

NOTES ON RUGBY PLAYED IN QUEENSLAND COUNTRY 1882-2002

This is a collection of data arranged by Andy Purcell. The writer will appreciate any reader who has more details, information or corrections contacting:

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THE ORIGINS OF RUGBY (DARLING DOWNS)

The original football played on the Darling Downs was based on Gaelic Football. The outstanding players were Fred Groom and James Tolmie afterwards Speaker of the Legislative Council of the Queensland Parliament which was abolished in 1922.

Between 1882 and 1886 there were constant arguments over whether to adopt Melbourne Rules or Rugby Rules. In 1886 due to the efforts of Neil McPhie, Job Stone, Gerald Barlow, Fred Way, Harry Hatton and J.C. Bain a Toowoomba Rugby Union was formed. This became the popular football code, although Melbourne Rules or to give it the modern term Australian Rules (AFL), survived in Toowoomba until the World War 1. The first teams were Moonlights, Paddingtons, Rockcliffe, Gordon, Aubigny and Rangers.

The first international visit was by the Maori team of 1889. The following Toowoomba men took part in the game, which became a legend in early Rugby. E.Cook, H.V.Carpendale, G.Boyce, F.Boyce, A.Saunders, C.Parmacott, C.Campbell, H.S. Barcendale, A.Christopherson, H.Hatton, J,Roidan , F.Huggins, E. Munro, J.C.Bain, K.Doran, Job Stone, R.F.Gardiner and E.Guppy. The Maori team contained the great pioneer of New Zealand Rugby the Warbrick brothers, Pat Rehoe, Davy Gage and Tom Ellison. The Maori giant Billy Warbrick was rendered hors-de-combat by a deadly tackle by Harry Hatton. Harry was the great "mauler" of his day, this term is very different to the term in the modern game. The laws then provided that if a player carrying the ball in "in goal" was so held that he could not ground the ball or the referee could not decide who had grounded the ball, the referee ordered a maul between two players. These pair attempted to rip the ball from the others possession while the rest of the teams watched. If the defending player prevailed a "save" was ruled and the ball was dropped out between the posts. In all cases if an attacking player grounded the ball in "in goal" no points were awarded but he was allowed to "try" to kick a goal, which if the ball passed between the post was worth five points. A goal from a mark was four points and a dropped goal was worth four points. Three points for a try was not awarded until the 1893-4 season. The final score was 16-0. The game was played on the Toowoomba Racecourse and it still must have been very much "bush"football to quote from the files of the Toowoomba Chronicle " Too much praise cannot be given to our local men who made such a gallant bid for victory and when a chance of scoring came they were cruelly disappointed by the ball striking a tree".

In the 1890's the game made steady progress, the club football was particularly keen and interesting. Rangers won the Meagher Cup numerous times between 1890 and 1898 and again in 1901.

Toowoomba secured representatives in the Queensland team the first being Bob Munro (1893-4) and Toby Doyle(1896-7). In the late 1890's electorate football was introduced, the town being divided into three wards; East, West and Central. West Ward was premiers in 1899 and East Ward in 1900. This only lasted two

seasons and the competition reverted to clubs. Boomerangs were premiers in 1906-1908, Past Christian Brothers in 1909 and Past Grammars in 1910.

In 1902 the QRU inaugurated Country Week carnivals in Brisbane. On the 26th June 1902 teams from Ipswich and West Moreton, Maryborough and Wide Bay, Gympie, Warwick, Toowoomba and Bundaberg played at the old Bowen Bridge ground.

Some scores were Maryborough defeated Ipswich 25 to 18, Gympie defeated Toowoomba 17-8: Bundaberg defeated Warwick 15 to nil. The first carnival was won by Gympie. On the 30th June 1902 the first country team was picked and played Brisbane, the scores being 16-15. Brisbane lead 16-nil at half time but collapsed in the second half. The team was:- Full Back J.Dunn (Gympie), Three-Quarters J.Canahan (Ipswich), Whittington (Bundaberg), J.Baildon (Bundaberg), C.Redwood (T'mba) Halves H.Hart and E.Rock both of Maryborough, Forwards C.Heidke (Bundaberg), D.McAuliffe (Gympie), T.Jackson (Warwick), J.Meibusch (T'mba), J.Bertram (T'mba), W.Marler (T'mba), M.McHugh (T'mba), A.Anderson (Bundaberg).

In 1903 Toowoomba, Warwick, Roma and the Border Union played as South West Districts, Rockhampton and North Qld were included. The 1903 match against the North Qld team reached a very high standard and was won by South West Districts 6-5. South West Districts won also in 1904 and 1905. Famous players in the Northern team included the Egan brothers, Sammy Sampson, Mark Dind and the Richard Brothers, Long Bill (EW) and Tom (Rusty). Bill played for Qld in 1903/4/5/7/12 and was captain on a number of occasions. He played for Australia five times from 1904-07. Tom toured with the 1908 Wallabies and was rated as the best forward in the World. He subsequently represented South Africa, England and France. The Richards Cup the trophy contested by the Wallabies and England is named after him yet it is rarely mentioned he was a Queensland Country player. The standard in the North was due to Harry Speakman who came to Australia with the Bob Seddon's British side in 1888. A Chesire and International half back, he remained in Brisbane, played for Qld in 1889-90-91. In 1892 he went to Charters Towers and captained and coached the Goldfields side for nine years.

The South West Side (Downs) was:

Full Back; Brigham Young. Three Quarters; Charlie Redwood, F.Ewald, J.Murdock, Percy Redwood) Five Eight: King Renwick). Half Back: Syd Schwilk.

Forwards: Jack Bertram, Jack Meibusch), Sine Boland, Bricky Freestone, Johnny McGlynn; Larry Kearney, M.Doyle and C.Schaffer.

Jack Meibusch played for Australia in 1904, Charlie Redwood in 1903/4 and Sine Boland originally from Past Grammars in Brisbane played in 1899 and 1903.

Another great performance by Downs was against Bedell-Sivwright's British Isles team in 1904. Downs lost 12-3 but this was the closest any team came to them in Australia.

The Downs team was: Full Back: Percy Redwood. Three Quarters: Charlie Redwood, Fred Ewald, Joe Murdoch, Ivor Davies

Five Eight: King Renwick. Half Back: Syd Schwilk; Forwards: Jack Bertram, Jack Meibusch, M.Doyle, Sine Boland, Bricky Freestone, Leo Redwood, Larry Kearney and Jack McGlynn.

A great try was scored by King Renwick whose performances that year stamped him as a great player.

He subsequently went to New Zealand and played for the famous Bay of Plenty team that then dominated the Ranfurly Shield. He was also a great coach and was sole selector and coach of the famous Toowoomba Amateur Rugby League teams in the first golden period of League in the 1920's. From 1930-1940 he was sole selector and coach of the Queensland Rugby Union team. During all this period he was Rugby coach at the Toowoomba Grammar School and they won many GPS premierships, the last in 1948.

An even better performance was the defeat of the full NSW team in 1911 by 14-11. The NSW side included Australian representatives, Freddie Woods, Ward Prentice, Danny Carrol, Larry Dwyer, Tommy Griffin, Harold George, Ted Fahey, and Jim Clarcken. The NSW side had previously been beaten by the Qld Team 24-3. Two Downs players were in the Qld side Copper Kent and Lou Meibusch. The full team was: Full Back: R.Burrows, Three Quarters: Herbert Callaghan, King Renwich, Tom Henderson, Lou Meibusch, Five Eight: Sam Parker, Half Back: R.Meibusch, Forwards: J.Thompson, D.Williams, Copper Kent (later replaced by W.Fallon), Penrose Burke, Frank Meibusch, J. McNamara, B.McGlynn and Ted Eastment.

Tries were scored for Toowoomba- Lou Meibusch (2), Frank Meibusch (1), Copper Kent kicked a goal from a mark (Three point from 1905) and Sam Parker converted a try.

This is a list of all the pre 1919 Country players who played for Queensland.
(Abbreviations :- NSW= New South Wales GB= British Teams in Australia, NZ = All Blacks, M= Maori teams.)

M.Ahern Warwick NSW 1913; W.Bawden, Rockhampton NSW 1913; A.Bolewski Bundaberg, NSW 1909,1910; W.Bolewski Bundaberg NSW 1909,1910 NZ 1910, M 1910; R. Broadfoot NSW 1897; C.Brown Toowoomba NSW 1908, GB 1908; J.Byrnes Mt Morgan NSW 1914. H.Callaghan Toowoomba NSW 1911; A.Carroll Charters Towers NSW 1913; H.Carroll Charters Towers NSW 1908; J.Curran Mt Morgan NSW 1903; A.Dick Charters Towers NSW 1913; T.Doyle, Toowoomba, NSW 1896,1897 NZ 1896,1897; D.Egan Townsville and Charters Towers NSW 1908; J.Egan Townsville and Charters Towers NSW 1908; A.Farmer Mt Morgan NSW 1908,1909, 1911, NZ 1910, M 1910; A.Fraser Townsville NSW 1913; J.J.Garry Gympie NSW 1905; J. Hanley Townsville NSW 1913, C.E. Hodgens Toowoomba NSW 1912; A.Horodan Toowoomba NSW 1913, A.W.Kent Toowoomba NSW 1909,1910,1911,1912, NZ 1910; R..Kent, Toowoomba NSW 1919; W.Kenyon Toowoomba NSW 1913; W.Larcombe, Rockhampton, NSW 1913,1914; A.J.Lewis Charters Towers NSW 1899; F.Lewis Charters Towers NSW 1913; T.Maher Mt Morgan GB 1908; W.Marston Mt Morgan, NSW 1910, NZ 1910, M 1910; J.Meibusch, Toowoomba NSW 1902 1904 1905 GB 1904; L.Meibusch, Toowoomba, NSW 1912 1913 1914, M 1913; R.Meibusch NSW 1911, M 1913; R.H.Munro Toowoomba NSW 1894, NZ 1893; J.Murdock Warwick NSW 1903 1904, GB 1904; A.O'Brien Mt Morgan NSW 1904 1905 GB 1904; W.Oehlmann Toowoomba NZ 1914; W.Park Charters Towers NZ 1914; F.Pill Mt.Morgan NSW 1908, NSW 1911; C.Redwood Toowoomba NSW 1903 1904 NZ 1903, GB 1904; L.Redwood, Toowoomba, NSW 1905; P.Redwood, Toowoomba, NSW 1901; H.Renwick Toowoomba, NSW 1904; E.W.Richards Charters Towers NSW 1903 1904 1905 1907, NZ 1905 1907, GB 1904; T.J.Richards Charters Towers NSW 1908; E.A.Sampson Toowoomba NSW 1903 1907, NZ 1907; S.Schwilk Toowoomba NSW 1905 1907; C.E.Simpson Toowoomba NSW 1905 1906 1907; W.Smith Toowoomba NSW 1914, NZ 1914; J.Spillane Charters Towers NSW 1909; F.Stanfield Warwick NSW 1914; H.Stumm Toowoomba M 1913; J.Thompson Toowoomba NSW 1911 1914 1919 M 1910 NZ 1914; W.Tucker Mt.Morgan NSW 1910 1911 NZ 1910 M 1910; D.Williams Toowoomba NSW 1912 1913 1914, M 1913, NZ 1914.

During this period there was growing player dissatisfaction with the organisation of the Qld Rugby Union. The playing strength of Country Rugby was not reflected in the selection of the Qld side. This was especially so in North Queensland who has a tremendous depth of players. To prove the point a Northern side from Charters Towers, Townsville and Cairns toured Queensland in 1912. This side easily beat Rockhampton, Mt. Morgan, Wide Bay and the Queensland representative side 21-3. Its only defeat was by Downs in a spectacular game. Neither side scored a try due to outstanding defence. Copper Kent kicked two

goals from a mark and Albert Carrol(1913) the Northern full back dropped a field goal (4 points until 1948). The final score 6-4. The outstanding players were Arch (Sonny) Fraser(1913) from the north, King Renwich and the Downs full back Charlie Fuller. In 1913 this player dissatisfaction culminated in the matching of the Queensland side which had won three of its four matches against New South Wales with the Downs side. Three Downs players had played for Qld, Bill Smith (1913), Dave Williams and Lou Meibusch. William alone was allowed to play for Toowoomba. The result was a 6-0 win to Downs. (Bill Oehlmann two tries). Two Toowoomba players, Copper Kent and Lou Meibusch, toured in the Wallaby Team to California in 1913.

The outbreak of war in 1914 brought the development of Rugby to a halt. Throughout Qld some club games were played in 1915, but none in 1916,1917 and 1918. Rugby League had struggled on during the war and some of the star Rugby players were involved. The Central Qld Rugby Union went over en masse to Rugby in 1917. On the Downs players simply did not want to play Rugby under the old conditions. Typical was the 1919 Annual General Meeting of the Toowoomba Rugby Union. After the election of office bearers a motion was put to the Chairman Mr P. Frawley by Mr.H.Sunderland (a Toowoomba Chronicle journalist) seconded by R.E. Meibusch, that the Toowoomba play football under the rules of the Northern Union. (Although the other Rugby Code was always known as Rugby League in Australia, it was known as the Northern Union in England until 1922). The motion was ruled out of order. In the furore that followed, Mr G.P.Barbour (Headmaster of the Toowoomba Grammar School moved that the meeting be adjourned. A week later a meeting was held in which the Toowoomba Amateur Rugby League was formed to play under Northern Union rules. The name Toowoomba Amateur Rugby League was retained until 1950.

The story of the rebirth of Rugby in Queensland is well told in Ian Diehm's "RED! RED! RED!" The inaugural meeting in Toowoomba in 1929 was under the Chairmanship of Mr G.P.Barbour. Rugby League was the community code in Queensland, with numerous small country centres having teams and the struggle to re-establish Rugby was difficult and made even harder by the depression. Standards varied and a Toowoomba team was beaten 60-0 in 1937 by the touring Springboks (Probably the greatest S.A. team of all time captained by Danie Craven and beating the All Blacks in New Zealand).

Clubs to play in this period were, Past Grammars, GPS Old Boys, Valleys, All Whites, Warwick, Allora, Pittsworth, Greenmount, Helidon and Crows Nest.

REPRESENTATIVE PLAYERS 1929-1940

All players are from the Toowoomba Rugby Union. George Allen 1933; Vince Bermingham 1933/4/5/6/7/8; Frank Broadfoot 1930/1/2/3; Eric Browne 1935/7; Graham Cooke 1933; Mal Creed Warwick 1938; Joe Doyle 1932; Les Garthe 1936; Jack Gibbs 1938/9/40; Tom Green 1933/5/7; Hefty Hawkins 1940; E.S.(Dooney) Hayes 1931/2/3/4/5/6/7/8; G.L.G (Bull) Holmes 1933; Tuffy Horan 1937/40; Harry Jefferies 1941/46; S.C. (Porky) Jones Warwick 1938; Roy Lindsay 1931/32; W.Massey-White 1930; Ron Meibusch 1936; Jack (Cracker) McDonald 1937/8/9/40; Ron McDonald 1937; W.(John) Ritter 1930/1/2/3/4/5; Jack Steggal 1930/1/2; Jack Stuart 1940; Stuart Tuck 1936; Neil Ward 1935; C.S.Wilson 1933; Lyn Wood 1931/2/3.

The Second World War again ruined Rugby in Toowoomba. From 1941-1945 there was no club football. The Rugby League continued during these years and became firmly entrenched in the public esteem as the major code. It was well organised and promoted, indeed under Duncan Thompson's guidance the 1950's were the second golden age of Rugby League and it was a force in the Australian Rugby League. The reformed Toowoomba Rugby Union was incapable of

competing. It struggled with players doubling as officials, never a satisfactory arrangement. Junior Rugby fell over in 1951 and from then on it was a matter of time. Recruitment depended on the banks, the stock companies who employed former GPS schoolboys and teachers. There was always a turnover of players, little local recruitment and a no real public support. Particular patrons were the O'Brien family, J.(Cracker) McDonald and Dr Lacaze whose annual donation of fifty pounds started the Union each year.

Notable officials were: Pat Hayes, Fred Hill, Ted O'Brien, Peter Watson and Terry Purcell.

REPRESENTATIVE PLAYERS 1946-1959

AUSTRALIA :- Fabe McCarthy, Wally Mason, Paul Costello.

QUEENSLAND. Col Cattanch 1952; Paul Comerford 1956/7/8/9; Paul Costello 1948/9/50; Neil Crozier 1954; John Dean 1946; Paul Faithful 1956; Bill Flamsted 1957; Len Forbes 1956/57; Reg.Fuller 1949; Jack Gentle 1954; Joe Gilbert 1957;

Dan Griffin 1950; Dinny Guilfoyle Jnr. 1950; Don Hosking 1957/8/9; John Kavanagh 1954; Wild Bill Laver 1949; Trevor Leisegang 1951; Doug Leslie 1946; Alan Lemon 1949; Roy Lostroh 1946; WJL (Wal) Mason 1947/8/9; Dave Meldrum 1952; Jeff Michelmore 1953; Bill Muller 1952/3/4; Fabe McCarthy 1948/9/50; Ray McNamara 1951; Tom O' Brien 1954; Max Phelan 1957, Andy Purcell 1956; Jack Seip 1951; R.Shelvey 1952; Jack Tucker 1947; Don Watt 1954/55

Clubs to compete during this period were Past Grammars, GPS Old Boys, Queensland Agricultural College, 101st Wireless Regiment Cabarlah, Southern Downs, 25th Battalioan RUFC, Harlequins, Dalby, Crows Nest, Valleys and Colts.

Despite the effort of a number of capable officials including Ted O'Brien, Fred Hill, Pat Hayes, Terry Purcell, E.W.W. (Arg) Whitton, Dr.Lacaze, the game simply died out. No football was played from 1960-1962.

Late in 1962 a detirmined effort was made to improve the administration and the image of Rugby in Queensland. Familiar names, to remain in the next 40 years of tremendous development begin to appear, Norbert Byrne, Bob Templeton, John Muir, Jack Steele to name but a few.

In 1963 Toowoomba Rangers RUFC was formed due to the efforts of Jack Seip, Terry and Andy Purcell, Doug Quinn and Barry White. A team was fielded in the Brisbane B Grade Competition. A development committee under Jack Steele arranged missionary matches, Brothers vs University in Toowoomba, and GPS Old Boys vs Wests-Toowong in Warwick. After this latter match an impulsive offer was made by Mr. Keith Leahy to donate a trophy for country competition. He backed up his offer with hard cash and donated the Risdon Cup, still the premiership trophy on the Darling Downs. Rugby League was losing its place as community football and becoming a business. The Bulimba Cup Competition was being phased out and replaced by television rights for a "Big League" in Brisbane. A niche opened up for Rugby in the Country. Four sides competed in 1964 in first grade Rangers, Dalby, Warwick, and Gatton College. The first Risdon Cup winner on the Darling Downs was Warwick defeating Toowoomba Rangers 25-14. The representative side playing as Queensland Country in 1964,defeated Brisbane Sub Districts 25-14 and Guyra 23-0. The final match was at Warwick and NSW Country was held to a suprising 14-14 draw. Doug Quinn was the coach, a former Drummoyne and Qld representative Don Hoskings was the captain. Peter Coote of Warwick and Ken Skerman of Dalby were subsequently picked in the Queensland team.

In 1965, in the Risdon Cup were Goondiwindi, Warwick, Dalby, Gatton and Toowoomba Rangers. There were a second and U19 Grades. The Darling Downs was on a firm footing. The Darling Downs played in the State Trails defeating a Brisbane 15. Clive Becconsall and Barry White both of Rangers were picked in the Qld Team. The U19 team started at a high level, T.Hilder and W.Seibel made the State side. A notable inclusion in the U18 side was Geoff White who started a wonderful career, which included playing for Qld Country, Brisbane Brothers and Queensland. He was one of the forwards who began dominating NSW in the 1970's and fittingly, finished his career as player of the match in Brothers Premiership win in 1981

FORMATION OF QUEENSLAND COUNTRY RUGBY UNION

The 1965 Development Committee of the QRU did not rest on its laurels. Members were J.Steele, G.Murphy, J.O'Connor, L.Walsh and J.Ryan. In February 1965 the Gold Coast and the Wide Bay Rugby Unions were formed. The Gold Coast Rugby Union won the Brisbane Sub-District competition in their first season. An U19 team was also fielded. The President-Secretary was Mr T.D. Perrin and the treasurer Mr R. McDonald. The Captain-Coach was Paul Perrin. A Wide Bay Rugby Union also started with teams from Bundaberg City, Bundaberg Army, Maryborough and Gympie. Bundaberg City won the Grand Final from Gympie 20-16. On 16th May 1965 the inaugural meeting of the QCRU was held at Risdon Stud Warwick. Three Unions were represented, Darling Downs, Wide Bay and Gold Coast. Office Bearers were; President, Mr J.White, Chairman J.O'Connor. Hon Sec Mr. E. P.Robinson, Treasurer Mr T.J.Purcell. On the 12th June 1965 the first representative team of the newly formed Queensland Country Rugby Union played Central Northern New South Wales at the Moree Showground. The team was (1) G.Wiltshire (2) S.Begbie (3) C.Becconsal, (4) B.White (5) W.Bligh (6) R.Triebe (7) M.Blockey (8) R.Holland (9) B.Chow (10) K.Matthews (11) K.Hughes (12) G.Makin Captain (13) D.Sidey (14) K.Farrell (15) B.Munro. Reserves were M.Finn and J.Edgar. On June 27th as a curtain raiser to the Australian - South Africa test, at the then new Lang Park, the Country team played. Brisbane. The team was (1) G.Wiltshire (2) S.Begbie (3) J.Edgar (4) B.White (5) W.Bligh (6) K.Skerman (7) C.Becconsal (8) R.Holland (9) B.Chow (10) J.Simm (11) B.King (12) G.Makin Captain (13) D.Sidey (14) D.Fitzgerald (15) B. Dahlke. The reserves were R.Priebe, M.Blockey, R.Lancaster and B.Seibel. Note the captain in both these matches was Geoff Makin the Goondiwindi and Darling Downs stalwart.

In 1966 Mr. F (Frank) Edgar was elected President and remained in office until 1972. He was a banker by profession and during these formative years gave a background of solidarity and commonsense to the enthusiastic but inexperienced officials. The first country trials were held in Dalby. Wide Bay, Gold Coast and the Darling Downs participated. The representative side under Ray McNamara was well beaten by a Brisbane team during the state trials. Mark Harris and Ken

Sherman participated in the Qld v Rest game. Two other matches were played that season, with losses to Brisbane Colts and NSW Country. The Country team against NSWCRU was 1 J.Edgar, 2 S.Begbie, 3 S.Mafi, 4 B.Brown, 5 M.Evans, 6 K.Skerman, 7 C.Oxenford, 8 R. Priebe, 9 J.McNee, 10 J.Wright, 11 L.Johnson, 12 P.Best, 13 P.Brennan, 14 T.Levander, 15 J.White, 16 M.Blockey 17 J Wicks, 18 D.Power, 19 K.Carmody, 20 K.Hughes. Dalby became the first Queensland country team to tour overseas going to New Guinea. They lost to Port Moresby and Combined Territories, drew with Lae and defeated Papua. In October 1966 Townsville and District Rugby Union was formed under the Presidency of Dudley Jones and the energetic Col Harkness was secretary. Growth was immediate and spectacular, starting with three teams in April 1967, there were five teams by June and Ingham had formed a club by the end of the season.

In 1967 Country trials were held in Bundaberg. A side played a Brisbane XV in the state trials and held them to a 16 all draw. Rick Trivitt was selected for Qld and Laurie Lawrence was a reserve. Touring side to NSW was: M. Chargoury (Gold Coast), L. Johnson (Dalby), M. Whiteford (Gold Coast), L Jones (Warwick), G.Arthy (Dalby), R.Trivitt (Warwick Captain/Coach), L.Lawrence (Townsville), Bob Sinclair (Gold Coast), D.Brown (Warwick), L.Hayden (QAC), J.Thorn (Goondiwindi), P.Rippen (Gold Coast), B Munro (T'mba), D.Whittle (Gold Coast), H. McMaster (Gold Coast), S.Begbie (T'mba), F.Fraser (Gold Coast), B.German (Goondiwindi), J.Cornes (Goondiwindi), C.Oxenford (Gold Coast). New England at Armidale and NSW Country Seconds at Woolsongong beat this team. Note the appearance of Bob Sinclair who gave nearly 40 years of service to Qld Country as a player, coach and administrator. He captained the Country team in the last match of the tour when Rick Trivett had to return home.

In 1968 the QRU insisted that Gold Coast play in the Brisbane Grade Competition. The inaugural Country Carnival was held at Ballymore. DDRU (1) defeated Townsville 31-10 and DDRU (2) defeated Wide Bay 65-0. In the Qld Trials Country Seconds went down to Brisbane 2nd Grade 24-6. County firsts after leading Brisbane 6-5 at half time were defeated 25-11. Qld representatives during the season were G.Price (Townsville), L.Johnson and M.Offner both of Dalby and J.Cornes of Goondiwindi. Papua New Guinea toured during the season being defeated by Downs at Dalby 27-10 and by Townsville 31-10. Downs toured to Sydney and were beaten by Combined Sub-Districts 24-8 and subsequently beat Brisbane Colts 19-16

In 1969 Wide Bay dropped out of the competition. The Rockhampton Rugby Union was formed and also a Far North Queensland Rugby Union which only lasted to 1972. The Country Carnival was held at Ballymore. Down (1) beat Townsville 31-11 and Downs (2) lost to Gold Coast 12-9. A combined side defeated the new Rockhampton Rugby Union team. The Townsville Rugby Union staged the first International ever played north of Brisbane when they played Fiji on the 9th August. Although losing 44-11 The Country team provided spirited opposition. Qld Country players were (incomplete) G.Adler, E.Andrews, Turner, Shaw, Galbraith (Townsville). R.Rushbrook, J.Cornes, J.Neale, M.Offner, L.Johnson (Darling Downs). The Qld Representatives were J.Cornes (G'ndi) and M Offner and J.Neale of Dalby.

In 1970 Townsville won the Country Carnival for the first time beating Downs (1) 12-8. Country (2) lost to Brisbane (2) 36-9 and Country (1) lost to Brisbane (1) 20-3. Five players played for Qld, J.Cornes (G'ndi), A.Skinner, R.Cooke and E.Andrews from Townsville and J.Neale from Dalby. The Puk Puks from Papua New Guinea toured Central and North Queensland.

In 1971 Geoff Richardson after playing originally for Townsville, in the Country Carnival represented Qld Country, Queensland and Australia in the one year. Mt. Isa affiliated with Qld Country. Darling Downs won the carnival and Country played Brisbane in Rockhampton and were beaten 30-8. Qld representatives were Geoff Richardson and John Cornes and Mark Skelton of Downs. Qld Country was host to two touring teams. The Golden Bears from California drew large crowds at Dalby, Townsville and Rockhampton. The Springboks played Qld Country at Toowoomba winning 43-7. Mark Skelton scored a remarkable try. Even the Springboks applauded. Anti-Apartheid demonstrations had marred the whole Springbok tour but the Toowoomba crowd was shocked when one of the demonstrators was brutally assaulted during an arranged orderly march across the rear of Gold Park before the match. Dominic Martinez was the first Townsville player to play for Qld at U19 level. Country players were; L. McLachlan, A. Fraser, G. Adler, G. Turner, G. Richardson, M. Cameron, (Townsville).

In 1972 the U19's made their first appearance at a Country Carnival. Downs again won the Carnival. Subsequently a QCRU Senior Team managed by Col Harkness and coached by Chris Oxenford toured NSW country. It lost to NSWCRU 48-4, but beat Newcastle 15-11 and New England 12-8. The Country team which played Brisbane was C. Hannan (T'ville), D. Stallman (DD), K. Hendy (Rpton), B. Reidy (DD), J. Coonan (Capt) (DD), M. Cameron (T'ville), P. Best (DD), E. Bola (T,ville), B. Moon (GC), P. Treherne (DD), J. Neale (DD), R. Wilson (T'ville), M. Cocks (V/Capt)(T'ville), D. Thompson (DD), J. Wicks (DD). Other players were: M. Cameron (T,ville), B. Kennon (T,ville), G. Adler (T,ville), G. Stooke (T,ville). The Junior All Blacks toured country areas defeating Darling Downs 23-9, Rockhampton 56-0, and the representative side in Townsville 49-6. After this match Chris Hannan the QCRU full back was judged the "best and fairest" player on the field. He went on to play for Qld, together with John Neale, Alan Skinner, and Peter Trehearne. Bruce Reidy and Epi Bola were chosen for the Qld Barbarians. J. Cornes a former Country player toured with the Wallabies to New Zealand. Downs toured the southern states losing to South Australia 13-0 and beating Army 30-6 in Melbourne and ACT 38-21. The Downs side was J. Coonan (Captain), D. Thompson (V/Capt). J. Edgar, P. Noble, C. Begbie, A. Sisafa, P. Trehearne, M. Francis, G. White, K. Skerman, B. Mottram, R. Handyside, B. Gallagher, S. Griffiths, P. Smith, G. McVeigh, B. Talbot, B. Reidy, M. Offner, M. Moran, R. Boulton, G. Little.

In 1973 Townsville began a domination of the Country Championship lasting to 1978. Notable players were Don Armit, Bruce Kennon and Greg Bourke. The Country team which played Brisbane was: P. Carroll (Captain), B. Fleming, M. Offner, I. McLellan, M. Cameron, G. McVeigh, P. Smith, D. Armit, B. McDonald, B. Kennon, M. Drysdale, A. Steel, P. Walsh, D. Thompson, S. Pilecki. Res. G. Harrison, T. McHugh, A. Borle, T. Welsh. No players were chosen for Qld but R. Armit (Townsville), P. Connors (Rockhampton) and M. McGovern played for the Qld U19 side. Tonga played Downs in Toowoomba. Downs lead 6-0 at half after a fine forward try by Tony Steele and after a great game by Mafi the Tongan Captain lost 12-9. The following weekend Tonga beat Australia 16-11 in Brisbane, surely the low point of Australian Rugby. Outstanding for Downs were Darky Thompson, Greg. McVeigh, Paul Smith and Bruce McDonald. Rockhampton toured New Zealand province Southland at the end of the season. With David West as captain, John White as coach and Cedric Archer as Manager, Their record was four wins and one loss. Rockhampton Rugby Union purchased the land for their clubhouse and home grounds. The DDRU took over Gold Park from the Toowoomba Rangers Club.

In 1974 Mt Isa had a good year opening their clubhouse. The Carnival was held at Ballymore. There were mixed fortunes with Mt Isa being humiliated on the first

day by Downs, but subsequently beating Rockhampton and Townsville. Townsville was the eventual winner on a points basis. The Country Team put on a great performance in Toowoomba, losing to the All Blacks 29-0. Forwards Stan Pilecki (subsequently the great Qld and Wallaby star), Don Muirhead and Grant Harrison were giants that day. Bruce Kennon's defence was magnificent and a bootlace tackle of the All Black flanker Ian Kirkpatrick was nominated by A.W.L. Roe (Scotland & Barbarians) as the finest he had seen. Brisbane beat Country 31-15 in a match at Rockhampton, marred by an unfortunate injury that ended Jeff (Puff) McLean's career. The Country team that day was 15 F.McKeon (DD) 14 K.Hendy (CQ) 13 W.McLaughlin (CQ) 12 G.McVeigh (DD) 11 M.Offner (DD) 10 Dave Ingle V/Capt (Mt.Isa) 9 P.Smith (DD) 8 D.Armit Capt.(NQ) 7 B.McDonald (DD) 6 B.Kenyon (NQ) 5 M.Drysdale (DD) 4 D. Muirhead (NQ) 3 S.Pilecki (CQ) 2 D.Thompson (DD) 1 G.Harrison (Mackay) Reserves A.Borle (DD), I.Tomlinson (CQ) J.Rootes (NQ) D.Green (NQ). The manager was Peter Gates and the Coach Andy Purcell. Other players this season were L.McNickoll (Mt Isa), J.Reid (T'ville) and I.McLellan (DD). Paul Smith a former Country player was half back for Queensland. State U19 representative were T.Connolly and Paul McVeigh of the Downs.

In 1975 the Country Carnival was played at Toowoomba, the first time it was played away from Ballymore. Downs won the carnival, but after a subsequent round robin of matches around the state Townville were declared the Country Champions.

QCRU played Brisbane Colts losing 38-10, England at Townsville losing 42-6 in a spiteful match, Japan at Rockhampton losing 32-12 and lost to Brisbane 37-3. The team which played England was: 15 F.McKeon (DD) 14 M.Offner (DD) 13 Ralph Sellwood (DD) 13 W.McLaughlin (CQ) 12 P.McLellan (CQ) 10 G.McVeigh (DD) 9 P.McVeigh (DD) 8 Ian Tomlinson (CQ) 7 B.Kennon (NQ) 6 B.McDonald (DD) 5 J.Holmes (DD) 4 D.Armit Capt. (NQ) 3 D.Crunkhorn (NQ) 2 D.Thompson (DD) 1 B.McLaughlin (Mt.Isa) Reserves; R.Ogden, R.Kelly, D.Ingle all of Mt Isa and Ray Armit (NQ). Other players to play this year were, L.McNicholl (Mt.Isa), R.Stewart (DD), G.Bourke (NQ), and I.McClennan (DD), T.McDow (Mt Isa). The Manager was Peter Curtis and the Coach Andy Purcell..

In 1976 Rugby was revived in Cairns, Gladstone and Mackay. The latter actually formed on March 15th 1976 and entered a team in the Country Carnival held at Townsville, who won the carnival beating Downs 10-7, mainly due to the efforts of Greg Bourke and A.Ratahi. The representative team lost their two matches, Brisbane 27-16 and to Fiji 24-4 in Dalby. Barry Leal from Dalby and Dave Logan from Rockhampton, both formerly of Brisbane, represented Qld. Players who represented Qld Country in 1976 were; Mt Isa, B.McLoughlin, R.Kelly, G.Quinn. Central Qld: I Tomlinson, P.McLennan, C.Harder, A.Polkinghorne, D.Logan. Townsville: G.Bourke, R.Shepherd, A.Ratahi, G.Thorne. Darling Downs: G.McVeigh, P.McVeigh, J.Wicks, B.Leal, D.Thompson, B.Kennon, P.Kruger, T.McIntosh. The manager was Paul Mooney and the coach was Jim Kenny. Qld representatives were D.Logan and B.Leal. R.Noye and M Marshall from Downs and B Maquire from Rockhampton made the Qld U19 team.

In 1977 Rockhampton hosted the Country Carnival. Maroochydore sent a team. Townville won and Peter Grigg the Wallaby winger made his first appearance. Dave Logan (CQ) was the sole Qld representative. Peter Grigg (T'ville) played both in the U19 and U23 side. D.Logan and R Kelly (Mt Isa) also played for the Qld U23 team. R.Noye, J.Birmingham of the Downs and P Driscoll (CQ) were in the Qld U19 side. Ray Kelly of Mt Isa who made the U23 team was named North-West Sportsman of the year. Mt Isa spent a government subsidy of \$50,000 and brought their grounds up to first class standard. The Senior Representative side was D.Dunworth (M'dore) Capt and Coach, Townsville T.McHugh, D.Rose,

A.Rahati, G.Bourke, R.Crunkhorn, G.Thorne, P.Grigg, C.Bishop, V.Steele, L.Sampson. Downs B.Kennon. Mt.Isa: R.Kelly, M.Duggan, A.Charles. Cent.Qld W.Banks, E.Donohue.

In 1978 the Gold Coast and District Rugby Union affiliated with the QCRU. Previously the Gold Coast fielded teams in the Brisbane Competition and the QRU insisted a local competition be formed. The Country Carnival was held in Mt Isa, Downs defeating Gold Coast in the final 17-3. Central Highlands made their first appearance at the carnival. The Fourex competition continued in Country areas with Brisbane clubs playing country unions. Noteable wins were Gold Coast beating Wests 35-8 and Norths 10-0. The QCRU representative side three days after being beaten by Victoria 24-9, rallied to defeat Brisbane 26-4. Don Stallman and Wayne Banks the country centres cut the opposing backs to pieces and the forwards Bos McGowan, Geoff White and Will Scarlet were on top throughout the match.

The Country side was: 15 D Leahy (T'ville), 14 T.Coward (T'ville), 13 D.Stallman (Sun.Coast), 12 P.Grigg (T'ville), 11 W.Banks (R'pton), G.McVeigh (DD) 9 P.McVeigh (DD), 8 Bos McGowan (GC), 7 Bruce Kennon (DD), 6 Nick Korako (M'Kay), 5 R.Burness (GC), 4 G.White (DD), 3 W.Scarlett (DD), 2 R.Wilson (DD), 1 T.McLennan (GC) Res.T.McIntosh (DD), P.Drake (GC), T.Cox (GC), L.Pittman (T'ville). Other players to represent country were I.Ratalava (GC), K.Burness (GC), R.Armstrong (T'ville). Country lost to Otago in Toowoomba 19-4 three days after the Brisbane match. The Coach was David Dunworth. The U19 side also defeated Brisbane 10-7. John Woodgate was the outstanding player, ably supported by W.Capper, K.Carson, Peter Ramsay (DD) and J.O'Connor and S.Guest (CQ) all of whom made the Qld U19 side. Peter Grigg again represented Qld at two levels. He was a permanent member of the Qld side and was joined in the U23 side by Wayne Banks and T.McLennan of the Gold Coast. Representatives in the Qld B side were P.Grigg, T.McLennan, B.McGowan (Gold Coast), D.Stallman and G.White of the Darling Downs.

In 1979 Gold Coast hosted the Country Carnival. Eight sub-unions took part in two divisions followed by a grading round. Darling Downs beat Mt Isa 27-0 in the A division and Gold Coast beat CQ 18-8 in the B division. It was survival of the fittest and the experiment was not repeated. The representative performances were disappointing after the previous year. The senior team beat Sub Districts 20-0 but lost to Brisbane 45-13 and ACT 20-10. A Country B side also lost to ACT 49-0. Players who played for Country were: Gold Coast: Ken Burness, Rob Burness, Ilario Raitilave, Peter Drake, Cent. Qld; Jim "Magoo" Rothery, Wayne Banks, Paul McLellan. Cairns: Russ Sage, John Collins. Darling Downs: B.Kennon (V/Capt), Max Lee, Peter Hood, Paul McVeigh, Glen Cooper. Townsville: Niel Simms, John Hienke, Peter Grigg (Capt.), Terry Shields, Wayne Guides. The Coach was David Dunworth, and Manager Bob Sinclair. The Country B Team was; Gold Coast A.Mainwaring, D.Finch, P.Ivers. Central Qld: P.Reball. Cairns; R.McLeod, B.King, J. Collins, T.O'Connel. Darling Downs; K.Carson, M.Tigue. Mt.Isa; M.Duggan, E.Edmondson. Townsville; M.Webb. Mackay R.Stuart. The U19 side lost to Brisbane 13-4. Peter Grigg again made the Qld Team, Wayne Nixon of Mt Isa made the Qld B side, and Wayne Banks and Bruce Kennon the Presidents XV. K.Carson and P.Grogan made the Qld U19 team This was the first full season the Townsville and District Rugby Union played at the Hugh Street complex, opened on the 11th March by the ARU President Bill McLaughlin. The Rockhampton Rugby Sports Club was built and opened on the 30th June by the Chairman on the QCRU John Muir. The first Qld Director of Coaching, David Clark was appointed,

In 1980 because of the domination of the Fourex Cup by Brisbane Clubs the QRU decided on a different format. Fourex for the first time sponsored the Country Carnival played at Townsville. Eight Unions took part. Rugby recommenced in

Wide Bay. The winning side was the Gold Coast. They became finalists in the Fourx State Championships and were beaten by Brisbane Brothers team in the final.

In May the Country side made its first overseas tour to NZ playing four games losing to West Coast 13-0, Mid Canterbury 23-4, Canterbury Sub Districts 27-3 and Canterbury Maori's 21-11. On their return they defeated South Australia 15-12. The All Blacks swamped the Country Team 63-6 in Townsville.

The team that toured NZ was Gold Coast: B.Craw, B.Cox, K.Burness, R.Burness, S.Wohler, D.Brown, I.Raitilava, P.Drake, G.Graham. Darling Downs: B.Kennon, W.Banks, F.Pierce, T.McIntosh, M.Callaghan, P.Hood. Townsville; A.Pearson, R.Kelly, J.Heinke, W.Guides. Cairns; B.Woods, J.Collins. Mt.Isa; J.Hardy, W.Nixon. Central Qld: J.Rothery. The manager was Bob Sinclair and the coach Phil Temperton. B.Kennon was captain and he played all games for Qld during the season. Peter Grigg played for Qld and with two tries against the All Blacks cemented his place in the Australian team. Brett Caw of the Gold Coast made the Qld B team. T.Ryan (Gold Coast), P.Lyons and R.Bell (Darling Downs) made the Qld U19 side.

In 1981 the Fourx Country Carnival was held in Mackay. In a new format ten unions took part, the final standings being (1) Gold Coast. (2) Mt Isa (3) Darling Downs (4) Townsville (5) Mackay (6) Central Highlands (7) Rockhampton (8) Cairns. (9) Wide Bay. (10) Port Curtis. An U19 Carnival was held in Rockhampton (1) Darling Downs (2) Rockhampton (3) Townsville (4) Gold Coast (5) Mt Isa (6) Central Highlands (7) Central Qld.Combined. Directors of Coaching were appointed in Townsville, Rockhampton and Darling Downs. The County side beat Canterbury Sub-Unions in Brisbane 15-12. In a southern tour Country beat Nth Provinces of NSW at Armidale 17-6. Against the NSWCRU at Narrabri they were narrowly beaten 14-10. In the final moments of the game Sonny Wohler put Peter Grigg in the clear but he was recalled for a forward pass. Western Provinces were beaten 27-12 at Coonamble and the last match against ACT was lost 16-7. The team put up a fine effort but lost to France in Rockhampton 33-3 in a match in which five eight Barry (Tulip) Duncan was outstanding. Senior players during the year were: Beau.Cox (GC), J.Rothery (CQ), A.Westbrook (GC), R.Burness (GC), G.McGowan (Mt.Isa) Captain, M.Bickley (GC), N.Frith (GC), B.Kennon (DDR), M.Callaghan (DDR), I.Jones (DDR), C.Mead (GC), B.Duncan (GC), S.Wohler (GC), Terry Cox (GC), P.Grigg (TDR), W.Nixon (Mt.Isa), G.Tighe (DDR), R.Gordon (Mackay), G.Hansen (Cent.High), F.Pierce, P.Birmingham (DDR). The manager was again Bob Sinclair and the coach Phil Temperton. Representative honours went to Peter Grigg for Australia and Queensland. For Qld B. B.Kennon, P.Lyons (DDR), D.Eales (Mackay). For Qld U19, R.Fuller (T'ville), D.Aiken, G.Kimborley, G.Whip, (DDR), T.Jackson, R.Witton, J.Bawden (CQR), M.Muller, P.Woolston (GCR). Coaching directors were; Des Johansen (CQ), Denis Ivers (NQ), Colin Perman (DD) and Phil Temperton (GC).

1982 was the Centenary Year of the QRU. The Country Carnival was therefore played at Ballymore with 10 Sub-Unions taking part. Mt Isa beat Rockhampton 10-6 in the final. For ten years to 1992, the Carnival was replaced by Regional Championships. This was also the year Terry Doyle was appointed Secretary and in the next fourteen years was always a friend of Country.

For example for the first two matches of the season the Country team took up residence in the Brother's dressing sheds at Crosby Park. The Manager and Coach cooked the breakfast on the nearby bar-b-que. Terry was aghast and ever after Country always had reasonable accommodation. The Country Team played seven matches during the season including a tour to Western Australia and South Australia. Results were: vs Otago SubUnions lost 12-10, vs Mid Canterbury lost 28-9, vs NSWCRU lost 17-7, vs Scotland in Mt Isa lost 44 -16, vs Western

Australia in Perth won 14-6, vs WA Presidents XV lost 22-18 and vs South Australia in Adelaide won 21-0. The match against Scotland was a great performance with first class tries to Tom Jackson and Greg Tighe and a startling field goal by Barry Duncan. Scotland were rattled at half-time and brought on their captain and star player Andy Irvine.

Players for the season were: Tom Jackson, J.Rothery, R.Wilton, M.Powell, G.Joncean (CQRU), G.Tighe, M.Callaghan, M.Marshall, K.Schwager, I.Jones, (DDRU), Q.Iwiki, J.Hardy Captain, W.Nixon, M.Nixon, R.Chitham, (Mt.Isa), T.Simkin, C.Hurley, Terry Sheills (T'ville), B.Duncan, Beau Cox, P.Lewis, S.Wohler, J.Bloomfield, K.Burness, R.Burness, P.Drake, A.Westbrook, (GCRU), P.Gillham, R.Gordon, (Mackay), W.McKay (Cairns). Qld U19 players were, R.Wilton, (CQRU), S.McDonagh, Kent McDonald, (DDRU), D.Phillips, S.Leveritt (T'ville), P.Walsh (CQRU), J.Jackson (Mt.Isa). The Manager was Les Sampson and the Coach Andy Purcell. Representative honours again went to P.Grigg at Qld and Australian level. Glen Kimmorley (DD) made the Qld U21 team. Qld U 19 representative were, R.Wilton, P.Walsh (Rockhamton), S.McDonagh, Kent McDonald, (Darling Downs), D.Phillips, S.Leveritt (Townsville) and J.Jackson (Mt.Isa). Coaching directors were; Des Johansen (CQ), Denis Ivers (NQ), Colin Perman (DD) and Phil Temperton (GC). This was the first year of the Sunshine Coast Rugby Union and the Central West Rugby Union based on Longreach. Coaching directors were; Des Johansen (CQ), Denis Ivers (NQ), Colin Perman (DD) and Phil Temperton (GC).

1983 was the first year of Regional Football with the annual carnival being replaced by the XXXX State Championships. Games played were;

April 9 th	South Queensland 7 defeated Brisbane 6
May 1 st	Brisbane 38 defeated North Queensland 3
May 14 th	South Queensland 12 defeated Central Queensland 6
May 21 st	North Queensland 9 defeated South Queensland 6
May 28 th	Brisbane 36 defeated Central Queensland 3
June 11 th	North Queensland 17-0 defeated Central Queensland 0
June 19 th	Final Brisbane 12 defeated South Queensland 0

The final was played in pouring rain and the controlled fury of the clashes between Nigel (Shredder) Holt the hard man of the Grand Slam Wallabies in 1984 and Steve (Animal) Finlay had to be seen to be believed. The Brisbane -Qld Country match was also hard with Country going to a 9-0 lead and being ground down in the second half to lose 13-9. Country went on a southern tour playing an 18-18 draw against Victoria and after leading ACT 20-12 finally going down 27-20 in a match in which Peter Grigg was the star. Against NSWCRU in a dawnbreaker before the Australia- American Eagles test at the Sydney, Country frittered away their chances with senseless kicking to go down 14-6. The final game of the season was against the Argentine Pumas in Townsville. The same story again, two tries in the first 15 minutes, then the great Hugo Porta took control. A try scored by Larusia and three penalties to Porta, down 13-8 at half time.

Despite a second half try to Country three more penalties by Porta made the final score 22-12. Sonny Wohler scored two tries and M.Smee one. The following players represented Qld Country in 1983: D.Aiken, P.Healy, P.Hood, A.King, K.Schwager (Darling Downs) G.Brown, R.Gordon, D.King, D.Garnett, (Mackay), G.Meneghan, J.Walters, J.Dillon, M.Smee (Captain), T.Simkin, P.Grigg, T.Sheills (Townsville) T.McLeod, (Rockhampton). R.Burness, S.Findlay, D.Finch, A.Westbrook, S.Wohler, T.Cox, K.Burness, B.Duncan, J.Bloomfield, B.Cowling, (Gold Coast). C.Elliot, Q.Iwikai, D.Mudgway, G.McGowan (Mt.Isa). The Manager was Bob Sinclair and the Coach Andy Purcell. Representative honours: P.Grigg continued his Qld and Australian career. David Aiken and Phil Walsh (Rockhampton) made the Qld U21 team and David Aiken made the Australian U21 touring team. A.King, D.Garnett, B.Coombe, and Rob Lawton made the Qld

U19 team. Coaching directors were; Kevin Crowe (CQ), Ron Bourke (NQ), Colin Perman (DD).

In 1984 there was a significant change to Country Rugby. The U19 grade came under the direct control of the QRU. Previously the Qld Junior Rugby Union had controlled this grade in Brisbane and for representative football. Country Sub-Unions had always controlled their U19's but at representative level immediate steps were taken by the QRU to raise standards. The Regional Coaching Directors were, Ron Bourke (Nth Qld), Kev Crowe (CQ) and Colin Perman (Sth Qld). Cairns built a clubhouse and enclosed their grounds. The results of the XXXX State Championships were:-

May 26 South Qld 10 d. North Qld 6 (Gold Coast)
 June 2 Brisbane 27 d. South Qld 4 (Dalby)
 June 9th Cent.Qld 15 d. South Qld 4 (R'ton)
 June 16th Brisbane 17 d. North Qld 0 (Mt Isa)
 July 15th Brisbane 45 d. Cent Qld 7 (Ballymore)
 July 21st North Qld 12 d. Cent.Qld 3 (T'ville)
 July 28th Final Brisbane 39 d. North Qld 0(Ballymore)

The Qld Country side played the Fijians at Carrara and after leading 10-0 at half time being overwhelmed 21-10 in the second half. Country bounced back to beat Combined Services 21-10. The game against Brisbane was close scoring two tries to one and beaten by goal kicking 12-10. The final game was against the All Blacks at Carrara and a crushing 88-0 hiding. In fairness after 20 minutes prop Peter Melville suffered a spinal injury and the game was delayed 45 minutes for a Rescue helicopter to arrive, to take the player immediately to the spinal unit at the Princess Alexandra hospital. Happily because of the immediate specialist treatment Peter recovered completely. Unhappily Country was crushed. Players to represent country were, P.Healy, Tom McVeigh, Peter Hood, Paul McVeigh, M.Callaghan, (Downs), T.Cox, A.Westbrook, R.Burness, Steve Findlay, Mick Bickley, Barry Duncan, Sonny Wohler, P.Scholes, G.Mannix, P.Melville, (Gold Coast), T.Sheills, J.Dillon, M.Smee, M.Fuller, P.Grigg, J.Rauch, G.Lawler (T'ville), Ted McLeod, P.Walsh, R.Barker, G.Jonceur, (R'ton), Q.Iwkai (Mt Isa), A.King (Longreach), D.Watson (Cairns). The manager was Bob Sinclair and Coach Andy Purcell. Representative Honours; Peter Grigg continued his career for Qld and Australia. Robbie Burness played for Qld B. P.Walsh, B.Coombe, A.King, P.Chengody and Dean Garnett played for Qld U21. In the Qld U19 team were R.Becker, P.Chengody and D.Garnett.

In 1985 the XXXX cup continued :-

Brisbane 33 d. North Qld 9 (Ballymore)
 Central Qld 15 d. South Qld 3 (R'ton)
 North Qld 15 d. Central Qld 9 (Mackay)
 Brisbane 33 d. South Qld. 9 (T'mba)
 North Qld 16 d. South Qld 9 (T"ville)
 Brisbane 32 d Central Qld 12
 Final Brisbane 19 d. North Qld 0 (T'ville)

The final points for the U19 competition, which mirrored the senior competition without a final was Brisbane 12, Central Qld 5, South Qld 4 and North Qld.2 Two more Coaching Directors were appointed; Terry Burkitt (Sth East Qld) and Dick Dargin (Sth West Qld) in addition to Kevin Crowe (CQ) and Ron Bourke (NQ).

The Senior Country team undertook a tour to New Zealand playing Rodney Sub Unions on Saturday losing 16-9. Then they played North Harbour on the following Tuesday losing 62-10. The half time score was a creditable 19-10 but then All Blacks Wayne (Bucky) Shelford and Frano Bottica took charge. Bottica finished with 34 points for the match. On their return home Country played Canada in Cairns before a crowd of 3,500. Again the same story leading 3-0 at half time,

letting an early try in the second half and going down 13-6. Against Brisbane once again Country lead 12-7 at half time and in a determined second half held Brisbane to 19-18. The winning try for Brisbane was scored by John Hienke who had played for County since 1979 and received little attention by the Qld. selectors. He won the Rothmans Medal and played for Qld once he went to Brisbane. Against Fiji in Rockhampton for the final match of the season the same story, 7-7 at half time and going down 39-10 in a second half onslaught of 6 tries by Fiji. Players who played for Country in the season were: K.Burness, R.Burness, R.Scholes (Gold Coast), M.Fuller, Terry Shiells, Andrew Short, J.Dillon, J.Walters, Vic Johnson, G.Lawler, G.Smith, J.Rauch, (T'ville), Peter Chengody, Dean Garnett (Mackay), Andrew King (Longreach), B.Coombe, Brett Williams, Richard Barker, Ted McLeod, (Rockhampton), Mathew Connor, D.Coonan, A.Dick, (Cairns), Don Stallman (Sunshine Coast), Mark Kalms, J.Fenton, (Central Highlands). M.Callaghan (Darling Downs). A.King (Longreach). D.Watson (Cairns). The manager was Bob Sinclair and Coach Andy Purcell. Representative honours. This was the last year Peter Grigg lived in the country, he went to Brisbane for the 1986 season. Andrew King and J.Rauch played in the Qld Presidents XV against Australian Services. Rick Becker of Mt Isa and Craig Pearce of Darling Downs played for Qld U19.

In 1986 an "Operation Country" seminar was held. Main recommendation was to limit the number of matches Qld Country teams played. The emphasis was still on regionalism Talent Identification programmes in line with QRU initiatives were introduced in each region. The Coaching Directors were Ron Bourke (NQ), Bob Brown (CQ), K.Crowe (SWQ) and Terry Burkett (SEQ). The new clubhouse complex at Quarry Hill, Mackay was opened by Joe French in July. The XXXX Cup took on a new format. Brisbane no longer played each Region. The Regions played on a home and away basis to find a winner to play Brisbane in the final. At the U19 level the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society sponsored a competition on the same lines as the former senior competition with Brisbane playing in the round robin and a final was held.

Senior Results.

South Qld 10 d. North Qld 6 at Cairns

North Qld 10 d. Central Qld 0 at R'ton

South Qld 22 d. Central Qld 7 at T'mba

North Qld 29 d South Qld 3 at Gold Coast

North Qld 9 d Central Qld 3 at Mackay

Central Qld 21 d South Qld 19 at Gladstone.

Final Brisbane 17 d North Qld 3 in Mackay

In the final of the State Colts Championships Brisbane 25 d.South Qld 18

On April 5 after a oneday assembly the Country team played West Australia in Townsville and lost 15-0. Another oneday assembly on April 26th to play the Northern Territory and Country scrapped home 13-9. After a longer assembly in May Country played Italy in Stanthorpe and put on fine performance to go down 25-23. Again Brisbane they suffered the worst defeat in years going down 30-4. A match against Rodney Sub Unions resulted in a 7-6 victory to Country.

The final match was against the Pumas in Rockhampton on July 9th resulted in a disappointing 41-6 loss. The poor showing this season resulted in the QRU giving the match against Llanelli at the Gold Coast to a President's XV. Players for the season were; C.Mayes, D.Garnett, M.Moxon, M.Smyth, M.Fuller, T.Sheills, P.Hockings., J.Rauch, B.Matson, Sam Scott-Young, R.Aldridge, A.Short, M.Langfranchi, Denis O'Hara, B.McGowan. D.Smith, P.Chengody (North Qld), A.Perrett, R.Williamson, M.Bickley, M.Callaghan, K.Long, P.Healey, M.Gordon, S.Stewart, W.Cooper, S.McKay, Ra Kirea, A.Hayes, C.Randall, J.Maiden, P.Power, Grant Mannix, (South Qld), T.Geiran, T.McLeod, B.Williams, R.Howell, A.King (Central Qld). The manager was Bob Sinclair and Coach Andy Purcell.

Representative honours :- F. Perrin (Gold Coast) and Sam Scott Young (T'ville)

played for Qld U19 and Scott-Young, Rick Becker and John Maiden played for Qld U21.

In 1987 the first World Cup was played in Australia and New Zealand. The format of the XXXX championships continued.

North Qld 26 d South Qld 7 at T'mba

South Qld 6 d Central Qld 3 at Emerald

North Qld 3 d Central Qld 0 at Mackay

North Qld 35 d South Qld 9 at T'ville

Central Qld 8 d South Qld 6 at Gold Coast

Central Qld 10 drew with North Qld 10 at Rockhampton.

Final: Brisbane 40 d North Qld 0 at Townsville.

In the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society State Colt championship Brisbane had reasonably close matches against all the Regional sides and in the Final just beat Sth Qld 14-10. Later in the season the County U19 side beat Brisbane 12-6 and seven country players made the Qld U19 side to tour NZ. They were Rod Berwick (Dalby),

Mark Catchpole and Grant Oxenford (Gold Coast), Jason Hetherington (Rockhampton), Scott Kennedy (Toowoomba), Greg Tonner (Townsville) and Matthew Tonkin Goondiwindi.

A further coaching director B.D.Honan was appointed (South Qld. South). The Country team played Middlesex on May 26 at the Gold Coast losing 32-6. Two other games were scheduled against Brisbane and South Australia as curtain raisers to World Cup matches. Unfortunately inclement weather forced on match to be transferred to Bottomley Park and the other to Toowong. Brisbane in the first beat Country 25-9 and in the second Country beat South Australia 20-18.

Players for Qld Country were N.Young W.Shaw, R.Burness, V.Oxenford, K.Burness, C.Blackley, I.Webster, J.Simmonds, (South Qld), M.Feilding, R.Becker, B.Needham, S.Nightingale, D.Garnett, P.Evans, R.Fuller, I.Martineaux, V.Johnson, (North Qld), W.Monk, R.Howell, B.Watts, P.McKenna, A.King, (Central Qld). The Manager was John Chance and the Coach Steve Rowley.

Representative honours: Brendan Moon domiciled in Rockhampton continued to play for Qld. Will Shaw was selected as reserve hooker for Qld. Dean Garnett and Shane Nightingale played for the Qld B side. Rick Becker, Will Shaw and John Maiden played in the Qld U21 team. Rick Becker made the Australian U21 side and became Mt.Isa's first Australia Representative.

In 1988 Because of budgetary restraints the XXXX Cup competition was reduced to one round between the three Regional sides with a final between the two leading sides.

North Qld 17 defeated Central Qld 0 at Cairns

North Qld 16 defeated Sth Qld 3 at Southport

South Qld 20 defeated Central Qld 8 at Longreach

Final XXXX Shield North Qld 44 defeated South Qld 15 at Caloundra.

A Qld Country Team contested the XXXX Cup and beat Brisbane for the first time since 1978. The team was

(1) Bill Abram, (2) Peter Healy (3) Dennis O'Hara (4) Shane Nightingale (5) Sandy Dunn (6) Will Shaw (7) Fraser Perrin (8) Dan Coonan (9) Mark Catchpole (10) Ian Webster (12) Vaughan Oxenford (13) Rohan Fuller (14) Craig Pearce (15) Andrew King (16) Peter Chengody (17) Neil Young (18) Bruce Newport (19) Rod Berwick. Replacements Dennis O'Hara off Neil Young on. Score Country 20—Brisbane 17 Tries:-Rohan Fuller, Mark Catchpole, Bill Abram. Craig Pearce Goal and 2 Penalty Goals. Played 26/6/88. Qld Country also played England in Mackay on 17/5/88. The final score was England 39—Qld Country 6. Dean Garnett scored a fine try which earned him a place in the Qld Squad. The team was (1) Bill Abram (2) Peter Healy (3) Dan Crowley (4)

Shane Nightingale (5) Rob Korst (6) Fraser Perrin (7) Don Marshall (8) Dan Coonan (9) Mark Catchpole (10) John Rauch (11) Dean Garnett (12) Rohan Fuller (13) Anthony Herbert (14) Kent Bray (15) Andrew King. (16) Peter Chengody (17) Ian Webster (18) Grant Bloxham (19) Dennis O'Hara (20) Scott Kennedy (21) Sandy Dunn. Score Country 6 England 39 Try D Garnett Goal J.Rauch. The manager was John Chance and the coach Steve Rowley.

The Metway Shield for U19 was contested by the Regional U19's in one round and won by Nth Qld. They were defeated by Brisbane in the final 34-6.

Players who represented Qld during the season were Shane Nightingale and Dean Garnett (Mackay).

Players who represented the Qld U21 side were: Keith Blaikie (Toowoomba), M.Tonkin (Goondiwindi), Scott Kennedy (Toowoomba) and Mark Catchpole, Vaughan Oxenford and Fraser Perrin all of the Gold Coast.

Players who represented the Qld U19 side were: Jason Hetherington (Rockhampton), Pat Weir (Townsville), Matt Tonkin (Goondiwindi), Glen Moat (Sunshine Coast). During the year an Italian U19 side toured Queensland beating the South Qld U19 side in Stanthorpe 22-0 and beating Nth Qld 14-0 in Townsville

Players who represented the Australian U17 side were: Blaike Gold (Townsville), Des Clark, Hunter Beirne, Mark Murray and Darren Young all of Toowoomba. This was the last season played by the Port Curtis Rugby Union. The coaching directors were R.Bourke (NQ), R.Brown (CQ), K.Crowe and G.A.Shaw (SQ). T.W.Burkitt replaced David Clarke as Qld Director of Coaching.

In 1989 was the inaugural year of the Winfield State Challenge Shield. Eighteen teams from Brisbane and Qld Country Sub-Unions competed. Although two Brisbane teams Easts and GPS played in the final, Country teams performed well. In the XXXX Sheild Competition between the regions, North Qld beat Central Qld 29-0. The Combined Country side defended the XXXX Cup which they won in 1988 against and went down 33-9. The Mt.Isa Mines State Colts competition was played, North Qld playing Brisbane in the final going down 33-9. The Combined Country U19 team beat Brisbane 19-18. The U21's lost to Brisbane 24-3. The Senior Country Team played Western Samoa losing 32-16, after leading at half time. They also played NSWCRU in Goondiwindi in a match promoted as the "Battle of the Border" and went down in a close match 25-22.

Players to represent country were: Keith Blaikie, P.Healy, Martin Laffer, Ian Webster, M.Ladner, D.O'Sullivan, Craig Pearce, Ken Long, Rod Berwick, G.Caswell, (South Qld). R Moroney, D.Coonan, W.Needham, Bruce.Newport, Brad.Torta, Peter Chengody, Rohan Fuller, Craig Hunter, Greg Tonner, Dan Coonan, (North Qld) B.Curran, Jason Hetherington, P.McKenna, J.Atkinson, G.O'Sullivan (Central Qld). The manager was Brendan Moon and the coach D.Hauff.

In 1990 once again eighteen teams contested the Winfield State Challenge. Two Brisbane clubs played the final, Wests winning a thriller against Brothers 19-18. The Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Central Highlands were the provincial areas to record impressive victories over the traditionally stronger Brisbane clubs. In the XXXX Shield each Regional side won one game and lost one game. The MIM State Colt's competition was won by North Qld. They were beaten at Ballymore 28-0 against Brisbane. In an early season match Qld Country played a match against the USSR at Townsville going down 22-21. Craig Pearce (Downs) scored all the points. In the annual XXXX Cup against Brisbane the Country Team after leading 18-14 let in four tries in the last 20 minutes to go down 40-18. The Qld Country side played NSWCRU at Ballymore and won 10-7, the best result since the draw in 1964 at Warwick. A Country U21 Team was beaten by a powerful Brisbane U21 side 41-7. They then went to the Southern States Carnival in Adelaide. They did not win being defeated by Victoria 12-7 but they beat the

Northern Territory 24-3 and South Australia 52-0. In an encouraging result in a match Qld Country 19's gave the NZ U19 the hardest match of their tour going down 23-6. Representative honours were P.Healy (SQ) Qld and Qld B, Keith Blaikie (SQ) Qld and Qld B.

Other players who played for Qld B were; B.Curran, P.McKenna, P.Chengody of CQ; M.Laffer, D.Tyson, D.O'Sullivan, of SQ; and P.Sprecker and P.Chengody of NQ. The Manager was Brendan Moon and later in the season Paul Mooney and the Coach Doug Hauff. Representative honours were: R.Moroney (Cairns) Qld , Qld B; Bill Needham (Mackay) Qld B. Qld U21 representatives were:- Grant Oxenford, Jim Damamua (Gold Coast); Peter Martinez (Mt.Isa); Glen Moat, Martin Laffer, A.Borthwick, (Sunshine Coast); J.Hetherington (Rockhampton), Paul Sprecker (Townsville); Scott Kennedy (Downs). Qld U19 representatives W.Salmon (Mackay); Aaron Gold, T.Grant, (T'ville), Roy Webster (Downs)

1991 was the last season of Regional Football. The XXXX Shield was contested on a carnival basis on the long weekend May 3-5th in Cairns. Nth Qld defeated Sth Qld 16-13; Sth Qld defeated CQ 3-0 and Nth Qld defeated CQ 29-0. An U19 carnival was held the same weekend at Kawana with Sth Qld winning On May 19th Sth Qld played Brisbane in the MIM final and were beaten 30-0.

On June 19th the Country U19 went down to Brisbane 17-8, three tries to two. Only two players made the Qld U19 side Travis Hall and Mark Murray. Both had distinguished future careers for Qld, NSW and Australia. A team from the train on squad played Tucuman (Argentina) in Bundaberg on the 16th March. After being down 18-0 at half time, they showed an uncharacteristic recovery in the second half to lose 22-14. The Senior team assembled on June 5th in Brisbane and beat Papua New Guinea 46-10. They then travelled to Adelaide for the Southern States Carnival and finished a disappointing fifth. Results :- vs Victoria lost 11-0; vs Tasmania won 26-3; vs NSWCRU lost 19-6 and defeated South Australia 34-10. The team was Paul Sprecker (NQ), Dean Garnett (NQ), David O'Sullivan (SQ), R.Constable (SQ), P.McKenna (CQ), Mick Busby (SQ), Vice-Captain, Steve Edwards (SQ), Boyd Curran (CQ) Captain, Mike DeRooy (NQ), Dean Tyson (SQ), Stuart Thorne (SQ), Rob Korst (SQ), Mark Raggart (SQ), Peter Healy (SQ), Bill Kettle (CQ). Reserves: Roger Leeson (CQ), Mark Gabriel (SQ), John Sheridan (SQ), Michael Conn (NQ), G.Tonner (NQ), J.Atkinson (CQ). Replaced in Adelaide by Martin Laffer (CQ). Players from the Tucuman match who did not tour were: Lou Gordon (SQ), Paul Vink (SQ), P.Chengody,(NQ), W.Burrows (CQ), A.King (WQ), S.Mettam (SQ). The Manager was Andy Purcell and the Coach Kim Bending. On the July 17 for the first time a Qld Country Origin team was assembled to play Wales in Rockhampton. With little preparation, outclassed in the scrums and without the ball they played well to go down 37-7. The team was:- 15 P.Sprecker, 14 R.Leeson 13 R.Constable, 12 D.O'Sullivan, 11 Dean Garnett, 10 M.Busby, 9 Mark Catchpole (B'ne), 8 Adam Jones (B'ne), 7 B.Curran, 6 F.Perrin (B'ne), 5 G.Morgan (B'ne), 4 S.Thorn, 3 R.Moroney (B'ne), 2 Will Shaw (B'ne). On July 21 a full country team played Brisbane and while down 21-3 at half time, played with spirit and pride to finish the game 21-13.

In 1992 the Winfield State Championship continued with Brisbane Clubs continuing to dominate, Souths beating Easts 38-8 in the final. There were good country performances, Central Highlands beating GPS 21-10, Cairns beating Norths 17-14, and Mackay going within three points of the Brisbane competition Grand Finalists University 16-13. A team from the senior train on squad played in the Crosby Cup in Brisbane and beat Brothers for the Crosby Plate. The Qld Country team played two matches, against the Qld U21 team losing 19-14 and against Brisbane 20-9 (2 tries to 1). Team members were: Roger Leeson, Wes.Burrows, M.Busby, Nigel Bannish, (Rockhampton), Josh Tonkin (Gold Coast), Grant Bloxham, R.Pelling, J.Searle, Liam Weir, Paul Sprecker, (T'ville), P.Chengody, Roy Spotswood (Mackay), Boyd Curran, Bill Kettle, (Central

Highlands), Mark Murray, Stuart Thorn, Hamish Dunbar, Rob Blackley, (Downs). M.DeRooy, (Cairns), Grant Qxenford (Gold Coast), Matt Cockbain (Innisfail). The Manager was Andy Purcell and the Coach Kim Bending. A Country Origin side was assembled to play Scotland in Toowoomba losing 29-12 after being 7-6 at half time. The team was 15 P.Sprecker, 14 Barry Lea (B'ne), 13 Matthew Hood (B'ne), 12 R.Constable, 11 W.Burrows, 10 Pat Weir (B'ne), 9 Brett Johnstone, 8 Sam Scott-Young (B'ne), Boyd Curran, 6 Fraser Perrin (B'ne), 5.Garrick Morgan (B'ne), 4 Stuart Thorne, 3 Grant Oxenford, 2 M.Foley (B'ne), 1 Dan Crowley (B'ne), 16 Hamish Dunbar, 17 Grant Bloxham, 18 Andrew King, 19 Brett Robinson (B'ne), 20 Rob Blackley, 21 Nigel Bannisch, 22 Mark Murray. The Qld Country U21 side competed in the Australian All States Carnival in Darwin from 8-17th May. They were undefeated champions winning against Victoria 25-10, South Australia 56-4, Tasmania 62-0 and Western Australia in the final 20-7.

The team was; (1) Wally Rea (Cairns), 2 Paul Rogers (T'ville), 3 Grant Burnham (Rockhampton), 4 Matt Cockbain (Innisfail), 5 Michael Marson (T'ville) V/Capt. 6 P.Munro (Downs), 7 Mark Murray (Downs), 8 Iliesa Tora (T'ville) 9 Hamish Dunbar (Downs), 10.Darren Shore (Gold Coast), 11 Brad Peterson (T'ville), 12 Aaron Buckley (Downs), 13 Ryan Constable (Sunshine Coast) Captain, 14 Josh Tonkin (Gold Coast), 15 Mepi Faoagola (Cairns) 16 Michael Foxlee (Mt Isa), 17 Craig Harding (Mackay), 18 Andrew Couper (Emerald), 19 Rohan Burrows (Rockhampton), 20 Scott Stallman (Downs) 21 John Hui (Gold Coast). The Coach was Don Moor and the Manager Bob Sinclair. The Brisbane U21 team never played this side. The Under 19 side drew 6 all against New England but went down 36-0 against Brisbane.

Representative honours were Boyd Curran Qld B. Australian U21 Ryan Constable, Mark Murray. Qld U21: Matt Cockbain, Ryan Constable, Mark Murray. Other States U21: Michael Marson. Qld U19 Daniel Ogg (T'ville), Josh Tonkin (Gold Coast).

In 1993 the format of the Winfield State Challenge was changed. There were two divisions of ten teams, including all Country Sub-Unions playing six games, with the winner in each group playing the final. The final was played between Souths and Wests at Ballymore with Souths winning 19-12. Good country performances were Cairns beating East 21-13 and Rockhampton and the Darling Downs beating Norths. The Country train on team assembled for a trial game in Lismore against Brisbane Brothers and won 19-10. They were unsuccessful in the Crosby Cup. In April the Country team beat Brisbane 29-15. However they were disappointing in the Australian State Championships losing to Western Australia 16-7 and South Australia 6-3. They beat Northern Territory 23-9 and Victoria 23-19. County Origin teams assembled to play three games. First against Western Province at the Gold Coast lost 57-9. The second against Tonga in Townsville was lost 16-3 and the final match against South Africa in Mackay was lost 63-5. The Country U21 assembled for two games losing to Brisbane 21-13 at Ballymore and 74-10 to the England National team at Bond University 74-10. The U19 side defeated New England 57-3 in Toowoomba and lost to Brisbane 57-12 at Ballymore. The country manager was P.Curtis and the coach G.Bourke. Representative honours were, Mark Murray Qld and Australia U21, Rohan Burrows, and Paul Sprecker Qld B, Brent Cockbain, Matt Cockbain and Jason Ramsamy Qld U21, Brent Cockbain and Brendan Casey Aust. U19 and Qld U19.

Luke Wyatt was appointed Rugby Administration Officer and formally appointed Secretary of the QCRU. The Rugby Football department was organized under the Rugby Manager G.A.Shaw. Coaching Directors were K.Crowe (DD), Dean Patterson (CQ), R.Bourke (NQ), R.Brown (Sun Coast).

In 1994 the Winfield State Challenge was again modified with the four top Country Teams, Rockhampton, Cairns, Darling Downs and Townsville, joining a first division with the Brisbane clubs and the remaining 7 Sub-Unions joined by

Brisbane Suburban in the second division. There was a provision for a challenge by the winner of the second division to join the first division. Once again two Brisbane teams Souths and Brothers played in the first division final Souths winning 22-20. Mackay defeated Qld Suburban 18-13 in the second division played as the "Winfield State Challenge Country Carnival" in Mackay. Subsequently they challenged and defeated Townsville 21-11, to go up to the first division. A U19 competition was conducted with the carnival in Mackay, the winner being Sunshine Coast who defeated Cairns 27-0.

The Country senior team played three matches losing to Brisbane at Ballymore 35-11, to NSWCRU at Armidale 43-8 and Italy in Toowoomba 57-13. The country manager was Bill Barrett and the coach Greg Bourke. The Country U21 team played two matches at Ballymore losing to the Northern Territory 84-0 and Brisbane 29-6. The Country U19 team lost to Brisbane Suburban in Toowoomba 24-20 and to Brisbane at Ballymore 57-13. Representative honours were: Qld B-R. Blakely (Downs), M. Fogala (Cairns), S. Thorn (Downs); Qld U21 - J. Ramsamy (Cairns), A. Raff (Downs), C. McCallum (Gold Coast), B. Casey (T'ville); Qld U19 - D. McKellar (T'ville), D. Jover (Cairns), R. Hill (Cairns).

In 1995, it was the last year of Winfield sponsorship because of Government restrictions on tobacco advertising. The format of the Winfield State Challenge was once again changed. Division 1 comprised 4 pools of three teams including 8 Brisbane teams and Darling Down, Mackay, Cairns and Rockhampton. The format did not allow for matches between Country teams or away matches. The second division was again played as a carnival in Emerald; the Shield final won by Gold Coast from Townsville 15-14 and the Plate Qld Suburban 15 beat Mt. Isa 12. Wide Bay eliminated Western Qld and Sunshine Coast eliminated Central Highlands. In the U19 Carnival also held at Emerald, Darling Downs won on points from Rockhampton. The Country Train on Squad played a XXXX challenge match against Brisbane in March being beaten 44-20. In a night game against Western Province they were defeated 40-16. Senior trials were held in Rockhampton in May and the chosen team defeated Qld Suburban 25-10 and lost to NSWCRU in Bundaberg 13-11. Players who played for Country were: Ralph Lipponem, Campbell McCallum, Shaun Walkinshaw, (Gold Coast), Nigel Bahnisch, Tony Macdonald, Todd Lynch, Rohan Burrows, Wes Burrows, Grant James, Peter Bartlett, (R'hampton), Rob Blackley, Stuart Thorn, Paul Farmer, David Elms, Stuart Pola, (Downs), Doug McGibbon, Bill Kettle, Grant Burnham, (Cen.High), Jason Murphy, Rod Pelling, Matt Morton, John Oulton, (T'ville), Alister Morrow, Ben Robertson, Jason Ramsamy, Mepi Faogali, (Cairns), Mark Humble (Sun Coast). The manager was Bill Barrett and the coach was Greg Bourke. The Country U21 Team beat Qld Suburban 46-3 but humbled by Brisbane 29-10. The Qld U21 Development team won the Southern States championship in Canberra. Country players were: Andrew Raff (Capt.), Paul Farmer, Jason Galai, Aaron Hunai, Campbell McCallum, Andrew Walker, Geoff Warman, Brett Shepherd, Andrew Ritchie and Richard Greff. The Country U19 team beat Qld Suburban 46-3, but were beaten 29-10 by Brisbane. Representative Honours: Red Healers (formerly Qld B) Mepi Faogali (Cairns), Rob Blackley (Downs), Wes Burrows (R'hampton), Qld U19 Danny McKellar (Townsville), John Haire (Central Highlands). The combined States team included Boyd Hamlyn (R'hampton), Archie Bell (T'ville), Robert Mc Donald (Rockhampton) and Sam Rossato (T'ville).

In 1996, it was the first year of Incitec Sponsorship. The Incitec Country Championships were played as a Carnival at Rockhampton at both Senior and U19 level. Nine Sub-Unions took part in the U19 competition with Gold Coast beating Darling Downs 23-11 in the final. The Senior competition included 7 sub-unions and the final was again Gold Coast 18 defeating Darling Downs 10. The Country Senior team beat Suburban 59-7, but lost to NSWCRU at the Sydney Football Stadium 35-0. This team was defeated by Illawara at Wollongong 35-0.

and Australian Services at Ballymore 22-16. The country manager was K.Crowe, the coach D.Thompson and his assistant B.McCouat.

The Country U21 lost to a Brisbane selection 47-0 at Ballymore and against Brisbane 57-0. The U19 team beat Qld Suburban 23-8 but lost to Brisbane 57-0 at the same venue. In a momentous decision the half-yearly meeting of the QCRU decided that the Rugby Football Department would take over the U19 and U21 players as a development project. Representative honours: Country players in the Qld Presidents XV were T.Macdonald (Rockhampton), J.Mulvihill, W.Rirnui, (Gold Coast), L.Moody, A.Vasta, (Townsville), D.Garnet (Mackay): Qld U21 Development Team:- L.Moody (T'ville), Paul Hanna (Downs), R.Greef (Sunshine Coast), D.Jover (Cairns), L.Fairbanks (Downs), A.Ritchie (R'hampton). Qld U19; D.McCallum (Gold Coast). Combined States U19; D.Thomas (Sun.Coast), B.Brown (Cairns). D.McCallum and B.Brown made the Australian U19 team.

In 1997 it was the first year of the Incitec Country Championship played as a Sub-Union competition on a home and away basis. Finals were only played at senior level. Townsville won a hard fought final against Sunshine Coast 14-13. U21 and U19 football was in the form of a talent identification programme under the State Director of Coaching Gavin Head. There were no representative games. The Country Team played two matches the first in Townsville against Combined Service losing 33-6 and against NSWCRU in Mackay losing 22-9. The manager was A.Beattie, coach D.Thompson and assistant coach B.McCouat Representative honours were David McCallum Qld U19. In 1998 a new sponsorship over three years was negotiated with Incitec for the Incitec Country championship at both the Senior and U19 level. There was no final for the U19's. The Northern and Southern Divisions played a home and away competition. The Far North Coast NSW played in the Southern Division. The Central Division played a round robin in Blackwater at Easter. Wide Bay won and played the winner of the Southern Division Sunshine Coast in the semi-final. The final in Townsville was Townville 17 defeated Sunshine Coast 13. For the first time since 1985 a short overseas tour was arranged to the Canterbury Province in New Zealand. Country was defeated 66-12 by Christchurch Metro (This team was virtually Canterbury B). The second game of the tour was cancelled due to unfortunate circumstances. On their return Country played the Army XV in atrocious weather in Toowoomba and won 10-5. Against NSWCRU at Narrabri in a thrilling match the final scores were 13-13. The Country players were: Andrew Walker, Todd Lynch, Michael Busby, Scott Barton, Adrian Price, (R'hampton), Dean Booth, B.Crothers, Rob Blackley, Tom Cooper, (Downs), Doug MacGibbon (Cent.High), Dave Kelly, Dave Sowerby, Tony Vasta, (T'ville), Andrew Gladstone (Mt.Isa), Heath Sylvester, Paul Stitt, Jamie Stewart, John Dann, P.Weir, Brad Diggle, (Sun.Coast), Campbell McCallum, Kurt Wright (Gold Coast), Paul Rogers (Mackay). The manager was P.Moore, the coach Doug Hauff and the assistant coach B.Timms. Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast hosted the Southern Cross series with teams from the Super 12. Cairns hosted Thailand and beat them 55-13. No representative U19 football.

IN 1999 the Incitec Country Championships continued in three divisions. Wide Bay joined the southern division and Far North Coast NSW dropped out. The Central Division was Mt.Isa, Western Qld and Central Highlands. The Competition was at Senior and U19 levels. In the Senior semi-final Townsville beat Central Highlands and in the U19 Cairns beat Mt Isa. The Senior final was held at Ballymore, Sunshine Coast finally beating Townsville 19-16 with a penalty right on the final bell. The U19 final was held at West's oval at Sylvan Road and Cairns beat Sunshine Coast 21-13.

The Senior Country side played two matches, the first against Army at Noosa winning 13-3 and drawing against NSWCRU at Ballymore 27-27. Country players were; Matt Albion, Rob Blackley, Brett Crothers, Paul Hanna, (Downs), Scott

Barton, Rohan Burrows, Roger Leeson, Matt Ramage, (R'hampton), John Flynn, Heath Silvester, Winton Smith, Paul Stitt, Chris Swift, (Sun Coast), Jos Goddard, Herbert Cameron, J.Kupa, Campbell McCallum, (Gold Coast), David Kelly (T'ville), Doug.McGibbon, (Cen.High), Liongi Pooi, Tai Walter, (Cairns), Paul Rogers (Mackay). The manager was P.Moore, the coach Doug Hauff and the assistant coach B.Timms.

In 2000 was the inaugural Australian Rugby Shield contested by seven teams, NSWRU, QCRU, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and the Northern Territory, the five state and territory teams being known by their capitals.. It was also the year the new logo the Qld Country Heelers was introduced. The Incitec Country Heelers showed great commitment and courage in coming from third to win the knockout semifinal and the final. On tour they defeated Darwin 33-18 and Melbourne 26-10 and lost to Adelaide 20-19. At Rockhampton they defeated Perth 27-16 and at Goondiwindi crashed in the second half to go down to NSWCRU 48-13. In the semifinal they had to travel to Perth and won on the bell. In the final at the Sydney Stadium they were down 17-16, in the last few minutes and scored a converted try to win 23-17, a historic effort by the team, its management and the Rugby Department support staff. Country players were: Matt Albion, Brett Crothers, Paul Hanna, (Downs), Carl Blaistow, Tony Harmor, Gary McNeil, Terry Moloney, Heath Sylvester, Paul Still, (Sunshine Coast), Cameron Brooker, Andrew Gardiner, Cameron Herbert, Mark Leech, Brad Harris, Andrew Dunbar, (Gold Coast), Rohan Burrows, Adrian Price, Matt Ramage, (R'hampton), Kris Burton, Ricky Culshaw, (Cairns), Andrew Gladstone (Mt.Isa), Wayne Hoffman, Dave Kelly, (Townsville), Vince Nugin (Wide Bay), Lawrence Symons (Mackay). The Manager was Peter Moore, the Coach Doug Hauff, the Assistant Coach Brent Timms and Steve Bofinger was the physiotherapist. The Selectors were P.Moore, D.Hauff and Don Moor. The Incitec Country championships were played at the end of the season between August 26th and September 30th in three divisions. The Northern Division was won by Rockhampton, the central by Mt.Isa and the southern by Darling Downs. Rockhampton played the Mt Isa in the semifinal and won 18-7. The finals of the Senior and U19's were played in Rockhampton on October 14th. Rockhampton beat Darling Downs 14-13. The U19 finalists Townsville and Darling Downs played an 8-8 draw. As the U19 dispensation allow them only to play 70 minutes of football it became a shared premiership.

In 2001 the last Country Championship sponsored by Incitec was played. Incitec did not renew its sponsorship for 2002. It was played in three divisions between March 31st and May 19th. Townsville the winner of the Northern Division played Mt.Isa the winner of the Central Division in the semifinal Townsville winning 39-16. The senior and U19 finals were played at Gold Park Toowoomba. Darling Downs 24 defeated Townsville 12 and in the U19's Sunshine Coast 17 defeated Townsville 8. The QCRU team in the Australian Rugby Shield playing record was:
 June 16 v Perth in Perth 20-20
 June 23 v Adelaide in Rockhampton 34-14
 July 7 v Darwin in Cairns 39-16
 July 14 v Melbourne in Mackay 15-6
 July 21 v NSWCRU in Newcastle 55-13
 July 28 Knockout semifinal in Perth was lost 18-17. Final placing was third. The QCRU U19 also played the NSWCRU Team in Newcastle as a curtain raiser losing 33-7. Senior country players were: Gary McNeil, Tony Harmer, Paul Stitt, Terry Moloney, Anthoy Merlo, (Sun Coast), Andrew Gardner, Mark Leech, Sopi Palea'ae, Sam Muir, Jonas Campbell, Cassidy Holland, Matt Hanay, (Gold Coast), Gil Griffiths, Shaun McCarthy, (T'ville), M.Albion, Kris Mulherin, Paul Hanna, Mark Brownlie, B.Crothers, Shane Hooper (Downs), Matt Ramage, Todd Lynch, Andrew

Walker, (R'hampton), Glen Reinecker Mt.Isa. The manager was P.Moore, the coach Brent Timms and the assistant coach M.Smith.

The British Lions played a match in Townsville on June 16th against a Qld President XV of contracted players. No Country players were included. They were defeated 83-6. The Qld Government through the Centenary of Federation sponsored a match "The Battle of the Border" between invitational sides from Qld and NSW on October 20th 2001 at Goondiwindi. The Qld side won 39-5. Players were;(1) Dan McConaghy Sunnybank, (2) Cameron Adams GPS, (3) Glen Appleton Brothers, (4) Paul Hanna (Darling Downs), (5) Brad Tronc Sunnybank (6) Byron Wood Easts, (7) Mark Jekyll (Darling Downs), (8) Matt Stafford Breakers (9) Sam Muir Gold Coast, (10) Kris Burton Souths (11) Luke Fairbanks (12) Tim Atkinson GPS, (13) Brett Crother Darling Downs (14) Reece Goode Wests (15) Barry Lea Norths (16) Bernie Pollard Darling Downs (17) Andrew Johnson Darling Downs (18) Peter Loane (19) Kris Mulherin Darling Downs (20) Sam Handy University, (21) Mark Brownlie Darling Downs (22) Shane Hooper, Coach Chris Handy, Assistant Coach Geoff Shaw, Manager Dave Nicholson

In 2002 the Country Championship was played, between April 6 and May 25, in three Senior Divisions, Northern, Central and Southern. There were two U19 divisions, Northern and Southern. The Finals were played in Townsville. Townsville defeated Gold Coast 19-16 in the Senior division. Townsville defeated Sunshine Coast 37-8 in the U19 final.

The Queensland Country Heelers assembled in Noosa and played two warm up matches. They defeated the Qld Suburban XV 41-27 and lost to Fiji A 34-18.

Their results in the Bundaberg Rum Australian Rugby Shield were:

June 15 v Darwin in Darwin won 45-11

June 19 v Melbourne in Melbourne won 40-13

June 29 v Adelaide in Adelaide won 13-6

July 6 v NSWCRU in Toowoomba lost 5-17

July 13 v Perth in Mackay lost 13-35

July 20 v NSWCRU in Narrabri Semi-Final lost 15-45

Final Place third.

Players in the squad were: Cairns D.Luci; Darling Downs F.Coorey, B.Hickey, S.Hooper, M.Jarroush, K.Mulherin, D.Thorn; Gold Coast, C.Brooker, H.Bell, J.Campbell, J.Clarke, J.Kupu, G.Miletelo, C.McCallum, T.Saxton; Rockhampton A.Price; Townsville, M.Buchanan, A.Davis, G.Griffiths, S.McCarthy, J.Moore, D.Scott; A.Vasta; Sunshine Coast, C.Baistow, B.Boniface, A.Gamblin, B.Hunt, M.Martin, C.Massoud, C.McKillop, G McNeil, L.Refite, B.Walker, R.Welsh. The Coach was Peter Bromley, his Assistant Coach was Brett Timms. The Manager was Dave Nickolson.

The QCRU U19 assembled in Brisbane on July 2nd and after one training run played University Colts 1 and were beaten 43-5.

On July 7th they played the NSWCRU U19 team in Toowoomba, and lost 25-20 in a thrilling match, showing their true potential. The coach was Peter Hansen, the assistant Coach Rob Nowlan and the Manager Geoff Barton. An innovation this year was a tour by the NSWCRU U20 team which played games in Mackay, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast.