

The Bledisloe Cup

The annual sporting spectacle of the Bledisloe Cup excites audiences around the world, but it appeals to citizens from two countries in particular. Since the 1930s, The Wallabies and the All Blacks have competed for the trophy. Any sporting contest between Australia and New Zealand is always competitive and this rivalry extends to their national rugby union teams. While the teams compete in a number of international rugby competitions (including the Rugby World Cup), the Bledisloe Cup is the only rugby union trophy contested solely by the two neighbouring nations.

Charles Bathurst, Lord Bledisloe, introduced the Cup at an inauguration ceremony in 1931, however, it wasn't awarded (to New Zealand) for the first time until the year after. In its early history, the competition could not be held yearly, because major global events, such as the Second World War, demanded the attention, resources, and citizens of both Bledisloe Cup nations. Now, the Bledisloe Cup series is held every single year.

Lord Bledisloe

Charles Bathurst was born in 1887 in England. After moving to New Zealand, he became the fourth Governor-General of the country from 1930-1935. He was a popular figure in New Zealand at the time, partly because he was seen to be caring to everyday New Zealanders, but also because he had a pleasing way with words. He is famous for buying the land at the site of the 1840 signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. This allowed for the historical preservation and memorialisation of an important part of New Zealand history. Today, his name is most famous because of its link with the Bledisloe Cup.



In order to win the Cup, Australia and New Zealand compete in a larger competition called The Rugby Championship (previously known as the Tri Nations). This competition involves a series of matches between four nations: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina. Regardless of which team wins the competition, only two of these nations are permitted to take the Bledisloe Cup.

The Wallabies won the trophy for the first time in 1934, but the consistent strength of the New Zealand team has seen the trophy spend most of its life away from Australian soil. In fact, the Wallabies have not held it since 2003, which means that the All Blacks have had an impressive winning streak!



This year, fans will gather to watch the three matches live at stadiums in Dunedin, Sydney, or on television. Dedicated Wallabies' fans will be dressed in the team colours green and gold to show their support, and the All Blacks' fans will be dressed in... Well, you can probably guess!



Questions

1. Name another rugby event mentioned in the text.

2. Why couldn't the Bledisloe Cup be held annually during the 1930s and 1940s?

3. How many years was Lord Bledisloe Governor-General of New Zealand?

4. Name three characteristics of Lord Bledisloe.

5. What makes it difficult for the Wallabies to win the Bledisloe Cup?

6. Which Rugby Championship teams are not able to win the cup?

7. Where has the Bledisloe Cup spent most of its life?

8. What do the All Blacks' fans wear to show their support for their team?

Answers

1. Name another rugby event mentioned in the text.
Another rugby event mentioned is The Rugby World Cup / The Rugby Championship / The Tri Nations.
2. Why couldn't the Bledisloe Cup be held annually during the 1930s and 1940s?
Because worrying global events such as the Second World War demanded the attention, resources, and citizens of both Bledisloe Cup nations.
3. How many years was Lord Bledisloe Governor-General of New Zealand?
Lord Bledisloe was Governor-General for five years (from 1930 until 1935).
4. Name three characteristics of Lord Bledisloe.
**He cared about everyday New Zealanders.
He purchased the land where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed.
He had a pleasing way with words.**
5. What makes it difficult for the Wallabies to win the Bledisloe Cup?
The New Zealand All Blacks have always been a strong team and are hard to beat.
6. Which Rugby Championship teams are not able to win the cup?
South Africa and Argentina are Rugby Championship teams that are not able to win the cup.
7. Where has the Bledisloe Cup spent most of its life?
The competition has spent most of its life in New Zealand.
8. What do the All Blacks' fans wear to show their support for their team?
All Blacks' fans will be wearing black!