the researcher, indicators of social acceptance, and ease entry into the sports team. In the present study, those roles were embodied by the team manager and coach of the Provincial Team, and by the manager, coach and captain of the All Blacks. The legitimators provide the authority and sponsorship to initiate contact with the research group. The coach and team management provided this function in the Provincial Team. In the All Blacks the coach, captain and key senior players "legitimised" the researcher's presence and made possible the gathering of "audible data" (Salmela, Draper, and Laplante, 1993, p.300). In seeking such admittance and sponsorship to the research group settings the researcher needed to be accepted as an observer, skilled as an interviewer familiar with the sport, and able to develop positive relationships (see Appendix H.1).

Within the research milieu the use of qualitative methodology yielded data which, in turn, generated a set of elite rugby team leadership categories for each of the four research stages using grounded theory techniques. Data in each research phase were also examined through the lens of symbolic interactionism to elicit significant symbols which added to an understanding of the immediate world of the elite rugby team leader (see Chapter Four).

The four research phases followed an initial trial of research methodology with a prominent secondary school rugby team. The first research phase was that of participant observation of a Provincial Team, with attendant interviews, questionnaire surveys and document analysis. Data from this phase of the research generated the first set of elite rugby team leadership symbols, categories and properties.

The captains and coaches of opposing provincial rugby teams were then surveyed by questionnaire to elicit perspectives on elite team leadership in the context of the national provincial championships. These provided insights on coaching and captaincy in actual match

situations and yielded information on elite leadership domains such as captaincy selection, game plan evaluation and captain-coach interaction. Symbolic interactionism and grounded theory were utilised, as in the preceding phase, to generate categories of elite rugby team leadership.

The elite rugby team research was then expanded to encompass the iconic “men in black” of New Zealand’s national rugby team, the All Blacks, with whom this researcher became a participant observer for eight test match weeks. The observation was complemented by interviews, coach and captain meetings, questionnaires and document analysis over some three years. This was the first such observation of a national team’s leaders and provided an “inside picture” of elite team leaders which illustrated certain coach behaviours indicated by literature (such as “man management”) and added depth to others (such as vision or developing the game plan). The field data generated a further set of elite rugby team leadership categories and symbolic considerations.

The final stage of the research drew together perspectives from the majority of living All Blacks, 51 international rugby opponents, and a group of national coaches and captains of non-rugby teams. These multiple perspectives included the significant voices of a select group of All Black captains and coaches on elite rugby team leadership. Data from the interviews and questionnaires led to consideration of significant symbols and the categories they generated.

The categories from each of the four research phases were melded into one master set of elite rugby team leadership properties and categories as presented in this chapter. The research findings, expressed below in categories and theoretical propositions, are dependent upon the weight of data determined from the interpretive field. Critical reflection and analysis of the four sets of research phase categories indicated that some data which did not have a strength in one particular research phase had a cumulative impact across phases, consequently generating a small number of new but limited properties for the study’s master set. This master set of categories generated the formulation of theory on elite team rugby leadership, expressed in propositions which are thus grounded in the research data of this present study (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1994; and Chapter Four of this study).

The raw field data from the four research phases are available from the researcher in 120 hours of cassette tape recordings, 26 notebooks of 120 pages each, and all respondents’ questionnaires. Their cumulative impact has assisted the researcher’s search for optimal validity of observations. Validity in interpretative or ethnographic research is not a measurable domain. It is indicated by

the ring of truth that research subjects and researcher colleagues hear in the researcher's voice (Fetterman, 1989). Sparkes (1992b, 1992c) underscores that this validity, of verisimilitude, of the subject life *in vivo*, is not a guarantee in any foundational sense. Observed "realities", shared understandings, researcher insights into group culture not clearly outlined by research subjects, and continuing strenuous efforts to seek confirmation or validation, are not guarantees that the researched behaviour is to be necessarily found in similar research subject settings. Thus, the present research provides details of elite rugby team coaching and captaincy which may or may not be mirrored across various elite team sport settings or even in all elite rugby settings. (It is noteworthy, however, that the study is perceived as directly relevant by elite level sports leaders who have drawn upon the researcher to assist in developing elite leadership, such as in netball, men's and women's hockey, badminton, and elite rugby.)

The research unfolded in a social world, revealing an elite rugby environment replete with symbols, social controls and social actions which reflected elements of modern-day sport noted in Chapter Two. Rugby, for example, illustrated complexities of the spirit of amateurism with players receiving income from certain commercial ventures yet not receiving payment for playing. Masculine domination was apparent in administration but extreme sexist stereotypes were not necessarily reflected in the field research. At one extreme a 1960s All Black recounted, "We got on the piss with a vengeance...the tarts seemed to turn up from all over the place...there were women around and bonking everywhere," but the participant observation phases did not substantiate such an extreme as typical (see Appendix D.2). Social control was a more subtle element, with interviewees such as a provincial team manager and a group of past All Blacks seeing rugby as "keeping kids off the street" and providing community stability. Social control and cultural continuity were indicated by comments from many of the pakeha culture who expressed an assumption that "we are all one people". An extreme illustration came from an administrator who was asked why there were so few Maori and Pacific Island administrators of elite rugby, given their widespread representation as players. His response, "We all know the f--g darkies all need a white man to lead them", is not necessarily representative of 1990s rugby administrators, but suggests that more detailed research into social dimensions of rugby and hegemonic analyses of sport administration may be needed.

The present study reflected Donnelly and Young's (1985) belief in a trend towards less extreme antisocial behaviour among rugby players, whereas Jones and Pooley (1986) note an acceptability of onfield violence which has some dissonance with findings in the present thesis where team

leaders and players differentiate between “violence” and aggressive or justifiably illegal play. Rucking is a case in point where literature and commentators, and elite level referees from the northern hemisphere, show different perspectives from the southern hemisphere subjects of the present study. (Rucking is seen as “stomping” by a number of the former, but as legitimate raking away of opponents’ bodies by the latter.)

Other social dimensions were reflected in the study, with education (All Black responses to the questionnaire in Appendix F.5), religion (All Black marking a cross on his wristband), nutrition (talk by a nutritionist to the All Blacks), and politics (Prime Minister in the dressing room), providing examples. A range of past All Blacks challenged the assumptions that rugby acts as an instrument of international goodwill (noted in Chapter Two), citing examples to support their views, particularly drawing upon the South African context with the exclusion of Maori from tours to South Africa and the 1981 Springbok tour of New Zealand. The goodwill dimension across national boundaries was endorsed emphatically at the interpersonal level of interaction, however, by test players of all surveyed rugby nations. (“Camaraderie” was a much-used term to describe relationships between rugby players.)

9.2 CATEGORIES OF ELITE RUGBY TEAM LEADERSHIP

Presented below is the master set of categories of elite rugby team leadership that were generated by the present study’s field data and categories from each research phase. The relevance of each property can be illustrated by available field data. Thus, for example, the property of *Consider Referee* in Category 6.5 is presented in Appendix C.3 as an example of the field generation of such a property.

1. COACH ROLES

1.1	Selector of team and captain	1.13	Creator of environment
1.2	Developer of team strategy and game plan	1.14	Coordinator
1.3	Team developer	1.15	Motivator
1.4	Link with assistant coach	1.16	Public relations agent
1.5	Link with captain	1.17	Analyst
1.6	Utiliser of team strengths	1.18	Social agent
1.7	Relationship builder	1.19	Respecter of tradition
1.8	Controller of training	1.20	Organiser
1.9	Developer of players	1.21	Player perceptions of coach role
1.10	Link with team management	1.22	Role change over time
1.11	Knowledge informant	1.23	Role impact on private life
1.12	Technical guide	1.24	Role impact of rugby life history
		1.25	Role impact of rugby administration

2. COACH QUALITIES

2.1	Personal philosophy	2.17	Utilisation of specialists
2.2	Vision	2.18	Interpersonal skills
2.3	Personal goals	2.19	Self-knowledge
2.4	Leadership	2.20	Preparation
2.5	Teaching skills	2.21	Hard worker
2.6	Personal qualities	2.22	Respected
2.7	Organisation	2.23	Coping skills
2.8	Communication	2.24	Analytical
2.9	Motivation	2.25	Long-term planner
2.10	Utilising player abilities	2.26	Single-minded
2.11	Coach-player interaction	2.27	Assimilates information
2.12	Technical and rule knowledge	2.28	Self-discipline
2.13	High standards	2.29	Provides feedback
2.14	People management	2.30	Ethic of hard work
2.15	Psychological skills	2.31	Developmental needs
2.16	Willingness to learn		

3 CAPTAIN ROLES

3.1	Onfield leader	3.7	Link with vice-captain
3.2	Implementer of game plan	3.8	Represent team
3.3	Leader by example	3.9	Public relations
3.4	Exemplary player	3.10	Team talk
3.5	Captain-coach link	3.11	Role impact of playing form
3.6	Off-field responsibilities	3.12	Role impact of rugby life history

4. CAPTAIN QUALITIES

4.1	Personal philosophy	4.14	Encouragement
4.2	Leadership	4.15	Read the game
4.3	Personal qualities	4.16	Team talk
4.4	Playing ability	4.17	Aloofness
4.5	Positive relationships	4.18	Utilises player strengths
4.6	Communication	4.19	Fair but firm
4.7	Decision making	4.20	Mana
4.8	Experience	4.21	Character
4.9	Public speaking	4.22	Tactical awareness
4.10	Keep players on task	4.23	Self-confidence
4.11	Motivational	4.24	Coping skills
4.12	Respected	4.25	Developmental needs
4.13	Coolness		

5. TEAM

5.1	Team culture and traditions	5.15	Court sessions
5.2	Team goals	5.16	Field positions
5.3	Team leaders	5.17	Team functions
5.4	Team development	5.18	Technical skills
5.5	Resources	5.19	Cohesion
5.6	Player goals	5.20	Training
5.7	Perceptions of team mates	5.21	Player induction
5.8	Language	5.22	Time usage
5.9	Physical environment	5.23	Rituals and bonding
5.10	Team meetings	5.24	Ethnic identity
5.11	Social context	5.25	Players' personal lives
5.12	Team roles	5.26	Relationships
5.13	Support staff and advisers	5.27	Selection of team captain
5.14	Match focus	5.28	Evaluation of leaders

6. GAME PLAN

6.1	Game plan	6.6	Game plan build-up
6.2	Analysis of teams	6.7	Game plan in action
6.3	Environmental factors	6.8	Game plan review
6.4	Formulating the game plan	6.9	Transmission of knowledge
6.5	Consider referee		

7. MATCH

7.1	Coach-captain roles	7.4	Match day build-up
7.2	Game plan	7.5	Match
7.3	Match week build-up	7.6	Post-match

8. ALL BLACKS

8.1	All Blacks	8.6	Performance
8.2	Team culture	8.7	Symbolism
8.3	Opponents' perspectives	8.8	Politics
8.4	Public reactions	8.9	World Cup
8.5	Commercialism	8.10	Leadership

9. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

9.1	Formal support	9.7	Public recognition
9.2	Informal support	9.8	Sponsorship
9.3	Team socialisation	9.9	Overseas perceptions
9.4	Gender	9.10	Media
9.5	Families	9.11	All Blacks
9.6	Multiculturalism	9.12	Societal setting

10. ADMINISTRATION

10.1	Team appointments	10.5	Marketing
10.2	Administrators	10.6	Professionalism
10.3	Resources	10.7	Interaction with players
10.4	Decrease violence		

11. TEAM LEADER EVALUATION

11.1	Respect	11.5	Team development
11.2	Results	11.6	Evaluation modes
11.3	Team dynamics	11.7	Leader development
11.4	Match play		

9.3 ELITE RUGBY TEAM LEADERSHIP: THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

The master set of categories above led to the formulation of theoretical propositions which provide a theory of elite rugby team leadership grounded in the research data (see Chapter Four; also Strauss and Corbin, 1994). The voices of non-rugby elite team leaders in the present research suggest a relevance of the above categories to other elite sport team settings, with the “theoretical generalisations that go beyond the particular details of the culture to link the study to relevant portions of other research” (Harris, 1983, p.92).

1 COACH ROLES

In carrying out the role of an elite rugby team leader, the coach...

- 1.1 *Selector of team and captain.*
 - 1.1.1 Has the major responsibility for selecting players to fit the coach's vision held for the team.
 - 1.1.2 Has the key task of selecting the captain.
 - 1.1.3 Ensures that players learn the reasons for their selection and roles they are selected to play.
 - 1.1.4 Selects a captain with particular criteria in mind.
 - 1.1.5 Considers players as potential team leaders.

- 1.2 *Developer of team strategy and game plan.*
 - 1.2.1 Has a major focus of developing an effective game plan for each match, in keeping with the coach's vision, team strategy and development.
 - 1.2.2 Has a role which encompasses responsibility for the team strategy, this having been the elite captain's responsibility prior to the 1950s.

- 1.3 *Team developer.*
 - 1.3.1 Has short and long term goals for developing the team, collectively and individually.
 - 1.3.2 Is operating within a tradition and ethos of elite New Zealand rugby.

- 1.4 *Link with assistant coach.*
 - 1.4.1 Builds a strong interactive relationship with the assistant coach.
 - 1.4.2 Outlines the complementary role of the assistant coach.

- 1.5 *Link with captain.*
 - 1.5.1 Works closely with the captain, in the team's best interests.
 - 1.5.2 Works with the captain in a critical partnership based on a shared philosophy and mutual trust.
 - 1.5.3 Explains to the captain the reasons for the captain's selection.
 - 1.5.4 Involves the captain in a responsible and contributing team leadership role.
 - 1.5.5 Supports the captain's development as a team leader.

- 1.6 *Utiliser of team strengths.*
 - 1.6.1 Utilises individual and collective player strengths and abilities.

- 1.7 *Relationship builder.*
 - 1.7.1 Builds relationships in and out of the team.
 - 1.7.2 Relates to players with off-field support away from the direct rugby setting.

- 1.8 *Controller of training.*
 - 1.8.1 Is responsible for the planning and process of training.
 - 1.8.2 Plans training in conjunction with the assistant-coach, captain, and team.
 - 1.8.3 Plans training as a process integral to development of the game plan.

- 1.9 *Developer of players.*
 - 1.9.1 Is concerned to develop players in terms of their team roles, technical skills and personal growth.
 - 1.9.2 Develops a concern to know, and relate to, each player.
 - 1.9.3 May have to discipline players.

- 1.9.4 May assist player development in non-rugby environments.
- 1.10 *Link with team management.*
 - 1.10.1 Forms a cohesive leadership role with team management persons.
 - 1.10.2 Is assisted in the leadership role by an effective team manager.
- 1.11 *Knowledge informant.*
 - 1.11.1 Has experiential and theoretical knowledge to pass on to players.
 - 1.11.2 Requires a command of certain teaching skills in order to transmit knowledge and communicate effectively.
- 1.12 *Technical guide.*
 - 1.12.1 Guides and develops players' technical skills.
 - 1.12.2 May utilise the technical expertise of non-team members.
- 1.13 *Creator of environment.*
 - 1.13.1 Creates an environment which influences team culture, team preparation and achievement.
 - 1.13.2 Influences the team environment through philosophy, actions and personal qualities.
- 1.14 *Coordinator.*
 - 1.14.1 Has a critical role coordinating team skills and abilities.
- 1.15 *Motivator.*
 - 1.15.1 Motivates players towards the achievement of goals.
 - 1.15.2 Requires a sound understanding of motivation.
- 1.16 *Public relations agent.*
 - 1.16.1 Is perceived by the public as the key team figure.
 - 1.16.2 Is perceived by the media as a key figure for attention.
 - 1.16.3 Has a role of presenting himself positively.
- 1.17 *Analyst.*
 - 1.17.1 Is an analyst of rugby matches, players and possibilities.
 - 1.17.2 Has an analytical role in formulating the bases for game plans, player and team development, and team tactics.
- 1.18 *Social agent.*
 - 1.18.1 Is concerned to interact with players in a positive social environment without becoming too close to them.
 - 1.18.2 Seeks ways in which the team can enjoy its social settings, particularly on "team only" occasions.
- 1.19 *Respecter of tradition.*
 - 1.19.1 Conveys a sense of tradition and elite team history.
 - 1.19.2 Respects past elite rugby team achievers.
- 1.20 *Organiser.*
 - 1.20.1 Has an organisational role integral to coach responsibilities.

- 1.21 *Player perceptions of coach role.*
- 1.21.1 Has self perceptions which are not necessarily the same as the players' perception of the coach.
- 1.22 *Role change over time.*
- 1.22.1 Enacts a role which has changed over post-war decades.
- 1.22.2 Has greater media demands and use of expert input in the 1990s.
- 1.22.3 Has a role with greater responsibilities for team leadership than the captain.
- 1.23 *Role impact on private life.*
- 1.23.1 Faces particular demands upon both personal and private life.
- 1.24 *Role impact of rugby life history.*
- 1.24.1 Is likely to have had first-class or elite rugby playing experience.
- 1.24.2 May not have been a "great" player but was noted for thought, application, strength of character, and commitment to the team as a player.
- 1.24.3 May not have a formal rugby coaching qualification.
- 1.24.4 Is likely to have been influenced by an elite player or leader of an earlier rugby generation.
- 1.24.5 Has come from a childhood in which sport was played and supported.
- 1.24.6 Has roles which have changed over rugby decades.
- 1.25 *Role impact of rugby administration.*
- 1.25.1 Is appointed by the rugby union and responsible to them.
- 1.25.2 Exhibits differential perspectives from those of the rugby administration.
- 1.25.3 Faces administration decisions which differ from the coach's preferred decisions.

The top coach is responsible for the style of rugby the team will play and must plan the entire season based around peak periods and target games. That coach is responsible for the players and must plan practices and arrangements for match days, team talks, etc., must deal with the media. Must create a good environment for his team to function. (Provincial coach.)

In 1937 our [province] was coached by [coach], a great player but not a driver of men. We had no real tactics, didn't know when the halfback ran, whether to be inside or outside that player, for example. [Coach] had no idea of how the Springboks would play or what they would do. Our practices probably looked okay but we lacked the behind-closed-doors team strategy. That loss gave me the determination to develop a plan for the 1956 Springboks. I was [our province's] coach so we had a few team talks, and on the Friday afternoon before the game, half a dozen of the senior blokes in the team took half a day off work and came around home ... (Provincial and All Black coach.)

The best coach I saw was [Coach A]. It took him a year into it to get it right. He could read a game, select the right players and have a clear game plan, getting the best out of players and the team. His team talks were out of this world, even great All Blacks learnt from him. (1940's All Black, 1960s provincial coach.)

The most successful teams I played in had the coach, a facilitator, getting the team to develop together. (1970s All Black.)

The All Black coach is guided by one objective: to kid, claw, dig, wheedle and coax that fanatical effort out of players. You want them to play every game as if they were defending their country. (All Black, All Black Coach 1960s.)

2 COACH QUALITIES

In carrying out the role of an elite rugby team leader, the coach's important qualities include...

2.1 Personal philosophy.

- 2.1.1 The ability to articulate a clear philosophy for the elite team.
- 2.1.2 A respect for rugby as a game.

2.2 Vision.

- 2.2.1 The formulation of a clear vision for the team.
- 2.2.2 Expression of a clear vision to the team.
- 2.2.3 The ability to draw the team into commitment to a clear vision and adapt this if necessary.
- 2.2.4 The ability to have the vision expressed in team play.

2.3 Personal goals.

- 2.3.1 The setting of personal goals.

2.4 Leadership.

- 2.4.1 The capacity to provide clear and effective leadership.
- 2.4.2 Perceived qualities, described as leadership by players, which are not explicated by them.

2.5 Teaching skills.

- 2.5.1 The ability to teach, transmitting knowledge and attitudes.

2.6 Personal qualities.

- 2.6.1 Personal qualities such as honesty, a sense of humour, integrity, diplomacy, determination, decisiveness and stability.
- 2.6.2 Qualities and behaviour which generate respect.
- 2.6.3 Those which were evident in earlier playing years.

2.7 Organisation.

- 2.7.1 The ability to organise self and team.

2.8 Communication.

- 2.8.1 A full range of informal and personal communication skills.
- 2.8.2 Relating with media personnel to express personal and team views.
- 2.8.3 Understandings of non-verbal and cross-cultural communication.

2.9 Motivation.

- 2.9.1 The facility to motivate players, individually and as a team.

2.10 Utilising player abilities.

- 2.10.1 The utilisation of player abilities to optimise individual and team development.

- 2.11 *Coach-player interaction.*
 - 2.11.1 Relating to players in such a way that they are valued by, and responsive to, the coach.
- 2.12 *Technical and rule knowledge.*
 - 2.12.1 The imparting of technical knowledge.
 - 2.12.2 Recognition of personal limitations in technical knowledge.
 - 2.12.3 A full understanding of current rugby laws.
- 2.13 *High standards.*
 - 2.13.1 The setting and maintenance of high standards for self and team, both personally and professionally.
- 2.14 *People management.*
 - 2.14.1 The critical dimension of people management (perceived in elite male rugby teams as “man management”), which is essentially the ability to relate to players, develop team spirit and discipline, and generate commitment and appropriate behaviours.
- 2.15 *Psychological skills.*
 - 2.15.1 A basic understanding and use of psychological skills such as counselling, concentration or goal setting.
- 2.16 *Willingness to learn.*
 - 2.16.1 The willingness to learn and acquire new knowledge and understandings.
 - 2.16.2 The capacity to draw upon diverse sources of information and expertise.
- 2.17 *Utilisation of specialists.*
 - 2.17.1 The utilisation of specialist staff and human resources, such as nutritionist, fitness trainer, masseur or video analyst.
- 2.18 *Interpersonal skills.*
 - 2.18.1 The ability to relate to diverse persons, particularly the players.
 - 2.18.2 The ability to empathise.
- 2.19 *Self-knowledge.*
 - 2.19.1 Self-knowledge, particularly knowledge of one’s abilities, limitations and qualities relevant to coaching and personal behaviours.
- 2.20 *Preparation.*
 - 2.20.1 The ability to prepare oneself and the team for elite rugby competition.
- 2.21 *Hard worker.*
 - 2.21.1 The ability to work hard in the interests of the elite team.
- 2.22 *Respected.*
 - 2.22.1 Those which engender respect from the players.
- 2.23 *Coping skills.*
 - 2.23.1 Skills to cope with the demands of elite coaching.
 - 2.23.2 Skills to cope with demands on the coach’s personal life.

- 2.24 *Analytical.*
2.24.1 Skills of analysis which are applied to interpersonal and match situations.
- 2.25 *Long-term planner.*
2.25.1 The ability to develop long-term plans for the team.
- 2.26 *Single-minded.*
2.26.1 A single minded focus upon certain goals when appropriate.
- 2.27 *Assimilates information.*
2.27.1 The ability to consider, assimilate and synthesise information from diverse sources.
- 2.28 *Self-discipline.*
2.28.1 The capacity for self-discipline.
- 2.29 *Provides feedback.*
2.29.1 The ability to provide constructive feedback to players.
- 2.30 *Ethic of hard work.*
2.30.1 Hard work, and having a history of a hard work ethic.
- 2.31 *Developmental needs.*
2.31.1 Abilities and skills which training or development could enhance.

The ability to create, manage, organise and utilise people to achieve a meaningful and positive result - does the coach have a dream and is that verbalised and structured into reality? (New Zealand hockey coach.)

The coach must have knowledge and is respected for the ability to impart that knowledge. Coaching is just an extension of teaching. Teaching skills are critical. (New Zealand Soccer Coach.)

To be able to communicate with players. Have a sound knowledge of the game and a philosophy on how the team should play. (All Black.)

Provide challenging practice situations and be able to motivate players. (Provincial Team Coach.)

Elite rugby coaches must be able to put their ideas and training strategies into the game and training field. A lot of coaches have very good ideas but can't translate them onto the field. The coach has to have the quality of relating to people but know when to be involved and when to keep a little distance. (All Black Captain 1992.)

Honesty and organisation are essential. If the coach played the game at a high level that's a bonus but, regardless, the coach has to have the qualities that get player respect. (All Black 1990s.)

3 CAPTAIN ROLES

In carrying out the role of an elite rugby team leader, the captain...

- 3.1 *Onfield leader.*
 - 3.1.1 Is valued most for onfield leadership.
 - 3.1.2 Is looked to by players to set an example in playing with skill and commitment.
 - 3.3.3 Draws upon field leadership from other players.

- 3.2 *Implementer of game plan.*
 - 3.2.1 Has a full understanding of the game plan.
 - 3.2.2 Is responsible for the game plan implementation in the match.
 - 3.2.3 Must adapt the game plan and make decisions on variations as necessary.

- 3.3 *Leader by example.*
 - 3.3.1 Is expected by the team to be a role model onfield and off.
 - 3.3.2 Is expected to embody playing ethics, commitment in play and off-field modelling of behaviour and leadership.
 - 3.3.3 Leads the team by example, on and off the field.
 - 3.3.4 Is especially looked to by onfield players to “lead from the front.”

- 3.4 *Exemplary player.*
 - 3.4.1 Is expected to exhibit a high level of personal playing skills.
 - 3.4.2 Exhibits playing skills which earn player respect.

- 3.5 *Captain-coach link.*
 - 3.5.1 Forms a close and complementary linkage with the coach.
 - 3.5.2 Works with the coach to set directions for the team, formulate and develop a game plan, and establish team policies and relationships.
 - 3.5.3 Has less overall responsibility for the team than in earlier rugby decades.

- 3.6 *Off-field responsibilities.*
 - 3.6.1 Provides leadership off the field in representing the team.
 - 3.6.2 Works closely with the coach.
 - 3.6.3 Has a private life which needs time and involvement apart from the elite rugby team.
 - 3.6.4 Has leadership support from senior players.

- 3.7 *Link with vice-captain.*
 - 3.7.1 Establishes a strong leadership linkage with the vice-captain.
 - 3.7.2 Considers the vice-captain’s role as complementary to that of captain.
 - 3.7.3 Discusses the vice-captaincy role with the coach and vice-captain to optimise its efficacy.

- 3.8 *Represent team.*
 - 3.8.1 Represents the team in public settings, media contact and meetings.

- 3.9 *Public relations.*
 - 3.9.1 Has a public relations role in positively representing the team, particularly to the media.
 - 3.9.2 Needs skills in public speaking.

- 3.10 *Team talk.*
- 3.10.1 Impacts upon the players with team talks, particularly with the test eve talk to players.
- 3.11 *Role impact of playing form.*
- 3.11.1 May view personal playing form as influencing the effectiveness of onfield leadership.
- 3.12 *Role impact of rugby life history.*
- 3.12.1 Has come from a childhood in which sport was played and supported.
- 3.12.2 Has been influenced by previous elite captains.
- 3.12.3 Has less team leadership autonomy and overall team responsibility than in earlier decades prior to the rise of formal coaching roles.

I consider [South African captain] to have been a great player but I don't think that he was a great captain. The [1928 All Blacks] game against [our province] was played on a fairly dry turf which suited us but the last test was played in the rain on a muddy turf to which your All Blacks adapted themselves better than we did - our captain should have changed the game plan. (1928 South African team player.)

Before England played New Zealand at Twickenham in 1936, the England XV met for the first time on the afternoon before the match for a short run about. We had a short talk before the game when I mentioned three points. The three points to which I referred were simple, and had to be simple because the England team met for the first time at 2:30 p.m. a day before the match. To have tried to be clever against a good, fit experienced side would have courted disaster. The simple points were carried out successfully. This may seem very casual but, in fact, we were all extremely fit and we had a very powerful side. We wanted to win and I took modest pleasure that we did. (1936 England captain.)

I pride myself on playing well and that is part of leading well ... this test I must relax and play my game well and the leadership will come. (All Black captain 1993, June 30.)

I always enjoyed [1950s All Black's] captaincy - a good leader who was a good tactician at reading the game and giving leadership by example. He could change the tactics if necessary, but many can't read it and change it. One of [All Black Captain Five's] attributes was his ability to lead by example and another was to change tactics. A good captain is a good leader on and off the field. (1950s All Black.)

Many captains, including some with a successful record, have had strong commitment onfield - the captain sees a lot of decisions made by others on the field. (Soccer coach.)

4 CAPTAIN QUALITIES

In carrying out the role of an elite rugby team leader, the captain's important qualities include...

- 4.1 *Personal philosophy.*
- 4.1.1 Formulation of a personal philosophy which underpins captaincy beliefs and behaviours.

- 4.1.2 A personal philosophy in accord with that of the coach.
- 4.2 *Leadership.*
 - 4.2.1 The quality of leadership, although leadership is not explicated clearly by elite rugby persons.
 - 4.2.2 Leadership abilities which are applicable to sport and business settings.
- 4.3 *Personal qualities.*
 - 4.3.1 Personal qualities of intelligence, honesty, enthusiasm, decisiveness and example.
 - 4.3.2 Encouragement as an important dimension which players value.
 - 4.3.3 Personal qualities which evoke player and public respect.
- 4.4 *Playing ability.*
 - 4.4.1 Playing ability of a high order which engenders player recognition of its quality.
- 4.5 *Positive relationships.*
 - 4.5.1 The ability to form positive relationships with players, team leaders, administrators and the public.
 - 4.5.2 Knowledge of establishing and maintaining interpersonal and group dynamics.
 - 4.5.3 A certain degree of distance between self and team.
- 4.6 *Communication.*
 - 4.6.1 The critical skills of communication, both verbal and non-verbal.
 - 4.6.2 Public speaking skills, including formal communication, speeches and talking with the media.
 - 4.6.3 Presentation of team talks and motivational communication.
- 4.7 *Decision making.*
 - 4.7.1 The ability to make fast and accurate onfield decisions.
 - 4.7.2 Off-field decisions in keeping with team policy and positive relationships.
- 4.8 *Experience.*
 - 4.8.1 Playing experience at the elite level.
 - 4.8.2 An assured playing position in the team.
 - 4.8.3 Earning the respect of team-mates.
- 4.9 *Public speaking.*
 - 4.9.1 The ability to make public speeches in a range of settings.
 - 4.9.2 Speaking ability in representing the team on formal occasions.
- 4.10 *Keep players on-task.*
 - 4.10.1 Keeping players focused and on-task towards performance and fulfilment.
 - 4.10.2 Working closely with the coach in keeping players on-task.
- 4.11 *Motivational.*
 - 4.11.1 The ability to motivate the team, particularly in match week, on match day, and onfield.
 - 4.11.2 Relating to individual players with understandings of their motivational states.
- 4.12 *Respected.*
 - 4.12.1 Behaviours and character qualities which generate respect from players.

- 4.13 *Coolness.*
 - 4.13.1 The ability to be cool under pressure.
 - 4.13.2 The necessity for personal stress management.
- 4.14 *Encouragement.*
 - 4.14.1 The ability to provide encouragement individually and collectively.
 - 4.14.2 Supportiveness for players.
- 4.15 *Read the game.*
 - 4.15.1 The ability to scan and comprehend actual and potential actions on the field of play and their implications for onfield leadership.
 - 4.15.2 The ability to consider and utilise other onfield leaders' perspectives on the game in action.
- 4.16 *Team talk.*
 - 4.16.1 The ability to pinpoint team needs and motivational triggers and to relate to these in team talks.
 - 4.16.2 Working in cohesion with the coach in team talk settings.
- 4.17 *Aloofness.*
 - 4.17.1 The ability to retain a little distance apart from the players.
- 4.18 *Utilises player strengths.*
 - 4.18.1 The ability to utilise players' personal and playing strengths.
- 4.19 *Fair but firm.*
 - 4.19.1 The ability to exhibit fairness allied with firmness in relationships and decision making.
- 4.20 *Mana.*
 - 4.20.1 Qualities which generate recognition by players and/or public of the captain's mana.
- 4.21 *Character.*
 - 4.21.1 A strength of character that is recognised by team-mates and coach.
- 4.22 *Tactical awareness.*
 - 4.22.1 The awareness of potential and actual onfield match tactics.
 - 4.22.2 Tactical awareness linked with a full knowledge of players, set moves, analysis of the opposition and ongoing evaluation of match factors.
 - 4.22.3 Complete rugby rule knowledge.
- 4.23 *Self-confidence.*
 - 4.23.1 Self-confidence as a dimension of effective captaincy.
- 4.24 *Coping skills.*
 - 4.24.1 The skill to cope with personal, playing, and team leader demands.
 - 4.24.2 Coping skills assisted by diffused leadership within the team.
- 4.25 *Developmental needs.*
 - 4.25.1 Some aspects which could be enhanced by training and development.

Loyalty - to the coach. Enhance players' technical appreciation. To have high personal standards and good interpersonal relationships. (Provincial Team Coach.)

Always be prepared and have good organisation in all areas. Keep things simple, but to the high standards you intend to set. Be a good communicator and listener, also a friend, but keep your players at a certain distance at times to maintain credibility. Always be positive. (New Zealand Provincial Coach.)

Must hold the respect of fellow players. (All Black 1980s.)

Must understand the game pattern and be able to correct things during the game if problems arise. Therefore, must be able to read a game. (Australian player.)

Should be a confident speaker with a strong personality. (New Zealand Provincial Team Captain.)

The captain should preferably have seniority, ability, good knowledge of all aspects of play and tactics, be a good decision maker, and be well able to work with the coach and co-ordinate the game on the field. (New Zealand player, 1950s.)

At times the captain will be a dictator (such as in a test) and at times will be a teacher (helping a team-mate understand a technical point) but I always want the captain to lead from the front. (All Black, 1990s.)

5. ELITE TEAM

The elite rugby team is characterised by...

5.1 Team culture and traditions.

- 5.1.1 A history shaped by previous teams and individuals.
- 5.1.2 Team culture, including events and rituals, symbols and statements, interaction and expectations.
- 5.1.3 Team culture which impacts upon team leadership.
- 5.1.4 Player induction, marked by in-team mentoring and formal recognition within the team.
- 5.1.5 Achievements and milestones in player careers noted within the team.
- 5.1.6 Experienced players and team management as key persons in maintaining team culture and traditions.
- 5.1.7 Court sessions which place formal team leaders under the charge of players who are "court officers" in a team's mock court.
- 5.1.8 The team jersey as a dominant symbol of team tradition and unity.
- 5.1.9 Team traditions which reinforce commitment, tradition and bonding.

5.2 Team goals.

- 5.2.1 Collective and individual team goals relating to onfield performance and team cohesion.
- 5.2.2 Team goals, initially framed by the coach but modified and mediated by team members, particularly the captain.
- 5.2.3 Short-term team goals related to match performance.
- 5.2.4 Long-term goals for team development.

5.3 *Team leaders.*

- 5.3.1 Team leadership including experienced players whose influence is respected by their team-mates.
- 5.3.2 Non-existent training or development of elite captains.
- 5.3.3 An apparently greater congruence of leadership behaviours between provincial coaches and captain in teams with a higher ratio of winning games than in losing teams.

5.4 *Team development.*

- 5.4.1 Its leaders perceiving the team as in a constant state of development.
- 5.4.2 Team cohesion and group dynamics.
- 5.4.3 Team focus and a desire to win over-riding interpersonal differences and tensions in critical match foci.
- 5.4.4 The coach's vision and resultant player requirements providing an initial framework for team development.
- 5.4.5 Team development over a range of levels, such as dimensions of security, personal growth, playing skills, team cohesion, performance, player satisfaction, and team playing style.
- 5.4.6 Players preferring criticism or disciplining from a team leader to occur in a one-to-one situation, rather than a team or group setting.
- 5.4.7 A need for team leaders and management to understand processes of change.

5.5 *Resources.*

- 5.5.1 Human and material resource utilisation, including support staff and the specialised input of specific persons.
- 5.5.2 Medical staff, fitness advisers, strength trainers, masseurs and specialist advisers to assist with the development of personal skills and player wellbeing.
- 5.5.3 An under-utilisation of technology such as video analysis, interactive video, virtual reality, electronic network services or relevant research in player and team development.
- 5.5.4 Support staff who do not usually include a sport psychologist.

5.6 *Player goals.*

- 5.6.1 Players' personal and performance goals being enhanced through a positive and interactive relationship with team leaders.
- 5.6.2 Successful attainment of players' personal goals, which impact upon player's well-being as contributing team members.
- 5.6.3 Coach actions to assist players to meet personal needs and attain personal goals.

5.7 *Perceptions of team mates.*

- 5.7.1 Player perceptions of team mate qualities and abilities, which are not necessarily congruent with the coach's perspectives.

5.8 *Language.*

- 5.8.1 "Rugby-speak," or symbolic language which is integral to leader-player and player-player interaction.
- 5.8.2 Symbolic rugby-speak in team talks, motivation and interpersonal communication.
- 5.8.3 Language use by team leaders which could consider cross-cultural communication.
- 5.8.4 Forceful language and exhortations in the pre-match dressing room.

5.9 *Physical environment.*

- 5.9.1 A team environment often limited in space, cleanliness, facilities, teaching materials, colour or privacy.
- 5.9.2 Varied physical settings of changing rooms.
- 5.9.3 Team accommodation which provides the coach and captain with a room each for confidential meetings and discussions.
- 5.9.4 A preference for a team room which facilitates team privacy, meeting security and social interaction.
- 5.9.5 A need for adequate and appropriate team accommodation.

5.10 *Team meetings.*

- 5.10.1 Team meetings which are instrumental in fostering information, communication, motivation, team strategy and tactics.
- 5.10.2 Team talks which are integral to elite rugby.
- 5.10.3 Team talks which are primarily motivational.
- 5.10.4 The coach as the major figure in team meetings.
- 5.10.5 Experienced players being more involved in team meetings than inexperienced players.
- 5.10.6 Coaches using team meetings to develop player understandings, with varied understandings of teaching procedures, or knowledge of learning styles.

5.11 *Social context.*

- 5.11.1 Positive social behaviour.
- 5.11.2 A lack of excessive antisocial, drinking or sexist behaviour.
- 5.11.3 A disinclination to attend formal functions, such as corporate lunches, in the week of a major match.
- 5.11.4 Music as a social element.
- 5.11.5 Valuing private and “team only” occasions for team socialisation.
- 5.11.6 Players desiring more time together as a team in match week than has been customary.

5.12 *Team roles.*

- 5.12.1 Formal and informal team roles which have clarity within the team culture.
- 5.12.2 Leadership roles of the coach, captain and informal team leaders.
- 5.12.3 Support roles of “duty boys”.

5.13 *Support staff and advisers.*

- 5.13.1 The use of support staff and specialist advisers.
- 5.13.2 The use of specialist advice from persons outside the immediate team environment.

5.14 *Match focus.*

- 5.14.1 An orientation of team development and preparation towards the next team match.
- 5.14.2 A game plan which is the key to the team’s match focus.

5.15 *Court sessions.*

- 5.15.1 See 5.1.6 above.

5.16 *Field positions.*

- 5.16.1 Expertise in field positions.
- 5.16.2 Players who have been restricted in their opportunities to experience play in other positions.

- 5.16.3 Player and coach beliefs that certain field positions relate to certain skills and/or personal qualities, although player and coach perceptions of these may not be congruent.
- 5.17 *Team functions.*
 - 5.17.1 Private “team only” settings in which player achievements are recognised by the team.
- 5.18 *Technical skills.*
 - 5.18.1 A high level of technical skills embodied individually and collectively.
 - 5.18.2 Coaching of players’ technical skills.
- 5.19 *Cohesion.*
 - 5.19.1 Playing cohesion onfield and varied social cohesion off-field.
 - 5.19.2 Activities and rituals which foster team cohesion.
- 5.20 *Training.*
 - 5.20.1 Training and practice which directly relates to player and team needs and the game plan.
 - 5.20.2 Training which is linked to actual match situations.
 - 5.20.3 Training and practices in which the captain has a prominent role with the coach.
 - 5.20.4 Training which is structured to allow forwards and backs to practise as units and the team to train together.
- 5.21 *Player induction.*
 - 5.21.1 The mentoring of new players by veteran players who place an emphasis upon new player integration into the team with concomitant understandings of tradition, team culture and team tactics.
 - 5.21.2 A need for the coach to inform new players on reasons for their selection and specific roles within the team.
 - 5.21.3 Inconsistent communication of selection and travel information from administrators to new players.
- 5.22 *Time usage.*
 - 5.22.1 Players wishing to have more time spent on whole team activities in match week.
 - 5.22.2 Players appreciating an overview of the match week time plan, for each day and the week.
- 5.23 *Rituals and bonding.*
 - 5.23.1 Acknowledgment of achievements within the team and by the public.
 - 5.23.2 Rituals which are traditional elements of team culture.
 - 5.23.3 Bonding of players at the All Black level.
- 5.24 *Ethnic identity.*
 - 5.24.1 Monocultural social behaviour.
 - 5.24.2 An environment exhibiting a range of cultural viewpoints and practices, from team-mate name pronunciation to national administration attitudes.
 - 5.24.3 The use of the Maori haka at the All Black level.
- 5.25 *Players’ personal lives.*
 - 5.25.1 A range of player backgrounds.
 - 5.25.2 A number of players having attended single sex or private schools.

- 5.25.3 Players having come from home environments in which families, particularly fathers and siblings, were involved with sport.
- 5.25.4 The impact upon personal lives of time used for rugby activities and training.
- 5.25.5 A range of players' formal educational qualifications.

5.26 *Relationships.*

- 5.26.1 A belief that team interests supersede differences in interpersonal relationships.
- 5.26.2 Valuing honest relationships between team leaders and players.

5.27 *Selection of team captain.*

- 5.27.1 Variable procedures and discussions in the appointment of team captains.
- 5.27.2 A lack of congruence in coach and captain explanations and understandings for the latter's appointment.
- 5.27.3 Close coach-captain understandings having a possible positive impact upon team results.

5.28 *Evaluation of leaders.*

- 5.28.1 A lack of specific or organised modes of team leader evaluation.
- 5.28.2 The possibility of an external observer evaluator providing feedback to team leaders.

I don't think the public realise the pressures, traditions and very real commitment of the top New Zealand teams.

The roles of team leaders coach, captain, and senior players are crucial. (All Black captain 1980s.)

In the top teams there must be a positive culture and the captain's all-round example is critical. [All Black Captain] was a great after dinner speaker ... but onfield he didn't have a bloody clue. He was blind to the reality of reading the game and I don't think he had a lot of communication with us younger players. (Prominent Past All Black.)

In the game you will find - and value - different types of leaders. I was no great All Black captain but I was a good All Black. I saw myself as a behind-the-scenes leader whereas [Captain One] was a perfect example of an in-front-of-the-scenes captain. He was always a leader, whether meeting the Queen or having a beer in a corner barEven back in the New Zealand in one team [Player X] was the captain but [Captain A] was the leader. (A legendary All Black, 1960s-1970s.)

The team really is the centre of focus for the coach and captain and within that you've got the game plan, the coming match, unity and players. And then within that you have to consider how things go and whatever shortcomings you have because somehow you have to make up for them. So much of what makes a top team the public never see. (All Black 1980s-1990s.)

It's bloody simple really. Consider the individuals - but it's the team, the team, the team. Look on the score board. It's the team that's playing. (Australian player, 1990s.)

6. GAME PLAN

The game plan is a key dimension of elite rugby team leadership, in which ...

6.1 *Game plan.*

6.1.1 The coach has a primary task of formulating a game plan to optimise the team's match performance.

6.1.2 The game plan's foundation is the coach's analysis of the team and the opposition.

6.1.3 Selections are linked with the plan.

6.1.4 The coach may draw upon a range of inputs including the knowledge of past and present players.

6.1.5 A particular match plan has linkages with previous matches and team development.

6.2 *Analysis of teams.*

6.2.1 Elite rugby coaches analyse their own team strengths and weaknesses, drawing upon player input.

6.2.2 The coach considers team and individual strengths and incorporates these into the game plan.

6.2.3 Analysis of the opposing team utilises video evaluation and perceptions from the coach's players, particularly senior team members.

6.3 *Environmental factors.*

6.3.1 The elite rugby coach considers environmental conditions which may impact upon the game plan.

6.3.2 Environmental conditions impacting upon the game plan include weather, wind, crowd support, turf conditions and the referee.

6.4 *Formulating the game plan.*

6.4.1 The coach formulates the game plan as the basis for the forthcoming match.

6.4.2 Players participate in the game plan formulation and senior players may continue to have a significant input into the plan's development.

6.4.3 The game plan relates to the coach's vision for the team, and the team development plan.

6.4.4 The coach and captain interact closely in developing and actioning the game plan.

6.4.5 Training and practice sessions are directly related to the game plan.

6.4.6 The basic strategy is set for a match, providing opportunity for the captain to change this onfield if necessary.

6.4.7 All Blacks place a premium upon fitness, speed of play, integrated team play, aggression, pride, and pressure on the opposition.

6.4.8 Key players and new players should have their roles carefully explicated.

6.4.9 Key moves are rehearsed and given code names which may be called by designated onfield leaders.

6.4.10 First phase, second phase and broken play are considered.

6.4.11 Onfield communication is critical.

6.4.12 Code words are assigned to set plays, such as with lineout calls.

6.4.13 Onfield decision-making is the primary prerogative of the captain, assisted by input from other onfield leaders.

6.4.14 The front five (tight five) forwards are believed to be critical in establishing a team's dominance in play.

6.4.15 Team talks through the week focus on the match.

6.4.16 Certain teaching styles by the coach are preferred by players seeking full understanding of the plan.

- 6.4.17 Coaches emphasise the enjoyment of a match.
- 6.4.18 Coaches stress adherence to the rules of play and avoidance of “dirty play”.
- 6.4.19 Coaches note occasions may arise when referees do not act on apparent illegal play, necessitating players activating their own response or retribution action within parameters of an informal “code” illegal onfield acts of aggression.

6.5 *Consider referee.*

- 6.5.1 The referee’s onfield decision-making and rulings will be a key factor and impact upon the plan’s efficacy.
- 6.5.2 Team leaders do not appear to fully evaluate referee styles and decisions in their game planning.
- 6.5.3 Players take physical retaliation against opponents’ illegal play if the referee does not take action.
- 6.5.4 The referee is under-utilised as a source of information on realities of onfield decision making by the team’s leaders.
- 6.5.5 The referee’s style and decision-making in preceding matches is rarely analysed by video.
- 6.5.6 Team coaches meet with the referee some time before the match day to discuss rule interpretations.

6.6 *Game plan build-up.*

- 6.6.1 The match week build-up is based upon the game plan.
- 6.6.2 Players are significant in contributing ideas, understand their roles, and apply themselves in training.
- 6.6.3 Senior players or unofficial team leaders have significant roles.
- 6.6.4 Training and practice are critical factors.
- 6.6.5 Training develops key moves and player understandings of the game plan.
- 6.6.6 Option taking and risk factors are fully discussed and understood by the captain and key players.
- 6.6.7 Training and practice should be well planned, set in a game plan and match context, involve all players, and maintain morale.
- 6.6.8 Training involves all of the team.
- 6.6.9 Training sessions have a full and immediate use of resources.
- 6.6.10 Key positions and field units have particular roles.
- 6.6.11 Codes and game plan terminology are fully explicated to players.
- 6.6.12 Reserve players need full understandings, knowledge of the code calls and a feeling of being integral to the team.
- 6.6.13 Fitness and physical preparation are critical and optimising these enhances game plan options.
- 6.6.14 Commitment and player motivation are prominent in the team leaders’ talks, team interaction and motivational interaction.
- 6.6.15 The new players should be integrated and receive special confirmation on understandings of their roles and the game plan.
- 6.6.16 Team responsibility for performance is accepted by players.
- 6.6.17 The build-up to the match has a range of inter-related factors which influence the game plan, including morale, individual focus and socialisation.

6.7 *Game plan in action.*

- 6.7.1 The captain assumes an increasingly prominent role in the 24 hours before, and during, match time.
- 6.7.2 The captain’s onfield decision making critically links to leadership in the game and game plan knowledge.

- 6.7.3 The captain simultaneously monitors a complex range of factors during play to assess the game plan in action.
 - 6.7.4 The captain may draw upon key players onfield in considering the game plan's efficiency in the match realities.
 - 6.7.5 The captain must have the coach's full confidence to amend the game plan in play.
 - 6.7.6 Player enjoyment is stressed.
 - 6.7.7 Pre-match dressing room motivation emphasises key elements of the game plan and associated personal and team motivation.
 - 6.7.8 The coach has a secondary role to the captain in pre-match exhortations.
 - 6.7.9 The plan's relevance to the match reality is critical.
 - 6.7.10 A players' code of behavioural parameters exists which is not congruent with official rugby laws. (See propositions 6.4.19 and 6.5.3.)
 - 6.7.11 The coach observes the match critically so instructions regarding the game plan can be passed to onfield players.
 - 6.7.12 The coach's input at half-time in a match may enhance the plan's effectiveness.
- 6.8 *Game plan review.*
- 6.8.1 A skilled post-match analysis of the game plan's efficacy is critical.
 - 6.8.2 Video analysis is a valuable tool for game plan evaluation.
 - 6.8.3 Post-match evaluation can be enhanced by objective data gathering.
 - 6.8.4 Post-match reviews should include specific evaluation of the match in terms of the game plan and its objectives.
 - 6.8.5 Re-creation or simulation of the match's unsatisfactory game plan elements is rarely carried out to assist analysis.
 - 6.8.6 Post-match reviews by coaches and players are self-critical.
 - 6.8.7 Post-game analysis examines the extent to which players played to their abilities and fulfilled game plan requirements.
 - 6.8.8 Players have the opportunity for input into the post-match analysis.
 - 6.8.9 Coaches find their notes and video reviews are valuable in post-match analysis.
 - 6.8.10 Evaluation by key players diffuses leadership responsibility and allows for more detailed analysis.
 - 6.8.11 The referee is a source of information on the game plan and onfield leadership.
 - 6.8.12 Analysis includes a critical review of the period leading to the match, including training and pre-match preparation.
 - 6.8.13 Evaluation includes considerations for player and team development.
 - 6.8.14 Specific pre-match expectations or key strategies are rarely examined, at provincial level, in terms of match realities.
 - 6.8.15 Coaches and captains may attribute losses to external factors more than to factors which were in their control.
 - 6.8.16 Team leaders review a match in terms of individual and team development.
 - 6.8.17 Review at international level, includes specialist statistical analysis.
 - 6.8.18 Evaluation directly impacts upon selection and the game plan for a following or later match.
 - 6.8.19 Match evaluation has implications for team leader behaviours and development.
- 6.9 *Transmission of knowledge.*
- 6.9.1 The ability to convey information, change player behaviour and facilitate learning is critical.
 - 6.9.2 The coach may have a variable understanding of basic teaching and learning precepts when transmitting game plan knowledge.

6.9.3 Coaches need some understanding of players' learning styles and adult learning principles in order to effectively transmit knowledge.

The reality is that we can spend several hours to create a game-like situation of three minutes' relatively effective practice. Training is discussed beforehand with [the co-selectors] and always with captain. I run everything past him before we do it. I discuss new ideas with the players concerned. There are experienced honest players in every team. (All Black Coach, 1993.)

Even when it was 0-10 down, we were pretty confident. We could feel we were shaping the game and could just keep the pressure on as the group were working in so well. (All Black 1993.)

The game plan is central to the coach, to the captain, to the team, to flexibility if needed - and to winning. It's the result that matters! (British Isles player, 1970s.)

At the elite level the coach should seek input from players ... part of their motivation and desire is fostered by their being involved in policy matters and team tactics, it helps to keep them interested. Often the coach is an expert on all positions and master of none. To my mind the major quality a coach needs is man management, being able to coordinate the team, get them to achieve goals and implement the game plan. (All Black 1980s, 1990s.)

The game plan now has more importance than twenty or thirty years ago. All players need to feel they contribute - and the captain must be fully involved. The coach has a focus on the game plan. (All Black, mid 1980s Coach.)

7. MATCH

The elite rugby team match ...

7.1 Coach-captain roles.

7.1.1 Is the critical focus of the coach and captain's match week leadership.

7.2 Game plan.

7.2.1 Culminates the week of preparation based around the game plan.

7.2.2 Build-up follows a pattern of full team practices on each day of the week, except the day before the game when the match venue is visited and key moves or priorities discussed.

7.3 Match week build-up.

7.3.1 Has a distinctive weekly and daily pattern in its build-up.

7.3.2 Is the focus for team management and support staff whose roles and behaviour relate directly to this.

7.3.7 Has, at international level, a captain's meeting on the preceding evening, with only players present and a focus on the next day's match.

7.4 Match day build-up.

7.4.1 Has the coach's match-day role as motivational and supportive, with key reminders of game play essentials.

- 7.4.2 Morning is quiet and intense, with the coach speaking briefly before the team departs for the match.
- 7.4.3 Is travelled to in silence.
- 7.4.4 Has the captain as the dominant leader in the team dressing-room and game.
- 7.4.5 Has the coach supportive of individuals in the dressing room and interacting frequently with the captain.
- 7.4.6 Sees informal team leaders providing motivational input in the dressing room.
- 7.4.7 Generates public support expressed primarily through faxes from families and businesses.

7.5 *Match.*

- 7.5.1 Causes the coach to record major points about the match on tape or in notes.
- 7.5.2 Causes the coach to advise the onfield captain or key players via cellphone calls to support staff and using such persons or reserve players as messengers.
- 7.5.3 Has coach and captain input at half-time which may have a significant motivational and strategic impact.
- 7.5.4 Makes vital the captain's ability to read the game and make decisions accordingly.
- 7.5.5 Has teams judged by criteria broadly agreed upon by past elite players.
- 7.5.6 Referees have significant impact upon the game but their style is rarely considered or analysed prior to the game in terms of its potential impact upon play.

7.6 *Post-match.*

- 7.6.1 Brings relief firstly and joy to elite teams and their leaders when won at the international level.
- 7.6.2 Has formal team functions, organised by administrators, which may exclude past elite team leaders.
- 7.6.3 Has a dressing room environment which limits outsiders but includes sponsor representation.
- 7.6.4 Is characterised by drink, music and "reliving" key match moments in the after-match dressing room.
- 7.6.5 Has the coach speaking to the team in the privacy of the team's post-match dressing room.
- 7.6.6 Has a press conference with team leaders which usually includes consideration of the result, opposition, game plan, conditions and referee performance.

In 1959 we won the Ranfurly Shield from [South Island province]. Our captain said to us, "Guys, at some stage today I'm going to have to call for the supreme effort"....At a vital stage in the game [Captain One] went along the lineout and asked for that effort. We won 13-9. (Provincial and All Black player, 1950s - 1960s.)

2:47 p.m. The opposition score, and PT's captain gathers the team behind the line. He stresses the basic points of the game plan. "Discipline, ball retention, tackle," are his key words. (Provincial Team Observation: Match Three of present study.)

Test match rugby is measured by the win-loss ratio, and you can't argue with that. Quality rugby is important, but I would generally rather play scrappy rugby and win than play good rugby and lose. Overall, I want the team playing quality rugby, the winning will come. The rugby must be entertaining for the players, spectators and sponsors, and exciting and challenging for the coaches. The national team has got to be a leader in quality rugby. (All Black coach, 1990s.)

The highest level matches bring together so much that one person, or the public, wouldn't see - from the in-house team relationships to the dressing room. (All Black 1990s.)

The mental preparation is extremely important in creating the right environment leading up to a test. Preparation for the Scotland test had everything right and we were in the same hotel for a week. We had an intensive and thorough build-up. (All Black Coach 1994).

8. ALL BLACKS

In the highest level of elite rugby ...

8.1 *All Blacks.*

- 8.1.1 The All Blacks have a special place in New Zealand sport and rugby.
- 8.1.2 Selection for the All Blacks is the ultimate accolade in New Zealand rugby.
- 8.1.3 Intergenerational linkages are apparent across All Black generations.
- 8.1.4 Traditions are strong in All Black rugby and used for motivation and group cohesion.
- 8.1.5 Public support for the All Blacks is very strong with most messages coming from families, work place groups and individuals.
- 8.1.6 The All Blacks are immediately recognised and named in public settings.
- 8.1.7 Public debate is evident over candidates for appointment as All Black coach.
- 8.1.8 The views of past All Blacks and All Black leaders are sought in public debate or media controversy over elite rugby.
- 8.1.9 The media, in their coverage of sport and national events, emphasise the elite status of the All Blacks.
- 8.1.10 The iconic status of the All Blacks is illustrated in print, social intercourse, and the ready public and media use of players' nicknames.
- 8.1.11 The All Black environment is marked by symbolism, which is integral to team culture, tradition, and public awareness.
- 8.1.12 A high level of technical skills is expected of the All Blacks, to be honed by the coach.
- 8.1.13 Communication skills are critical in the All Black environment and can be developed further.
- 8.1.14 All Black players have a basal knowledge of nutrition, fitness and training procedures above that of the provincial team players.
- 8.1.15 The All Blacks utilise greater player input, self-analysis, match analysis, game plan specificity and higher motivational elements than do a provincial team.
- 8.1.16 Contemporary All Black test matches are considered by team leaders in terms of the team's development towards the World Cup.
- 8.1.17 Within the All Black team, players desire one-to-one time with the coach, preferably with a discussion focus upon player skills and development.
- 8.1.18 Leadership is often used by players to describe a key quality expected in the All Black coach and captain but is rarely explicated.
- 8.1.19 There is a fraternity of past All Blacks.

8.2 *Team culture.*

- 8.2.1 The All Blacks have identifiable elements of team culture.
- 8.2.2 The All Black team culture includes symbols, language, player roles, entry and exit, meals, social functions, meetings, expectations, behaviours and interactions.
- 8.2.3 Team culture is in keeping with All Black traditions.

- 8.2.4 Team culture may place the elite coach and captain in non-authority roles in social settings.
 - 8.2.5 Players have an awareness of their interdependence.
 - 8.2.6 Team culture is marked by a range of intangible and tangible symbols.
 - 8.2.7 The All Blacks are cognisant of their high public profile.
 - 8.2.8 Players desire assistance with personal education, career paths and personal skills.
 - 8.2.9 The multicultural backgrounds of players may not be reflected in team behaviour.
 - 8.2.10 All Black players have high self-expectations which reflect their belief that the only worthwhile All Blacks are good All Blacks.
 - 8.2.11 The manager has a significant role in All Black management but is secondary to the coach in terms of players' desire for leader approval.
 - 8.2.12 The All Black team culture partially includes a small group of support staff in test match week, such as doctor, fitness trainer, masseur and physiotherapist.
 - 8.2.13 Social interaction and team-only social settings are valued by the players and management.
- 8.3 *Opponents' perspectives.*
- 8.3.1 International rugby players view the All Blacks as the top team in world rugby.
 - 8.3.2 International rugby players, over generations, have common perceptions of All Black rugby.
- 8.4 *Public reactions.*
- 8.4.1 Public reactions to the All Blacks are variable but primarily supportive.
 - 8.4.2 The coach and captain influence the All Blacks' interaction with the public.
 - 8.4.3 The team leaders and players are not fully trained in public relations, interviewing or public speaking.
 - 8.4.4 Political leaders are perceived as using the All Blacks to further their own public relations.
 - 8.4.5 The All Black players and team leaders are aware of public expectations and team accountability.
 - 8.4.6 The All Black team leaders have a strong sense of accountability to the players.
- 8.5 *Commercialism.*
- 8.5.1 The All Blacks operate in a commercial environment.
 - 8.5.2 Commercialism is manifested in contracts, sponsorship, marketing and appearances.
 - 8.5.3 The major sponsor of the All Blacks has a constant presence through a representative or presence of the Chief Operating Officer.
 - 8.5.4 The Chief Operating Officer of the major sponsor provides private support and assistance to the All Black players and coach.
 - 8.5.5 Marketing of the All Blacks is not perceived by players as exceptionally skilled, commercially astute or especially supportive of the All Blacks' interests.
- 8.6 *Performance.*
- 8.6.1 The All Black test matches are the focus of all New Zealand media.
 - 8.6.2 All Black test matches receive more New Zealand media attention than any other sport.
 - 8.6.3 The coach and captain are placed under pressure to produce a winning team.
 - 8.6.4 All Black match play in the 1990s is featured by running, integrated, and technically skilled rugby, shaped primarily by the coach.
 - 8.6.5 The All Black players do not all have an excellent knowledge of rugby laws.

- 8.7 *Symbolism.*
- 8.7.1 The setting is replete with symbolism in language, rituals and artefacts.
 - 8.7.2 Symbols are drawn upon by coaches and captains in team talks and, especially for motivational purposes.
 - 8.7.3 The team jersey (and emblem of the silver fern) are especially prominent symbols.
 - 8.7.4 Symbols are drawn upon by the public and commercial interests.
- 8.8 *Politics.*
- 8.8.1 Local and national politicians associate themselves with the elite team.
- 8.9 *World Cup.*
- 8.9.1 The World Cup is an influence upon long term goals and related team development.
- 8.10 *Leadership.*
- 8.10.1 Leadership is often used as a term to describe the coach or captain role but is rarely explicated.
 - 8.10.2 Leadership in the All Blacks team is often provided by non-formal leaders.

I'll tell you about the silver fern - I was always called a hard man but when I heard my name called out in the All Black team at the Royal Hotel, I took off and raced home to mum! (1930s All Black.)

The match at Lansdowne Road, Dublin, in 1924, was tough. You New Zealanders know how to use well-trained energy. Ireland was defeated six-nil but we were well pleased to keep the score so low. (1924 Irish test player.)

Old All Blacks came up to us and said they could never remember an All Black side being physically weak. That's a club you'll join, the old All Black fraternity. Some of you will be part of that soon. They don't want the legend to die. (All Black Coach's team talk, June 30, 1993.)

When you put on that black jersey you become bloody unafraid and committed. We didn't really care if we were playing rugby or indoor basketball because once you get out there, winning was the main thing. There's no point in going out there as an All Black unless you're desperate to win. (1950s All Black Vice-captain.)

All Black captains previously had more control. Today, the captain looks more to the coach about tactics. The power relationships have changed between coach and captain in favour of the coach. (All Black Coach 1970s.)

9. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

In the elite rugby team's immediate social environment, or in society at large, ...

- 9.1 *Formal support.*
- 9.1.1 The elite rugby team has formal and informal public support.
 - 9.1.2 Formal public support is expressed through supporters' clubs, the All Blacks' Club and formal settings such as corporate lunches.

9.2 *Informal support.*

9.2.1 Informal rugby support is manifested through such indicators as attendance, membership, faxes and messages, and voluntary comments.

9.2.2 Rugby is a focal point or integral part of community life.

9.3 *Team socialisation.*

9.3.1 Social life after a match offers a private team-only period for the coach to speak to the players.

9.3.2 Music is part of elite in-team social life.

9.3.3 Beer is a visible element in socialisation.

9.3.4 Stereotypical perspectives of players as beer-swilling sexist persons are not supported.

9.3.5 Players relate with courtesy to other persons but wish to acquire greater social skills.

9.3.6 Past elite teams have engaged in anti-social or deviant behaviour.

9.4 *Gender.*

9.4.1 Gender attitudes vary.

9.4.2 Sexism within elite teams is not necessarily as apparent as in rugby literature.

9.5 *Families.*

9.5.1 Player's families are valued by the players and team leaders.

9.6 *Multiculturalism.*

9.6.1 Recognition of multiculturalism in elite team is not practised.

9.7 *Public recognition.*

9.7.1 The elite rugby team has an impact upon the public.

9.7.2 The impact of the elite team is affected by media presentation.

9.7.3 Commercial firms capitalise on the high profile of elite teams.

9.7.4 Hero worship of the All Blacks is evident.

9.8 *Sponsorship.*

9.8.1 The impact of elite rugby team sponsorship is manifested in the media, billboards, test grounds, product shaping and team uniforms.

9.8.2 See 8.5.3 and 8.5.4 above.

9.9 *Overseas perceptions.*

9.9.1 The All Blacks have an impact upon overseas rugby.

9.9.2 The All Blacks have a high public profile in South Africa.

9.9.3 The All Blacks coach and captain are high profile sports persons in rugby orientated countries.

9.10 *Media.*

9.10.1 The media have a marked impact upon public perceptions of elite teams, particularly the All Blacks.

9.10.2 The relationships between team leaders and media are sometimes variable.

9.11 *All Blacks.*

9.11.1 The All Blacks are the team which has the greatest recognition by the public and media in rugby and within New Zealand.

9.12 *Societal setting.*

9.12.1 Rugby is a socially constructed sport with meanings attached to it by participants and non-elite rugby society.

The rules and disciplines on the field are transferred to community life. Rugby is a stepping stone to self esteem. (1940s All Black and later Provincial Coach).

There's more to life than rugby. (All Black Captain, June 30, 1993.)

I didn't think too much of [famous overseas coach and administrator] when he was as drunk as a skunk on double gins; and the night before the big match he was at a Presbyterian Church saying New Zealand rugby players drink too much. (1950s All Black.)

Rugby draws New Zealanders together. Rugby, because it is a team game, forms a natural basis for a successful community - the same principles for getting on together apply in every case. It teaches how to accept success, graciously and humbly. Rugby, through to All Black level, teaches how to face loss and adversity with a strong backbone and a will to win. For many people - men and women players and coaches - it can be a stepping stone to self-image and self-esteem. It provides natural non-academics or slow learners with a chance to enhance their personal qualities. Rules and discipline on the field can be transferred to community life. It leads to acceptance by team-mates and people outside the team, utter commitment and selflessness. (1940s and 1950s All Black, Provincial Coach.)

I don't go along with some so-called team traditions such as that of having to drink a lot of beer. (All Black Captain 1992.)

10. ADMINISTRATION

In the domains of elite rugby ...

10.1 *Team appointments.*

10.1.1 Team leadership operates in an environment influenced by rugby administration.

10.1.2 Team appointments are made by rugby administrators.

10.1.3 The appointments of elite team leaders may not be free of controversy.

10.1.4 The appointment of the All Black coach has aroused marked controversy.

10.2 *Administrators.*

10.2.1 National rugby administrators are not perceived positively by elite rugby players.

10.2.2 National administrators do not have programmes to develop rugby team leadership.

10.2.3 Players are not fully consulted by rugby administrators on matters affecting them.

10.2.4 Rugby administration is variably adjusting to professional rugby.

10.2.5 Team leaders do not receive especially strong resource support from administrators.

10.2.6 Provincial administrators vary in their perceived management expertise and sport business training.

- 10.3 *Resources.*
- 10.3.1 Elite rugby teams have more limited resources provided by administrators than do iconic teams in overseas elite sports.
 - 10.3.2 Material resources which could enhance the impact of team leaders include team rooms, changing rooms, tackle gear, electronic timing equipment and teaching equipment.
 - 10.3.3 Human resources for the team could include a masseur, video resource person, and sport psychologist.
- 10.4 *Decrease violence.*
- 10.4.1 Players are supportive of administrator moves to eliminate rugby violence.
 - 10.4.2 Players and team leaders desire consistency in administrator responses to incidents of illegal play.
 - 10.4.3 Coaches and captains can impact upon the level of onfield ethics and violence.
 - 10.4.4 Teams seek consistency from referees, nationally and internationally.
- 10.5 *Marketing.*
- 10.5.1 Marketing of the sport has been variable in quality and impact.
 - 10.5.2 Players have felt they have been inadequately marketed.
 - 10.5.3 The All Black marketing by their sponsor has been strong.
- 10.6 *Professionalism.*
- 10.6.1 The professional rugby era has led to elite provincial captains and coaches being paid by their provincial unions and by the NZRFU at All Black level.
 - 10.6.2 The shift towards professionalism has not changed the basic roles and qualities of the coach and captain.
 - 10.6.3 Professional rugby increasingly presents challenges for administrators.
 - 10.6.4 The team leaders have more financial security than previously.
 - 10.6.5 The coach has greater “control” over player time and commitment in professional rugby.
 - 10.6.6 Players need guidance on such matters as careers, educational or trade training and financial planning.
- 10.7 *Interaction with players.*
- 10.7.1 Perceptions of administrators by players and team leaders are varied.
 - 10.7.2 There is a need for close liaison between the team leaders and player representatives and administrators.
 - 10.7.3 Administrators could do more to enhance the security of players’ careers and life after elite rugby.

“Young Vic” Cavanagh was the best coach, like a brilliant lecturer, his use of words, determination, pitch of voice, everything. He kept everything simple, even when teaching new ideas, didn’t ever confuse the players. But the administration politics stopped his appointment to the All Blacks. (1940s All Black, All Black Team Manager, Provincial Captain.)

I get so bloody annoyed when the guys are playing their guts out and the administration doesn’t seem to give a damn! (All Black Provincial Coach 1992.)

The [Rugby Union] Council have an inaccurate picture of the coach. As a Councillor I had a different idea of him from what I have seen as All Black manager. I really admire the guy and his coaching. (All Black Manager, July 8, 1994.)

At the provincial level, some unions will find it hard to get the best coaches and captains as rugby administration won't have the big money needed. (Provincial Rugby Executive 1995.)

I don't think the players realise how much we do for them. (NZRFU Councillor 1994.)

11. TEAM LEADER EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation of the elite rugby coach or captain could consider ...

11.1 *Respect.*

- 11.1.1 The respect which the team presently have for the leader.
- 11.1.2 The development of respect, over time, for the leader.
- 11.1.3 Respect for the team leader(s) by knowledgeable rugby persons.

11.2 *Results.*

- 11.2.1 The results of matches played by the team.
- 11.2.2 The percentage or ratio of winning matches compared with matches lost.
- 11.2.3 Results in terms of the quality of opposition teams.
- 11.2.4 Competition results and the team's final placement.

11.3 *Team dynamics.*

- 11.3.1 The team's morale and well-being.
- 11.3.2 Player interaction, cohesion and mutual support.
- 11.3.3 Team enthusiasm.
- 11.3.4 Commitment to training and team interests.

11.4 *Match play.*

- 11.4.1 The quality of the elite team's onfield playing style.
- 11.4.2 Team and individual standards of playing and technical skills.
- 11.4.3 The cohesion and pattern of the team's play.
- 11.4.4 Onfield decision making and option taking.
- 11.4.5 The ability of the captain and key players to read the game and make requisite decisions.
- 11.4.6 The apparent ability of the coach and captain to generate maximum team commitment and playing skills.
- 11.4.7 The appropriate, efficient, and creative use of onfield tactical moves.
- 11.4.8 Clear, effective and concise onfield communication.
- 11.4.9 Player ethics and acceptance of the referee's decisions.
- 11.4.10 The players playing to their perceived potential.

11.5 *Team development.*

- 11.5.1 Discernible indicators of team development, on and off-field.
- 11.5.2 The development of team unity, playing standards, relationships, public relations, winning matches, and playing style.
- 11.5.3 Factors such as team-building, balance of experience, and injured players which impact upon results.

11.6 *Evaluation modes.*

- 11.6.1 A range of evaluation techniques not always apparent in elite rugby teams.
- 11.6.2 Little used techniques such as full match videos of individual players for analysis by team leaders.
- 11.6.3 Developing clear criteria related to team goals and the game plan.
- 11.6.4 A range of team leader evaluation resources being developed by rugby authorities upon which coaches and captains could draw.

11.7 *Leader development.*

- 11.7.1 Implications for development of the elite rugby team leader.
- 11.7.2 The views of past All Black team leaders expressing a need for elite team leader preparation and development.
- 11.7.3 Utilisation of past elite team leaders, mentors, rugby team leader research, player input, and persons external to rugby to enhance team leader development.
- 11.7.4 The relevance of elite rugby team leader evaluation and development for other interdependent team sport leaders.

Signs of a well-led team are the fitting into a pattern ... the side that's communicating ... you can see cohesion in a well-coached side. (New Zealand Rugby League Coach.)

I judge a team by: well drilled moves in set play; capacity to change tactics effectively; captain playing positively with a high skill level and leading from the front; a motivated team; tactics providing evidence of the team attacking areas of an opposition weakness; and the impact of the half-time talk. (New Zealand Hockey Captain.)

I look at the way they come on to the field, take up their positions and the coherence in their play. I look for communication, discipline, technical skills and some sense of enthusiasm, even at the highest level. Consistency in play, and the response to pressure with clear leadership and player support are critical. (1990s All Black.)

There is more systematic analysis of the opposition in today's top teams, with professional and psychological support. Fitness has been upgraded and nutritional ideas influenced teams. The use of video analysis is valuable. I wonder if the game plan is really analysed in detail after the game. (1950s All Black Captain.)

We simply do not develop our top coaches, and certainly do not develop captains. This is a real area of need. (Famed All Black Captain.)

I believe the best captains are born but I also believe very good captains can be made. Whether born with leadership ability or not, any captain can be developed by clear direction of the role of captaincy and by exposure to being captain and by the experience of fulfilling that role - and by constant feedback and analysis. (All Black Captain 1980s.)

9.4 REFLECTIONS ON THE PROPOSITIONS

The theoretical propositions outlined in the preceding section were generated by qualitative research data, as discussed in Chapter Four, and resulted from a belief that “new theories are needed to discuss interactive leadership processes that unfold over time in social systems” (Yukl, 1989, p.279).

Rugby was not seen by participants in the present study as either simple (French, 1980; James, 1983; Stewart, 1983) or complex (McLauchlan and Dickinson, 1981; Van Heerden, 1967), but illustrative of Allen and McLean (1970) in that there are simplicities overlaid by complexities. The team leaders in the present study outlined clear overviews and then underpinned these with game plans, tactics, individual interaction and complex coded moves.

The first two categories from which theoretical propositions were drawn were those of the inter-related **coach roles and qualities**. The literature review emphasised the qualities of motivation and communication, attitude, planning and tactics (see Figure 3.7). Clear thinking and intelligence (see Hendry, 1969) were seen strongly by commentators, as was an understanding of players. The All Black coach was methodical and goal-oriented (see Baria et al., 1993). The present research, in a male rugby context, emphasised the term “man management” which respondents described as inclusive of the team leader’s understanding of players, relating to them and developing clear team dynamics. The impact of the coach (Deans, 1987; Williams, 1991) was perceived as central to team fortunes. One of the two coaches in the participant observation phases was not clearly organised but had strong interpersonal qualities. The other reflected Ogilvie and Tutko’s (1966) suggested traits of intelligence, some inflexibility, being well organised, conscientious, emotionally stable, sociable, dominant, trusting and was perceived at times by rugby persons as having a relatively low interest in others.

The coach role in action reflected all broad theories of leadership (see Chapter Three). Vic Cavanagh illustrated the “Great Man” theory; the coalescing of coach qualities (see Appendices F.6, G.5, G.11) indicated a belief in certain traits; and past player accounts of outstanding team leaders tended to support behavioural leadership theorists. Contingency theorists were illustrated with varied approaches to certain opposing teams. Varying leadership styles according to the team level and player maturity (New Zealand Colts or All Blacks, for example) pointed towards the path-goal theory, being reflected in one coach’s flexible leadership styles from relatively autocratic

to collaborative and democratic (“okay, if you’ve worked that out I’ll wear it”). Transactional leadership was observed in certain Provincial Team and provincial team leader situations (see, for example, the comment, “The coach has tried and given us every opportunity and in the end it has to come from the players” in Appendix E.4). Transformational leadership was illustrated by player comments that, following a highly motivational week of team talk(s), “there was no way we were going to lose”. Past All Blacks and international players also provided perspectives on transformational actions of leaders (see Appendices B.1 and B.2, also Figure 8.9).

Coaching emerged from the present study as an art with its strong affective and interpersonal elements, and also emphasised scientific aspects such as match analysis, use of video analysis, objective formulation of key points of the game plan and use of specialists in fitness, nutrition and rugby techniques (see Stewart, 1976, and Woodman, 1993). The impact of rugby knowledge, tradition and team norms were evident (see Chapter Seven).

The literature indicated the leader and coach quality of sharing a vision (Kirk, 1994, April 7; Kouzes and Posner, 1987; see also Figure 3.3) and this was confirmed in the present study. The Provincial Team coach had a vision for the Ranfurly Shield game and the All Black coach frequently expressed his visions for the All Blacks (see Chapter Seven and Appendix F.8).

The coach’s personal qualities were emphasised by players, and coaches in the provincial and All Black teams were valued for their honesty and organisational skills. The development of a game plan and positive linkage with the captain were important -- with few provincial teams optimising the latter.

Figure 3.12, with its emphasis upon technical skills, strategic analysis and man management, is reflected in the coach role propositions of the present research. Overall, the informal literature placed an emphasis upon the coach’s personal qualities and tactical skills at the elite level. The present study confirmed this, but with a greater degree of importance than is reflected in present coaching manuals. The elite rugby coaches broadly exhibited achievement paths similar to those noted by Salmela (1994).

The elite rugby team coach, given the pressures of impending competition (the match) is faced with a short time-span to develop the team and game plan. At various times of the rugby season the players come under a range of coaches, (e.g., provincial, Divisional, All Black trials, age

groups, Barbarians, Maori, Super 12 or All Blacks), unlike elite athletes in track and field or elite athletes in other team sports who may be virtually wholly coached by one coach or a constant group of coaches. The relatively directive nature of the elite rugby coach reflected findings of such literature as Pratt and Eitzen (1989a, 1989b) and Salminen, Liukkonen and Telama (1990). Although seeming to contradict Daly (1984), the compressed time-frame of a test match week may indicate the reason for mature player acceptance of some elements of coach autocracy.

The **captain's roles and qualities** indicated in Figure 3.4 were reflected in the present study's theoretical propositions and thus given research validation. Broad thrusts of captaincy noted in the present study (see 3.2.2) are reflected in the findings of this study (see Mosher and Roberts, 1981; Patterson, 1981). Playing ability was critical: "He must lead from the front" was a frequent comment which appeared with greater force in the field research than it had in the "overseas" literature (see also Figure 3.10). Such a quality was exemplified in past All Blacks' comments commending All Black captain Five in Chapter Eight. The captain's roles also include off-field responsibilities and relating positively to players, with personal and public qualities noted from the literature review being reflected in the present study. The perspectives of Luke (1984) in Canada, Watkins (1980) of Wales, Cotton (1981) from England, the South Africans Friedlander and Telbutt (1949), and the Scot, Rutherford (1971), indicate a broad overall commonality of the present study's findings and overseas literature on elite rugby captaincy qualities.

Captain-coach linkages were emphasised in the literature (Frost and Uttley, 1981; Greenwood, 1986; James, 1983; Thornett and Easton, 1966; Watkins and Dobbs, 1971). However, there was not a strong indication of how such links could be fostered. The present study provides (Propositions 1.5.1 - 1.5.4 and 3.5.1 - 3.5.3) a starting point for this, and the observations and interviews with the coach and captain in Chapters Five and Seven illustrate the linkage. Critical to this is the need for discussion of the captain's selection and role. The provincial team leaders provided research evidence that this was not done consistently or thoroughly.

The literature review noted the lack of research on rugby team leadership and the comparative dearth of elite captaincy research. The present set of categories and theoretical propositions provide the starting point of research on this leadership role. The propositions indicate the captain's place in the model, with evidence underpinning this from observation, interviews, questionnaires and document analysis.

The elite rugby team did not receive the same emphasis in literature as did the coach, although the present study indicates **the team** is an important category. The game plan is dependent upon team player qualities and capabilities but these are not emphasised to the same extent in the literature as suggested in the present study. Indeed, the research evidence of this study compels a close consideration of the team's culture, traditions, skills, cohesion and environment, for example, in terms of leadership actions. Organisational culture was noted in the literature as important and an avenue of potential research (see Schein, 1990b; Slack and Kikulis, 1989). This was also noted in the participant observation records and the symbolic interactionism reflections (see, for example, Chapters Five and Seven).

Of central essence to the team leaders and the outcome of their efforts is **the game plan**. Although the number of properties in this category of elite rugby team leadership is limited, the depth and force of research evidence underlying these is reflected in the range of theoretical propositions they generated. The role of the coach as a game planner was noted in New Zealand rugby literature (see Figure 3.12) but not in that of the British Isles to a similar extent (see Figure 3.7). The present study places the game plan as a central element in elite rugby team leadership, with greater emphasis than is recorded in the literature. (Consider, for example, the perspectives of opposing coaches and captains in Chapter Six, the Ranfurly Shield match in Chapter Five and the observation of the All Blacks in Chapter Seven.) The game plan links with the team leaders' personal philosophies and vision of how the game should be played.

The elite rugby **match** fused preceding categories and saw a partial transition in leadership dominance with the captain assuming, pre-match and during the match, the more prominent role of focusing the players and providing onfield direction and decisions. The literature was limited on elite rugby match preparation, pre-match settings, and the range of leadership skills required in the actual match context. In this context the referee was found, in the present research, to have a valuable function in providing feedback on the team's onfield leadership and cohesion.

At the ultimate level in New Zealand rugby the **All Blacks** provide a rarefied environment for team leadership. The New Zealand rugby literature, primarily of a biographical nature, tends to focus upon the All Blacks but that team had not been researched, despite their dominance in world rugby, until this present study. The All Blacks' tradition and internal standards are rarely explicated in rugby literature, in terms of team leaders in action or the informal team leaders. The present study's criticism of Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) and their possible lack of weight

accorded to team intangibles (see Chapter Three) appeared to be supported by the All Blacks research phase but less so with that of the Provincial Team which was not observed to have a similar culture. The All Black phase of the present study emphasised the role of informal team leaders, their expectations of peers, and influence on and off the field.

The present research indicated three categories of elite rugby team leadership and three consequent sets of propositions which may be termed as environmental forces acting upon the leadership setting. The **social environment** (propositions group 9), **administration** (group 10) and **team leader evaluation and development** (group 11), each impact upon the coach role and qualities, captain role and qualities, team, game plan, match and the All Blacks. Examples were noted or observed in the present study to validate these categories and their resultant propositions.

Reflecting upon the theory generated by the present study the categories and propositions broadly reflect the literature on coaches and captains and underscored the literature which indicated that the coach role now prevailed over that of the captain (see, for example, O'Connor, 1975; Williams, 1976). The present research confirmed this, with the coach having responsibility for the captain's selection and team preparation for elite matches. Examples of findings which did not emerge as strongly in the literature as in the present research were the critical focus of the game plan, the roles and qualities of the captain based on research, match evaluation, referee, the impact of rugby administration, and the presentation of a model of elite rugby team leadership which could assist considerations of team leader roles and behaviours or the development of these.

9.5 A MODEL FOR DEVELOPING ELITE RUGBY TEAM LEADERSHIP

Despite the prominence of rugby union football in New Zealand and the perceived importance of the coach role in athlete and team performance (Chelladurai, 1981; Rapaport, 1993), there is no guide for developing elite team leaders within the sport. Findings from the present study, coupled with the strong belief expressed by rugby persons such as the great All Black captains in Chapter Eight that rugby team leadership should be more systematically developed, reinforced the researcher's intention to express the theoretical findings in a model of elite rugby team leadership which could then be considered as the basis for such team leader development. It was felt that this could link theory to practice and provide administrators from rugby and other team sports with a focus for facilitating the development of elite coach and captain leadership.

The literature review in Chapter Three noted the lack of research based coaching models. Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria and Russell (1995) emphasised the lack of comprehensive frameworks “that represent the complex reality within which coaches work” (p.2) and noted the lack of conceptual models which account for the full range of variables in the coaching process. The proposed model below draws upon the research phases discussed in Chapters Five through Eight which employed research processes advocated in the literature (see, for example, Cratty, 1989; Gould et al. 1989; Horn, 1992; Horne and Carron, 1985). The model provides one response to Kuklinski’s criticism that “there is a paucity of research and conceptual literature about leadership in sport situations even though coaching requires one to be a leader” (1990, p.9). The proposed model may well complement those of such researchers as Chelladurai (1978, 1990) and Côté et al. (ibid.), although the former does not provide for a variable such as competition, and the latter model’s components at the elite level may gain further strength when substantiated through ongoing observation of coach behaviour which could confirm its interview based research.

A model may be described as “an abstract way of presenting the relations between social phenomena” (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, 1994, p.269). The theoretical propositions in the present study express elite rugby team leadership phenomena discerned through grounded theory research. Consequently, the proposed model below may be seen as a representation of the researcher’s paradigm of elite rugby team leadership (see Figures 9.2 and 9.3). Kolbe, Iversen, Kreuter, Hochbaum and Christensen (as cited in Levy, 1991) describe a paradigm as a theory that has become dominant in a discipline and had its adequacy tested “through research procedures than can be replicated” (Levy, 1991, p.196). In the absence of literature providing such a paradigm of elite rugby team leadership, the present model with its constituent theoretical propositions may be regarded as an initial and tentative meeting of this need.

The proposed model is based on the rationale that grounded theory and the present research:

- (i) Indicate a set of phenomena illustrative of elite rugby team leadership.
- (ii) Provide a set of theoretical propositions, rooted in elite rugby team leader behaviour, which have implications for present and future elite rugby team leaders to consider.
- (iii) Outline elite rugby team leadership theory which is not available in the literature.
- (iv) Express theory as the basis for a programme to develop elite team leaders.

The present model of Elite Rugby Team Leadership is grounded in field data generated by participant observation, interviews, questionnaires and document analysis as indicated in Figure 9.1 and incorporates the categories and theoretical propositions noted in this chapter.

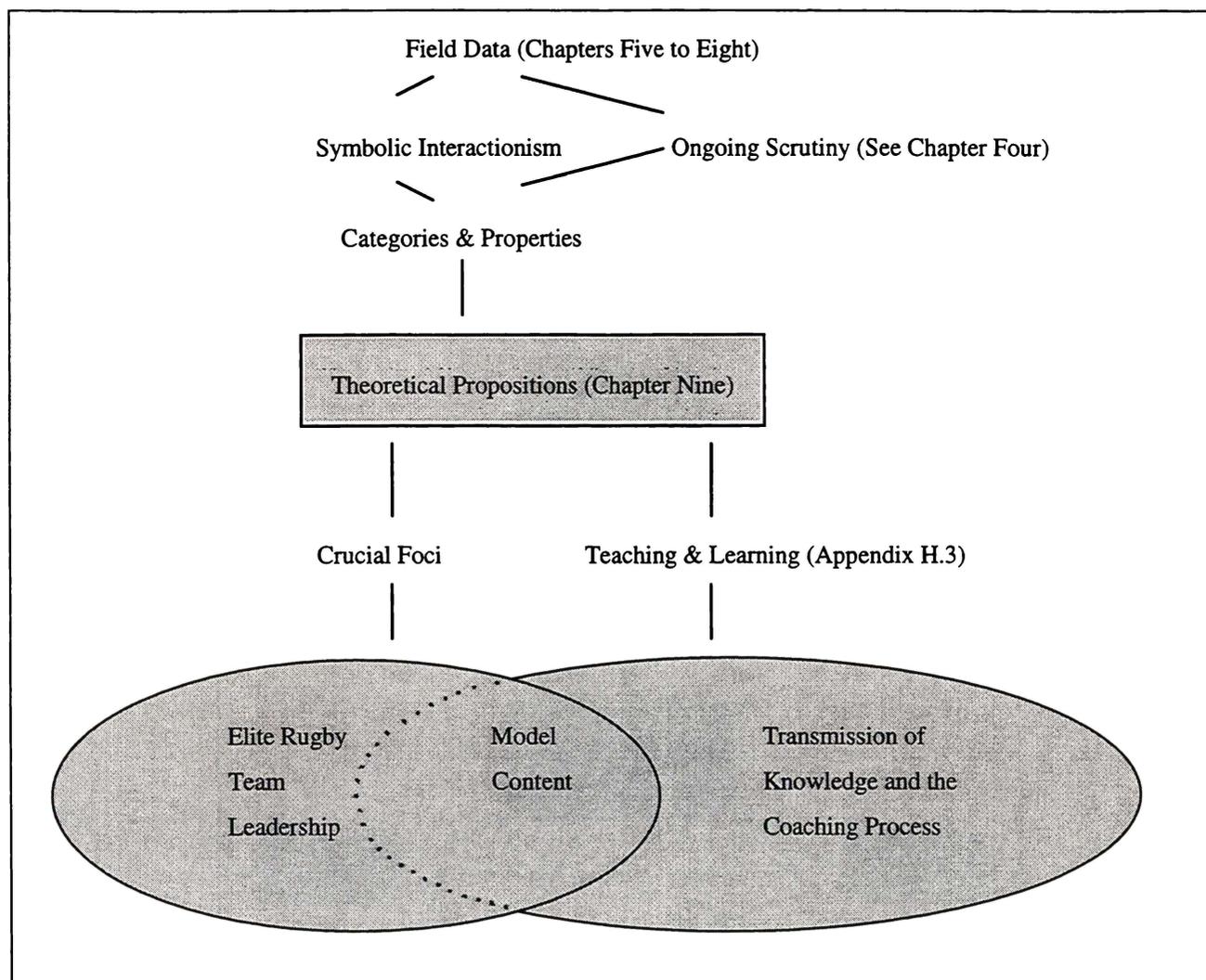


Figure 9.1 Schematic outline of content development in a model for developing elite rugby team leadership.

Model Content

From the present study, and as noted in the literature, the coach is the key figure in the elite rugby team environment. The model (Figures 9.2 and 9.3) builds links from the coach roles and qualities, particularly with the other primary team leader, the captain. Their interaction, noted strongly in the present research data, provides the initial framework for the team setting. Given the utilisation of qualities in association with the role, the coach appoints the captain and selects the team. The team leaders will work together to initiate the game plan in terms of the particular team.

The game plan is critical in the enactment of elite rugby team leadership and is interlocked with the match. The match is seen as a reflection or indicator of coach and captain efficacy, having influenced their preparatory behaviour, such as in terms of considering the perceived opposition quality or game plan implications. Beyond the “normal” elite team lies the prospect of selection in New Zealand’s iconic team -- the All Blacks.

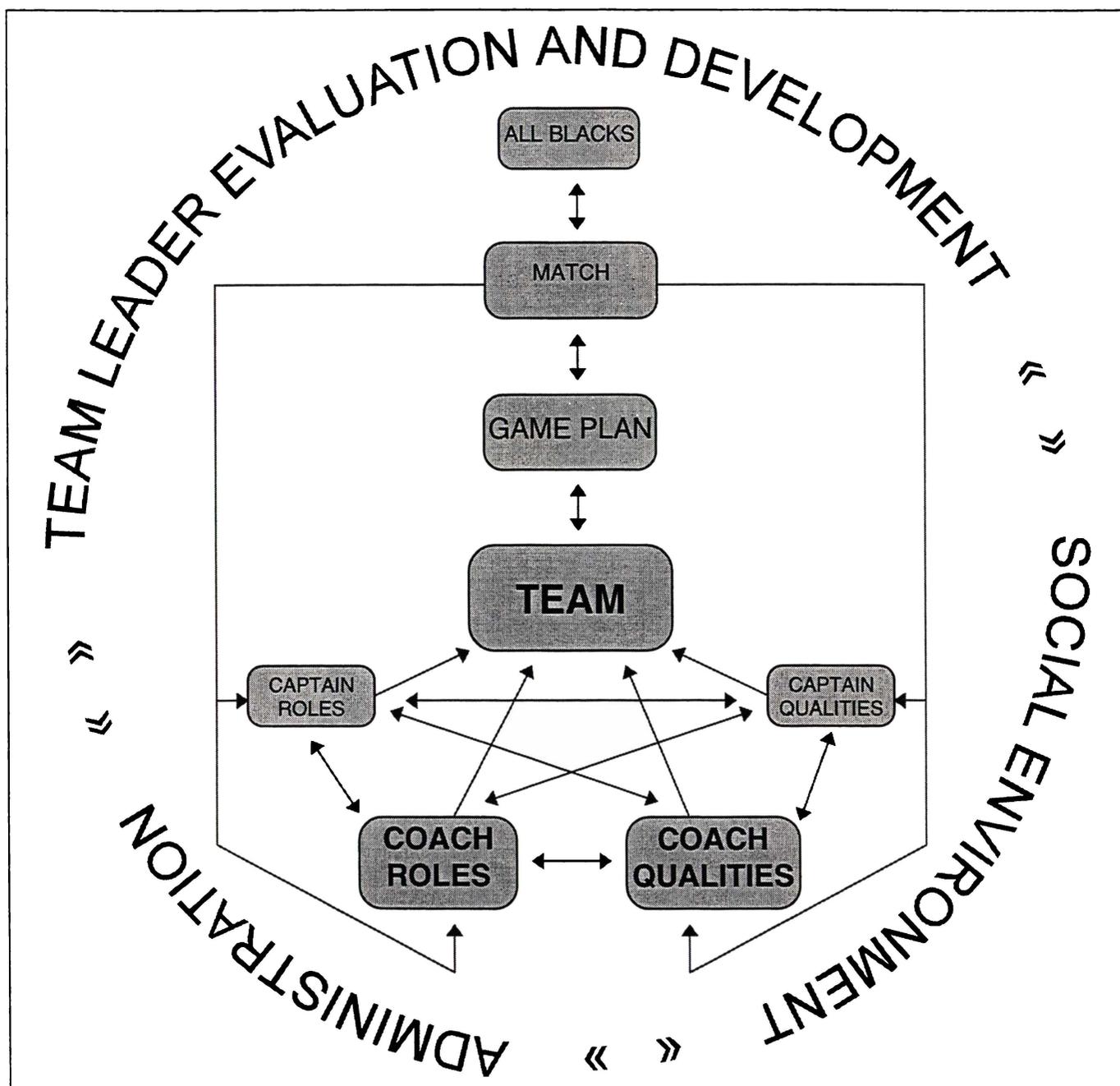


Figure 9.2

Theoretical propositions as model components : A first perspective.

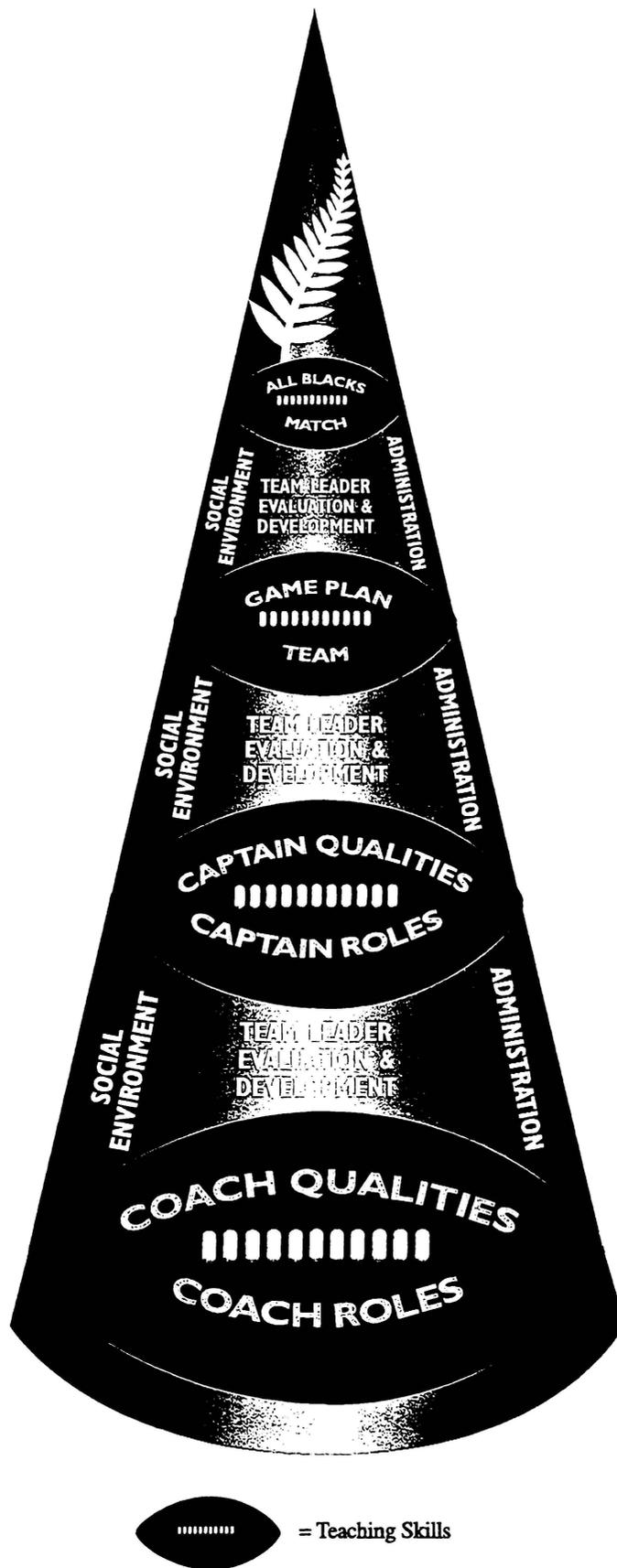


Figure 9.3 Theoretical propositions as model components:
A second perspective.
(See Chapter Nine for content of the theoretical propositions)

A different perspective of the model is presented in Figure 9.3. The model is now seen as a hierarchical representation, indicating the possible progression of components. Impacting also upon all model components are the propositional forces of team leader evaluation and development, social environment and administration. The first of these influences selection of the coach, and coaches in the present study were evaluated by the governors of the game who confirm or replace that coach. Administration affects the team at all levels -- selection (through the coach, for games arranged by administrators) to All Blacks (in schedules, support, sponsorship agreements, for example). The social environment is operative at two levels -- with the pervasive place of rugby in New Zealand society and within the team's social environment. Critical reflection on the match, and the processes of team evaluation and development may lead to a new focus on the coach roles and qualities.

9.6 FROM MODEL TO DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMMES : SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The model provides a possible basis for responding to the lack of research-based programmes to train and develop elite rugby team leaders, and the fact that current NZRFU rugby coaching courses do not recognise such elements as the game plan, the match, and elements of team leader roles such as coach-captain linkages. "Very seldom is any meaningful help given or training available to coaches" noted a former All Black coach (Stewart, 1987, p.134). Despite the current but limited rugby coach manuals noted in the literature review:

There is, however, a need to deliver a more sophisticated and elite training programme for those people with the interest, skill and aptitude to develop to a higher level which will ensure that New Zealand rugby remains at the summit of the international area (NZRFU, 1992, p. 12).

The present model could be taken as the foundation for such a programme with its implementation guided by precepts such as those which follow (see Appendix H.3; see also, for example, Bandura, 1977; Berliner, 1992; Crandall, Eiseman, and Louis, 1986; Dembo and Gibson, 1985; Doggett, 1957; Showers, Joyce, and Bennett, 1987).

Precepts for a Programme to Develop Elite Rugby Team Leadership

Programme Basis

- The programme is based upon a model of craft-content legitimation which provides evidence of perceived elite rugby team realities and is based upon field research and consequent theory.

- Understandings of team culture, personal change, organisational (team) renewal, and the belief that norms of elite team leadership can be shifted, underlie the programme.
- The programme design and its validity or relevance of content may be more important than the training or qualifications of the programme instructor.
- The programme will enhance formulation of a personal philosophy and vision, goal setting, trust building, team development, collaborative relationships, problem solving, decision-making, and person-management -- but recognise individual responsibility and appropriate authoritative or autocratic team leader behaviour.

Participants

- Team leaders' acquisition of new skills and knowledge draw upon experientially framed knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and cues framed in their rugby and life environments.
- The self-efficacy of programme participants is a prerequisite to change. Competent team leaders with high self-esteem usually gain more from the programme than those lacking self-confidence or competence.
- The ability of participants to self-reflect and evaluate their leadership actions and needs furthers their motivation and responsiveness to the programme.
- Elite coaches and captains who are flexible thinkers are more likely to adopt and adapt new skills and concepts into their leadership styles.
- Coach and captain practitioners have an external press for immediacy and concreteness of content.
- Participants are adult learners (see Appendix H.3).

Programme Principles

- Team leaders can generate change in players and teams.
- Team leaders can change their behaviour.
- The programme has relevance for developing elite team leaders in non-rugby sports.
- Programme participants are more likely to inculcate new strategies and team leadership concepts if they receive guidance and reinforcement while trying these in simulated and actual team settings with support.
- An appropriate grounding, sense of familiarity, basic ability or predisposition towards a new element of the programme facilitates acceptance and acquisition of a new skill.
- The cognitive or intellectual level of the programme is critical.
- Individual differences are not only expected but may be desirable.
- Theory and practice must have team, game plan, and match reality relevance.

Teaching

- In the rugby context, coaching is dependent upon the ability to communicate, and the ability to "understand the learning procedures" (Stuart, 1978, p. 88).
- Team development programmes can draw upon teaching precepts and critical factors of team and staff development (see Appendix H.3).
- Learning activities should be theoretically sound, reality related, and provide for learner participation.
- (See Appendix H.3 for further teaching considerations.)

The programme presenters' teaching skills should include such qualities as enthusiasm, personal flexibility, self-confidence, empathy, openness, motivation, facilitation, advocacy, applying knowledge, building of programme support, and understanding learning needs and styles (see Appendix H.3). These should also be understood by, and developed with, the programme participants to enhance their role effectiveness. Programme evaluation criteria could be determined by participants. These may be based on group-set determinants, personal expectations, programme content relevance, positive changes in participant behaviour, goal-free evaluation (judging by the actual effects irrespective of intended effects), player survey, and operational performance.

The programme sequence would progressively develop understandings of the components noted in progression in Figure 9.3, with an emphasis upon inter-relationship of content as indicated in Figure 9.2. The participants would possibly be assigned mentors to facilitate their development. Given the research support in the present study for a clear team leader philosophy, the programme could open with the sharing of coach philosophies and build upon sound pedagogical principles and self-reflective analysis as advocated by Kidman (1994) (see also Bishop, 1991). Teaching skills are essential in teaching the programme and as coach qualities (see, for example, Black, 1990; Gould et al., 1990; Joyce and Showers, 1982; Kidman, 1994; Stuart, 1982; Tharp and Gallimore, 1976). The need for consideration of players' preferred learning styles, illustrated in the present study by responses to the September 1993 All Black questionnaire (Appendix F.5), could be the subject of programme in-basket or group exercises to consider their implications for coach behaviour.

Each component of the programme (see Figure 9.4) could be developed as a module with its own interactive media activity, video film for analysis, mock interviews, simulation, case studies, critical incidents, observation, analysis, in-basket exercises, demonstrations and use of multiple modes of learning (see Appendix H.4 and, for example, Gehrke, 1988; Zimpher, 1988). The programme provides potentially exciting opportunities for material to be drawn from real situations to generate elite rugby team leader problem solving. The verity of these enhances coach participation and provides the basis for invigorating discussion which allows present coach knowledge to be respected, shared and considered. Consider, for example, the All Black coach outlining the team situation and environmental pressures he faced in the Match Two week (see Chapter Seven) and programme participants being challenged to plan a game plan accordingly. The match expectations and reflections of the provincial coaches in the present study could be

examined in terms of actual planning and evaluation. Referees could be brought in to add their perspectives of onfield leadership, as noted in the present research. Actual coach and captain pairs could be interviewed to elicit their shared and dissonant perceptions of selection, roles and elite rugby team leadership, reflecting the second research phase of the present study.

The programme then, has the potential to be a stimulating exploration of elite rugby team leadership beyond the technically oriented manuals and resources presently available. The NZRFU recognition of the need for an elite programme (noted above) illustrates the possible value of such a research-based and theoretically validated practical process as suggested here. The programme duration could be the equivalent of a three week training course but could be spread over an off-season series of consecutive workshop weekends, structured for independent study manuals and video-conferencing, built into existing tertiary or coach qualification courses, utilise distance learning principles, or have selected components studied in depth. One possible abbreviated version of the programme could draw upon the basal propositions noted in Figure 9.4 and be developed over a one week pre-season course with subsequent mid-season and post-season sessions.

<i>Teaching Skills</i> (Appendix H.3)	
Team Leader	Coach Roles 1.1 - 1.3
Evaluation and Development 11.1 - 11.6	Coach Qualities 2.1 - 2.6
Administration 10.1 - 10.3	Captain Role 3.1 - 3.5
Social Environment 9.1 - 9.2	Captain Qualities 4.1 - 4.7
All Blacks 8.1 - 8.2	Team 5.1 - 5.5
Match 7.1 - 7.6	Game Plan 6.1 - 6.8

Figure 9.4 Model content: Basal propositions.

[Numerals indicate relevant theoretical propositions.]

9.7 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The outline of research categories, theoretical propositions, model of elite rugby team leadership and suggested programme for developing such leaders had its genesis in the set of research questions which underpinned the present study. These were :

1. *What are the team leadership roles of elite rugby coaches and captains?*
2. *How are these leadership roles enacted at an elite level?*
3. *What are the most important qualities of elite rugby coaches and captains?*
4. *How are these qualities illustrated at an elite level?*
5. *Given the team leadership roles and qualities of the elite rugby coach and captain, how can these best be developed?*

The primary answers to Questions 1 and 3 were outlined in the categories and properties of the current chapter and considered further through the theoretical propositions which followed. The roots of these lay in the present study's field research which provided understandings of answers to Questions 2 and 4. The research data have been illustrated in the present thesis and are available from the researcher in various formats.

The fifth of the basal questions drew its answers from the research and responses generated by the preceding four. The present chapter has outlined a model of elite rugby team leadership which provided the basic content for a programme to best develop elite rugby coaches and captains. Integral to such a programme's effectiveness are considerations of programme development, teaching skills and content relevance which have been noted above (see 9.6) or outlined in the appendices (see Appendix H.3). A possible module sample from such a programme is provided (see Appendix H.4) to illustrate the possible programme in action.

9.8 SUMMARY AND REVIEW

The present study was guided by research questions (noted in 9.1 and 9.7 above) which led to field data generated from four research phases. Data in each research phase generated particular sets of properties and categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Strauss and Corbin, 1994) which were shaped by grounded theory and symbolic interactionism. These four sets of categories were

fused into a master set of categories and presented in this chapter, which led to a set of theoretical propositions expressing a theory of elite rugby team leadership. In turn, these propositions provided the basis for a proposed model of rugby team leadership, with components outlined in Figures 9.2 and 9.3. The model was seen to provide the basis for a programme to develop elite rugby coaches and captains. The need for such a programme was noted in the literature and illustrated by present research content which is not available in current manuals or rugby coaching courses. Precepts for implementing such a programme were noted and suggestions made for its practical implementation considered, along with the provision of a sample module and teaching guide in Appendices H.3 and H.4.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter outlines the research questions that underpinned the present study, summarises the research process, reflects critically on the research path, and analyses particular challenges faced by the researcher. A summary of the major research findings is presented, as well as suggestions as to how the findings might connect with programmes to assist coaches and captains at all levels of the rugby code. Recommendations are made on use of the study, with discussion of further research that might be pursued as a result of the study.

- 10.1 Research Retrospective
- 10.2 Reflections on the Research Methodology
- 10.2.1 Symbolic Interactionism
- 10.3 Summary of the Research Findings
- 10.4 Further Research
- 10.5 Concluding Remarks

10.1 RESEARCH RETROSPECTIVE

Rugby in New Zealand dominates the national sportscape (Chamberlain, 1992; Crawford, 1988; Palenski, 1992). Through the country's sporting history this winter game has developed its heroes, symbolism and centrality in social interaction, workplace discussion and the media (O'Connor, 1975). At the pinnacle of international rugby, the All Blacks team is "the most formidable rugby force the world has ever known" (Edwards, 1984, p.44). Within this elite rugby world -- and beyond it, into the populace -- the All Black coach and captain are special figures (see Chapter Two of this present study). Despite their apparent impact on high level teams and public perceptions of these, the elite team leaders have not been studied at first-hand to provide knowledge and understandings of their actions as coaches and captains.

The literature review in the present study endorsed, at the elite level, the belief of Terry and Howe (1984) that "a thorough review of the sport leadership literature reveals how little is really understood about the effects of the coaching process" (p.188). Researchers such as Côté, Salmela, Trude, Baria and Russell (1995) emphasise the need for information on variables in the coaching process. Given the apparent influence in team sport of the coach and captain, and assumptions made about team leadership roles in the literature, there seemed little first-hand information on what the elite team coach actually did (see Chapter Three).

The lack of research on rugby, and elite rugby coach behaviour, led to the formulation of research questions that prompted the researcher to utilise qualitative research methods to draw out first-hand understandings and perceptions of elite team leadership from key actors in the elite rugby world (see Chapter Four). These questions were:

- 1 What are the team leadership roles of elite rugby coaches and captains?
- 2 How are these leadership roles enacted at an elite level?
- 3 What are the most important qualities of elite rugby coaches and captains?
- 4 How are these qualities illustrated at an elite level?
- 5 Given the team leadership roles and qualities of the elite rugby coach and captain, how can these best be developed?

A working definition of leadership was formulated as, “leadership is an influence relationship through which leaders and followers intend real change which has mutual acceptability and individual commitment” (after Rost, 1991, p.104). The research focus was upon the coach primarily, reflecting the clear emphasis in the literature on the primacy of this role in modern elite rugby, and the captain as the other major team leader.

Participant observation, interviews, questionnaires and document analysis were used to obtain elite rugby participants’ perspectives and provide first-hand data on actual settings of the elite rugby coach and captain. There were four primary phases of research: a provincial team; provincial team leaders; New Zealand’s national rugby team, the All Blacks; and a multiple group of past All Blacks, overseas rugby test opponents, and team leaders from elite non-rugby teams (see Chapters Five, Six, Seven, and Eight respectively).

The researcher entered the elite rugby world after a trial of methodology with a secondary school rugby team that refined aspects of the research process. The field was not entered with predetermined theories of coaching in mind but with a perspective that may be expressed as : “Let’s see what these leaders do and find out how they are seen by players and others affected by their actions.”

Immersed in the field of the elite rugby leaders, the researcher observed, listened, asked, photographed, recorded, read and responded to a myriad of situations and information. Given the seeming centrality of symbols in rugby it was decided to examine the emerging data for meanings

and associated symbolism beyond the readily apparent or literal description. The coach and captain were found to enact their roles on elite stages constructed by circumstance but spotlighted by symbolism. Symbolic interactionism (Fine, 1986) was used in each research phase for this purpose, uncovering meanings and underscoring the relevance and significance of data.

The circumstances of the elite rugby team leaders included onfield and off-field actions and influence. From all of these team settings grounded theory was applied as a methodology to develop organisation and conceptualisation of data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Data were subjected to a constant comparative method in which they were continuously compared as they emerged and were recorded. This mode of comparative analysis generated categories or groupings of data which had a common theme or linkages. The present study outlines categories generated by the data of each research phase, and critically considered through a symbolic interactionism methodology (see Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight).

Each of the research phase categories of elite rugby team leadership were merged in Chapter Nine, with some modification resulting from a retrospective analysis of the cumulative weight of data from the completed research. This master set of elite rugby team leadership categories formed the basis for developing a set of theoretical propositions on elite rugby team leadership. The theory was thus grounded, back through the master set of categories and research phase categories, in the data generated by the qualitative research in the field.

“Without a general model on coaching, the knowledge accumulated through research remains disconnected information related to how and why coaches work as they do” (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria and Russell, 1995, p.2). Thus, the present research study drew upon its formulated theory in Chapter Nine to construct a model of elite rugby team leadership (see Figures 9.1, 9.2, 9.3). This provides, for the first time, a model which can be utilised by elite rugby administrators - and those in non-rugby team sports -- as the basis for a programme to develop elite coaches and captains. Initial suggestions were made in Chapter Nine for the implementation of such a developmental programme.

10.2 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher experienced trepidation in the initial stages of the research and found a personal disposition towards organisation and empirical research at odds with the seemingly fluid state of qualitative research. The trial methodology was of marked assistance and the first -- and most sustaining -- lesson of the research study was learned, namely, to record everything possible as the importance of behaviour was not always evident at the time. The need to ask if uncertain and to rid oneself of an uncertainty about personalising the research record were also noted. "Indeed, the feelings, actions, motivations of the *I* are often a central aspect of the way research gets reported" (Sparkes, 1992d, p.280). Increasingly a reflexive awareness developed, facilitated by checking records with the subjects, and with the researcher's supervisor who was both an academic person and a past elite level rugby player.

Sparkes (ibid.) argues that the ethnographer's text is neither innocent nor neutral. The researcher quickly found this and attempted to have all material double checked (triangulated) or read critically by the subject to ensure that the account accurately captured the setting or the essence of the action. The All Black setting provided challenges of "going native" as the researcher developed close interpersonal links with the team and, especially, its primary leader. Coach read the observation records and responded in depth to questions seeking understandings of his coaching actions or philosophy. At times the researcher was asked by the coach for certain suggestions or viewpoints which, in one sense, compromised elements of neutrality, yet reflected the acceptance of the researcher's presence. Three examples come to mind.

Firstly, the coach wanted to develop a quotation for a team talk and asked the researcher to assist in its construction. Refusal seemed inappropriate as the researcher had achieved a full acceptance and ease of relationship with the group and as a "group member" a refusal was inappropriate. Assisting the coach refined his words but not his intention or the overall impact of his action. Bain (1989), Griffin (1989) and Sparkes (1992a) all provide support for the argument that the "subjects" are, in reality, fellow participants who share decision making and sense-making processes with both parties enriched in the process.

On a second occasion the researcher was addressed directly in one team meeting by the manager (see Match Four, Chapter Seven) and demurred an answer but was pressed by the manager. To

avoid argument the researcher answered the question when queried a second time. This was the only time in the three research years with the All Blacks that the researcher felt any discomfort.

A third example was the inevitable Friday question, “How do you think they are?”, asked of the researcher by Coach and Assistant-Coach. This was always a burden for the researcher -- the iconic team were playing a test on the next day and the team leaders sought relatively neutral feedback on their teams’ morale and preparedness. The researcher was always honest but was acutely aware that he had a lack of elite team experience and could misread situations. Fortunately this did not appear to happen.

The researcher’s notes and questions on teaching techniques did appear, to the researcher, to influence the reflective coach whose teaching technique developed over the three years. For example, the use of advance organisers and wait-time by the coach appeared to increase, and the researcher felt that this shift could have been influenced by researcher-subject interaction. The coach did not believe this occurred to any marked extent (see Appendix H.1). In contrast to this, Harris (1983) notes the impact of the observed culture on the researcher. This occurred in the Provincial and All Black teams. The researcher and players related well and personal warmth was indicative of the researcher-team leaders relationship. Consequently, actions of the coaches and captains may have been viewed a little less critically in the researcher’s records than another observer may have noted. On the other hand, an awareness of this possibility heightened the researcher’s resolve to validate observations, impressions and interpretations as fully as possible.

The researcher’s awareness of this possibility led to the checking of records with participants, obtaining the research supervisor’s perspective, and the use of a “researcher-as-symbolic-forum” approach. In this latter mode the researcher took the imaginary stance of being part of an observing forum and asked himself such questions as, “If another observer were present, how could they interpret this behaviour?”, or, “If I had to describe this to an absent evaluator, what might they ask me?” This was a valuable process at certain times in anchoring the researcher and was a device not emphasised in the participant observation literature. Ultimately the researcher’s sense of integrity was critical.

Harris (1983) argues that such researcher immersion may be advantageous as it, “permits an investigator to interpret the salient features of the culture within the broader, more general cultural context in which they are situated” (p.88). Locke (1989, 1992) seeks systematic

observation, which is coupled with Smith's (1992) case for writing that catches the pulse of the lifeworld and "allows us to catch hold of what it means to be situated there" (p.87). These illustrate the tenets which underlay the sustained observation periods of the present research. Eight tests, for example, over three years meant more than eight full weeks of virtual 12-14 hour day observations, including telephone calls, meetings, interactions, interviews, sending observation records for checking, document gathering, and a range of contacts. The researcher's unrestricted All Black access led to a virtual saturation of data by the conclusion of match eight. Given the essentially personal construction of observation research the researcher has presented a comparatively wide range of observational records -- including verbatim samples -- in this present study to indicate contextual realities and the mode of recording.

A major subject or research participant in the present study was the All Black coach. It is rare in qualitative methodology literature of participant observation to hear the voice of the research subject reflecting on the research process. Consequently, at the end of the study, Coach was interviewed by the researcher to ascertain subject or prime actor perspectives on the research process and to add a further dimension to understandings of the present research (see Appendix H.1).

10.2.1 Symbolic Interactionism

The world of sport's symbolic meanings may illuminate the world of the coach (Melnick,1986). The elite rugby world proved to be replete with tacit and shared understandings, with ritual and symbol (Sheard and Dunning, 1973). The researcher approached the symbolic interactionism perspectives of the present research with no prior experience of this methodology. Increasingly, the symbolism developed a set of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic keys which opened partially camouflaged doors. Entry to the elite team revealed symbols which increasingly moved from the material (such as the jersey or silver fern) to the intangible (traditions, language and beliefs).

"The symbolic significance of rugby is now widely recognised in New Zealand" (Cleveland, 1967, p.211). Within elite rugby team settings the symbolic significance of word, artefact and action is rarely examined. The use of symbolic interactionism enhanced understandings for the researcher of the team leader behaviours and their interaction with the team. The focus in each research phase upon symbolic expression provided at once a close-up lens and a depth of understanding which added to the researcher's critical reflection on the research data. Some symbols were

explained by players in terms of personal relevance, such as the jersey, but others were not readily explained, such as the meanings of seating arrangements.

Symbolism extant in the elite teams of the present study is indicated in an examination of Appendix H.2. Photograph H.2.i provides associated symbols in set play terminology such as the scrum, back move, openside, blindside (on the photographer's side of field), the pre-test day ritual at the test ground, positions and the game plan. An examination of H.2.ii indicates the three faces of a test victory -- relief, weariness and celebration. The *Moët & Chandon* champagne illustrates the All Blacks' sponsors who provide the champagne through their business links. The iconic black jersey (with the sponsor's label signifying an increasing commercial symbolism in elite rugby) and silver fern (seen on the black jacket) have been discussed in this study. The clothes represent formal settings for the All Blacks, with the in-team terminology of "Number Ones" referring to the jacket, tie, white shirt and grey or dark trousers (see also Provincial Team, Chapter Five).

The photograph in H.2.iii of the team room corner presents a range of symbols typical of those discussed in research phases of the present study. Not obvious outside the team is the masseur as a supplementary team group person, not officially sanctioned at the time by the NZRFU and whose travel was understood to be assisted by personal payments from the All Blacks. On the table is a player noted within the team for his enjoyment of massage. Sponsor symbols are on the wall and the insignia of another major sponsor is on the player's shorts. The whiteboard provides further insights into the elite rugby substructure. Terms such as "tidy casuals", five players' nicknames (of which perhaps two would be widely known to the rugby public), and the "dropout" [kick] are indicative of team terminology.

The team room signing of rugby balls symbolises commercialism and team generated income. Some signings generate direct, and perhaps unofficial, team income. Symbolism in the H.2.iv photographed seating is seen with the inclusion of the doctor and physiotherapist as part of the team signing the balls. Each ball has a number against which each individual team member signs. The seating illustrates "senior pros" within the team, with four veterans seated together. The room is set aside for the elite team and no members of the public, or even players' family members, enter.

Symbolic interactionism provided a distinct set of lens for viewing the research data. This led to reconsideration of some data, and confirmation of other, in the generation of properties and categories. Below the elite level, the symbolic congruence of rugby and a New Zealand way of life may be shifting and a number of past All Blacks and administrators commented upon the weakening of club and rural rugby -- an aspect of contemporary rugby that may need investigation.

10.3 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings were outlined in detail in the categories and theoretical propositions of Chapter Nine. In summary, these findings were located in the elite rugby team leadership categories of:

- Coach roles
- Coach qualities
- Captain roles
- Captain qualities
- Team
- Game plan
- Match
- All Blacks
- Social environment
- Administration
- Team leader evaluation and development

Personal philosophies and vision lay at the heart of the team leader roles. The coach has primary roles of selector and team strategist. Allied to these are personal qualities and the ability to develop a unified team commitment to a clear game plan. The game plan emerged as a critical finding, with an importance greater than that noted in the literature. The captain's role is centred on "leading from the front" and decision making onfield, as well as being an off-field role model with the ability to relate to players. Qualities of communication are vital. Coach-player interaction was found to be a critical dimension of elite team leadership, as was the coach-captain relationship.

The symbolism and qualitative methodologies associated with participant observation underscored the importance of team culture, traditions, goals, team leaders and team development (see Lipsky, 1978). This was particularly apparent in the All Blacks context. The research also indicated the coach's multi-faceted role at that elite level, ranging from assistance with career placement to private disciplining of players. Perceptions of the elite rugby coach and captain roles and qualities were similar from past All Blacks and overseas rugby opponents. This suggests a possible relevance of the present research to elite rugby leadership in other rugby playing countries.

The present research indicates that sexist and drink related behaviour was evident in the social environment of elite rugby, but cannot be said to be characteristic of that environment (c.f. Donnelly and Young, 1985). The elite sphere does not appear to be consistently characterised by the effectiveness of rugby administration.

An interesting finding was the emergence of the leadership category of team leader evaluation and development. This did not emerge until the researcher's critical re-evaluation of accumulated field data. Team leader evaluation and development was illustrated in Chapter Eight with insights from former All Blacks, particularly great captains.

The research results, outlined in Chapter Nine, concluded with a model of elite rugby team leadership and discussion of this as the basis for a programme to develop such team leaders. This could utilise handbooks, interactive technology materials, or activity based programme participation for each component of the model (see Figure 9.3) to be developed as a learning module (see Appendix H.4 for an example). The New Zealand Rugby Football Union, or an overseas rugby administration, could develop an elite team leader course from the model and programme discussion in Chapter Nine. Such a programme could progressively cover the model's content over, say, a ten-weekend series of summer (i.e., non-rugby season) workshops. Alternatively, workshops could be built around relevant and selected groups of propositions in Chapter Nine for specific weekend or one-day courses or a combination of workshops and distance learning. Critical in any such programmes are the presenters' teaching skills (which are essential skills for coaches) and guidance for these is noted in Appendix H.3.

The model of elite rugby team leadership appears to have potential for lower levels of the sport. For example, the game plan component may have a generic relevance for coaches and captains planning for a match at any level of rugby. Similarly, the qualities of the coach or captain, or

elements of their roles such as coach-captain linkage in the propositions and model, provide a basis for team leader development and workshops at any level of rugby. Such courses could draw content from the present research as determined by an appropriately constructed rugby leadership planning group. Such a group could be comprised of practitioners recognised by their peers, (see Chapter Eight), the researcher, administrators, and representatives of lower level practitioners.

10.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

The present research offers the first “inside” picture of the elite rugby team leader in action over a substantial period of time and the first such qualitative research of an international team’s coach, and captain. Despite the plethora of popular writing on rugby in New Zealand and manuals available on coaching, no coherent outline exists of elite rugby coaching or captaincy. The methodology discussed in Chapter Four, the four research phases, presentation of the research findings in Chapter Nine, and this Chapter’s research retrospective, provide an audit trail for subsequent researchers.

Women’s rugby is developing in New Zealand and the All Blacks’ homeland has the international rugby world’s premier women’s team. A caveat at the commencement of the present research noted this study’s examination of elite male rugby, (and the consequent recording in the research of such gender oriented terminology). The study’s findings, given informal discussion between the researcher and women’s rugby team leaders, might well have relevance for women’s rugby (see also Laws, 1993, and O’Reilly, 1993, for confirmation of this). The theoretical propositions and model derived from the present study are non-gendered in terminology, although drawn from male elite rugby team settings. The study could be replicated with elite women’s teams.

Further research would be beneficial with interdependent team sports other than rugby. Discussion and semi-structured interviews with elite non-rugby interdependent team leaders in the present research indicated relevance of the study to leadership in those sports. (Similar discussion and informal interviews with national women’s team leaders provided informal support for this perspective in women’s team sports also.) Sports other than rugby could be researched to determine appropriate leadership understandings and possible guidance for elite coach and captain development utilising the methodology drawn upon in this present research.

Rugby (and other interdependent team sports) below the elite level could be investigated to ascertain team leader roles and qualities at those levels. The present study's research methodology could form the basis of such an investigation. The findings with school-age teams for example, might or might not share a degree of congruence with the present study. Similarly, the relevance of the theoretical propositions to various levels of coaching such as self-coaching, informal, assigned, formal, or professional (see McConnell, 1995a) could be examined. Although the present study had a focus upon an interdependent team sport, independent sports could be explored with a similar methodology.

Certain aspects of elite coach behaviour may not have been revealed in the present research. Consideration of athlete and coach experience in other spheres of sport could indicate aspects of elite team leadership to be further researched in a rugby environment. An example is the coach's role in facilitating, with individual players in a team environment, the autotelic experience of "flow" or "state of grace" which is an ultimate fusion of physical, emotional and mental dimensions of the athlete. (Such a state was noted by a small number of All Blacks in the present study.)

An example of further research possibilities comes from examination of the model developed in the present study and coach models such as those of Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria and Russell (1995) and Chelladurai (1993). The models may be seen as having differing conceptual and behavioural orientations, but do provide certain common elements such as considerations of the situational factor or characteristics of participants. Further research could consider the efficacy of the models in actual elite coach settings.

Finally, critical reflection by the present researcher, prompted by the theoretical propositions related to administration and needs espoused by great All Black captains and coaches for more leader development, raised key questions for further research. Given the present study's suggested content for possible elite rugby team leader training programmes, a range of resultant questions arose which included those following:

- Who develops the coaching process?
- Who controls this process?
- Who determines what is to be taught, known or propounded?
- Who interprets and re-interprets the processes of coaching and captaincy?

- What are the pedagogical, moral, and ethical responsibility parameters of developing and enacting the elite rugby team leadership process?

10.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Rugby is the major sport in New Zealand, and its growth as an international sport is achieving initial recognition in moves to reclaim its Olympic Games status. Coupled with the lack of studies of actual elite coach and captain behaviours, the present research has presented one qualitative study of such leadership actions and generated a set of theoretical propositions which now provide the basis of a model of elite rugby team leadership and a focus for team leadership development and further research in rugby.

In the present study the researcher's ability to constantly examine and critically compare data was challenged and re-challenged by circumstance and a sense of research integrity. Vigilance was effected through triangulation, dialogue with the researcher's supervisor, and critical reflections in the Researcher's Notebook. The weight of diverse elite rugby perspectives coalesced to present the first theoretical outline of elite rugby team leadership. Other elite team sports may well benefit from critical reflection on the study's relevance to their particular leadership roles.