



British Hills Knowledge Base: New Zealand Sports

Rugby Union

Rugby is the most popular sport in New Zealand. Internationally, there are two types of rugby; rugby union and rugby league. Rugby union is the most popular type in New Zealand.

In New Zealand rugby is a winter sport, and people all over the country watch or play. Rugby is often played in New Zealand from elementary school, through high school and up into club rugby. Both men's and women's rugby is popular. Most high schools have a rugby team and boys try to make their school's "1st XV" (first fifteen), so called because there are fifteen players on a rugby team.

Most school or club teams will practice once or twice a week, with a game on the weekend. The social aspect of rugby is very important, with club team members having beers after the game with the opposition team.

Skillful club players are selected to play for their area in the national competition, the **National Provincial Championship** (NPC). The best players from these teams can become professional rugby players, playing in the Super Rugby competition. Today, this competition involves teams from New Zealand, Fiji, Australia, and Pacific Island nations, and South Africa, Japan, and Argentina have previously competed.

The men's national team of New Zealand is one of the most famous teams in the world, the **All Blacks**. The All Blacks have the highest winning rate of any major sports team in the world, while the women's team, the Black Ferns, have won the Women's World Cup 5 times.

The All Blacks famously perform a Maori war dance, the "**Haka**," before each game.

Rugby League

Another sport that is popular in New Zealand is rugby league. Rugby league has 13 players on each team and, unlike rugby union, play stops and resets with every tackle. The attacking team can be tackled 6 times before they have to give the ball to the other side, so generally there are 5 tackles and the attacking team kicks the ball before the 6th tackle. The one-on-one hits in rugby league are generally harder and more aggressive than rugby union.



Cricket

Cricket is usually ranked as the second most popular sport in the world, and is the most popular summer sport in New Zealand.

Cricket is a bat and ball sport with 11 players on each team. There are many rules for cricket and it is a difficult sport to understand for beginners, but it is very fun to play.

Today, there are three types of cricket; **Twenty-Twenty** cricket, which is the newest form of cricket, with games lasting a few hours; **One Day International** cricket, with games lasting a whole day; and **Test Match** Cricket, where games go for 5-days! Test Match cricket is the closest to the traditional form of cricket.

As you can imagine, cricket can be a very slow sport to watch. At home, however, New Zealanders sometimes play **Backyard cricket**. Many New Zealand houses have big gardens or yards, so “backyard” cricket means an informal game of cricket played in someone's garden. Because gardens are different shapes and sizes, different gardens have their own special rules, for example: “if you hit the ball over the fence into the neighbour's garden you get 6-runs, but you are out.” Backyard cricket is often played on long summer evenings after a BBQ.

British Hills has its own version of backyard cricket in our popular British Sports lesson. Come and learn to play cricket with us!

Netball

Netball is the most popular women's sport in New Zealand. Netball is similar to basketball, except that the nets do not have a backboard and players are not allowed to run with the ball. This means when an attacking player catches a pass, they must stop, stand still, and pass the ball to another player.

There are five players on each team and games are very fast-paced. In New Zealand, netball is a winter sport and many high schools and elementary schools have a netball team. There is also an international netball tournament, called the ANZ Championship, played between five teams from New Zealand and five teams from Australia. The best players from the New Zealand teams are selected to play for the New Zealand national team, the **Silver Ferns**. Recently, men's and women's mixed social netball teams are also becoming more popular.

British Hills Knowledge Base New Zealand Sports: Questions

Read about sports in New Zealand, and answer the following questions:

1. What is the most popular sport in New Zealand?

2. What is the most popular women's sport in New Zealand?

3. What is the most popular summer sport in New Zealand?

4. How many players are there on a team in the different types of rugby?

5. What is the name of the New Zealand national men's rugby union team?

6. What is the name of the New Zealand national women's netball team?

7. What is the Haka?

<https://www.enjoybritish-hills.com/kbnzsports.html>

