



1926

While 1926 was a good year for the club on the field, it was a bad one for the training shed and a haphazard one for Auckland rugby as a whole.

The training shed was flooded to a depth of six inches of water in May, although repairs were quickly carried out, and then suffered a second and far more destructive fire than in 1924 in early September. At least this time the club was insured, but the damage meant an almost total rebuild was needed.

The club season also dragged on, and very late in the piece one of the most bizarre matches ever considered by a body that came up with some beauts took place – the challenge by the Senior B winner to the Senior A champion, winner to take the Gallaher Shield. Which was a piece of nonsense, but it was in play this year – and hastily scrubbed when the silliest of all possible outcomes nearly happened.

Ponsonby won the Gallaher Shield in something of a cakewalk, winning all ten matches easily and only twice being held to a single-figure margin. The press often lamented that the standard of club football had gone down and that it was too easy for Ponsonby, and that the rep selectors had no option but to put half the champion side into the rep team as the other contenders didn't have that combination, or any number of other things that could be captured in one sentence: 'Ponsonby wins too easily, and the competition is boring.'

Simply brushing Ponsonby's record over three seasons off as being due to the weakness of the rest ignores everything that went into creating this powerhouse. And it should be remembered that 1926 wasn't as successful as 1925 had been, since a number of clubs really got stuck in down the grades.

When one looks at the playing personnel in the Senior side, it's not to be wondered at that they were so superior. Six All Blacks, most of whom were at their peak, one New Zealand Maori rep and half a dozen other respected provincial players have never formed a weak club side yet. But there was also what these men had done at club level to consider; the team was as settled as it ever was in the 1920s, and of the fifteen regulars, no fewer than 12 would fashion careers of at least 30 matches, with most having considerably more.

Report after report extols the quality of Ponsonby's back play; at one stage, writing about a Third Grade game, the scribe talked of the consistent quality throughout the club. The forwards were not the lightweight pack of four or five years earlier either; they were now one of the biggest sets in town, and certainly the fastest and most skilful.

What was perhaps upsetting the press most of all was that there was no indication this dominance was going to end any time soon – and in that they were absolutely correct.

15 March Auckland Annual report

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260315.2.135>

20 March AGM called

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260320.2.142>

31 March Season preview

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260331.2.191>

13 April

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260413.2.188>

The suggestion that Ponsonby got 'a flying start' in 1925 as a result of 'taking the field absolutely fit for the first game' will come as no surprise to any club representative.

17 April Pre-season

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260416.2.19.5>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260417.2.154.3>

19 April Ponsonby 8 College Rifles 0 (pre-season)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260419.2.142>

Lucas, Cammick tries Lucas conversion

20 April Season prospects

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260420.2.90>

21 April Lower grade draw

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260421.2.177>

22 April Senior draw

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260422.2.13>

24 April Ponsonby 19 Pukekohe 0 (pre-season)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260424.2.145>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260426.2.133>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/FRTIM19260426.2.10>

Tonkin (2), Pelham, Hook, Cammick tries Lucas 2 conversions

29 April ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260429.2.179>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260429.2.13>

30 April/1 May Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260430.2.14>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260430.2.170>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260501.2.161>

1 May Ponsonby 37 Grafton 8 (Opening Day)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260503.2.147.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260503.2.138>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260504.2.142>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260505.2.159.1>

Hook (2), Lucas (2), McWilliams (2), Righton, Lincoln, Knox tries Hook 5 conversions

4 May Death of George Nicholson's sister

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260504.2.105>

6 May ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260506.2.134>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260506.2.13.1>

7/8 May Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260507.2.159>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260507.2.13.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260508.2.121.1>

8 May Ponsonby 14 Grammar 3

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260510.2.138.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260510.2.132>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260511.2.127>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260512.2.159.1>

Lucas (2), McManus, Tonkin tries Hook conversion

13 May ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260513.2.116>

14/15 May Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260514.2.150>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260514.2.16.1>

15 May Ponsonby 22 Marist 8

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260517.2.156.7>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260517.2.140>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260518.2.138>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260519.2.165.5>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260519.2.165.1>

Lucas (3), McCarthy, Lincoln tries Lucas, Hook conversions McWilliams penalty goal

20 May ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260520.2.13.1>

21/22 May Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260521.2.16.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260521.2.176>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260522.2.139.1>

There was some question as to whether the games would be played this weekend, as torrential rain and heavy flooding had affected the upper part of the North Island since Tuesday. However the weather relented enough for the games to go on, and Ponsonby played as if it was a dry day.

22 May Ponsonby 36 University 3

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260524.2.119.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260524.2.142>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260525.2.144>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260526.2.182.1>

Mattson (3), Righton (2), Tonkin, Hook, Cammick, Lucas, McCarthy tries Lucas (2), McWilliams conversions

27 May ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260527.2.15.1>

27 May The start of a bad year for the Ponsonby training shed

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260527.2.147>

During the heavy rains of the previous week, the training shed was flooded to a depth of six inches.

28/29 May Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260528.2.149>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260528.2.14.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260529.2.155.1>

29 May Ponsonby 15 College Rifles 0

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260531.2.123>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260531.2.133.6>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260601.2.145>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260602.2.180.1>

Mattson (2), Foster tries Lucas conversion Hook dropped goal

3 June ARFU meeting, the question of reinstatement

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260603.2.98>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260603.2.16.1>

3 June Post-flood repairs to the Tan

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260603.2.97>

After the flooding came the repairs – the Tan had been resurfaced in a matter of a couple of days. The surface of the training area was always the #1 priority.

4/5 June Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260604.2.125>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260604.2.126>

5 June Ponsonby 36 Grafton 3

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260607.2.143.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260607.2.114>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260607.2.115>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260608.2.144>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260609.2.165.1>

Pelham (3), Lucas (2), Hook (2), Mattson, McCarthy, Cammick tries Hook (2), McWilliams conversions

10 June ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260610.2.14>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260610.2.116>

11/12 June Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260611.2.17>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260611.2.145>

12 June Ponsonby 14 Grammar 5

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260614.2.129>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260614.2.139>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260615.2.125>

Mattson, Foster, Hook tries; McWilliams conversion; McWilliams penalty goal

17 June ARFU meeting Reinstatement of league players

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260617.2.135>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260617.2.14>

Reinstatement was a big issue in the mid-1920s as a lot of players had left rugby union to go to league in a short time. It can be seen that the Auckland Union was taking a hard line.

18/19 June Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260618.2.15.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260618.2.164>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260619.2.169.1>

19 June Ponsonby 23 Marist 6

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260621.2.129.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260621.2.153>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260622.2.150>

Mattson (2), McCarthy, McWilliams, Webber, Hook tries Lucas conversion Lucas penalty goal

23 June Ponsonby Juniors' unusual feat

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260623.2.174.1>

24 June ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260624.2.138>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260624.2.160>

Hearing for Webber and Lucas after sending off v Marist

29 June Bert Palmer gets a good review

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260629.2.158>

1 July ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260701.2.18>

2/3 July Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260702.2.151>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260702.2.14>

3 July Ponsonby 18 University 3

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260705.2.155.4>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260705.2.155>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260706.2.163>

Lucas (2), McWilliams, Hook tries Lucas 3 conversions

3 July Auckland squad; eight Ponsonby players

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260703.2.156.4>

8 July ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260708.2.18.6>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260708.2.120.7>

9/10 July Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260709.2.13.1>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260709.2.171>

10 July Ponsonby 15 College Rifles 9

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260712.2.123.4>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260712.2.123.7>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260712.2.126.2>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260713.2.168>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260714.2.166.1>

McWilliams, Hook, Cammick tries Hook (2), McWilliams conversions

15 July ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260715.2.136.1>

22 July ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260722.2.14.1>

23/24 July Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260723.2.139.4>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260723.2.15>

24 July Ponsonby 13 University 14 (Pollard Cup)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260726.2.139.1>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260726.2.124.1>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260728.2.167.1>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260727.2.123>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260731.2.196.4>

Tonkin, Cammick, Lincoln tries Tonkin, McWilliams conversions

26 July Obituary of Frederick Edwards, early Ponsonby player

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260726.2.108>

He played 18 matches for the Seniors from 1889 to 1891, but was lost to the club in the District Scheme reorganisation; he lived in the City district and played for that club in its early years.

29 July ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260729.2.142>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260729.2.15.1>

With nothing to lose, North Shore issues a challenge for the Senior championship. For a couple of seasons, the Senior B winner could challenge the Senior A champion, with the winner taking the Gallaher Shield. Ponsonby, the strongest team in town by far, had streeted the championship field, only twice being held to single-figure margins. Ten Ponsonby players were in the various rep squads and this game was played ten weeks after the last championship match. North Shore had no such concerns and could focus on the game for weeks. Ponsonby won, 6-5, but the match exposed every flaw that existed in what was a bizarre system.

30/31 July Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260730.2.19.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260730.2.142>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260731.2.143.4>

31 July Ponsonby 27 The Rest 9

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260802.2.180>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260802.2.140.1>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260802.2.181>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260803.2.131.3>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260803.2.131.7>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260804.2.156.1>

Hook (4), Lucas (3) tries Tonkin 3 conversions

2 August Auckland team named to play the All Blacks – eight Ponsonby players

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260802.2.140.3>

3 August Armchair selectors were around then too

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260803.2.131.4>

5 August ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260805.2.13.1>

6/7 August Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260806.2.17.1>

7 August Ponsonby 20 Ellerslie 3 (Pollard Cup)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260809.2.150.2>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260809.2.128.2>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260810.2.128>

Tonkin (3), Hogg, Short, Francis tries Short conversion

12 August ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260812.2.13.2>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260812.2.133.2>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260812.2.133.1>

The ARFU wanted to set up a match between Ponsonby and either the Hawke's Bay champion or, failing that, the Wellington winner (Athletic, which would have led to an interesting jersey clash). As it turned out, neither match could take place.

12 August Draw

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260812.2.13.1>

13/14 August Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260813.2.132>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260814.2.128>

This was basically the Ponsonby Junior team reinforced by Tonkin, Foster, Knox and Righton; the club was lucky to have Righton available as he was left out of the Auckland team, much to the dismay of the critics. Berridge was the only new player who fashioned anything like a full Senior career.

14 August Ponsonby 5 Grammar 15 (Pollard Cup)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260816.2.130.2>
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260816.2.130.5>

Tonkin try Berridge conversion

16 August Auckland team for Southern tour – seven Ponsonby players

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260816.2.130.4>

19 August ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260819.2.12.1>

21 August Some common sense returns to the club competition structure

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260821.2.151>

21 August Ponsonby default to College Rifles (Pollard Cup)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260821.2.151>

‘Owing to practically all the players being included in the A and B representative teams, Ponsonby will be unable to field a Senior fifteen ...’

26 August ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260826.2.12.5>

27 August Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260827.2.14.1>

28 August Ponsonby Suburbs (Pollard Cup)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260830.2.135.2>

Ponsonby had withdrawn from the competition, being unable to field a team of anything resembling Senior standard.

2 September ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260902.2.12.1>

4 September Training shed fire

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260904.2.64>

This time, after the warning of two years before, the club was insured (and they made a healthy profit on the rebuild). While it was a fairly dramatic way to achieve it, the fire and subsequent repair meant Ponsonby had a new shed when all the others around town were nearing 30 years old and starting to show their age.

9 September ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260909.2.133>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260909.2.13.2>

16 September ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260916.2.130>

22 September Auckland Juniors v Waikato Juniors – six Ponsonby players

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260922.2.177>

22 September Season review

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260922.2.183.1>

The writer was probably hoping for a bit much when he hoped the experimenting in the backline would produce players capable of reproducing ‘the brilliance associated with the names of V

Badeley, K Ifwersen and AE Cooke.' Badeley was, apparently, very good but the other two were players for a generation and both represented New Zealand at both rugby and rugby league.

23 September ARFU meeting; North Shore challenges Ponsonby

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260923.2.145.4>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260923.2.17>

For some reason the team that won Senior B could challenge the one that won Senior A, with the Gallaher Shield on the line. Fortunately for sanity, none of the challengers ever won this match.

24/25 September Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260924.2.135>

25 September Ponsonby 6 North Shore 5

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260927.2.145>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260927.2.128.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19260928.2.113.1>

Tonkin, Palmer tries

29 September

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260929.2.166.1>

30 September ARFU meeting

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19260930.2.13.1>

6/8/9 October Fixtures, teams and notes

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19261006.2.181.2>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19261008.2.153.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19261008.2.150>

9 October Ponsonby 6 Grammar 11 (Charity Cup)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19261011.2.147.1>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19261011.2.150.1>

Lucas, Knight tries

13 October Third Intermediate

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19261013.2.121>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19261018.2.131.11>

18 October Third Intermediate

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19261018.2.133.2>

21 October Third Intermediate

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19261021.2.135>

25 October Third Intermediate playoffs

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19261025.2.138.7>