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The Economic and Financial Effects of the Introduction of Super League in Rugby League

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the effect of a unique experiment by the Rugby Football League, to apply the American professional team sports model to its game, making it the first British sport ever to attempt this. It investigates the economic, financial and social changes, which have occurred within the sport of rugby league, since the introduction of the 'Super League'.

The adoption of the American professional team sports model is based on increasing the uncertainty of outcome of games in order to ensure profit maximisation of the clubs. This has raised a number of issues, pertaining to both the game of rugby league itself, the difference between American and British sport, and the ever increasing effect of television revenues and mass media on sport.

The adaptation of the model by rugby league officials has resulted in decisive changes to the way the game is played and how the Rugby Football League is run. A change to three divisions from two, the introduction of a 'Super League' copying football's Premiership and a switch from the traditional winter game to a summer season has taken place. Also critical has been the move from terrestrial to satellite television and the effect of this move on network externalities that could influence the long-term future of the game.

The £87million financial investment from Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation provided the catalyst for change, in exchange for the five-year exclusive broadcasting rights to the game. The American model was utilised in order to try and financially stabilise the league through the process of profit maximisation. The need for equilibrium within the league also led to the utilisation of various restrictive controls, all of which are common-place in the United States.

After critically evaluating the relevant literature, attention is turned to testing the effect of the experiment of applying the American model to British Rugby League. A five-strand approach has been adopted using data both pre and post, the introduction of Super League, utilising nine, case study-clubs throughout the study.

Firstly, any change in uncertainty of outcome was examined using the standard deviation of Win/Loss percentage adapted from the approach by Noll (1988) and Scully (1989). Demand for the live matches through attendance figures and broadcasting demand, using audience viewing data were examined. The third strand examines whether the predicted outcome of the American model, and increases in revenue and profit, have been achieved. Finally, two social surveys were carried out on three major stakeholder groups, club officials, players and supporters.

The results indicate that the application of the American Professional Team Sports model to rugby league did not achieve the predicted outcome of increased uncertainty, attendance and ultimately, revenue. The reasons for this can be explained by the partial implementations of the model and non-market factors, which appear to be much more significant within British Rugby League than in American sports. The over-riding results suggest that regardless of structural or organisational changes, rugby league is destined to remain a northern minority sport.

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Introduction

1.0 The Study

This research began at the start of 1996 after the announcement, which revealed the proposed changes to the structure of professional rugby league. Support for the game had been waning for several years and it desperately needed to reverse the trend in order to encourage more interest in attendance at live matches and ultimately to increase revenue from gate receipts. The re-structuring was influenced by the need to secure financial survival for the clubs and was instigated after seeing the positive effects that re-naming the divisions and selling the broadcasting rights to BSkyB had had on football.

Apart from a re-labelling of the top tier of the game and selling their broadcasting rights to satellite company, BSkyB, the sport's governing body went one step further than football. It decided to alter the very structure and organisation of the sport, by using a framework adopted from American sports. This provided an ideal and unique opportunity to examine the effects of applying an American model of professional team sports to a British game.

The study aims to examine rugby league's restructuring in relation to the American model and to assess to what extent the model has in whole or part, been adopted by rugby league. The effects of the new organisational structure will be analysed in order to determine whether the application of the American model to British rugby league has resulted in the game achieving the same outcomes as those predicted by the model.

The approach taken in this thesis is that the restructuring of rugby league in this country is essentially an experiment in applying the principles of American professional sports leagues to a British sport. The fundamental questions therefore relate to whether these principles have been properly applied and whether the predicted effects have materialised. Finally, the question asked is whether there is essentially anything different about British sport in general and rugby league in particular that affects the outcome of applying the American model to British sport.

The structure of the approach taken to examine the changes and their effects utilises the economics of professional team sports literature, which is based on the American model of professional team sports. The basis of the framework is that in order to maintain their existence, clubs must ensure they are financially stable. In American sport, leagues are developed along profit maximising lines, where the main objective is to ensure that the league and its member clubs maintain their financial viability.

In order to do this, the competitive balance within a league is required to ensure that uncertainty of outcome is high and the outcome or result of a match is uncertain rather than a foregone conclusion. This uncertainty ensures that the interest in the game is maintained, fans continue to attend live matches and revenue from this source is increased. Exclusive from gate income, revenue from the broadcasting of professional team sports also provides lucrative financial investment for leagues and their member clubs. The increasing influence of television on sport suggests that the greater interest in the games, the greater the income available from this source.

This situation is aided by leagues working as a cartel, with all clubs co-operating for the benefit of themselves, the other members and the league as a whole. They use restrictions on both product and labour markets to ensure the retaining of the league's competitive balance and hence more revenue.

Therefore, the main aim of this research is to:

> Analyse the economic, financial and social implications of the restructuring of the game of rugby league in Britain.

1.1 Research Objectives

In order to attempt to analyse the effect of the restructuring on rugby league, certain objectives will be addressed within this study.

The main objectives are as follows:

1. Examine the historical developments of rugby league, a major British professional team sport since its split from rugby union in 1895 and identify the problems faced by the sport prior to and in the three years following, the move to Super League in 1996.

2. Review the economics of professional team sports literature and examine the key components of the American Professional Team Sports Model.

3. Analyse the differences between professional team sports in the US and UK, highlighting problems of adopting the American model and trying to place the English game within it, in particular assessing the significance of non-market influences in rugby league.

4. Analyse the broadcasting demand for sport, and examine the extent to which broadcasting demand has been integrated into the American model and assess its importance to the rugby league experiment.

5. Critically evaluate the extent to which the American professional team sports model has been adopted by the sport of rugby league.

6. Examine and analyse what effects the application in 1996 of the American professional team sports model has had on rugby league.

In order to do this, the economics of professional team sports literature will be reviewed alongside the sociology of sport literature, concerned with the non-economic factors important to team sports. Parallel to this, the professional and popular material relating to the sport of rugby league is also examined.

Firstly, light will be shed on the historical antecedents that engender changes in professional sports, so as to place rugby league in its cultural context. This will attempt to show whether overlooking them could be damaging both in a social and financial sense to the clubs and to those who support them. It will also attempt to show what social costs, if any, these changes will incur.

Following an introduction to the sport, key areas within the American professional team sports model have been identified and examined which form the theoretical framework for this study. They will be used to examine whether the implementation of the economic model of a professional sports league, on the sport, achieves the economic benefits predicted by the rugby league. An attempt will be made to form a suitable structure for British sport, considering what, if any other factors should be taken into account.

1.2 Overview

The published literature on professional team sports mainly concentrates on the American team sports of ice hockey, basketball, American football and baseball, with only the sports of football and cricket having been previously studied in Britain. Therefore in addition to the academic literature, a broad range of resources will be utilised, drawing on previous research in many areas.

Chapter 2 will focus on the first objective of this study, examining the history of rugby league following the sports development from a folklore game to a professionalised spectator sport. It will seek to clarify the relevance of the history in shaping the future of the rugby league and identify how the game has remained very close to its roots and traditions. It analyses the problems the sport faced and concludes with the game struggling to survive.

This illustrates the failures of the past and demonstrates the importance and significance of the changes, which have been employed to ensure the continued existence of the game into the twenty-first century.

The second and third objectives of this study are the focus of chapter 3. It involves a review of three research strands, which collectively form the main body of published literature on the American professional team sports model. The first begins with an explanation of variables, which affect the demand for competitive sport and demonstrates the importance of uncertainty of outcome for the continued existence and economic success of both clubs and leagues.

Strand 2 explores the notion that sports leagues act as cartels to ensure their continued survival. This can often lead to a conflict of interest between leagues and individual clubs, which will also be addressed within this section. Product and labour market controls form the third strand of the chapter, indicating how associations utilise such restrictions in order to ensure the competitive balance within a league is maintained.

Following a detailed examination of each component of the American model, they will be placed within a British context to demonstrate the similarities and differences between professional sports leagues in America and Britain. Reasons for the differences and the importance of other, additional, non-market factors will be investigated. These relate firstly, to the differences in objectives of professional sports clubs, namely profit maximisation in USA and traditionally a more utility maximisation approach within British sport, and its relevance to rugby league.

Secondly, an evaluation of the extent to which broadcasting has been integrated into the American model will be carried out, as conventionally within the theoretical literature, demand is accepted as being attendance at live games. With the recent changes in the role of television and its relationship with sport, its effects on attendance at live matches and the determinants of broadcasting fees will be examined. The increasing influx and dominance of both satellite and pay per view television over terrestrial channels will be assessed, and the effects on rugby league will be examined.

Chapter 5 focuses on the methodology employed in this investigation to examine the consequences of the changes, to the sport. The economic effects will be explored firstly to determine whether the restructuring of the game has resulted in an increased uncertainty of outcome of both individual games and the competition as a whole.

Secondly, league attendances will also be monitored pre and post Super League to show whether changes to uncertainty have affected attendance figures and to show any change in demand for the game. Broadcasting demand for the game is also examined and the impact that the move from terrestrial to satellite television has had on rugby league will be identified. Thirdly, a financial statement analysis will be carried out to determine whether, as predicted by the American model, revenue has increased.

Finally, in-depth interviews and a longitudinal social survey incorporating a combination of both qualitative and quantitative questions were utilised. This involved the questioning of club officials, players and supporters with regards the introduction of the changes to the game, and the implications for its future, carried out to test whether the American model is applicable to British rugby league.

Chapters 6,7, 8 and 9 discuss in detail the results from the empirical research. Chapter 6 examines uncertainty of outcome and addresses the question of whether this has increased due to the restructuring. Secondly, attendance figures will be considered to determine whether the new restructuring has been successful in terms of increasing demand for the game.

Chapter 7 considers broadcasting demand and seeks to highlight any major change in viewing figures since the switch to the new Super League structure. The impact of the move from terrestrial to satellite coverage and the return of the game after a three-year respite back onto the BBC's regional channels in the form of a highlight show will also be addressed.

Chapter 8 presents the financial statements' data relating to both individual clubs and the Rugby Football League itself. This is considered both, pre and post the change to Super

League, including an analysis of the impact of the News Corporation investment into the game.

The focus shifts, in Chapter 9, from economic to social considerations. The results of the longitudinal questionnaires will be discussed and the in-depth interviews with club officials, players and supporters reviewed. The importance of rugby league to those involved in the game will be established in an attempt to ascertain whether demand is dependent on other factors, external to market influences.

Chapter 10 seeks to address the final objective of this study to determine whether the application of the American model of professional team sports has had the predicted effects on the British sport of rugby league. It synthesises the findings of this research to show whether the restructuring of rugby league has been successful in its attempts to strengthen the game's financial and supporter base. The benefits of attempting to simulate the organisation of American sport are examined and the possibility of expanding rugby league into a global game assessed.

Finally, chapter 11 summarises and reviews the findings of this research and raises some important issues regarding the suitability of the American model of professional team sports to British sport. The possibility of developing a British, European or global sports model will also be considered.

The changing structure of rugby league was selected for this thesis as it provided a unique opportunity to examine the implementation of the American model of professional team sports on a British sport. Additionally, this research represents a clear gap in the professional team sports literature as previously, very little work has been undertaken relating to the British sport of rugby league. In order to explain the background to this study, the following chapter provides a historical account of the circumstances surrounding recent events within the sport.

Chapter Two
History of Rugby League

2.0 Introduction

Although rugby was played for many years prior to 1895, it was this year, which marked rugby league's split from union, thereby dividing the sport into two factions and representing the most momentous event in the game's one hundred year history.

In 1995, the sport of professional rugby league celebrated its Centenary, which proved to be another significant milestone for the game, as it witnessed a major transformation in its structure and organisation. The year signalled a 'new' disregard for tradition, as the switch to a summer season was implemented and the firmly established winter schedule was abandoned.

The introduction of new clubs from non-conventional rugby league areas clearly highlighted the desire of the Rugby Football League to drag the sport into the twenty first century and into a new era of professionalism, which would run parallel with the heightened influence of television and media on the game.

This chapter will set the game in context and examine the origins and emergence of rugby league. The problems that rugby league has faced at various times throughout its history culminated in the mid-1990's with the realisation that change was essential if the game was to survive. The relevance and significance of the past events to the recent changes are therefore, identified. This can help in the understanding of how the roots of rugby league have shaped its history, and how in turn its history has contributed to the game in its present day form.

2.1 The Years Pre-1895

Despite 1895 being the acknowledged birth of rugby league, its seeds lie in medieval folk games. Played from the fourteenth century onwards, these adapted with time from having wild and simple unwritten, adhoc rules, which varied due to locality, to become, like society more carefully regulated. It is the adaptation of these folk game antecedents that has laid the foundations for many of our modern day sports and has led to the game of rugby league in its present day form.

Holt (1990) explains how sport has changed by simply stating that the formal codification and national administration of sport are at the heart of the gulf between traditional and modern sports. McPherson *et al* (1989) agree that the structural changes in modern sports are due to the gradual and continuing commodification. This has resulted in the social, psychological, physical and cultural uses of sports being assimilated by the commercial needs of advanced monopoly capital. This most historians attribute, primarily, to the Industrial Revolution.

The development of railways, accompanied by an increase in the concentration of population within large industrial centres, coupled with an expanding world economy, meant a fall in food prices, living costs were cut and so real wages increased considerably all helping to stimulate the development of a market for spectator sport (Vamplew, 1988).

Changes to transport, technology, urban life and factory labour began to have a major impact on popular sport (Holt, 1990) and just like its economic counterpart, the Industrial Revolution in sport had social ramifications (Vamplew, 1988). It played a crucial role in creating and sustaining a new popular culture and new kinds of urban identity (Hobsbawn, 1984).

This increase in sport was aided by the Factory Act of 1847, which reduced working hours and by the gradual institutionalisation of Saturday as a half-day by 1878 (Dunning and Sheard, 1979). These were structural and motivational preconditions necessary to allow people more leisure time (Best, 1971). This plus a rise in real working class incomes of 40% and by another 15% in 1900 meant a small proportion of income could now be reserved for pleasure and entertainment (Clarke and Critcher, 1985).

These parallel developments stimulated a demand for commercialised spectator sport, a demand enhanced by growing urbanisation, which offered entrepreneurs concentrated markets for the first time (Vamplew, 1988).

This industrialisation of British sport can be charted as the development of supply and demand in the market place. Favourable changes in demand parameters, particularly time and income, encouraged the injection of factors of production into the supply of sport and the application of modern technology in the form of drainage and stand construction to combat the weather and allow regular and more intensive use of facilities (Vamplew, 1982). The development of professional team sports i.e. rugby league and football can be interpreted as involving complex responses to industrialisation and to changes in class relations and social power (Horne *et al*, 1987).

The emergence of team sports took place in the educational establishments reserved for the elite of the bourgeois society, the 19th century bastions of the establishment, the public schools (Wiseman, 1977). They played a major role in the emergence of team sport, by shifting from games to competitive sports. These changes had a profound effect on the development of sport, helping to create the pre-conditions for the creation of rugby.

It is recognised that a large literature is available on the impact that the public schools had on the development of sport and the creation of a new middle class. However, a detailed examination is not deemed relevant for this research, and so although acknowledged, this is not considered any further within this work.

The development of these team sports within public schools was mainly orchestrated by Thomas Arnold at Rugby School. He was opposed to the gentry and so banned field sports and other aspects of traditional, aristocratic lifestyle, substituting them with cricket and football (Moorhouse, 1995). These changes helped to lead to the emergence of a social structure conducive to innovation, with rugby beginning to emerge as a distinctive, restrained and more civilised game. The process achieved its own momentum, as rules became more specific, numerous and complex they had to be written down, wilder features began to be eradicated and controls became more stringent. It was a collective process, but totally unplanned, an unintended consequence of the social change wrought by industrialisation.

Rugby had taken a small step towards its modern form, it was beginning to emerge as a game considered suitable for English gentlemen (Dunning and Sheard, 1979).

During the 1870's, rugby began to undergo democratisation, as it ceased to be monopolised by the upper and middle classes. Different values were added to rugby by the non public school bourgeois and working men which led to new sources of tension as the dominance of the upper and upper middle class groups were challenged (Dunning and Sheard, 1979).

This resulted in decisive changes in the social composition, which previously had been homogenous. No longer was it socially exclusive. As Hargreaves (1986) explained,

> *'The working class people stamped sports like association football and rugby league with their own character and transformed them in some ways into a means of expression for values opposed to the bourgeois athleticist tradition'.*

In the north, owners of industry and trade were usually of a lower social status than those in the south, which resulted in the existence of a different social configuration. They kept in touch with the manufacturing processes on a day-to-day basis. This allowed them to continue to retain their own identifications and kinship with their class of origin and to work in a close-knit atmosphere conducive to a high degree of identification between employers and employees (Dunning and Sheard, 1979).

Northern employers were keen to encourage an involvement in sport, in order to promote a sense of unity in the workplace. It seems therefore that the impetus for growth of working class participation came in a structured sense from above. This helped to form the social foundations for the formation of the open rugby clubs of the north.

In Yorkshire and Lancashire, rugby underwent a separation process as it began to diverge from the interests and values of the rugby establishment. These values were being expressed in northern rugby through the introduction of cups and leagues and in the growing amount of money within the game (Dunning and Sheard, 1979). This involved charging for admission, arrangement of matches, which would attract large crowds, payment of money to players and the use of material inducements to lure the best players from one club to another.

However, the southern men felt that the effect of league matches and cup-ties was thoroughly evil. Accompanying the Yorkshire Cup that began in 1877 was a high level of public interest bringing with it an increased number of working class players, spectators and strong rivalry between clubs. This led to large amounts of gate money, which together with monetary rewards was thought to lead to unscrupulousness and corruption (Dunning and Sheard, 1979; Collins, 1995). Large crowds at sports events were nothing new but large paying crowds on a regular basis were. Mass spectator sport became a growth point in the late Victorian economy (Vamplew, 1988).

By 1880, several of the open clubs had transformed themselves into gate taking organisations. The wealth they accumulated allowed them to emerge as the most powerful, with over half the clubs in the Rugby Football Union, by September 1893 coming from the North (Dobbs, 1973; Macklin, 1974; Ulyatt, 1988). It had become the English bulwark of rugby, with its industrial towns the ardent strongholds of the game (Brown, 1979).

This increasing northern dominance was also reflected on the field of play, with clubs establishing superiority over their southern counterparts. Yorkshire began to monopolise membership. The Football Annual of 1881 showed in devoting a chapter to the game in Yorkshire, which it claimed, could boast of being second to none, in its support of the popular winter pastime (Dunning and Sheard, 1979). The south resented that momentum for change was being generated by what they regarded as alien and inferior groups, and that they were being quite literally beaten at their own game.

In the north, people saw the game not just as matches and exciting spectacles but as tests of virility between their community and another. The depth of identity of town with team, meant players were to play for the glory which victory would bring to their community as a whole. It also provided excitement and relief in the routine, work dominated lives of people compelled to industrial towns and villages of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

As Vamplew (1988) explained,

> *'Earlier folk football had been essentially for the participants, whereas the new football was geared towards the paying spectator, only twenty-two were allowed to play, but there could be thousands watching'.*

Football had become part of the mass entertainment industry. This was clearly demonstrated by the large crowds that were attracted to matches and helped play a crucial part in the emergence of the gate-taking clubs. Twenty two thousand paid to watch Bradford versus Halifax in the Yorkshire Cup in March 1893 (Wakefield Express, Saturday 11th March 1893) and on the 2nd January 1895 a crowd of 10,000 watched Bradford play Leeds (Liverpool Daily Post, Wednesday 2nd January 1895).

As demands on their time increased, players could see that profits were being made from gate receipts and felt that they deserved at very least to be financially compensated when they had to take time off work (Macroy, 1991).

The five-day week was still two or three generations away and Saturday was no different from any other day. A significant proportion of players were miners, glass blowers, mill workers, dockers, all working class occupations which meant that they could not afford to take time off to play rugby without a consequent loss of pay (Davies, 1988).

A practice developed in the north and midlands for the middle class players and officials to subsidise working class players, from either their own pockets or from money taken at the gate (Harris, 1975). Sport for money and food prizes such as geese and legs of mutton became an integral part of working class cultural life in West Yorkshire (Collins, 1995).

Due to this, officials became openly achievement orientated and had few qualms about stimulating competitive rugby through the introduction of cups and leagues. The offering of employment, on condition that a player turned out for the local team, quickly became one of the most powerful inducements.

The expansion of working class participation was to some extent contingent upon middle class wealth but also upon a redistribution of resources among their own class. Many were now willing and able to exchange money for the thrill of watching a skilful, exciting game, representative of the communities with which they could identify.

Many of the northern clubs wanted to make their own payments for broken time but still, remain under the auspices of the Rugby Football Union. However they realised that broken time payments would never be tolerated by metropolitan overlords, who thought they were the thin end of the wedge, the path to full professionalism (Dunning and Sheard, 1979). They believed this would lead to the intrusion of market forces into realms of private life, buying and selling of players to please the public, and unethical practices such as poaching or bribery of competitors (Macklin, 1974).

Up until now, rugby's constituent clubs had been drawn from all classes of society just like in football and in similar circumstances to football, rugby had to face the question of payment for broken time to players (Holt, 1990). Unlike association football, which permitted payments to those who needed it, the Union recoiled in horror from any such situation.

To those who urged that the working man ought to be compensated for the loss of time occurred by his recreation, the club owners in the south answered that if he could not afford the leisure time to play a game, he must do without (Dobbs, 1973). They saw the actions of the northern men as blatant acts of professionalism (Brown, 1979). As allegations of underground professionalism increased throughout Yorkshire and Lancashire, the Rugby Football Union attempted to try and stop its spread by altering the constitution to crush any attempt to establish professionalisation (Viney and Grant, 1978).

They associated amateurism with a higher social status (Golby and Purdue, 1984) and so wanted to legitimise rugby as a purely amateur sport by enshrouding amateur principles into their constitution, and introducing stringent anti-professional regulations. These were designed to make the northern clubs, tow the pristine amateur line or risk expulsion.

The problem of broken time payments led eventually to a split, as an article in a Yorkshire newspaper in 1896 suggested,

> *'The northern revolt had been precipitated by the rugby union establishment's ignorance of the social conditions under which the game in the north was played'.* (Dunning and Sheard, 1979)

Rugby's troubles erupted at a time of grave industrial strife and mounting class tension. The early 1890's where marked by economic depression, with disputes and strikes over wage rates. There were also pay cuts especially in mining areas of the north and textile trade centres in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which were badly hit (Dunning and Sheard, 1979).

Collins (1997) however, believes that the split was not based on geographical lines. Many clubs in the Northern Union including Castleford and Dewsbury actually lost key administrators and players suggesting that the battle was based more on class lines, focused on differing attitudes towards working class players.

Clarke and Critcher (1985) agree that the split was an act of downward cultural dissemination by the aristocracy and bourgeois over an issue of class, power and ideology, inextricably interlaced with questions of professionalism, competition and market forces (Gate, 1989). Rugby became the only sport in Britain to undergo a total amateur/professional split due to the intensification of class conflict that occurred in the 1890's, making it socially divisive (Holt, 1990). It can be argued that amateurism evolved as the ideological expression of middle class attempts to subordinate working class players to their leadership (Collins, 1997).

The entering of working class players into rugby in the 1870's and 80's plus the reluctance of the middle class leadership to allow this participation on an equal footing caused reverberations. These are still seen even today, as rugby league is regarded as a game for the masses and rugby union, for the classes.

2.2 Rugby's Disunion: The Birth of Rugby League

The year 1895 marked the defining moment as bifurcation changed the nature of rugby and its cultural and social allegiances, creating two separate sports alienated due to differences in their backgrounds and beliefs.

The revolution in English rugby actually occurred on the 29th August 1895, at The George Hotel, Huddersfield. Twenty clubs with the addition of two Cheshire clubs making the initial membership twenty-two resolved to form a Northern Rugby Football Union. They pledged themselves to push forward without delay, its establishment, on the principle of payment of bona fide, broken time.

Before the split, the Yorkshire Union had one hundred and fifty clubs, which amounted to three-quarters of the numbers affiliated to the Rugby Football Union. Therefore the membership continued to climb as the following season saw an increase to fifty-nine with additions including Salford, Swinton, Castleford and Bramley. In 1897, eighty clubs were members (Viney and Grant, 1978) and 1898 saw the figure rise to ninety-eight (Mason, 1989).

Before September was out, the Northern Union's season was underway, with the first matches played on 7th September. At the beginning, players received six shillings per match as long as they could demonstrate that they were in employment and had lost a day's pay (Saxton, 1895). However by 1898, any attempt to restrict payments of players, was abandoned as professionalism was legalised, although players had to have full time employment in a legitimate occupation outside football, so, as none become financially dependent on the game.

Interests of the spectators continued to increase as Saxton (1895) reported 3,000 watched Cheshire and Lancashire in October 1896; 9,059 supported Lancashire and Yorkshire in December 1896 and by November 1897; 15,000 attended a match between the two sides. This period saw the infrastructure of the game's competitions established and the very methods and patterns of play that make the game so distinctive.

Season 1901 saw two developments that had an immense impact on shaping the course of the game. Firstly, as clubs wanted to reduce the number of players from fifteen to twelve, they introduced smaller team sizes for a trial period. Secondly, this year saw the fusing of the Lancashire and Yorkshire senior competitions into one league, as a campaign for a Super League started. Many of the bigger clubs were tired of the parochial county championship, however, there were protests from the lower clubs. They felt that a Super League would skim the cream from the senior competition and kill the smaller and less glamorous clubs.

However the powerful voice of the bigger, influential clubs won and 1901 saw the birth of the first Northern Rugby Union, which resulted in a Super League (Macklin, 1974), very similar to that created during recent events in the game. The change to the Super League arguably also had damaging effects on the sport in the long term, which can be identified as the first warning signs of difficulties, which would affect the expansion of the game.

South Shields, which had been deprived of their best fixtures since the 'Great Schism' opted to change codes and move to the Northern Rugby Union. However, the new Super League declined to accept them and although they were eventually admitted into a second division, and had a promising start, they were rapidly relegated. Their inclusion into the bottom division combined with declining gates and increased debt, resulted in them only lasting for three seasons. A similar existence developed for a club based in Coventry, which also lasted for three seasons and outlawed clubs in Devon and South Wales meant that the seeds of future problems surrounding expansion were already sown, as early as 1910 (Farrar *et al*, 1993).

The game needed to be entertaining and competitive enough to keep the communal support upon which the success of the northern union had been built (Delaney, 1993), as the Bradford Observer noted (28th August 1896),

> *'The intention of the union was to lose no opportunity of further improving the game", which led it to be shaped not only by the social circumstances that existed in England at the time but by the people who played it and those who governed the league'.* (Brown, 1979)

Changes to the actual game took place over time, but they were programmed to attract spectators even from its earliest days, and its refusal to allow lineouts or rucks was a testimony to this (Midwinter, 1986). Despite the earlier experimental twelve a side games, the number of players was eventually reduced to thirteen players in 1906 (Williams, 1994) and kicked goals scored only two points instead of four as in rugby union (Macklin, 1974).

The Rugby Football Union thought that the game was being ruined by the new rules, which had been introduced to try and make the game faster and more exciting due to the dependency of the Northern clubs on gate money (Macklin, 1974).

Attendances were continuing to rise though, as average gates in 1902-03 of 5,500 had nearly doubled by 1904-05 to 9,022 (Williams, 1994). The Northern Union's membership also continued to increase, as did their balance sheet. Despite a £90 loss in its first season, by 1898, with a membership of 98 clubs, the union made a profit of £1,525. This increased further the following season to £1,544 and by the Annual General Meeting of 19th July 1901 the Northern Union had a sound financial base, recording profits of £2,334 (Gate, 1989).

Within eleven years of the split, the game pattern of rugby league had, in all major respects acquired its modern form, which distinguishes it as the separate identifiable game we now call rugby league. It had emerged organisationally, as what is today, a professional sport, mainly financially dependent on money taken at the gate. Although, the new league did experience some teething problems, with several clubs including, Manningham and Stockport going out of existence by 1902 due to financial problems, overall the general picture was one of enthusiasm and stability (Delaney, 1993).

The Union was developing fairly successfully (Gate, 1989) and experienced a greatly settled domestic scene during the years prior to 1914. The new code became strong in the north of England, and in parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, ousted association football as the local working class sport.

However, despite attempts to expand the new code into fresh areas it failed to develop significantly elsewhere in Britain, partly because soccer had already established itself as the major winter spectator sport (Cunneen, 1979; Vamplew, 1988). This resulted in the game never really establishing an economic base that would enable it to support a large body of full time players solely dependent on rugby for their livelihood and consequently laid the seeds for future financial problems.

The years from 1907 to 1914 proved to be settled times, with few changes, demonstrating the greater staying power of the Northern Union. However, the outbreak of the First World War upset the growing prosperity and development of the league, resulting in several lean, unsettled years for the game.

2.3 The Years 1914 - 1950

The Great War, which broke out in 1914, put paid to any further expansion ideas the Northern Union may have had. Although initially it caused little disruption, in 1915, when the war increased its momentum, difficulties began to surface. Many teams were having problems paying match fees and by 1915, over one and a half thousand players, had been rallied to the army. A large number were killed in action including Bill Jorman of Leeds, Walter Raman of Rochdale and J. H. Turtill of St. Helens, spectators too were in short supply. Therefore, the Annual General Meeting of 8th June decided to suspend competition for the duration of the war (Macklin, 1974).

Only friendly games were played thereafter, reducing the Northern Union to an emaciated amateur tournament (Gate, 1989; McCarthy, 1989). By the end of the war, clubs were in a dire position, many had lost players, money was scarce and several grounds either had been impounded or were overgrown and decrepit. Oldham, Wigan and Broughton Rangers had been forced to sell their grandstands to raise funds and were dubbed by other clubs the 'timber merchants'.

Some clubs lost the edge and their form failed to return. One casualty was Runcorn who never resumed playing and many clubs had to be persuaded to continue, doubting they could survive another season. The war ended on 11th November 1918, but the decision was made not to restart until 1919-1920, giving both the country and clubs time to get back to normal.

The 18th January 1919 saw the resumption and the size of the crowds surprised and delighted officials. After the long years of tedium and frustration, the return to competitive rugby league had bought out spectators in their thousands. Crowds grew bigger and more enthusiastic, with the post war boom reaching new heights. New ground records were set in Hull, Rochdale, Halifax, and Swinton (Jones, 1988).

The reduction of the average working week from 56 to 48 hours in 1919, stimulated greater demand for sport (Jones, 1988) and as the chairman of Huddersfield said, 'There is no sign of the boom receding' (Gate, 1989).

The 1920 Annual General Meeting showed the positive balance sheet of £4,641 as the post war boom continued. A new team Featherstone Rovers entered the league and in addition the first post war Australian tour of the Northern Union took place. The lack of real competition for several years led to remarkable scenes on 5th June 1929, when the first Test match was played at the Metropolis Cricket Ground in Australia, with the official attendance recorded as 67,859. The matches were a great success, designed primarily to help the expansion of the game in both countries (Moorhouse, 1995).

This led to an important suggestion being made by the Australian management, Mr. Ball and Mr. Cann, who felt that the Northern Union should drop its present title and adopt one more in keeping with the developments in Australia (Moorhouse, 1995). This idea was considered at the 1922 Annual Meeting and within only twenty-seven years of its origin, the other side of the world had taken up the game. The name Northern Union was dropped and the title Rugby Football League adopted.

However, despite the progress made and the Rugby Football League's financial report showing a surplus of £15,164, signs had begun to emerge that the post-war boom was beginning to subside. This was demonstrated by the reported loss for the Rugby Football League of £847 in the following season (Delaney, 1993). It had become clear that the game needed to reassert its own identity, seek a wider base and attempt to try to break from its traditional areas in order to align itself more with the Australian and New Zealand Rugby League organisations (Moorhouse, 1995).

As in Britain, a similar emergence and growth of rugby league was also seen in Australia. This was reflected in the structures of working class organisations in Sydney, although the principal difference here was that payment of players was not considered an infringement of any particular moral code (Cunneen, 1979). This in British rugby league has proved to be one of the biggest obstacles, which put paid to the sport's earliest expansion plans.

The game's failure to spread beyond the northern context in which it originated, was partly due to the fact that rugby league could not hope to gain support in working class areas where soccer had already become firmly entrenched. In addition, its own strongholds in the northern cities were themselves vulnerable to the lure of the football league.

Simultaneously the stereotyped cloth-cap image and move to professionalism meant it could not compete effectively with rugby union for the middle class allegiance. Despite this, the decision was made in 1928 to move the Challenge Cup Final to Wembley. Although the roots of the league remained firmly in the north, the first final attracted over 41,000 supporters, and so sealed the staging of the event for future years at the London stadium (Dunning and Sheard, 1979).

The years after the First World War had seen many changes for the game, the first Australian tour, a name change and the Wembley location for the Challenge Cup. However, even more radical alterations were to be made, with the outbreak of the Second World War.

The war brought with it, increased problems, as it caused a temporary halt to the season. The government did eventually deem that sport was a useful aid to maintain the nation's morale and so play was allowed to continue. It did cause obvious difficulties however. Several grounds were requisitioned for drill or storage and capacities were severely restricted due to the possibility of air raids. An emergency committee was set up to administer games for the duration of the war, which was run on a Lancashire and Yorkshire league basis.

The 1940-41 season restarted as usual, minus Rochdale whose stadium was utilised by the military and Hull Kingston Rovers who had been forced to sell their ground due to financial hardship. The following season saw Leigh also excluded, as they too had been forced to sell their ground. Only eighteen teams continued and so few Lancashire clubs were functioning that the two divisions where merged into one emergency War League. Season 1942-43 saw only 14 members start, as the war's repercussions hit more clubs and problems worsened as the troubles continued (Gate, 1989).

The hostilities in Europe lasted until May 1945, and rugby league resumed normal operations shortly afterwards. A similar post war boom to that which occurred after the First World War followed. New clubs emerged including two in Cumbria, Workington and Whitehaven and several clubs had imported overseas players which was helping to attract further supporters, just as in football. The years superseding the troubles in 1940 also saw match attendances flourish, culminating in a new, world record attendance recorded at the 1947 Challenge Cup Final of 77,605 (Gate, 1989).

Despite this, the game's officials were still keen to expand the game into two divisions, which they believed would make for more exciting matches. In 1949, the idea of expanding to Wales was put into action as the Rugby Football League acquired grounds in Neath and Abertilley. Huddersfield, St. Helens, Warrington and Wigan all played exhibition games there and in the wake of this a Welsh League of eight teams was started.

Therefore, by the beginning of the 1950's, the game was enjoying a period of prosperity. The first half of the twentieth century had proved to be encouraging for the sport, and it seemed that the best years were still to arrive.

2.4 Rugby League, Technology and the Media: 1950-1985

The successful post war trend of the late 1940's continued into the early 1950's providing the most prosperous years in the game's history. It thrived alongside other spectator sports, culminating in a record attendance for the 1954 Challenge Cup final replay at Odsal of 102,575 (Yorkshire Post, 1997). Average attendances in season 1949-1950 reached 9,428, and this period saw the emergence of a new team, Blackpool Borough. The sport flourished due to the social change and technological developments, which the post-war years had brought.

As Moorhouse (1995) commented,

> *'1950 saw the start of a social and scientific transformation of the western world, which in many ways was comparable to that of the 1890's and rugby league, was again, one of the areas it touched'.*

One example of this new technological age was the introduction of floodlighting. The first game played using this latest advancement was between the Kiwis and Great Britain at Swinton on 10th November 1951. Rugby league was the first form of football played in Britain under lights, and its success led to a Knockout Floodlit Competition in October 1955.

More importantly this was sponsored and broadcast by the Television Company, Associated Rediffusion, marking the beginning of television's infiltration into the world of rugby league. In addition, it also provided each team with £400, signalling the first 'television money' for clubs. Although the transmission did not reach the north of England at this time, in the longer term, it paved the way for the BBC 2 Floodlit Trophy. This was introduced several years later and lasted for fifteen seasons, providing an important long-term source of income for the clubs involved (Moorhouse, 1995).

However, although the early 1950's proved the most successful years in the game's history, the upsurge was short lived and many troublesome years were to follow.

The outbreak of the Second World War, the problems related to geographical limitations, coupled with the increasing success of football and the class divide which separated it from union, meant that rugby league, despite the encouraging first half of the twentieth century, remained a primarily northern sport based in towns located along the Pennine routes, played by working class men. Any hopes of expanding to become a nation-wide game had not come to fruition and again financial problems were becoming rife among the clubs.

The first indication of a reversal of the current successful trend accompanied by the beginning of the re-emergence of problems was seen in 1952. The Welsh league had experienced problems, with funding difficulties and poor facilities which proved to be its downfall, as it became defunct by the end of the year, only three seasons after its birth (Moorhouse, 1995). In addition to this, expansion and the prospect of the introduction of further clubs also diminished as a team from Glasgow was refused entry to the rugby league. The authorities thought that it would cost existing clubs too much in travel expenses if Glasgow were admitted.

Therefore, expansion was now starting to seem a remote possibility as the post war boom appeared to have subsided and problems were beginning to surface. Rugby league's unstable position within the leisure industry was intensified by the slump in attendances that afflicted all spectator sports after the peak in the immediate war years.

Average attendance began to fall, a decline, which gradually increased momentum and as indicated in Table 2.1, saw the figures nearly halved by 1962.

Table 2.1 *Rugby League Average Attendances 1949 - 1962*

Season	Average Attendance
1949-1950	9,428
1955-1956	6,205
1957-1958	6,161
1961-1962	5,506

Source: Adapted from Burkitt & Cameron (1992)

Much of the blame for this was attributed to the relationship between rugby league and television, with the introduction of the live televising of games. The, then Chairman of the Rugby League, Bill Fallowfield reported,

> *'There are no indications as yet, that attendances are better because television has spread interest in the game to a wider public. Increased interest in the game in areas, remote from the centres in which it is played is of no material benefit to the game. Circumstances would however be very different if there was the immediate prospect of expanding the game to these remote areas'.*
> (Moorhouse, 1995)

This led to the decision being made to halt the television coverage of rugby league, although this also curbed the flow of income to the clubs, which this type of television contract generated.

By June 1955, the Rugby Football League announced profits of only £138, with outstanding loans to clubs totalling £20,000. Twelve months on and the loans had risen to £30,000, showing the increasing financial plight of the clubs. This coupled with the continuing decline in attendance and the accompanying fall in gate receipts, led by the end of the 1955-56 season to a deficit for the league of over £1,000 (Moorhouse, 1995). Also crippling the game's clubs was the imposition of a 25% entertainment tax from 1951-1956, coming on top of the club levy, one of the principal sources of central funds.

Other factors, which impacted upon rugby league, were external to the game. This period saw the beginning of the demise of the Saturday half-day, which meant the whole day, was now available for leisure. This allowed for an increase in leisure time, leading to new developments and the growth in other recreational opportunities. Sport was being increasingly challenged by new family and domestic centred leisure activities based on the car, hi-fi, video recorder and home improvement (Whannel, 1992). This was demonstrated by the surge in DIY and home improvements, which accompanied a rise in the number of owner occupied dwellings from just over four million in 1951 to thirteen and a half million by 1984 (Gratton and Taylor, 1985).

The increase in competition from new home-based leisure activities saw many, once popular choices in leisure now suffer a downturn in interest and support. However, the main source of this entertainment came in the form of television, which had now entered most homes. The Rugby league's previous decision to allow coverage of live games was instantly seen to be taking spectators from the terraces and therefore blamed for the decline in gates (Gate, 1989).

Despite the ban on the televising of live games due to its correlation with a reduction in support, by 1958, the game's authorities had reversed their decision. Rugby league became the only sport, to allow the live televised coverage of a match while other clubs where actually playing on a Saturday afternoon. Football has never allowed this.

To some extent, this live television coverage provided a spur for the spread of the sport. It exposed the game to a national audience, for the first time, often attracting over 100,000 viewers (Gate, 1989) with this rising to between 3-4 million in later years.

Briefly, this proved successful, resulting in a twenty five percent increase in gate figures during the 1962-63 season. However, this was short lived, as uncertainty, as to whether television's coverage of rugby league was beneficial, persisted. By the following season the aggregate attendance had slipped back below two million for the first time since the war, and by the last season of the decade, it had dwindled further to 1.43 million (Bird, 1982).

Therefore, although rugby league officials thought that televising matches was doing no future harm to the game, many commentators still viewed television as the principle cause of rugby league's decline as a spectator sport during the 1960's (Sunday Times, 7th May 1992). This eventually led to the rugby league taking action by once again halting the live coverage of matches, as crowds in the late 1960's were the worst of the post war era (Kelner, 1996).

Problems were further aggravated by the pattern of success that Wigan were demonstrating. They had won the Challenge Cup three times in the 1950's and appeared at Wembley five times during the 1960's. St Helens too displayed a certain supremacy, winning the cup and championship twice and the Lancashire Cup seven times during this period. The fact was that the game seemed to be growing increasingly predictable and losing the exciting element that the Northern Union had tried so desperately to ensure.

This led to the authorities tinkering with most aspects of the game in an attempt to try to make it more attractive to potential spectators. The introduction in February 1960 of two divisions was revised in 1964, with a reversal back to a single league. The four-tackle rule was introduced which would later be increased to six tackles, the mark was abolished and the tap penalty reintroduced. The Australian policy of allowing substitutes was permitted and a lighter coloured plastic ball used for the first time. By the-mid 1960's, Sunday matches had also been sanctioned.

The increasingly desperate situation led to yet another U-turn by the Rugby Football League in 1967, when they were offered and accepted £200,000 by the BBC, for the sole rights to the top games for the next three seasons. In reality though, live television was only one factor in a larger constellation of difficulties and in real terms, sports, other than rugby league displayed a decline during the period.

Leisure as a whole was actually expanding as the number and variety of leisure activities had increased. However, other areas that had developed as mass leisure activities during the post war years, as rugby league had, were seeing a similar slump in attendance. Alternative recreational pursuits were increasing in popularity and so 'traditional' activities like the cinema exhibited a steady reduction in admissions. Although twenty six million people a week in 1951 visited the cinema this figure had dropped to only one million by 1984 (Gratton and Taylor, 1985).

Despite the attempts to counteract the problems within the game, the start of the 1970's offered little respite for rugby league, as the trouble continued. The game was struggling, as clubs were insolvent, many teams required loans in order to survive. This continued flow of credit had been an accepted feature of the English game for some time, with the resources used to pay for ground improvements, to offset the build up of debts or to help establish social clubs for the supporters. This period also saw the abandonment of the Lancashire and Yorkshire County Leagues due to a lack of support, as the increasing financial difficulties for clubs was paralleled by declining attendance.

By 1972, the attendance of 1,365,700 recorded was a third of the figure in 1952 of 4,000,000 and continued to fall (Arlott, 1945). Costs had risen steadily and many clubs had dire financial problems, Hull Kingston Rovers was one example. They recorded losses of £11,818 in the 1972-73 season, also revealing a 14.5% decline in attendance.

In the 1974-75 season, Barrow claimed they were losing £400 a month and Oldham reckoned to be £38,000 in debt (Saxton, 1975). By 1975, small clubs like Blackpool Borough had borrowed over £3,000, York, £2,200, and bigger clubs also required help, including Wigan to the total of £48,000, Castleford, nearly £4,000 and Salford £23,000. Clubs were also beginning to pay excessive transfer fees, demonstrated in Table 2.2, which many could not afford, putting even greater strain on already stretched financial resources.

Table 2.2 Record Transfer Fees 1969-1988

Year	Transfer Fee	Year	Transfer Fee
1969-70	12,500	**1979-80**	38,000
1972-73	13,500	**1980-81**	72,500
1975-76	15,000	**1985-86**	100,000
1977-78	18,000	**1986-87**	130,000
1978-79	35,000	**1987-88**	155,000

Source: Moorhouse (1995)

Therefore, the game was forced to turn to sponsorship as an extra form of income. The increase in leisure time had meant that the traditional ways in which sports bodies coped with financial problems, sweeps and lotteries, selling debentures, socials, levies and raising the price of entry had all proved insufficient (Hargreaves, 1996). Spectator sport could no longer pay its own way (Calhoun, 1981).

The rugby league looked to companies like the Yorkshire Brewers, Tetley who put up £4,000 in 1971 in support of the Lancashire Cup and John Smiths Brewery offered a similar amount in backing the equivalent, Yorkshire competition. In 1975, John Player invested £22,800 into the game, which led to the launch of the Regal Trophy competition some years later (The Guardian, 10th September 1975).

The modern era of promotion and sponsorship coincided with changes in personnel and direction at rugby league headquarters, as David Howes and David Oxley were installed, bringing fresh ideas and a new forward thinking approach to the game.

In order to renew interest in the game they relaxed the ban on international player transfers, producing firstly a trickle and later a flow of Australians to the Northern Hemisphere. The rapid expansion of air travel helped to transform both the game's labour market and the advent of international competition with the introduction of a World Cup Competition, which aided in the extension of the game. Domestic club competition was also helped at this time by the full opening of the M62 motorway in June 1975.

Despite some of the problems of the last thirty-five years, these changes to the sport during the late 1970's resulted in the game witnessing a brief upsurge in interest. A renaissance occurred in Hull, helping to provide the game, with the greater national exposure it craved. The two Hull teams met five times in major finals during the first half of the 1980's, and between them ensured that no single community in rugby league's history had ever won as many trophies in such short a time.

The climax was the teams both reaching The Challenge Cup Final for the first time in 1980. This event divided the city and gained massive media attention. One city, divided by a game resulted in a domino effect within the rest of the rugby league, as once again the enthusiasm and passion returned to the game and catapulted it into a more confident era.

This upswing did continue into the 1980's with Wigan replacing the Hull teams as the dominant and most successful club. However, in spite of this, these years witnessed events, which had far reaching effects not solely for rugby league, but for sport in general.

Firstly, the tour of Australia in 1982, saw Great Britain heavily beaten and highlighted the weaknesses of the English game, including a lack of strength in depth, as Wigan's sole dominance continued right through the 1980's and into the 90's. This did nothing to help the game, which often lacked excitement due to its increasing predictability.

A team from Fulham was entered into the League in 1980, the first from London. This led to overtures being made from other soccer clubs who were interested in becoming involved in the sport, including Luton Town, Reading, Crystal Palace and again Glasgow despite them being refused entry several years previously. Although nothing came of these initial inquiries, a year later the Rugby Football League did admit Cardiff City. Within three seasons however, they had folded due to the lack of a suitable ground and financial pressure. A further team was launched from Maidstone, Kent Invicta but they too only lasted until the end of 1985 (Farrar *et al*, 1993).

Despite the failure of these 'new clubs' and the low ebb of the game, expansion plans remained in the minds of the Rugby Football League as they agreed to admit both Mansfield Marksmen and Sheffield Eagles in 1984. Although Mansfield too were a side which failed to survive, Sheffield became one of the only success stories of the Rugby league's expansion plans. International development also occurred with the introduction into the fold of Papau New Guinea, adding to Britain, Australia, New Zealand and France as Rugby League playing nations.

In terms of external circumstances and events that shaped not only the future of Rugby league but also other spectator sports in Britain including football, two factors proved decisive. Firstly, the economic recession which saw official unemployment figures rise dramatically from 700,000 in January 1975 to just over three million in early 1981 (Sked and Cook, 1993). This combined with strikes by most of the country's workers' unions was reflected in the dwindling support at grounds around Britain.

For a significant majority of fans, the decline of English manufacturing industry in the form of the coal and steel, meant deprivation in leisure as much as in many other areas of their lives (Russell, 1997). The majority of the country's manufacturing industry was situated in the north, which proved significant for the Rugby Football League due to the geographical location of its member clubs. As one of rugby league's sponsors, British Coal were forced to terminate its annual grant of £190,000 in support of the Great Britain Rugby League Team and the financial assistance it gave to Wakefield Trinity (Moorhouse, 1995).

The decline in industry was accompanied, notably by a parallel decline in the game's spectator support. Rugby league appeared to be in crisis, the game that had begun some one hundred years earlier, looked on the verge of destruction. However, in spite of the lack of support and the game's financial difficulties there was one exception, Sheffield Eagles. Despite the city of Sheffield suffering a dramatic decline in its manufacturing industry, a rugby league club emerged and developed into a Division One team. Therefore amidst all the problems and strife, an element of progression was still evident.

The second detrimental influence on the English professional sporting scene was the implementation of ground safety regulations after the Bradford City fire and the Heysel Stadium disaster in 1985 and the Hillsborough Disaster four years later. An investigation by Lord Justice Taylor, which probed into the incidents at the two British football grounds and examined the state of sports arenas in general, produced a report, the effects of which where felt by most professional sports clubs. It highlighted the need for more modern, all seater facilities and therefore provoked significant implications for the games of both football and rugby league.

Lord Justice Taylor published what became known as the Taylor Report in January 1990 that revealed a general malaise or blight over the games due to a number of factors.

Principally they were old grounds, poor facilities, excessive drinking at grounds and poor management.

His recommendations included that standards had to be improved and for many clubs this meant an even greater demand on their already limited resources. Compounded by this was a rise in insurance premiums on grounds of 500%. For many clubs that owned ageing and dilapidated stadia this forced them into having to leave their long-standing homes. Historical venues like Fartown in Huddersfield, Dewsbury's Crown Flatt and Hull Kingston Rover's Craven Park were lost, as the pressure increased to improve and modernise grounds or go under.

These two events external to rugby league, over which the game had no control, proved to be of notable significance and have had, as great an influence on the sport, as any decision, which its controlling body made during this time. The game was not alone in its troubles, as football had experienced similar problems but towards the end of the 1980's a combination of both extrinsic and intrinsic factors meant that in rugby league, many clubs were struggling to survive. The sport badly needed a radical solution if it was to turn its fortunes around and solve the financial and structural difficulties it was facing.

2.5 Prelude to the Super League: 1985 onwards

The downward trend in attendance figures experienced throughout the 1970's and 80's continued and intensified into the next decade, with crowds declining further by 1990. A picture of run-down grounds, poor facilities and financial depression compounded the growing lack of interest in the game. Many clubs had spiralling wage bills and income had remained static. There had been a growing reliance on the governing body to pull in sponsorship and money from television deals, with smaller clubs surviving on handouts from the 6% levy imposed on first division clubs. Rugby league was in disarray.

By the end of the 1992-93 season, only fourteen clubs had experienced greater average crowds than in the previous year, leading to a worsening financial situation, with seventeen out of thirty-two clubs technically insolvent (Observer, 21st August 1994).

Some clubs like Nottingham and Blackpool had been forced to relinquish their league status and became defunct, whilst Doncaster went bankrupt and despite continuing, found themselves no longer full members of the league.

In November 1992, Maurice Lindsay replaced David Oxley as Chief Executive of the Rugby Football League and immediately decided to commission a major financial review of the sport. This was an attempt to identify the game's major problem areas in the hope of solving what had become a financial crisis within the game.

The review was carried out by Global Sports Marketing (GSM) in 1993 and proved to be the most thorough and expensive the game had undergone in its history. It involved a review examining all aspects of the game including attendance, the geographical positioning and the financial condition of the clubs.

The audit was illustrated in the minutes from the Framing the Future Meeting and highlighted a highly regionalised game, with a strong bias along the M62 corridor. It found that of 2,587 amateur and school rugby league clubs, 93% were located in postal areas where a professional club was situated. In a season, 60% of all spectators watching professional rugby league came from just four postal districts, Wigan, Leeds, Wakefield and Warrington (Waudby, 1993). It was evident that the thirty-two professional clubs were serving a small overall market and due to their close proximity, there was little scope to extend outside natural, club boundaries (The Guardian, 31st August 1994).

Rugby league had failed throughout its history to expand beyond its northern territories and any hopes of possibly raising interest for the game in the immediate future was doubtful due to the escalation of football's success since 1986. Graph 2.1 demonstrates the extent of the disparity between the two sports in terms of their supporter base. This clearly shows the advantage football has always had in terms of attracting larger audiences than rugby league, primarily due to its national rather than regional coverage.

Although, from the post war period football experienced a much more dramatic decline in attendance than that witnessed in rugby league, football has always attracted considerably greater levels of support. On average, the first division in football attracted more support than all of the rugby league clubs collectively.

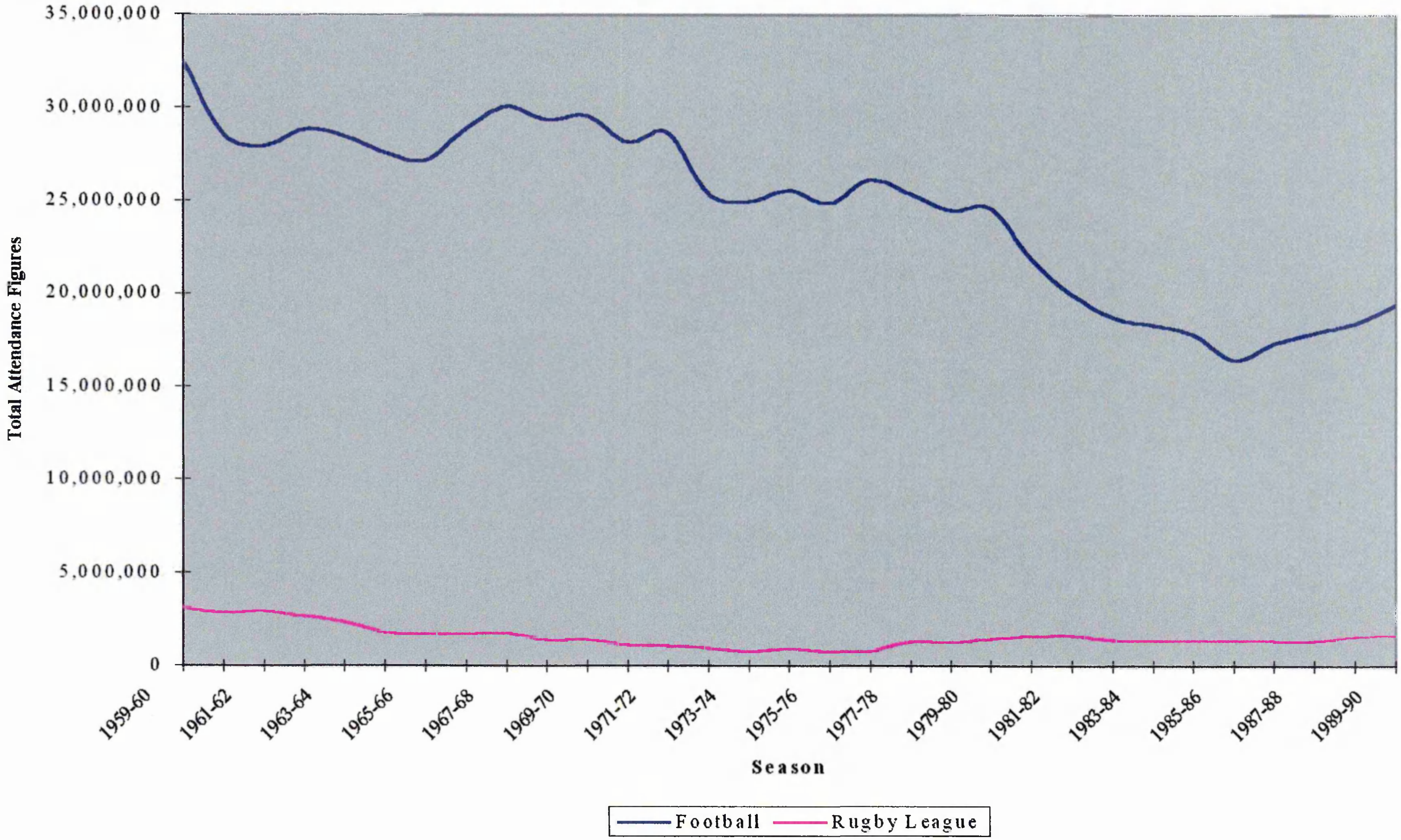
The decreasing levels of support for rugby league had also resulted in a fall in gate revenue. The financial failing of the clubs was emphasised within the report, as the game was losing nearly £3million a year. The Rugby Football League was paying 47% of their income directly to the clubs, not only in their allocation of sponsorship money but also in loans (Rugby Football League, 1994). Salary payments were being made over and above the revenue being generated through the turnstiles, a situation, which had grown continually worse since the introduction of player contracts in 1989. Wage bills had risen by 10% within three years and was threatening to drive clubs deeper into financial trouble and several out of business.

The report highlighted the over-payment of players and the reliance of many clubs on playing success as some 'Holy Grail', as possible reasons for the dire financial position within, which rugby league found itself (Rugby Football League, 1994). Lack of interest in rugby league was also compounded by the emergence of Wigan as the dominant force within the sport, winning every honour in the game throughout the
1980's.

The internal problems for the game were not helped by a number of problematic, external factors. There had been a rise in living standards and an accompanying increase in consumer choice, resulting in changes in leisure patterns. Increasing levels of car ownership continued to play a major role, allowing all manner of other attractions to draw people from traditional locations, including sports grounds (Russell, 1997).

The GSM review culminated in the publication of a report called 'Framing the Future'. This was presented to the Rugby Football League's member clubs at Central Park, Wigan on the 30th August 1994. The report contained a set of proposals and criteria, plus highlighted the changes that needed to be made, setting out guidelines and minimum standards, which had to be attained on and off the field (Observer, 18th September 1994).

Graph 2.1: Total Attendances - Football and Rugby League 1959-1990



The new, stringent fiscal directives suggested, included tighter financial controls and the adoption of a more professional management structure, prompting a new, business like approach into the running of the game. The governing body insisted that the clubs had to introduce personnel in key positions with the appointment of a chief executive, club accountant and a marketing manager. It was hoped they would help to turn the financial situation around and lead rugby league into a more financially secure future.

Compelled by the Safety of Sports Grounds Act, the Rugby Football League was also forced to impose criteria relating to the provision of facilities and the improvement of conditions at its grounds for both spectators and the media (Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 1999). Stadiums had to provide 10,000 capacity, 6,000 of which were to be covered and 2,500 seating provision. Improved access and viewing areas for the disabled, better dressing rooms and sanitary provision, were all standards included in the Framing the Future document that had to be met within five years (Hull Daily Mail, 6th October 1994).

The report also suggested that, 'the creation of a professional rugby league with fewer clubs would support the current market better'. This led to discussions regarding the merging of existing clubs, which would allow for better use of the limited resources that the game depended on. A change to a summer season was also suggested plus regional development programmes to help promote and develop the game throughout the country.

The Rugby Football League was aware however that too many radical changes could threaten their existing supporter base and so only a limited number of changes were made. The sport remained a winter game, the proposals for mergers were disregarded, and only the financial policies and new ground regulations were implemented. The GSM report had served to raise awareness of the severity of the problems that the game was facing. The majority of the clubs were financially embarrassed and with declining crowd figures, the future looked bleak. The guidelines set out in the Framing the Future report were to act as a framework for the clubs to follow, so that conditions would be improved for supporters, and financially the game would enter a more stable period.

2.6 *Conclusion*

Rugby league evolved from a mass folk game played with no distinct rules or regulations into a professional team sport, attracting gate-paying supporters. The most distinct moment in its history to date was the split from the game we now know as rugby union, as rugby became the only sport to undergo a total amateur/professional separation. This was due to both class and geographical differences that affected the various county associations, and led to problems over 'broken-time' payments.

Although rugby league's growth years were successful, the onset of the First World War coupled with the escalating dominance of football, meant that expansion plans for the sport were becoming increasingly unlikely. The outbreak of a Second World War led to both on and off field problems for clubs.

The war took its toll on grounds, financially many clubs were in dire positions and the number of player casualties was high. Despite this, the years following the end of the troubles again resulted in favourable gate figures, which seemed to signal a new era for the game.

However, the post-war boom years that had proved the most successful for England's spectator sports were short lived. The dispersion of several years of prosperity, were superseded by periods of financial hardship and limited gates. Attempts to introduce new clubs from 'non-traditional' areas had in nearly all cases, failed and with the introduction of technology and the enormous extension in terms of leisure choices, attendance figures began to decline. This resulted in an accompanying drop in gate receipts, which proved fatal for several clubs and plunged those that had managed to survive into alarming financial positions.

More recently, the doubts over the safety of grounds, due to the incidence of several disasters had placed further pressure on clubs, both financially and from a community stance. The state of rugby league had reached a critical point. It seemed inevitable that unless drastic measures were taken and new approaches to the problems adopted, the future would be bleak, if indeed, there was to be a future at all.

Although from the birth of these professional spectator sports, namely rugby league and football, the future appeared to look very bright, as they developed problems became evident.

Throughout its one hundred years, rugby league has experienced a gradual decline in attendance, managing only to maintain a stable supporter base in the northern counties of England. The failure of the governing body to promote progressive attitudes and regulations has resulted in an antiquated and archaic hierarchy and structure. The game has tended not to move with the times and this has deprived the sport of much needed investment for its continually failing members and prevented advancement and impaired further expansion.

This chapter concludes at the end of the 1994 season, with attendance figures within the game of rugby league declining. Problems where exacerbated further by an increasingly precarious financial position for the majority of clubs. The future looked bleak and a radical solution had become a necessity.

The following chapter will address the second and third objectives of this research, examining the economics of professional team sports literature and providing a definition of the American model. This theoretical model will provide the framework for the empirical investigation and will be evaluated in relation to the extent to which it has been adopted by the sport of professional rugby league.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

Following an introduction to the sport in the previous two chapters and an outline of the recent changes that have been implemented, it is apparent that rugby league has looked to American professional sport in an attempt to solve its problems. The focus of the literature review is the economics of professional team sports literature, the main body of which is generated in North America (Gratton and Lisewski, 1981). This has grown steadily since articles first started to appear in the 1960's and deals with specific problems associated with the major American professional team sports, basketball, baseball, ice hockey and American football. A major study of both the American and British literature was published by Cairns, Jennett and Sloane in 1986. Therefore, the theoretical framework for the study is adopted from the American professional team sports model.

From this, the following essential areas have been identified:

- Uncertainty of Outcome
- Theory of Cartel Behaviour
- Product and Labour Market Controls

The basic underpinning component of the American model is uncertainty of outcome, which is necessary to produce competitive games and is regarded as the key to economic analysis of professional team sports (Sloane, 1980). For competitive balance to be achieved and uncertainty of outcome maintained, the co-operation of clubs is required. Sports are therefore organised into leagues or cartels that work to ensure league decisions and enforce and preserve uncertainty of outcome.

In order to do this, the leagues are responsible for deciding upon and imposing product and labour market controls for the benefit of all members.

Therefore, the three strands of the American model will each be examined and critically evaluated in order to form the analytical framework on which the study is based. The framework will then be used to compare the changes in rugby league to the American model. This is the first experiment to apply the American model to a British sport, although providing, not a direct application, the closest that has ever been attempted.

In addition, previous work has identified differences that may exist between American and British professional team sports namely the primary objectives of professional sports clubs in both countries. Also examined will be the failure of the American literature to consider non-market factors. It is generally accepted when analysing the demand for British sport that socio-cultural issues are an important element for consideration. The American literature however, neglects to mention that other, non-market influences may also affect professional team sports. The significance of these factors in relation to British sport will be considered and the implications of such factors for the successful introduction of the American model into British professional sport, examined.

Recently the influence of broadcasting demand has become an important additional element in the functioning of professional team sports. However, although this factor has not yet been readily adopted into the American model, it does appear increasingly crucial in determining revenue. This chapter will begin by examining in detail the three crucial market factors in relation to professional team sports. Then the additional factors of club objectives, non-market factors and the relatively new area of research concerning broadcasting demand plus the importance of the role they play in influencing the operations of professional sports clubs will be reviewed.

3.1 Uncertainty of Outcome

In order for a spectator sport to exist commercially, there must be a demand for it: i.e. people willing to pay to watch or attend the event. The demand is important for virtually every aspect of club and league behaviour (Peel & Thomas, 1988) and has a number of facets.

Primarily we are concerned with why people attend matches and the most obvious reason as identified by Ruddock (1979) is that entertainment is the commodity and the reason why the consumers walk through the turnstiles. People actually pay to watch the match (Sloane, 1980).

However, the decision to attend a match may be affected by several different factors. Greenstein and Marcum (1981) in their study of Major League Baseball suggested two types of determinants of demand. Firstly, socio-demographics relating to age, sex, social and economic status, size and distribution of the population and secondly, sporting event accessibility, relating to seat availability, location and transportation factors.

Thomas and Jolsen (1979) found in their study of the Baltimore Orioles Baseball team that they could classify determinants of demand into five groups, access to stadia, personal reasons, promotion and stadium services, team performance and physical facilities..

Hart, Hutton and Sharot (1975) also identify determinants of a demographic or geographic nature. Attendance figures clearly depend on the number of supporters each team can claim and this in turn depends on the population of each team's catchment area. Schofield (1983) takes this further to include variables like population size, ethnic mix or per capita wealth.

Apart from socio-cultural variables, Hart, Hutton and Sharot (1975) also recognise economic determinants of attendance, notably the entrance fee at the ground and the level of private incomes.

Demmert (1973) and Noll (1974) found in baseball that demand was relatively price inelastic. Conversely, Branscome and Wann (1992) found that if teams owners increased the value of going to the game by either lowering the price or offering more entertainment for current prices, then attendance would rise. People saw they were getting value relative to and when compared with the value of other forms of entertainment. However, Dabscheck (1975) insists that most clubs charge approximately the same admission price, so there is no real attempt to compete for spectators by price.

Bird (1982) in his study, found English football was an inferior good. As the availability of surplus income increases, demand decreases, as other options become available for the consumers to spend their money. This can be attributed to the substitution effect, although in English football now, this is no longer the case.

Sports have to compete with other forms of substitute or rival entertainment outlets for the consumer's time or money, either different sports activities or other leisure pursuits (Demmert, 1973; Thomas and Jolson, 1979).

As Davies *et al* discovered in their 1995 study, many cities and towns have a variety of sporting activities that compete for spectator income. Carlisle, Doncaster and York all have professional rugby league clubs, a football club and a racecourse. Bradford, Hull and Sheffield all have at least one, rugby league club and at least one football club plus a speedway team. However, it is not just substitutes in the form of other sports, but also alternative products.

The growth of car ownership (Sloane, 1971), television, radio and newspaper coverage (Thomas & Jolson, 1979) plus the type of stadia and facilities available (Noll, 1974; Scully, 1974; Medoff and Abraham, 1980; Vamplew, 1982) and factors like weather or climate and popularity of the sport can all play an important role.

Wakefield (1995) who found after interviewing local spectators, that Pittsburgh Pirates Baseball team were operating in a 'football town' reiterates this. He indicates that people's perceptions of the mass popularity of going to see a particular teams games may influence choice behaviour.

Although, socio-demographic and economic factors have all been put forward as major determinants of demand, Greenstein and Marcum (1981) identified a further factor relating to demand for sports teams. They perceived this to be the most powerful determinant of demand and expected a strong positive correlation between winning and attendance figures. However, this served to explain only 25% of variation in attendance, demonstrating the extent to which other factors are of obvious significance.

Although the factors already mentioned are all accepted as determinants of demand, economists now acknowledge uncertainty of outcome as the most important component of demand (Neale, 1964; Jones, 1969; Cairns *et al*, 1986; Peel & Thomas, 1988). This refers to how well matched the teams are. If teams are equal in sporting ability, the result of the game will be in doubt, if one team is far superior to the other, the result is a foregone conclusion.

In order to retain interest in a game, the result of the match must be uncertain. Consequently the greater the competitive equality between teams and hence the greater uncertainty of outcome on the field, the greater is spectator interest or demand for the sport (Neale, 1964). Each game's attractiveness depends to a large extent on the expectation of close match, as the probability of either team winning approaches one, gate receipts fall substantially (El Hodiri & Quirk, 1971). Clear superiority or inferiority reduces uncertainty of outcome, which affects the gate of both teams. Therefore, for the league as a whole the greater the uncertainty of outcome the greater the aggregate attendance (Jones, 1969).

Uncertainty of outcome therefore, relates to the expectation of a close match, which is needed to produce a competitive game. Although a 6-5 victory is as successful as a 10-0 victory, it is much more likely to sustain demand (Rathmell, 1974). If uncertainty of outcome increases, it is then accepted that demand for the game will also increase, as Jones (1969) states,

> *'Other things being equal, the greater the degree of competition, the larger the crowds and the greater the revenue'.*

When discussing the importance of competitive balance it must be recognised that there are three types of uncertainty of outcome. The first is match uncertainty of outcome and relates to each individual match contested. The expectation of a close game may well tempt more home supporters to attend, plus more supporters to travel with the visiting team (Vamplew, 1988). Although, as Peel and Thomas (1988) explain, for individual clubs, supporters enjoy watching a high placed team, particularly when their own team is likely to win.

Short run uncertainty of outcome relates to all games within a season. The importance of these differs throughout the season notably because games have little significance for overall outcome of the championship in the first few weeks of the season but have more in the season's closing stages. This is closer competition for either, the clubs located at the top of the table who are in contention for the league championship or for clubs in danger and trying to avoid relegation. As the season progresses, more clubs drop out of contention, but the games of those remaining takes on an even greater significance.

Thus, as Jennett found in 1984, short run uncertainty of outcome is significant in Scottish Football League because the games likely to be more important for determining the championship attract extra supporters and therefore generate increased attendance. This is supported by Danielson (1997) who added that attendances are not generated solely by the probability of victory of either club in any one game but by the significance the game has in the overall championship race.

Further, to support the need for some type of equality and balance is the work by Quirk (1973) and Wiestart (1984). They found that continued one-sided domination of a league by one team would ultimately lead to a lack of interest in league games. This was found to be evident not only in weaker cities but in the dominant city itself, substantially diminishing and reducing interest in live attendance. Hence, if several teams alternate winning the league title over a period of years rather than one team dominating, aggregate attendance will be substantially higher (Noll, 1974).

Vamplew (1988) however, suggested that uncertainty of outcome could also work against the individual clubs and actually undermine their long-term viability. Although a high level of uncertainty of outcome makes for a more interesting game, the result can go either way and too many in the wrong direction could serve to reduce local support.

Despite the evidence supporting uncertainty of outcome several studies have questioned its significance on attendance. Cairns in his 1983 study using Scottish football league data found that there was evidence to suggest that the relationship between the increase in attendance precipitated by increased uncertainty of outcome was not clear. Jennett (1984) also found that the extent to which leagues can generate new attendance from increased (short-run) uncertainty of outcome is somewhat limited.

However, Rottenberg (1956) although arguing that the closer the competition the larger the attendance, found that baseball league attendance figures do not altogether substantiate this view. As Jennett (1984) stated, uncertainty was more important with regards preventing the long-run domination of the league over several seasons by one or two clubs, which he found would diminish interest and lower attendance. Hence, increased long-run uncertainty of outcome appears necessary in order to secure the league's success.

Therefore, long-run uncertainty, relating to uncertainty over a number of seasons, may in terms of survival of both individual clubs and the league as a whole be viewed as the most important. Although teams may dominate during a season any long-term reduction in uncertainty may result in even the successful teams losing support. If a team's stock of playing skill increases above that of other teams, the probability of its winning will increase and as uncertainty of outcome falls, attendance will eventually fall.

As Neale (1964) demonstrated, for a period in the late 1950's the Yankees lost the championship and opened the possibility of a non-Yankee World Series, they found themselves facing sporting disgrace but bigger crowds. Therefore, aggregate attendance will be substantially higher if several teams alternate in winning the league title over a period of years, than if one team dominates (Noll, 1974).

Winning teams are often good for business, as consistent winning often helps a club gain entry to a higher division but teams that win most of the time reduce league competitiveness. Any game that is too predictable will not raise spectator awareness. Although sport can entertain, it can also frustrate, annoy and depress. It is this very uncertainty that gives sport its unpredictability, but continued success by one team will reduce these highs and lows and turn people away from the sport.

As Danielson (1997) explains,

> *'Professional teams have a collective interest in producing games that involve enough uncertainty to sustain the interest of their customers. Competitive leagues are good business; close pennant races and more teams in contention for post-season play increase attendance and broadcast audiences'.*

Consequently, as the essential economic fact is that gate receipts depend crucially upon competition among teams (El Hodiri & Quirk, 1971), in the long run, playing strengths must be fairly evenly distributed among the member teams in a league (Rottenberg, 1956). The important goal of the league is to ensure member clubs are relatively balanced in terms of their competitiveness on the field. This helps preserve both the competing teams, ensures production of the common product, and allows the continued existence of the league itself.

The importance of uncertainty of outcome in generating attendance has distinct policy implications. Teams and leagues must co-operate to ensure competitive balance is maintained. This is why unlike other businesses, many sports teams operate as cartels, working together to try and safeguard close competition, which then guarantees spectator interest and profits are assured for the league as a whole and the teams it represents.

League administrators can affect uncertainty in numerous ways and hence, on uncertainty of outcome rests the justification for sporting leagues restricting competition. This is done via rules devised to ensure survival of a sufficient number of clubs, through pooling of revenues, limitations of players among clubs and arrangements adopted for sharing gate receipts between competing clubs.

Competitive balance is a necessary element to any sporting league, without which uncertainty of outcome may be reduced leading to a decline in both attendance figures and gate receipts. In order to try to maintain this equilibrium, teams co-operate in the form of leagues or cartels through which decisions regarding the control of both product and labour markets are made.

The following two sections develop further the argument for uncertainty of outcome as an essential part of professional team sports. Firstly, the organisation of professional team sports into leagues will be examined followed by a review of the market controls adopted by leagues in order to establish and maintain uncertainty between clubs.

3.2 Theory of Cartel Behaviour

As already examined, uncertainty of outcome is a necessary pre-requisite for increasing demand for a game and the league functioning as a viable economic installation (Davenport, 1969). In order for sports teams to maintain uncertainty of outcome, they require the equalisation of playing strengths, which in turn requires the co-operation of all teams in the league.

Unlike firms in business, a sports club cannot produce a game on its own and so it depends primarily upon the existence of other teams to provide the opposition to play against and to attract spectators on a regular basis (Cooke, 1994). Unique to sport is the theory of inverted joint product, introduced by Neale in his 1964 work. This theory is based on the fact that sporting firms produce an indivisible product: the game, from the separate processes of two or more firms. The product itself is a peculiar mixture, it comes divisible into parts, each of which can, and are sold separately, but is still a joint and multiple, yet indivisible product. Jones (1969) supports this theory and agrees that the unique feature of professional sport is that in the sporting production function, no club in and of itself can produce a saleable output, a game.

Although a coalition between two clubs is necessary to produce a game, when the number of clubs exceeds two, a formal organisation known as the league is more effective and efficient in performing certain joint functions (Quirk, 1973). Consequently, a professional sports league tends to operate along the lines of a formal coalition thereby essentially functioning as a cartel (Noll, 1974; Sloane, 1980), where a group of independent firms attempt, via collusive agreements to behave as a collective monopoly (Hirshleifer, 1976).

The need for equality however goes even further. Not only is there a need for close co-operation in order to produce a game, to secure it is closely matched and attracts spectators but also to ensure both the survival of individual clubs and the league as a whole. Any long-term dominance by one or a few clubs is not conducive to ensuring the league survives. If a team becomes a monopoly, it is detrimental to its competitors but also to itself and so every team has an economic motive for not becoming too superior in playing talent compared to other teams in the league.

In Neale's (1964) words,

> *'Sporting competition is more profitable than sporting monopoly, although it can be said economic collusion among sporting competitors remains most profitable of all'.*

However, this produces a conflict because often what is good for an individual club is not necessarily good for the whole league (Sobel, 1977). A tension has developed between the need for competitive balance within a league to maintain supporter interest and the yearnings of owners and fans alike for memorable dominating teams. All owners must work together to make sure the league prospers but they are also in competition and want the most successful team on the playing field and, to maximise their own profits (Gardner, 1974). In contrast however, the league is concerned with maximising the joint welfare of all of its member clubs, so no one team becomes dominant and serves to reduce the competitive balance within the league (Jones, 1969; Jones, 1984).

Teams' interests often conflict with the collective welfare of the league, which is required to be profitable or at least ensure the probability of positive profits for individual clubs is greater than that of unacceptable losses (McPherson *et al*, 1989). Therefore, although sports clubs are competitive in the sporting sense, they tend to co-operate closely in economic matters in order to help sustain the long-term operation of the league (Neale, 1964; Sloane, 1971; Hart, Hutton & Sharot, 1975; Cairns, 1983). The actions of clubs are constrained by the operational necessity of maintaining the league, but they realise that by acting in collusion, although joint profits not individual profits are maximised, this compromise position is advantageous.

Most economists accept this view of sports leagues, although there is a question over the actual nature of the cartel. Some regard sports leagues as multi-plant firms, whereas Sloane (1971) challenges this stressing that clubs are separately owned. Neale (1964) states the league is a natural monopoly but fails to consider that although leagues set the rules, clubs only have to operate within them, as they see fit. Danielson (1997) feels that leagues are associations of teams rather than independent entities; they exist to promote the common interests of their member teams, which are separately owned and operated firms. Whereas, Vamplew (1982) argues that clubs exhibit mutual interdependence and exist as cartels to prevent any one club becoming a monopolist

A monopoly situation is not conducive to ensuring the survival of the league, as it lends itself readily to unequal sporting competition, so leagues try to create and ensure that teams are of equal sporting ability via mutual interdependence. If one team dominates this could lead to a decline in aggregate attendance, profitability and result in its own decline due to a lack of contestants to play against. The importance of the league acting as a cartel therefore, is to ensure that member clubs are relatively balanced in terms of competitiveness on the athletic field (Weistart, 1984).

The league actually works by members sanctioning power to a central governing body, usually consisting of representatives from the individual clubs. They have considerable control over and exert due influence on the individual league members, which form the organisational infrastructure of the sport (Wilson, 1990) in order to regulate competition for the benefit of the members as a group.

It is therefore, accepted that an oligopolist control is a typical situation for a sport league. This is because the leagues exhibit shared monopoly behaviour as their profits depend on not only demand and cost conditions but also the actions of other firms in the industry. Members to a certain extent must therefore, agree to forgo their own interest in order to promote equality (Sloane, 1976; Shepherd, 1979).

The central role of a sports league is that of a cartel, which has several purposes to its mission. Cairns (1983) identifies five main functions of leagues in America, the first being to control the size of the league and its organisation, with regards to its composition and structure. This includes the number of clubs in a league and how many divisions, of how many clubs. By determining the size of the league, cartels try to create and promote uncertainty of outcome and attendance, which in turn increase revenue and profits (Jones & Ferguson, 1988).

Leagues also provide the framework and institutional market structure within which contests among member teams are arranged to produce games. This serves to structure the competition into seasons, play offs and finals, so as to determine a champion for each season (Quirk, 1973; Danielson, 1997).

The second purpose of a league acting as a cartel is to defend against any external competition in both product and input markets, helping to protect group profits and viability. The league works to preserve its rights and prevent the formation and emergence of a rival league, which may create inter-league competition and threaten the existence of the established league.

In American football, the National Football League's dominance was threatened by the emergence of a new organisation the American Football League. This and other challenges invariably led to mergers and a return to the monopoly position. All four established professional sports in the USA have experienced challenges from rival organisations. Established leagues use their influence and power to destroy the new leagues or incorporate some of the teams that are favourable to the established club owners (McPherson *et al*, 1989). Leagues also control the distribution of franchises, deciding whether to admit or deny new teams and control the location and relocation of clubs.

A league's role also includes demand production that can be divided into product diversification and product improvement. The first relates to the promotion of demand by diversifying into areas of souvenir sales, merchandising and advertising. Product improvement relates to decisions made by the cartel aimed at improving the product, for example, by introducing new rule changes to increase the attractiveness of the game.

Diversification of the product is also used, alongside other methods to provide supplementary sources of income, in addition to the traditional revenue stream from gate receipts. A major source is broadcasting income plus money from sponsorship of clothes, grounds, the team and individual players. In America, leagues exercise control over the selling of national broadcast rights and impose rules enabling teams to sell and control broadcasts within their local territory (Schimmel *et al*, 1993; Danielson, 1997).

Internal regulation by the league is involved with regulating competition between member clubs by enforcing rules including drafts, contracts and trades, designed to prevent or reduce competitive bidding for labour. It regulates the distribution of playing talent, relating to the entry into the game and movement between clubs of established players.

However, the most important and crucial function of a league is the promotion of equality. All teams cannot be successful at any one time as the nature of the market is inherently unstable, but leagues try to equalise playing strengths amongst all competitors (Rottenberg, 1956; Neale, 1964; Jones, 1969; Sloane, 1980; Gratton and Lisewski, 1981).

Competition for players and entry into the league is restricted, which involves the use of revenue pooling or sharing. These controls are intended to protect financially weaker clubs, serving to all but eliminate business competition among their members and promote equality and uncertainty of outcome within the league (Noll, 1974; Cairns *et al*, 1986).

This behaviour is reflective of a cartel where firms attempt to collectively make league decisions on relocation, expansion, revenue sharing and network broadcasting contracts (Danielson, 1997). As examined in the previous section, a league's ability to produce and maintain competitive equilibrium is crucial to ensure the continued existence and self-preservation of the league (Cairns, 1983, Wenner, 1989). It is the need for balance that renders the league an essentially co-operative venture and on uncertainty of outcome rests the justification for sporting leagues having several types of restrictive practices (Weistart, 1984; Danielson, 1997).

However, in normal business practice, the existence of a cartel and restrictive controls are illegal. This has led to the question of whether sports leagues should be forced to comply with government rulings or be exempt from antitrust policies (Noll, 1974). Antitrust exemption has been sought by professional sports in America on the basis that they are unique in nature. Although each club is an independent economic unit, unlike in business, each is also dependent on another to produce a game.

In America, monopoly power often violates antitrust laws and so leagues have played down the business aspects of sports. Professional sports have argued for favourable treatment on the grounds that, their existence as cartels and their use of restrictive practices are necessary to bring about the equalisation of playing strengths and to ensure the league's economic viability. They contend that without such restrictions, many minor league teams would perish, as the wealthier clubs would buy the best players and on-field competition would vanish (Topkis, 1949; Theberge and Donnelly, 1984).

This has led to the US Supreme Court endorsing legislation, allowing antitrust exemption for professional sports in order to equalise competition, and protect the integrity of sporting contests. In 1922, baseball became the first sport to gain exemption from the antitrust laws (Gilroy & Madden, 1977). The Supreme Court ruled,

> *'Baseball is not a subject of commerce and so cannot be subject to or charged with violations of the antitrust laws'.* (Quirk and Fort, 1997)

The other three professional sports in America, basketball, ice hockey and American football have all been granted exemptions, although none have enjoyed the same extent of freedom as baseball. Rottenberg (1956) however, challenges the notion that restrictions are necessary and states that restrictive controls distribute playing talent in a similar way to that which would occur within a free market. He is supported by Jones (1969) and Quirk and Fort (1997), who also question the sports industry's exemption from the requirements of monopoly and restrictive practices legislation. They suggest that there are no indications that introducing restrictions has any measurable impact on the competitive balance within a league.

Conversely, Noll (1974), Brower (1976) and Sloane (1980) all state that procedures are required to prevent a few teams dominating a league. Hence, the main ways a league controls its competitive balance is by controlling the distribution of players and the distribution of revenue (Danielson, 1997). Therefore, in today's sporting society, the recognised need for interdependence of clubs is the impetus for such procedures. The sports industry has adopted measures that seek to ensure competitive equilibrium among league members (Wenner, 1989), imposing certain restrictive practices and constraints on the economic activities of the member teams in both product and labour markets (Schofield, 1982).

The following section will address the restrictions used that encourage balance both financially and in terms of sporting competition between the members. Controls over both the product and labour market will be reviewed in an attempt to assess their usefulness in developing and maintaining competitive equality among member teams in a league. The first set of controls are necessary, primarily to ensure sporting competition, namely labour market controls and the latter to ensure the economic survival of the weaker members of the group via product restrictions.

3.3 Product and Labour Market Controls

In an attempt to achieve equalisation of performance, professional team sports leagues work as cartels to devise several types of restrictive arrangements. These restrictions give the league control over the distribution of talent and income. This section will examine the controls used by sports leagues in America to regulate competition between clubs. These include those dealing with inter-team competition for players, location of league franchises, the distribution of revenues and the sale of broadcasting rights, plus rules helping to control and enforce the size of the league (Noll, 1974; Sloane, 1976).

Firstly, labour market restrictions will be examined, including the change within the last twenty years from the restrictive 'reserve clause' to the more flexible free agency for players. The product market controls are then explored, concentrating on revenue distribution between clubs and the use of franchises to equalise competition for the game.

This, finally, leads to the penultimate section within this chapter, where the differences and similarities, which exist between sports leagues in America and Britain, are reviewed and possible non-market reasons for the differences are presented.

3.3.1 Labour Market Restrictions

In order to guarantee a relatively balanced competition, sports federations and league authorities have always tried to regulate the labour market in order to prevent the concentration of all playing talent in the rich big city clubs. For that reason, many sports leagues in the USA have installed player restrictive systems (Kesenne, 1998).

The draft and reserve system provides the foundations upon which the structure of American professional team sports was built (Gardner, 1974). Professional sports clubs controlled the playing talent within the league and sought to equalise its distribution. These systems of labour market controls were considered to be the 'glue' that held together the employer-employee relationship (Gilroy & Madden, 1977).

The draft system is still an integral part of the labour restriction employed by American professional team sports, and is utilised to regulate the movement of athletes from amateur to professional status, usually once their college eligibility has ceased. The National Football League first used this device in 1936, known as the reverse-order-of-finish college draft. It ensured that playing talent was distributed equally, allowing the weaker teams in one season to get the first choice of all the new stars the following year (McPherson *et al*, 1989; Quirk and Fort, 1997).

The main crux of labour market controls within American sports has been the reserve clause, which first appeared in baseball during the 1879 season. Once a player had been drafted they would become the property of the club's owners (Gilroy and Madden, 1977). The reserve rule was introduced to permit a team to renew a player's contract on a year-by-year basis; thereby giving teams exclusive rights and a perpetually renewable option to a player's services. Players were bound to one team for their entire career, unless the clubs decided to sell them, meaning they faced only one buyer for their services and so teams were essentially monopolistic employers (Sanderson, and Siegfried, 1997).

The reserve system inhibited the freedom of the labour to choose its own employer and as career opportunities depend on entering into complex and legally binding contracts, individuals are often shackled to a particular employer. This gives the cartel absolute control in any bargaining relationship with employees (Staudohar, 1989).

During the 1960's and 1970's, the restraints on ice hockey, basketball and American football, three sports subject to the antitrust laws prohibiting collective action in restraint of labour competitions, were legally challenged. Compromise deals were reached, which saw players with six (later reduced to three years) years service in the baseball leagues gain free agency. This was the beginning of the erosion of the monopsony power of professional team sports and the reserve rule.

Since this period, there has been a strong impetus from the emergence of strong and pro-active players' unions. The reserve clause remained until 1976, which has partly helped to increase economic freedom and the relaxation of its powers has made way for a new collective bargaining agreement in baseball (Cairns *et al*, 1986).

The power exerted over new entry players into sports teams is still high but free agency has served to reduce a major source of grievance between players and the game's authorities. Free agency has meant that there is more potential movement within the labour market for players, although the continued use of draft systems still allows for the distribution of talent each year. Due to the abolition of the reserve clause, there is now competition for labour as club owners can bid for players, which has increased prices and pushed up player salaries (Gilroy and Madden, 1977). In reply to these rapidly increases in salaries, salary caps or maximum payrolls have been implemented as a way of preventing the richer teams buying the best players by limiting the amount teams can spend on salaries.

Quirk and Fort (1997) concluded that an enforceable salary cap could be expected to accomplish the maintenance of financial viability for teams in a sporting league, especially those positioned in weak drawing markets. Kesenne (1998) also agreed that despite the problems of practically enforcing a salary cap its impact on the industry of professional team sports is positive. He found it did improve the competitive balance of the league, improved player salary distribution, held down excessive top player salaries and guaranteed a reasonable profit for both big and small clubs. Salary caps can be considered further salary stabilising strategies, used within the labour market in order to try and help maintain a status quo among competing clubs.

As discussed in the previous section, there are arguments against the use of labour restriction in sport, as a free market would provide a similar equilibrium to that gained by controls. However, although there has been a move away from such controls in recent years and a move towards free agency, both the draft system and salary caps are still in place. These help to equalise the distribution of players, in order to prevent the polarisation of the best players to the wealthiest clubs.

The importance of uncertainty of outcome and maintaining competitive balance has further policy implications. This means that apart from labour restrictions, leagues also use restrictive practices within the product market (Noll, 1974) to try and regulate competition in professional team sports. The following section will examine the restrictions used to distribute revenue to encourage equalisation within the league and the utilisation of franchises, as a control over the geographical location of clubs.

3.3.2 Product Restrictions

Like labour controls, product restrictions are arrangements imposed by the cartel to try to maintain equilibrium between clubs. The most important of these are income-sharing arrangements that include the distribution of both gate receipts and revenue derived from broadcasting. In addition, stability also includes the control not only of the allocation of income but the control and location of club franchises, plus rules regarding the structure of the clubs into a league.

Firstly, the distribution of profits and the division of gate receipts are examined, which Quirk (1973) argues are the most important and crucial controls adopted for sharing gate receipts, required to ensure profits for the league as a whole. Using revenue sharing policies, leagues can help to maintain the economic survival of the weaker members of the group.

It should be emphasised that equal gate sharing is not argued on the basis of some notion of fairness but because, by acting to equal revenue potential, its effect enhances the competitive aspects of the sports. This helps to improve and preserve the economic viability of the league and all the member clubs (Quirk, 1973; Weistart, 1984).

It would not result, either in joint profit maximisation for the group or attempted profit maximisation for each club but would ensure a degree of group equilibrium. This means clubs would be earning profits that are sufficient to keep them in the league and so preserve the viability of that organisation.

Most leagues operate a pooling system and although an extreme case scenario to ensure total equality would be for all gate income to be pooled and divided equally between clubs, in reality this does not happen. Instead, a proportion of revenue is shared between clubs, as the league takes it upon itself to exhibit a far greater degree of control over the individual members (Sloane, 1971). For example, in the National Basketball Association, the home team receives 100% of gate money whereas in the National Football League 60% is retained by the home team and 40% by the visiting team (Quirk, 1973). Therefore, some type of revenue sharing of gate receipts is mandated by most leagues (Schimmel *et al*, 1993).

In addition to gate receipts, the foundation of current professional sports income is the fees paid by the broadcasting industry (McPherson *et al*, 1989). The restrictions related to the sharing and distribution of broadcasting revenue are examined in detail later within this chapter.

Another area of product restrictions is concerned with the movement, control and location of franchises. El Hodiri and Quirk (1971) stated that a major factor in preventing equality is differences in population size among geographical locations of members. Clubs in areas with a greater population gain more revenue from both gate receipts and local television contracts, allowing them to afford to buy the best players (McPherson *et al*, 1989).

An important advantage of a cartel organisation therefore is where the ruling body, governs the location of teams in a league. In order to attempt to maximise the potential revenue of the league as a whole, franchised clubs are moved to areas, which are deemed more suitable in terms of their population size. There are three general motives behind the use of franchises. The first is to prohibit a member club from locating in a city that another team has designated as its home. This prevents the spatial competition between the two clubs. Secondly, leagues control the movement of existing franchises to cities without teams, to encourage greater interest and profit for both the club and league and lastly to control the addition of new teams to a league. This reduces the risk of any threat to existing member clubs and maximises the potential of new franchises.

Each team in the USA is assigned an exclusive franchise to conduct league contests within some specific geographical area (Bale, 1989). In American there are forty-two cities which host professional sports franchises and most are chosen depending on population of the cities and their surrounding hinterlands (Bale, 1989; Danielson, 1997). Research has identified threshold populations above which a sports team will be regarded as a viable economic proposition. A figure of one million fan visits per season is suggested as a critical threshold for a professional baseball franchise, although many metropolitan areas fail to reach this. The National Football League for example, limits franchises to cities with populations of at least 75,000, which have territorial exclusivity, enabling them to avoid competition for local fans, viewers, media and broadcasting rights (Danielson, 1997).

Policies are also developed regarding the movement of franchises (McPherson *et al*, 1989). The policy is that a franchise may not be moved without the approval of at least three quarters of the owners. All leagues have fought fiercely to maintain control over franchise movement or relocation, as McPherson *et al* (1989) has noted the stability of each franchise is important to overall financial success. Many team owners are afraid to disturb the system that, on the whole remains profitable. This control means that new teams of major league calibre cannot be started and existing franchises cannot be moved to the cities (Topkis, 1949). Although Quirk (1973) points out that franchise moves can act as temporary expedients in correcting for an imbalance of playing strengths and revenue potential within a sports league. These fail to offer any real long-term solution to the fundamental problems that plagues professional sport, namely the tendency of big city teams to dominate the sport.

Therefore, the two main types of restrictions relating to franchises are control over expansion or relocation. This demonstrates the tension between a league's concern for financial stability and a call for increased competition. This recognition of a club's mutual interest in the financial stability of other clubs means that a league will decline to locate a franchise in any area in which it appears that available support would be inadequate (Weistart, 1984).

Generally large cities not only contain more clubs in various sports, but also contain the most successful clubs. This is due to the large cities possessing the potential to attract large crowds, but more importantly to gain higher broadcasting fees, which bring in higher revenues (Bale, 1989). From within American sport, the idea of nursery or feeder clubs has also transpired. These exist to allow small town clubs to be maintained in minor leagues, and used as training grounds for the majors (Horton, 1997).

3.4 The American Model of Professional Team Sports

The American professional team sports model is based on uncertainty of outcome as the major determinant of demand for live attendance at games. In order to maintain the competitive balance of the league, which conflicts with the objectives of individual clubs that want to maximise their own profits and on-field success, restrictive practices are required. These controls need to be implemented to ensure that competition is maintained through the equal distribution of revenue and the location of franchises in areas with the potential to generate greater support and income. For the sport to integrate the restrictive policies the co-operation of the member clubs is required and so the league is organised as a cartel, which controls the market in both labour and product markets.

The use of restrictive practices concentrates on the distribution of both talent and income in order to try to equalise the competitive balance of the league. The restrictions and controls utilised are constantly changing, due to the changing circumstances of the sports themselves. The draft system, the relatively new free agency rules and the distribution of revenue are all controls adopted by the league in order to maintain its survival and that of its member clubs.

The American professional teams sports literature has been examined, which forms the theoretical framework for this study and is used to analyse the integration of the American model into rugby league. However, various fundamental differences exist between professional team sports in America and Britain, which may have an important impact on the outcome, successful or otherwise of rugby league's adoption of the model.

The following section identifies these differences and emphasises that similar restrictive controls to those used in America are often absent from British sports practices if through their use, the configuration of the clubs in a league would be altered. In Britain, it appears that sports organisations are deterred from introducing new controls, especially those relating to new franchises in case established teams become obsolete, which may have a negative effect on the community that the club represents. Differences between sports leagues in the two respective countries are explored and possible reasons for the differences are discussed.

3.5 The American Model in a British Context

In Britain, professional sports league are organised in a similar structure to those in America, although in the USA, leagues are hermetic or closed leagues, with all competing teams in one division (Hoehn and Szymanski, 1999). In Britain, leagues operate with more teams and so the leagues are usually divided into numerous divisions. In order to ensure interest in the competition is maintained and competitive balance within the division, limited promotion and relegation are used (Wisemann, 1977). This serves to retain interest throughout the season for both clubs at the top and bottom of the division. In addition, cup competitions, rare events in America are also used to increase interest in games.

In terms of restrictive practices, British sport has traditionally used fewer and different controls than those in America. In place of the draft system and the revenue clause, now replaced by free agency to equalise the distribution of playing talent, in British leagues a different labour market control system is in use. This monopolistic device is known as the retain and transfer system. It is designed to inhibit the ability of clubs to monopolise the best players and prevent one-sided domination by the wealthier club resulting in long-term reduction of spectator interest (Dabscheck, 1993).

There is no system akin to the American player's draft in Britain but similar to the reserve system, players can be bought and sold by their employer and once signed, a player is bound to that club. The transfer system, which is used in certain sports like rugby league and football means that players can be bought and sold by their employers. Hence, a player can only play for a particular club with which he is registered and transfer to another, only with the club's consent (Sloane, 1976).

If a player is placed on the transfer list, he can be approached by any clubs who wish to sign him without the consent of his employers, provided they are prepared to pay the appropriate fee. The problem is that it prevents, or at least limits competitive bidding for players, as wealthier clubs buy the greater playing talent. This can be detrimental in the long term due to reducing competition between clubs or by placing increased pressure on poorer clubs to buy players they cannot really afford.

This makes the sport's leagues monopolistic in intent, which is then in effect illegal, a restraint of trade agreement. Although, the amount of power that sports leagues have, has meant very few have ever challenged their position (Sloane, 1976), although matters are slowly changing with the Bosman Ruling proving to be the catalyst.

Although it is often in the public interest to prevent the gravitation of players to a few healthy clubs, restrictions within the labour market are now identified as illegal as they represent an unjustified restraint of trade (Stewart, 1986). Recent events within the sports labour market having caused changes giving players more freedom of movement.

In December 1995, the European Court of Justice gave judgement on the compatibility of Football Federation Regulations with community law. In what has become known as the Bosman ruling, the judge ruled that transfers of players and the limits on the number of community players in inter-club matches are contrary to the Treaty of Rome. (European Information Service, 1995).

The European Court of Justice ruled that Football clubs in Continental Europe could no longer demand transfer fees for out of contract players moving to a foreign club, as this was a restraint of trade (Harverson, 1998). Unlike sports leagues in America, sports in Britain are not exempt from legislation regarding the general labour market and so clubs are bound by the same laws, which apply to any other employer within the EU.

In practice, the ruling gave more power to player akin to that of free agency in America, as once over the age of twenty-four years, players are free to move from club to club. Small clubs had always relied on selling players they have brought through from a young age, in order to survive. The age limit for freedom of contract was introduced to prevent a crucial income stream for lower clubs being destroyed (Mail on Sunday, 8th December 1996).

One major concern however, is that due to the Bosman ruling, top clubs will be able to acquire players for less money, which will then mean a reduction in transfer fees but an increase in salaries (Harverson, 1998). As the labour market in British sport is covered by European law, the freedom of movement from one country to the next means that cheaper foreign players may be bought as alternatives to younger, domestic playing talent. This will have obvious implications for equalisation of teams and will ultimately affect uncertainty of outcome within a league structure.

Gradually, as seen in America, players are gaining more freedom of movement, which serves to reduce the competitive balance within the league. The use of other labour controls are non-existent in Britain, with neither salary caps nor draft systems utilised to try to equalise the distribution of talent. This is reflected in the polarisation, which is evident in the British sport of football, but is also due to a lack of product controls within the game.

Unlike in America, revenue in British sports is not equally distributed between all member clubs. Until 1983, in football, clubs would award up to 20% to the visiting team, but since the start of the Premier League in 1992, the home team has retained all the gate receipts. This means that for the bigger clubs, with greater ground capacities, they gain significantly more revenue through the gate than clubs which attract less support or whose ticket sales are restrained due to the size of their ground. The result is a growing divide between the wealthy clubs and those within the lower leagues. The only exceptions to this are cup competitions, for example in the F. A. and League Cups, where the home and away clubs receive 45% each and the remaining 10% is divided equally amongst all entrants (Hohen and Szymanski, 1999).

In terms of broadcasting rights, there is centralised control of the selling of the rights. The broadcasting income is shared amongst all clubs within the league, although again, this is not distributed fairly with the top clubs usually receiving more revenue from this source than lower division teams. For example at the start of the Premiership, each member received around £8 million a season compared to the first division club's half a million each. This made the difference between the average Premier League and Division One club somewhere in the region of 16 to 1 (Mear and Hudson, 1998).

A further problem for British sport is the significant potential for substitution by consumers for games. Many cities have more than one representative club in each sport, for example Sheffield United and Sheffield Wednesday in football, Hunslet and Leeds in rugby league and Harlequins and London Scottish in rugby union. This means that clubs are competing for support and revenue from neighbouring clubs, unlike in America, where teams have their own territorial rights.

The American system of franchise moves ensures that teams are situated in the best possible areas in terms of the potential support and profit availability. There are numerous examples of franchise movement and relocation within American sports. The Anaheim Amigos in the American Basketball League were moved to Los Angeles and renamed the Los Angeles Stars in 1968 and then in 1970 moved to Salt Lake City and were renamed again, becoming the Utah Stars. In the National Hockey League, the Oakland Barons went through three name and location changes before merging with the Minnesota North Stars, while in the National Football League, the Duluth Kellys went through six location moves before becoming the Washington Redskins (Quirk and Fort, 1997).

This type of policy is unheard of in British sport, due mainly to a number of non-economic factors that are not accounted for within the American model. Although differences have been identified and confirmed by economists, the distinctions between the two countries have not been readily addressed in relation to the suitability of the American model for sports in Britain.

The established explanation for the differences is that British professional sport clubs have a social role to play, which is a much greater role relating to the establishing and retaining of community links, than clubs in American (Gratton and Lisewski, 1981).

Although the American professional teams sports model does not refer to non-economic factors, they do appear to be important determinants of demand in British sport, beyond that of economic and financial considerations (McPherson *et al*, 1989).

In America, there is a demand for profit maximisation and an acceptance of club franchise moves, related to potentially larger supporter catchment areas, rather than any community history of support. This demonstrates that the close community ties associated with British sport tend not to exist in America. The importance of the local rivalries and community spirit that sport in Britain exhibits, have been neglected within the American literature relating to professional team sports. However, although only limited, a small body of literature relating to the importance of social factors, in demand for sport in Britain does exist.

Firstly, the very essence of sport in Britain is such that for many, sport is the loci and foci of group loyalty, national or cultural identity of patriotism and nationalism (Lawrence and Rowe, 1986). Sport involves much more than just watching a team play, for some it is an intrusion that seems to have religious or quasi-religious significance (Gardner, 1974). Dunning *et al* (1993) explains sport is often used as the central source of identification of meaning and gratification in people's lives. Sport is not just a few hours diversion it's a symbol and a ritual, a re-affirmation of utility and collective pride (Furst, 1971).

Whannel (1992) agrees the way sport is organised on a team basis stimulates local rivalries and offers local, regional, national and ultimately emotional affiliation (Bale, 1989). Sporting success by the local team therefore generates benefits throughout the community, a fact illustrated by Derrick and McRory (1973) in their study of Sunderland's self image after winning the F. A. Cup. The whole community becomes associated with the success of its local club. This is confirmed by the size of the crowds that greet a F. A. Cup winning side on its return, as support is much greater than the number of people that pay at the turnstiles.

This social demand for sport is similarly seen on an international level, as highlighted in the 1975 white paper 'Sport and Recreation' which stated,

> *'Success in international sport is great value for the community not only in terms of raising morale but also by inspiring young people to take an active part in sport.'*

This has led some commentators to argue that the introduction of a league, where clubs moved around to different areas on the basis of the most attractive location, would result in a large decline in the number of clubs and a major change in the nature of the sports. Thomas and Jolsen (1979) and Gratton and Lisewski (1981) also agree that if a more American system of operation were adopted in British professional team sports, it would involve heavy social costs. The traditional and strong links between clubs and their local communities could be destroyed, which would be detrimental to British society.

Hence, the reason why a league structure of unwieldy size might be preferred, despite being un-economic to run, is that it is felt the omission of clubs with a long tradition will involve a great loss of consumer welfare (Sloane, 1971).

Furthermore, professional sports do not operate in a social or economic vacuum but are very much affected by the social, political and economic atmosphere of the larger society (Leonard, 1997). As already examined, in America, professional sports franchises make relocation decisions with a regularity that would surprise the average British sport fan. In Britain many fans have successfully countered plans of clubs to relocate, but in the USA, fans rarely if ever oppose such moves. In the USA, sports industries work so each team has an exclusive franchise within a specific geographical area. This displays a degree of economic rationality absent in our major team sports, where a considerable degree of spatial competition for sport arises.

Such locational changes and movement of sports clubs are expected in situations where profit maximisation is the norm (Bale, 1989), which appears to be in American sport. Therefore, we may consider that clubs in Britain have objectives other than that of maximising profit.

It is commonly accepted by sports economists, as indicated in the literature that in America, professional sports teams are based on the premise that their major objective is one of profit maximisation (El Hodiri & Quirk, 1971; Noll, 1964). It is also acknowledged that as professional team sports are usually privately owned, those in charge are in the business of maximising profits and therefore play a pivotal role in the commercialising of sport (Bale, 1989; Cashmore, 1996).

Hence, American professional team sports exhibit various attributes, which have become accepted as characteristic of profit maximising leagues. These are associated with the continued existence of the cartel and its member clubs through maximising the uncertainty of outcome between teams. This is the basic justification accepted in order to maintain profitability. It is recognised therefore that profit maximising leagues advocate the utilisation of labour and product restriction rather than a free market system.

The dilemma facing profit maximising club is that if it wins every game its own profitability could be undermined as reduced uncertainty of outcome may lead to a decline in spectator interest and in turn a reduction in revenue. Therefore, in a profit maximising league it is in each team's interest to prevent disparity between their playing strength, so a richer club may well let star players go to poorer teams in order encourage closer competition and enhance profits (Rottenberg, 1956).

The draft system is the labour control that encourages the equality and balance of playing strengths and is advocated by both Rottenberg (1956) and Dabscheck (1975).

As the top clubs allow the best players to go the weaker teams, their own accomplishments on the field would diminish. This results in the opposing teams becoming increasingly successful and eventually a profit increase for all clubs as a consequence of a higher uncertainty of outcome.

In order to profit maximise therefore, the notion of 'running behind' introduced by Rottenberg (1956) is accepted, with clubs preferring to remain in contention rather than constantly winning. This is because despite the fact that winning may produce profits, consistent winning does not maximise them and so profit maximisers will not attempt to secure the best players as closeness of competition and consequently attendances and revenue will suffer (Sloane, 1971).

This suggests that some other goal has priority and profit maximisation is not their primary objective. Sloane, (1971,80), Davenport (1969), Gratton and Lisewski (1981) and Dabscheck (1975) have argued that the evidence indicates that objectives of British professional sports teams are different to their American counterparts. Instead of profit they substitute in its place and regard their behaviour in terms of utility, which relates to a general level of satisfaction. The practical implications being that their behaviour will differ significantly from that of profit maximisers, with winning or sporting success their primary aim.

This utility maximising model proposed by Sloane (1971) is based on playing success being the major determinant of demand for people attending matches. This is to some extent questioned by Demmert (1973) who suggests that profit and winning are related, with both utility and profit maximisation resulting in the same behavioural implications. However Cairns (1974) disputes this, noting that team owners derive benefits from a winning team and are often willing to sacrifice profits in an attempt to win more games.

This is further explained by Danielson (1997) who maintained that, as most people who own teams are highly competitive and used to success, their involvement in sport is no different, they want success. The difference is that win/loss records and championships rather than profits and losses measure success in professional sport and so although they are not comfortable with losing money, the impetus and objective for entrance is primarily non-pecuniary.

Jones (1969) agrees that the prime interest of team owners is love of the game and they do not see it as a purely business venture. Instead they treat sporting activity as a form of consumption and often choose to tolerate persistent losses (Cairns, 1983b).

Coakley (1986) notes that sport enhances prestige more dramatically than any other form of business and so their satisfaction comes from interest where non-monetary rather than monetary income is obtained. This takes the form of social prestige, director status and power (Sloane, 1980). Managers and directors are not interested primarily in financial gain, with income from this source being limited, but are often fanatical supporters who find their involvement a rewarding hobby in itself (Wiseman, 1977).

It is precisely the difference in objectives of clubs, that has been identified by Sloane 1971) as the crucial factor required to explain the differing behaviour between sports administrators in the UK and USA sports. He concludes that this can also explain the lack of profitability in British professional sport, which is even noticeable in top English soccer clubs such as Liverpool. They, although having tended most toward profit orientation, have generally fallen short, still seeing their main objective as success on the field of play (Ruddock, 1979; Vamplew, 1982).

This is endorsed by the report into professional football stating,

> *'The objective of the football club is to provide entertainment in the form of a football match, the objective is not to maximise profits but to achieve playing success whilst remaining solvent.'* (Chester Report on Professional Football, 1968)

Therefore, sports clubs in Britain have often had to rely on outside assistance or subsidies via donations, supporter club activities, transfer fee revenue and increasingly the use of lotteries and television moneys to maintain their viability (Noll, 1974; Rivett, 1975; Wisemann, 1977; Rigauer, 1993). Thus Sloane (1976) criticises both league organisations and clubs in the UK for being un-enterprising and unimaginative, blaming the absence of the profit motive and the constraints imposed on competition for inhibiting British sport.

Under utility maximisation, wealthier clubs are willing to sacrifice profits and increase success by attempting to maximise their playing efficiency. They would rather risk too successful a season and diminishing financial returns than try to profit maximise and face losing too many matches.

Unlike a club wanting to profit maximise, utility maximsers will attempt to attract the best players to its teams with offers of high wages and inducements. Although Sloane (1971) and Rojeck (1985) both claim that clubs strive to maximise utility only, subject to financial viability, they recognise that the financial instability of many clubs is masked by the fact that clubs frequently pay out large sums to obtain the signature of star players.

This is supported by Dabscheck's (1975) work on the Victorian Football League of Australian Rules, which demonstrates that clubs are often prepared to pay players total wages in excess of the income derived directly from football activities. Although the utility maximiser may seek to enlarge their income by supplementing gate receipts with other sources of income, this is not with the intention of profit maximisation but is in order to compete and secure the services of the best players.

This leads Vamplew (1982) to introduce the proposition that utility maximisers are more inclined to endorse a restriction free labour market in which those with money secure the most talented. This has been questioned however, in relation to British sports as clubs still enforce certain controls restricting to some extent aspects of freedom of movement within the labour and product markets.

Despite this, British clubs are still regarded as utility maximsers with Cairns (1989) emphasising the relative disinterest in profits of both spectators and the clubs themselves, with winning the prime motivator. In contrast, the North American system reflects the greater strength of the profit motive, with the mechanism of franchise moves just one indicator of profit maximisation.

Barnett (1990) says the crucial difference between Great Britain and America is that in British sport, decisions have not, until recently been dominated by the need to secure large television fees. However, now with the possible financial rewards from broadcasting rights increasing dramatically, the structure of sports teams are changing rapidly, in order to maximise the revenue they can generate from this source. The rise in broadcasting demand for games represents one of the most evident tendencies in late twentieth century sport.

The next section will focus on broadcasting demand, examining the implications of television coverage on live attendance and the substantial revenue generated by the selling of broadcasting rights. The methods of revenue distribution and the differences between broadcasting in American and British sport will be addressed.

3.6 The Role of Broadcasting Demand

Conventionally, demand for sport was measurable using attendance figures from live matches. However, with the expansion of television's coverage of sport, for most of us, for most of the time, television is the medium through which most people are directly involved with professional sport. Therefore, this section examines the theoretical background to demand for sport on television.

Cairns, Jennett and Sloane stated in their 1986 review of professional team sports, that, 'specialist literature on the issue of broadcasting demand is hardly extensive'. More recently, in 1995, Baimbridge, Cameron and Davison have reiterated the fact, that despite token recognition of its importance, the impact of television on sport has been largely ignored by the literature.

Despite the dramatic rise in television's influence on sport, the theoretical literature related to the broadcasting demand has, although discussed, been less extensively researched. Due to this, there is no real theoretical framework and a lack of integration, of broadcasting demand within the economics of professional team sports' literature. Therefore, broadcasting demand's role and related issues are examined separately within this study, from the literature regarding the American model of professional team sports.

This section examines the current literature related to broadcasting demand and critically evaluates the extent to which broadcasting has been included within the American model. Revenue derived from this source by American sports is discussed and the methods adopted to equalise their distribution are explored. Finally, differences between sports broadcasting in America and Britain are examined.

3.6.1 Broadcasting Demand in America

The Cairns *et al* 1986 article highlighted two main issues regarding broadcasting demand in sport, firstly the effect of television coverage on live attendance and secondly, the determinants of broadcasting fees, which will be addressed in turn.

From the start of television's coverage, many sports bodies regarded television as a threat, as it permits the game to be watched and followed, play-by-play, much as it might be from the stadium. The concern was that it would be responsible for siphoning off a considerable number of people whom might other wise have attended in person (Bogart, 1972; Greenstein and Marcum, 1981). This would result in a decline in game attendances and a curtailing of spectator interest (Moore, 1995).

This view was supported by several studies, all of which found that the non-restriction of sports events did in fact cause attendance to decline. Topkis's 1949 work found as television entered homes in New Jersey (Newark) the local baseball team suffered a sharp drop in attendances, largely attributable to the citizens' ability to sit in bars and watch the Yankees. Over thirty years later Calhoun (1981) investigating the Cleveland Indians who televised the majority of their home games between 1948 and 1956 found they correspondingly lost 67% of their support during this period. Similarly, Stewart in his 1986 survey found one in three people attended less athletic events since they purchased a television set.

A further worry was the effect that the televising of 'big league' contests would have on minor competitions or amateur leagues elsewhere. It was felt that a significant number of spectators would rather watch the professionals on television (Goldlust, 1987).

Calhoun in 1981 posed the question,

> *'Why pay good money to sit in the ball-park to watch the local yokels, when you can sit at home for free with a bottle of beer and see the national game of the week?'*

This was supported by Gardner, whose 1974 work found that the number of American minor leagues shrunk from 59 to 23 and the number of clubs declined from 500 to 155 between 1949-70 when live televised matches were introduced.

These studies clearly reinforce the point that unrestricted televising can undermine sports events and have a detrimental effect on attendance. However, in contrast there has been a significant amount of research emphasising television's positive effects on sport. These identify television's role in promoting sport, which helps to stimulate and heighten public interest, resulting in at times, incredible growth of supporter popularity.

Williams (1974) suggests that television makes sport accessible to more potential fans and such strata of society (women, children) that for different reasons had not previously seen live sports competitions. By compelling more people to attend, television increases familiarity with games and widens the sport's knowledge of the population (Horowitz, 1974; Calhoun, 1981).

In an unbelievably short time, television has managed to transform people who so far had been most indifferent with regard to sport, completely unaware of its role and significance, into its ardent adherents. As Bogart (1972) sums up,

> *'Television has helped the sports business by creating nation-wide and world-wide markets for both major and minor sports, bringing outstanding athletic events within the reach of millions who would otherwise not see them'.*

In addition, television coverage also brought many sports, not previously fashionable in mass dimensions into the orbit of involvement for television viewers. New kinds of interests, not only among spectators but also among potential participants were stimulated by the televising of a wide range of sports (Williams, 1974).

Due to the inconsistency surrounding the effects of televised coverage in live audiences sports authorities have introduced various restrictions to limit any possible detrimental effects. In 1948, baseball owner, allowed games to be televised without any restrictions, resulting in a dramatic drop in attendance at games (Gardner, 1974). Since then, American professional sports teams have chosen to introduce a series of restrictive controls and practices to prevent any adverse effects on gate figures.

To prevent or at least to limit negative effects, the process of 'blacking out' was introduced and utilised. This involved the blacking out of the indirect channel of distribution, televised coverage, in order to protect the direct channel of the game (Rathmell, 1974). Blackouts of games were implemented even if the game was sold out, as it was felt that television exposure would still result in ticket holders staying at home if the game was televised. Eventually blackouts were banned in areas outside the catchment area of the game or in the home areas of the clubs, if all tickets were sold 72 hours before the game was to begin. Live television coverage remains banned from the geographical vicinity from which most of the paying spectators to an event were drawn.

Therefore, the debate regarding the effect of televised coverage on live sports events continues but is still theoretically indeterminate. However, most governing bodies now acknowledge the positive impact that television can have in terms of conveying their sport to a wider audience and have made the decision to allow their matches or competition to be broadcast. This is not the only reason that sports have been willing to sell their broadcasting rights. The main reason is due to the potential revenue generated through broadcasting sales.

Previously, the greater proportion of a club's income was derived from gate receipts but this has now been replaced by broadcasting revenue (McPherson *et al*, 1989). As demonstrated by Wilbert (1997) when he compared Demmert's work in 1973 with that of his own carried out in 1994. In 1973, 55% of operational income in the National Football League was derived from ticket sales and only 34.5% from television. Within twenty years, gate receipts and the media were still significant contributories although broadcasting income accounted for over two and half times that of gate money.

Although television has covered sports since the 1940's, the recent rise in revenue from this source has been dramatic as shown by Graph 3.1 of the revenue from network broadcasting contracts for the NBA.

Television companies are now willing to pay excessive amounts to buy up sports rights as demonstrated in American baseball, but the other three professional sports have also seen their revenue from broadcasting rise. For example, The NFL recently signed a $17.6 billion deal over eight years with Fox, ABC, CBS and ESPN (Sports Business, 1998).

This leads to the second issue highlighted within the Cairns, Jennett and Sloane, 1986 article, the determinants of broadcasting fees. Literature relating to the determinants of this revenue has been limited and inconclusive. Horowitz (1974) found the size of the potential audience, spectator interest, past performance and future prospects all to determine the amount of revenue gained from the sale of broadcasting rights. However, unlike attendance at live matches, which has always been considered the major determinant of demand, broadcasting has not been addressed in a similar way.

Within the American model, demand for live audiences is derived due to a number of factors, with the most important, as discussed in section 3.1, being uncertainty of outcome. When uncertainty increases, demand for live games also rises and hence revenue is maximised. However, the question of whether uncertainty raises demand for television coverage and whether in turn this generates greater amounts of income has not been dealt with to any extent within the literature.

The problem is that income from broadcasting is decided upon, in the short-term, before the season starts and hence before demand, in terms of television audiences for the sport, is known. The fact, which has failed to be adequately addressed, is that unlike match attendance, demand for broadcasting has not up to the present time been determined by the sports market. Demand for broadcasting rights has increased, but is determined by the media and broadcasting markets, not by uncertainty of outcome.

Cowie and Wilson (1997) stated that a reason why channel broadcasters may wish to acquire sports rights is their potential to attract large audiences and the effect on channel inertia.

> *'There is evidence that viewers watching a programme on Channel A will stick to it at the end of the programme rather than switch to Channel B'.*

By obtaining sports rights, broadcasters are competing with their rivals not just for audiences for that specific programme but for subsequent programmes. Also there is competition for the rights to special events, which attract customers, especially in the case of satellite and cable broadcasters, to subscribe to them rather than a rival company. Therefore, televised sports demand has been influenced by battles between the key bidders within the media markets, fuelled by the world-wide growth in satellite and cable broadcasters, not based on the sport itself (Cowie and Williams, 1997).

In the longer term, it may be the case that demand for the televised coverage of a game will determine revenue. If a sport is not attracting high audiences, then the amounts paid for the broadcasting rights may be reduced or coverage and hence revenue may be withdrawn. This is one area, where clearly more work needs to be conducted.

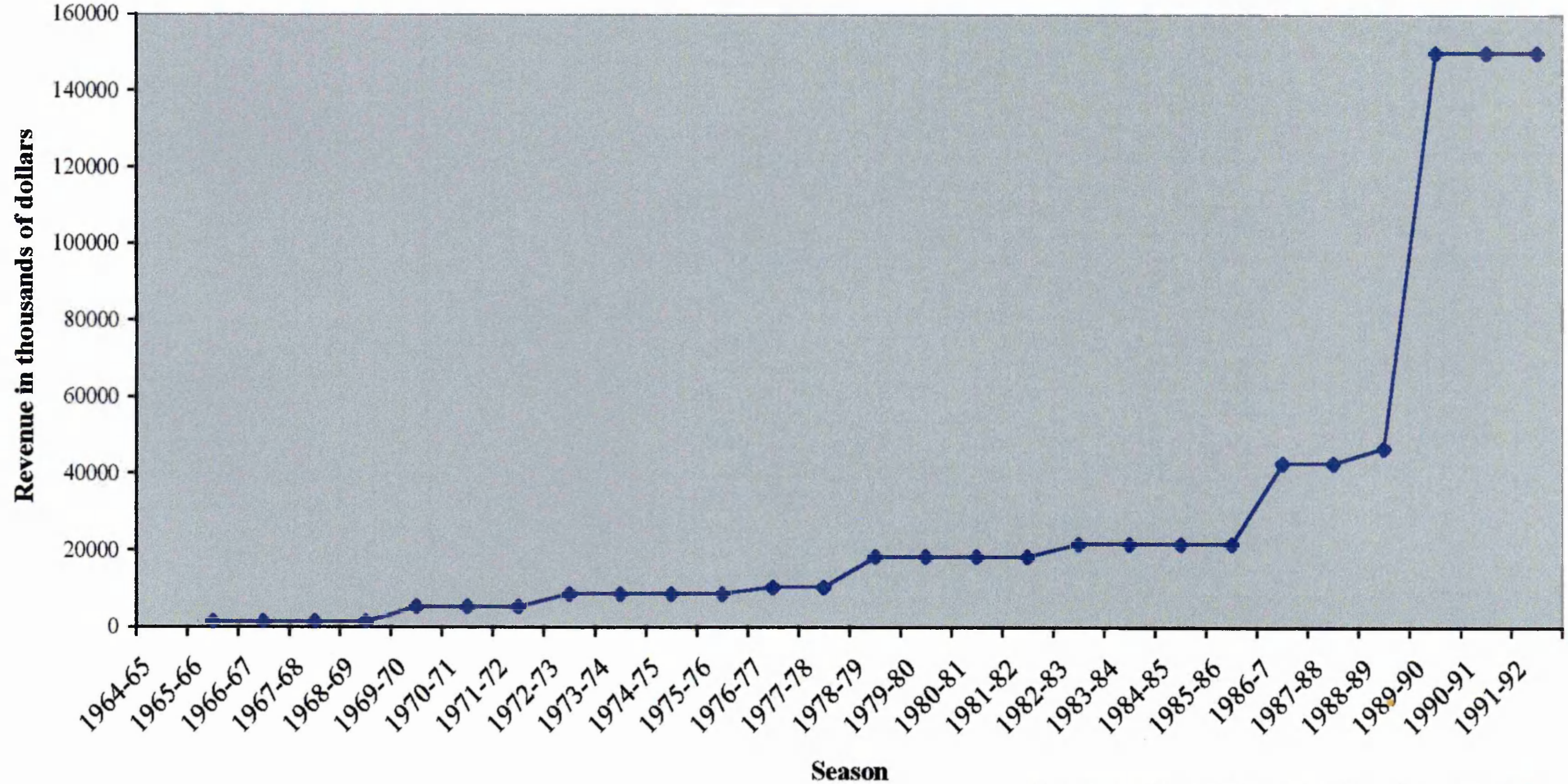
As the revenue available to sports at the elite level via the selling of their broadcasting rights has increased dramatically, many have undergone significant changes. The whole structure of sport has been altered and its economics vastly complicated (Inglis, 1977).

The sports authorities saw the extent of the rise in revenue as having possible detrimental effects on the balance between clubs in a league, which could lead to financial inequality. Hence, just as American professional sports try to ensure competitive balance in terms of equality on the playing field and off-field economic and financial initiatives, these are mirrored with respect to the selling and sharing of television revenues. A variety of restrictions were adopted to prevent adverse effects of broadcasting on live attendance and to protect the competitive balance through the distribution of income.

Most sports leagues in America, act as a single seller, peddling to national networks (Danielson, 1997). The introduction of policies concerning the selling and distribution of revenue has been enforced since 1961 when professional sports leagues were granted immunity from antitrust legislation with regards to broadcasting (Vogel, 1998). The concern was that revenue derived from this source could influence the competitive balance of the league and so the introduction of such controls was an attempt to maintain equality amongst clubs. The distribution of broadcasting revenue in American sports can be divided into two areas, the distribution of national and local or regional rights.

All four major sports in America apart from the National Hockey League, divide television revenues equally between their member clubs ensuring that this does not impact on the league by reducing the competitive balance. In ice hockey, revenue is divided so that the more successful teams or those in the large cities with larger viewing figures get more. However, the real concern for the maintenance of this equilibrium is due to the evident disparity that arises due to the distribution of local broadcasting revenue.

Graph 3.1: NBA Broadcasting Revenue - 1964-1992



Source: Adapted from Quirk and Fort (1997)

American leagues impose rules enabling individual teams to control broadcasts within their own territory (Schimmel *et al*, 1993). Apart from American football, each individual team in America has exclusive territorial rights regarding the selling of local broadcasts (Leonard, 1997). For example, in the National Hockey League, teams have rights within their own territory and surrounding area of within 50-75 miles of their home ground. Each team is responsible for conducting the sale of their broadcast rights within their own area.

This although providing an important source of income for the clubs, also provides an opportunity for the unequal distribution of this revenue (Danielson, 1997). The problem is that as each club is granted monopoly rights over it territory broadcasts, this does not provide an equal source of revenue for all clubs as their geographical areas and catchment populations vary greatly.

The amount of revenue each team receives from this source is dependent on where they are located. Teams in the large media centres like New York, Los Angeles and Chicago will generate much greater amounts than that gained by teams in smaller media markets. This is demonstrated using data from American baseball, which is presented in Table 3.1 and shows the extent of the disparity between revenue gained by teams from local broadcasts in different locations.

Table 3.1 Local Broadcasting Revenue for American Baseball Teams 1990-91

Team	Thousand of $'s
Baltimore	8,500
Boston	20,100
Minnesota	5,600
New York	45,500
Cleveland	6,000

Source: Quirk and Fort (1997)

This therefore clearly leads to a situation where the major market teams have the potential to be differentiated from teams in smaller television serving districts by their income streams. This differentiation is due to location but can still lead to a position not conducive to producing and maintaining competitive balance and thereby may have a significant effect in terms of playing success.

This disparity is heightened further by the added availability of cable networks to those in major conurbations. Hence, decisions have had to be taken and measures adopted to try to restrict a growing divide developing between teams in differing sized market settings. In order to try to balance this division of income, one suggestion has been the formation of individual sports channels. Each sport would have its own channel with all revenues distributed equally between all of the clubs. In a similar vein, baseball has tried to ensure all regular season games are available on the national network, thereby reducing the need for local broadcasts.

An alternative approach, already discussed, has been the role of club franchise moves, adopted to relocate teams from lesser-populated districts to areas with larger media markets. This promises an increased captive audience for both live games and television broadcasts and therefore greater income generation from both gate receipts but more importantly from local broadcasting revenues. Thus teams have been uprooted and relocated, simply because locations elsewhere have meant a larger, more concentrated and more demographically desirable television audience (Goldlust, 1987).

The effect of television coverage on American professional team sports has resulted in the escalation of broadcasting revenue, which provides clubs with a large percentage of their incomes. Television's induced alterations to sport have not been confined to restrictive practices but it has been the instigator for various changes sports have made to their practices, schedules, locations and to the very sports themselves (Wenner, 1989).

From the literature, it is apparent that broadcasting has not been clearly integrated into the American model. The literature fails to acknowledge the importance of broadcasting demand on two counts. Firstly, that broadcasting is now a more crucial determinant of revenue than gate receipts, which has not been addressed in relation to uncertainty of outcome. Secondly, that demand for televised sport is not influenced by the internal factor of uncertainty but by a different set of determinants, specific to media and broadcasting markets.

The last section within this chapter examines broadcasting demand in relation to British sport and highlights the differences between television coverage, revenue and distribution in America and Britain.

3.6.2 Sports Broadcasting in Britain.

The impact of television on sports in America has been dramatic and although the disparity, in terms of revenue between America and Britain is evident, the differences between them are being eroded. The changes, which occurred in American sport, ten years ago, with regards to broadcasting, are now happening in Britain. Sports are receiving greater coverage than ever before and generating more revenue from the sale of their broadcasting rights.

The literature regarding British sports' broadcasting remains less extensive than that, which has appeared in America over the last twenty-years. However, as the rapid changes have been installed in British sports broadcasting, correspondingly there has been an increase in the number of academic papers related to this subject.

This section addresses the fourth objective of the study and examines the effects of the recent changes in British sports broadcasting. The amounts generated by sports through television revenue, its distribution and the switch from predominantly terrestrial to satellite coverage are all discussed and potential problems for the future, due to the limited audience reach of satellite television are highlighted. The increasing though still somewhat limited British literature is reviewed in relation to broadcasting demand within the American professional team sports model.

In Britain, the terrestrial channels of the BBC and ITV have always dominated televised sport, with all programmes, including sporting events free to the whole television owning population (Whannel, 1992). In addition, no real restrictions applied, as individual sports authorities were free to decide, which events to sell and how much they were willing to accept. The only exception to this was the 'listed' events, which under government policy could only be sold to terrestrial stations. However, recently the major catalyst to change has been the introduction into Britain of the satellite company, BSkyB, which has had two primary effects.

The recent introduction of satellite and cable television into Britain has had two main effects. Firstly, an increase in interest from policy-making groups, for example the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and the Culture, Media and Sport Committee. Secondly, this has been accompanied by a change in attitude of the sports authorities. This has opened up the possible revenue that can be gained by selling sports rights and it appears that there is an increasing interest among governing bodies to sell to the highest bidder, often regardless of the consequences.

At the present time in Britain, the 1996 Broadcasting Act prevents satellite bidding for exclusive live rights for listed events, which are reserved for terrestrial channels. These are decided upon by the Secretary of State and include the Grand National, The Derby, Wimbledon and the F. A. Cup Final (Lord MacLaurin, 1997).

These restrictions are not imposed by the league but by the government, who have given several fundamental grounds for the necessary regulation of broadcasting. Firstly, to avoid spoiling the market, with too much sport on television, people would start to switch off. Secondly, to curb the effects of excessive dominance by major clubs, which could result in a growing division between themselves and the weaker teams. Regulations also help to stop the abuse of broadcaster monopoly power and help to maintain the 'National Treasures' on terrestrial television, which are events noted for ensuring 'public good' and a feeling of pleasure, plus promoting national unity.

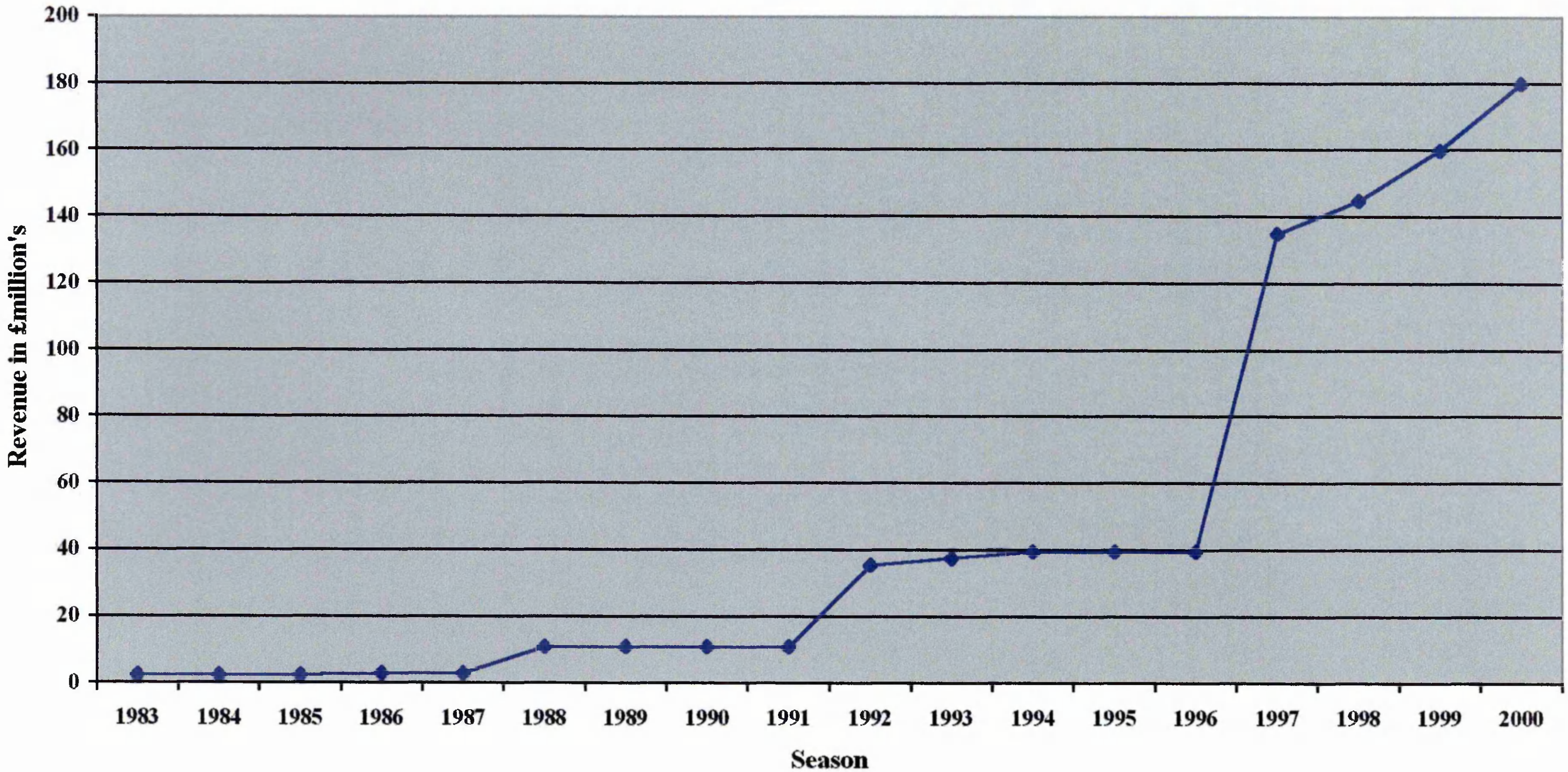
However, many sports want their events de-listed, in order to make it possible for them to negotiate a fair price for their television rights. Sport's governing bodies have argued that the advent of BSkyB has created a genuine market for television rights in Britain. This would be heightened further, if the government imposed restrictions are withdrawn and de-listing is approved, Pay-TV companies would be able to bid along with terrestrial television for the major sporting events (Lord MacLaurin, 1997). This would subsequently increase competition, providing a huge boost to sport's earnings.

Despite the minority audience of satellite television, Premier League football sold its broadcasting rights to BSkyB in 1992 for £191.5million over five-years, which became the largest television contract for sport ever, in Britain. The figures gained from broadcasting have been subsequently increased in preceding years, representing a similar rise in revenue to that which took place in America between 1988 and 1990, as demonstrated by Graph 3.1 in the previous section. Graph 3.2 presents an equivalent trend in British football, with more recently, the games of rugby league and rugby union also having accepted large pay-outs in exchange for their broadcasting rights. The reasons for this switch is that contracts from satellite television far outweigh those that are offered by terrestrial broadcasters.

Therefore, due to this influx in revenue, many sports authorities have been willing to sell their television rights to BSkyB but unlike in America, televised sports coverage has always been traditionally terrestrial, available nation-wide. However, there are questions over the suitability for satellite coverage of sports events with complaints from consumers that sport was being taken away from the mass public, only to be viewed by those willing to pay to watch. Satellite coverage was only available to a minority of the population and so the British government were keen to safeguard top sporting events for the four British television channels.

Similar to in America, broadcasting revenue has become a major contributor to professional team sport's income in Britain. In 1978, the BBC held a four-year contract with the Football League for broadcasting rights worth nearly £10 million. In 1996, football signed a £670 million contract with BSkyB for the same time-period (Cameron, 1997; LIRC, 1997).

Graph 3.2: Football's Premier League Broadcasting Revenue - 1983-2000



Source: Monopolies and Merger Commission (1999)

As this income continues to rise, attention now turns to the distribution of this money and the potential inequality it may cause. In terms of the distribution of television revenues, only national contracts exist unlike in the USA where each club negotiates to sell their own local television rights. National rights in American sports, apart from in the NHL, are distributed equally between teams in a league (Hoehn and Szymanski, 1999).

Although in British sport, this has tended not to be the case. In general, those in the top division usually receive more coverage and hence more revenue than those clubs in the lower divisions. In addition, there is often a disparity between clubs at the top and bottom within the same division. All clubs in each division receive an equal share of a television contract but those, whose games are broadcast more often throughout the season, gain extra revenue. This can be demonstrated clearly through using an example from football.

Firstly, there has been a split between the Premier League and the three lower leagues in terms of coverage and revenue distribution. During the 1996-97 season the Premier League signed a contract with BSkyB/BBC for £693million, with each of the twenty clubs receiving £1.930,000 during the season. In comparison, The Nationwide League receives only £125million over the same five-year period (Deloitte and Touche, 1998). However, the additional revenue is also distributed according to the number of appearances made on television. This is where the disparity lies within the same division. During the season, Manchester United appeared on BSkyB twelve times and on the BBC, seventeen times, for which they gained an extra £2,114,000. In contrast, Coventry City appeared four times on BSkyB and three times on BBC, receiving an extra £423,000 (Deloitte and Touche, 1998b).

This is inconsistent with American sports and leads to a situation where the major market teams have the clear potential to be differentiated from the 'have nots' in terms of playing success. A position that is not conducive to the production of a balanced competition (Wenner, 1989). This is also supported by Baimbridge, Cameron and Davies' (1995) work who found that on the current pattern of live coverage of rugby league, there was an inherent risk of widening income equality between the clubs.

Therefore, unlike in America, in British sport there appears no real policy to attempt to equalise the distribution of television revenue between the clubs in the league. Hence, the pattern in Britain represents that of local revenue distribution in America. The only difference is that although it is still the bigger clubs that generate greater revenue in American, this is due to the size of the media market rather than the number of matches broadcast.

Some commentators have made the suggestion that rather than regional contracts for teams, each could have their own television channel. This has already happened in football, with MUTV, Manchester United's own television service. However, for a team like Manchester United this may be beneficial due to their global support, with 91% of their fans living outside the Manchester area, although the smaller clubs may not fare so well (Nisse, 1997). Clubs with strong support in their local catchment area like Sunderland and Nottingham Forest may not be able to gain enough subscribers unlike Manchester United whose predicted additional income is over £100million a year. A similar situation is already evident in Italy, with three fifths of all subscriptions, sold to just three clubs (Economist, 1996).

Therefore, due to the escalation of broadcasting revenue, more equal distribution policies have been suggested in order to equalise the balance between clubs (Sloane, 1981) although more recently Hoehn and Szymanski (1999) have argued that revenue sharing would not serve to preserve the balance within a league.

The other issue relating to broadcasting, which is not addressed in the American literature, is specific to Britain and deals with the move from predominately, terrestrial television coverage to satellite, and the implications this has on British sport.

The concern with the sale of broadcast rights to a satellite company is that due their limited audience reach, the potential number of viewers is reduced from that which could be gained from terrestrial television. This is simply because, satellite television is not capable of reaching the huge audiences commanded by terrestrial television (Whannel, 1992). This can be demonstrated by golf's Ryder Cup, which, live from Spain on BSkyB gained an audience of 1.4million. In 1993, the equivalent day on BBC drew more than four million. More recently rugby union, who signed a contract with BSkyB worth £87 million saw the live coverage of England versus New Zealand attract an average audience of only 740,000. This represents 8% of the national audience, whereas previously, screened internationals on BBC would gain audiences of 7million (Financial Times, 28th November 1997).

Baimbridge *et al* (1995) stated that the problem with switching to satellite coverage is that although there would be increased revenue from the sale of the rights, this maybe outweighed by a loss from a net fall in viewers. The fear is that due to restricted penetration, due to limited audiences, there may be a dramatic impact in terms of reduced consumer surplus (Solberg, 1999). This has implications on those who previously watched the sport on terrestrial television and do not have a satellite facility but also has implications for the sport's marketing and promotion.

Although, this issue has failed to be addressed within the sports literature, it has been debated within the media and broadcasting literature. Boardman and Hargreaves-Heap (1999) argue that a move to satellite television would reduce consumer surplus due to network externalities. This relates to the reduced potential audience on satellite television than if a programme was shown on a terrestrial channel. Network externalities are explained by Boardman and Hargreaves-Heap as the enjoyment generated through conversations regarding sporting events that people have watched and like to talk about with others who witnessed the same event. This brings enjoyment through watching the event, through the conversational network derived from viewing and adds value to the network for everyone.

The effect of network externalities for a sport that has sold its broadcasting rights to BSkyB, are that as less people can watch the game, viewing figures will be reduced and this in turn will lead to a decline in the conversational network. In these circumstances, interest in the sport may be reduced significantly, which would result in a decline in support, a trend that could be difficult to reverse.

As Solberg (1999) explained, terrestrial television or public service channels as he referred to them can be described as maximising social welfare, while private, commercial ones, for example, BSkyB are maximising profit. Therefore, a switch to satellite television would result in the loss of potential welfare benefits, which as suggested by Boardman and Hargreaves-Heap (1999) includes the conversational value of the sport.

They stated,

> *'If BSkyB takes over broadcasting of sporting events, the numbers watching the game will fall and this will undermine the conversational value of the event, with the result that the culture of everyday life will be impoverished'.*

and then go on to say...

> *'Watching a sports event is both a consumption good and an investment good. People enjoy the pleasure it generates at the time but it is also a source of debate and discussion for days, or even weeks, months or years to come'.*

However, if only a minority of people watch the event then there is less likelihood of discussion after the event. Basically, if people do not see a sport because it is only shown to a small audience, then less people will talk about it, interest may eventually wane and this could have potentially detrimental long-term implications. This is supported by Whannel (1992) and Solberg (1999) who state that any sport that chooses to remove its competition from terrestrial television risks damaging its own prospects of greater involvement and interest. A reduction in the number of viewers may well mean diminished interest in the game and new enthusiasts and players, the life-blood of the sport may be harder to attract.

Golf is an example of a sport in this very situation. It has sold its rights to BSkyB and now only attracts audiences of 30,000 for its European Tour. The figures gained from what is arguably the game's most prestigious event, the Ryder Cup are also minimal compared to between three and five million, that chose to listen to the event in 1997, on the BBC's Radio 5 (Trow, 1999).

This may subsequently have a knock-on effect in other areas of income generation, affecting the sale of merchandise or in the attracting of new sponsors and the retaining of established ones. Other related markets may also suffer as demonstrated within golf. The shift of major events onto BSkyB not only resulted in a reduction in audience figures, but also has been accompanied by a decline in golf products and specialist golf magazines. In the early 1990's, 'Golf World' magazine sold more than 100,000 copies a month, now the total distribution is barely 66,000 clothing and equipment, as interest in the game has fallen (Trow, 1999).

Overall, British sports are now receiving the amounts from television revenue that American sports have been enjoying for over twenty-years. Although the broadcasting income is distributed, as in America, by the league, there is not an equal division amongst all clubs thereby leading to the top clubs gaining more and hence the gap between top and bottom clubs increasing. Problems of satellite coverage and its limited audience may result in future problems, due to lack of interest and knowledge in the game. Although Boardman and Hargreaves-Heap (1999) suggest that satellite and cable access will develop so that these problems will be of less concern. Meanwhile, sports authorities must choose between the large sums of money available from satellite broadcasters or the extensive coverage offered by the terrestrial channels.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature relating to the economics of professional team sports. Three key areas have been identified, which provide the theoretical framework for this study; uncertainty of outcome, the theory of cartel behaviour and product and labour market controls. Additionally, non-market factors have been examined, plus the rapidly expanding issue of broadcasting demand. The framework provides a basis for examining the implementation of the American professional team sports model to rugby league and potential areas of disparity, which may affect its application.

The following chapter will examine rugby league since 1995 and the move to a Super League structure in 1996. It will review how the game took its inspiration for change from football's re-labelling of its Division One to the Premier League. Although football did not embark on a process of restructuring, rugby league, in order to try to begin solving its problems, looked to American professional sports. The mechanisms that have been adopted by the game are examined in greater depth and its attempt to follow the American lead and mirror both their structure and results are explored.

Chapter Four
The Move to Super League

4.0 Introduction

As already discussed in Chapter 2, by the middle of the 1990's, professional rugby league was suffering from a downturn in attendance, games were being played in deteriorating grounds and several clubs faced bankruptcy. The Rugby Football League was desperate to find a solution to the problems in order to increase their spectator appeal and strengthen its financial base.

The catalyst for change came in the form of an offer of £87 million over five years from BSkyB, in exchange for the live broadcasting rights to the game. The acceptance of the investment led to major changes in all aspects of rugby league, influenced by recent, successful modifications to English football and the systems of management utilised in American professional sport.

The purpose of this chapter is to address the sixth objective of this study, which is to evaluate the extent to which the American model has been applied to British rugby league.

The first section examines the background to the changes, including the instigation through the following of football's lead, in renaming the first division and the sale of broadcasting rights to BSkyB. The influence of American sports on the governing body and the relationship between Australian and British rugby league are also noted. Secondly, the changes themselves are addressed in detail from the acceptance of the £87 million investment through to the start of the first Super League in March 1996.

Finally, the restructuring and repackaging that British rugby league embarked on will be discussed and the similarities and differences between the model and its actual application to rugby league are explored.

4.1 Context

The growing economic necessity within rugby league prompted a series of changes influenced and aided primarily by factors, external to the game. Advice regarding possible solutions to its financial position had been prescribed in the Framing the Future document but no action had been taken to turn its fortunes around.

The Rugby Football League looked firstly to football for its lead, which several years earlier had been in a similar position but since 1986 had witnessed a resurgence of interest and by 1995 was enjoying a period of great prosperity. For the top clubs, demand often exceeded supply and gates had risen from an all time low of 16,448,557 in 1985-86, to 21,865,020 by 1995. Although football began to witness a turn-around from 1986, rugby league looked to the changes that football had made since 1992 in the hope of emulating their success and encouraging supporters back to the grounds.

In August 1992, the football league re-named its top division, The Premier League, which coincided with the renewal of the sale of its broadcasting rights. The satellite company, BSkyB negotiated and won a £304million deal for the exclusive live coverage of the English Premiership (Cashmore, 1996), which served to help attract additional sponsorship and merchandising. The success of the changes in football acted as a fomenter for rugby league. When offered a similar deal of £87million over five-years from Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB in exchange for their television rights, the game accepted not only the investment but the major concessions it entailed.

The motives behind Murdoch's investment offer lie in the game of rugby league in Australia. His North American Company, Fox, had already acknowledged the benefits of buying up sports rights when they gained the National Football League in America.

Due to the growing escalation of the selling of sports rights, Murdoch wanted to use rugby league as a way of enticing subscribers away from his rival satellite channel in Australia, Optus Vision to provide a boost for his own cable company, Channel 9.

In order to do this he wanted to take control of domestic rugby league in Australia, the country's national sport, although both his rival television channel and the Australian Rugby League were currently owned by Kerry Packer. Murdoch decided if he could capture the rights in Britain and the other playing rugby league playing nations of the world, Australia would follow suite and the establishment of a world-wide sport, could significantly increase his subscribers.

After gaining control in Britain, he began by attempting to buy both clubs and players from the Australian Rugby League (ARL), which led to an acrimonious dispute between the game's governing body and the News Corporation. This led to a legal battle for control of the game, although in reality, it was a competition between two media magnates.

As the new sponsor of the British game, Rupert Murdoch wanted to improve the financial position of the game and so he sent the rugby league officials on a fact-finding mission to America. This was to help them gain further knowledge and understanding of how American professional sports operated as systematic and efficient businesses. The hope was that some of the systems and organisational structures used in their professional sports would be integrated into the British game to help improve its profitability.

Alterations to the game's structure and organisation have been made in order to emulate football's gate figures and revenue, in an attempt to ensure the sport's future survival. The following section addresses the actual changes and modifications made to the game in the hope of transforming rugby league from a traditionally northern, winter pastime into, what was hoped, a globally played, summer sport.

4.2 *The Restructuring and Repackaging of Rugby League*

The first change to rugby league followed football's 'Premier League' and the game renamed its first division, 'The Super League'. The final details were decided upon on 30th April 1995 at the Hilton Hotel in Huddersfield, which signalled the introduction of numerous changes in all aspects of rugby league.

Football's restructuring was mainly superficial in nature, with the only main change being to its name and the number of clubs in each division; however, rugby league went further in its reforms of the structure and organisation of its game. It actually restructured itself completely, introducing a three instead of two divisional structure for the first time since a brief spell in 1991-93.

The professional clubs were separated into three divisions, according to the finishing positions at the end of the 1994-95 season, which included a Premier Division of 12 teams. This was made up of the top ten placed teams in the First Division plus London, thereby guaranteeing a capital presence in the highest echelon and Paris, a new team which would make it a truly European Super League. There was also to be a First Division of eleven and a Second Division, which was to have originally consisted of eleven teams, although South Wales were admitted making the number twelve (Kelner, 1996).

Despite the inclusion of two new clubs, the new league operated with a smaller number of clubs in each division. This had been installed purposely to make the game more exciting by encouraging closer competition thereby increasing uncertainty not only in match outcome but also over the whole season. It also altered its championship structure with a top five play-off, to decide the Super League Champions.

Apart from the restructuring, the major concession and the biggest structural change forced upon rugby league was its transformation, after one hundred years of traditionally playing in winter, into a summer sport. The prime reason for the reversal to summer was so that the season could run concurrently with the Australian rugby league calendar, culminating in a World Club Challenge (Fletcher and Howes, 1997). This was mainly for the benefit of the television although the then Chief Executive of the Rugby Football League, Maurice Lindsay, dismissed this and commented that summer rugby would see fans flocking to games, played in better conditions.

Contrary to this however, there was a concern that the impact on demand for the sport could be of a negative nature. A greater range of leisure pursuits, are available during the summer months, which it was felt by many, would attract people and serve to persuade them away from rugby league. In addition, Moorhouse (1995) suggested the halting of the traditional winter programme of fixtures might also cause people to stop attending matches, as watching rugby league, for many supporters embodies not just a habit but a way of life.

Other radical changes both on and off the pitch where also employed, including nine rule changes. These where accompanied by the introduction of video referees for live games on BSkyB to adjudicate on line decisions, giant video screens at grounds and squad numbers, akin to those in the FA Carling Premiership (The Times, 29th March 1996).

In addition to these practical changes, rugby league went further than football and introduced concepts acquired from the organisational structure of major, American professional team sports, namely ice hockey, baseball, basketball and American football. Following their fact-finding tour to America, rugby league officials took on board what they had seen and tried to adopt the structures and principles, in an attempt to apply them to the game in England. Their sole aim was to shift towards a more profit maximising approach than at present. They wanted to stabilise the financial position of the league's member clubs while at the same time contributing to greater uncertainty of outcome in Super League competitions. The following section examines the components adopted from the American model and their application to the sport of rugby league.

4.3 The Application of the American Model to Rugby League

In restructuring, rugby league attempted to apply their game to an American framework in the hope of improving the financial position of the clubs. In America, the prime aim of the league is to maximise profit through the maintenance of competition between clubs. This is achieved most effectively through systems that have been devised to increase uncertainty of outcome by equalising the playing strengths of teams. To eradicate problems of imbalance, controls have been devised and imposed within both product and labour markets of leagues. To encourage balance, both financially and in terms of sporting competition between the members, market controls have been introduced. These include revenue sharing policies and the players' draft system in an attempt to prevent the gravitation of the best players to the top clubs resulting in a widening divide within the league.

However, in practice, the systems used in America have not been copied and transferred directly to rugby league. Several of the key components have been omitted and so instead of implementing the 'model' exactly, only certain constituents have been selected and those not considered suitable have been discarded. Its adaptation, without certain product and labour market controls will have obvious implications on its application to sport in this country.

This section examines elements accepted from American professional sports and applied to rugby league. It also highlights the aspects of the model not utilised and presents the difference between the two countries.

The first indication of an American influence in rugby league was the loss of traditional titles through the re-naming of individual clubs. Clubs added suffixes to their original titles to become the Rams, Hawks, Sharks or Wolves. Clubs like Bradford, previously known, as 'Northern' now became the Bradford Bulls, readily admitting their name change had been adopted from the successful USA basketball team, the Chicago Bulls.

However, the American influence went much further as British sports, including rugby league began selling their broadcasting rights in exchange for sizeable increases in revenue. Since the 1960's American sports had been exploiting television, becoming dependent on the revenue, it provided, and now this was becoming acceptable in Britain. The deal with BSkyB was worth much more to rugby league than the previous income they had received from the traditional terrestrial channels of BBC and ITV. It not only extended coverage of the game but also provided a crucial source of revenue.

The distribution of the £87 million from the television deal was the first instance in which rugby league failed to adapt precisely the measures used in American sport of the equal distribution of broadcasting revenue. The American model involves the equal distribution of all gate revenue and income from national broadcasting rights, although in Britain, revenue tends to be distributed according to divisional status.

The Rugby Football League decided that teams in the Super League would each be given £9000,000 a year, significantly more than those in the two lower divisions. Division One members gained between £200,000-£700,000 dependent on their league finishing positions at the end of the 1994-5 season and those in the second division received between £100,000-£135,000 (Kelner, 1996).

Due to the differences in league structure between American and Britain, sports leagues within the two countries lend themselves to differences in the distribution of revenue. Whereas leagues in America operate with only one division, in Britain a number of divisions make up the league. Owing to this, disparities occur not only with equality within a Super League, but also across all of the divisions. It is unclear whether the application of the American model was intended to increase just uncertainty of the Super League or for the game as a whole. However, it can be suggested from the distribution of the broadcasting revenue that the Super League was the primary concern of the governing body.

A similar pattern of revenue distribution was also evident with regards gate receipts. Originally the Rugby Football League placed a 6% levy on gate-takings from the top division clubs, which went into a central fund and were used as handouts for lower division clubs. However, in 1996 the Rugby League Council changed the voting rights of the clubs, so each, no longer had one representative on the governing board. Super League clubs were given four votes; first division clubs, two votes and second division clubs retained just one vote. This led to an increase in power for the top teams and a reversal of the 6% levy.

The Rugby Football League announced that there would be a 7½% claw back of revenue paid to all clubs, which would be utilised to pay appearance fees to clubs whose home matches were shown on television, as compensation for the disruption at their ground (League Express, 29th January 1996). This in effect was reversing the 'equalisation' process on the league as a whole, by taking money from all clubs to give it back to those in the Super League.

The lack of product market restrictions saw not only a failure by rugby league to integrate this component of the American model into the sport but also resulted in a split within the game. This helped to contribute to the eroding of restrictive controls for the equal distribution of funds, allowing a much freer market and proving advantageous to the clubs in the Super League. This led to Super League (Europe) Ltd. being launched, which became responsible for the financial planning and managing of Super League. In response, the clubs in the lower divisions formed their own organisation, The First and Second Division Association (FASDA), signalling a widening of the gap between the top and bottom clubs within the game.

In an attempt to offset this problem, the league proposed the merging of clubs, a control used in American sport to promote a more equally balanced league. The evolution of existing clubs through mergers was encouraged by the governing body to allow fewer clubs to make better use of limited resources available (Guardian, 31st August 1994). Additionally, franchises were also introduced, another idea taken from American sport, where they are regularly used to allow the movement of clubs to more potentially viable areas in terms of population density and hence revenue generation.

Within rugby league there were to many clubs in too small a catchment area and so proposals were put forward for new teams to be produced from the merging of existing clubs (Kelner, 1996). Castleford, Featherstone and Wakefield were to become Calder, the two Hull teams would make up a Humberside team, Cumbria would comprise Barrow, Workington, Whitehaven and Carlisle, with Sheffield and Doncaster becoming South Yorkshire and Salford and Oldham, Manchester.

However, the reaction of the fans was one of outrage and disharmony, with many demonstrating against the idea, believing the game was 'selling its soul' for money. In rugby league, a game very close to the communities in which it is played, teams are seen as a foci of community identification. This appeared a clear indication of the importance of non-economic, market factors to the game of rugby league, which resulted in the lack of any mergers taking place.

As Niwa (1973) stated,

> *'In a mobile, urban world where most people have few close, long standing ties, sport gives a sense of roots'.*

This is especially true of rugby league, but parallels can also be drawn with Manchester United's proposed take-over of BSkyB. This also met with a great deal of criticism as supporters felt traditional links between club and community would be destroyed. Despite the opposition to the mergers, franchise moves were introduced within rugby league. The governing body wanted to expand the game beyond its traditional, northern territories and so allowed teams from Paris and South Wales into the league, with Gateshead admitted in 1998.

One of the detrimental effects of the BSkyB investment, evident within football, had been the resultant polarisation of clubs at the top and bottom end of the league. This has contributed to a growing financial division within the industry, between the Premiership elite and the rest of the football league. Incomes of the largest teams had become vastly inflated with the differences between the average Premier League club and one in the first division, in the region of 16:1 (Mear and Hudson, 1998).

Wage rates had also risen dramatically, as average salaries for a regular first team player in the Premiership during 1996-97 earned an estimated £310,000, which had risen by the following year to £330,000 (Harverson, 1997c). The big clubs and their players were becoming increasingly rich, while many of the smaller clubs were struggling to continue.

The worry was that what happened in football would happen in rugby league and the smaller clubs, outside of the Super League would suffer financially, fail to survive and this would disturb the balance within the league.

In terms of player restrictions, the American system utilises a players' draft to distribute new playing talent between the teams rather than allow the gravitation of the best players to the already superior clubs. However, in Britain the retain and transfer system, still remains the preferred method of controlling labour movement between clubs in English rugby league. This means that once a contract has been signed, a player cannot leave the clubs until the contract expires, unless his employer is willing to release him and another club is willing to buy him. If this is the case, his employer retains his services until a transfer fee has been paid by his proposed 'new club', as compensation. This results very often in the richest clubs obtaining the best players and an obvious imbalance in terms of playing talent, thereby preventing equilibrium of the league being maintained.

For several years, the crux of the financial problems within rugby league was the over payment of players, a problem potentially heightened by the impact of the Bosman judgement. After a legal case in the European courts, the restriction of players via the retain and transfer system was ruled illegal due to a restraint of trade, similar to antitrust in America. The present system was failing to allow the facilitation of player movement in the search for better opportunities and higher earnings due to the expectant fee demanded by his employer when joining another club.

This has meant that clubs can no longer demand a transfer fee for out of contract players over the age of twenty-four, which has effectively produced a free market for labour. Clubs now have to compete for the services of playing staff and in order to obtain the best; many are willing to pay over and above what they can afford. This favours the wealthy clubs but also serves to raise players' salaries.

Additionally, in rugby league Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB has introduced 'loyalty payments'. These are remuneration payments to top players, for the retention of their services at certain clubs within the Super League competition. Any movement of a player under a loyalty contract from one club to another required the agreement of BSkyB before the transfer could go ahead. An example was the veto on Paul Newlove's transfer from Bradford, who eventually signed for St. Helens rather than Wigan, encouraged by BSkyB officials, in order to prevent further disparity within the league.

This demonstrates Murdoch's control over the labour market in terms of the distribution of talent. The power however, was provided, not by the league, acting as a cartel but by the broadcasting company, which provided the financial support for the game.

In order to combat the problems of over payment of players, the Rugby Football League installed a salary cap to prevent clubs from paying more than they could afford to attract and keep players. This was a measure to stop clubs committing themselves to unmanageable wage bills, which would help to stabilise the finances of clubs instead of them haemorrhaging money. It restricted players' salary bills proportionately to club income, so they could only spend 50% of their income on players' wages and other benefits, although there was no limit on what individual players could earn.

Therefore, although rugby league did adopt several components of the American model to its game, its partial implementation led to a lack of centralised control over the labour and product markets.

The restructuring was an attempt to follow the basis of American sports and try to raise uncertainty of outcome within the league by increasing the number of divisions in the game. In order to maintain this equilibrium, the clubs in American co-operate as a cartel, with each representative having equal voting rights. This has recently changed in British rugby league, allowing the bigger clubs greater power over the policies and processes used to regulate the league.

This shift is evident when examining the revenue sharing policies of the league. The Super League clubs appear unprepared to cross-subsidise by redistributing a proportion of their incomes to smaller clubs, having voted to revoke the levy on them, used to benefit lower league teams. Similarly with regards to the broadcasting contract with BSkyB, those clubs in Super League gained most of the television revenue. Although the game followed the American model by attempting to generate a large proportion of its income from the sale of its broadcasting rights, the implementation of its distribution policy led to an unequal sharing of investment.

Joint decisions are required by clubs in leagues to ensure that any financial disparity is reduced and playing talent is equally distributed to ensure greater competition and hence greater interest in the game.. Attempts were made to prevent the distribution of playing talent to the top clubs through the use of restrictive controls like the salary cap but the game failed to address the potential for disparity between clubs within the product market.

4.4 Conclusion

The investment from BSkyB proved to be the catalyst for major reforms in all aspects of rugby league, leading to the formation of a 'Super League'. The game was expanded into three divisions and saw the inclusion of 'non-traditional' clubs from London, Paris, South Wales and Gateshead. Rugby league also had live matches broadcast on satellite television for the first time, rather than on the terrestrial channels of BBC and ITV.

Other professional spectator sports in Britain like football and rugby union, have also introduced changes to their game's organisation. However, rugby league using the example set by football and the influence of American sport has seen the introduction of the first major changes for over one hundred years.

It is the only professional sport in Britain to attempt to adopt the American model of professional team sports to its game, which has seen the introduction of policies and structures not previously evident within British sport. Its implementation however has only been partial, although this is the closest that any non-American sport has come to integrating such a framework.

The model fails to be totally implemented due to a clear lack of revenue distributing policies or labour market controls in the form of the draft system. Additional non-market factors, not considered within American sport have resulted in a lack of clubs movement to areas of greater population viability, due to the potential 'social' damage to clubs. Therefore, due to the extent of the application, there may be differences with regards the predicted outcome on the game.

The following chapters will address not only the theoretical model behind the changes adopted in rugby league but will then examine the implications and significance of the new structure on the game. The short and long-term consequences of the primary modifications and those introduced during the first three years of Super League will be assessed plus the American model will be utilised, as a framework for analysis and discussion. The suitability of this model for British sport plus issues surrounding broadcasting demand and non-market effects on rugby league are also explored.

Chapter Five
Methodology

5.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology that is used in this study to examine the results of the experiment by the British sport of rugby league in applying the American professional team sports model to its game. The basis of the model as defined in Chapter 3 is that, by teams within a league co-operating as a cartel and applying restrictive practices to maintain the competitive balance, uncertainty of outcome within the league will rise. The predicted effect of this is that attendance will rise and ultimately league revenue will increase.

The Rugby Football League moved to a 'Super League' and restructured its game in the hope that it would improve the competitive balance within the league and raise interest levels, encouraging more spectators to attend matches. This in turn would result in increased revenue and help to alleviate the financial problems shared by the majority of clubs. This is the first time that a British team sport has attempted to adopt such a model, as neither cricket, rugby union nor indeed football has previously attempted this.

Within this thesis, economic and financial factors are both examined in addition to non-market considerations. These are utilised to explain any differences between professional sports in the two respective countries. Although the literature relating to these factors and their effect on sport is limited, it presents possible reasons for the differences and helps to assess whether non-market factors have any impact on the outcome of the application of the model.

Several different elements make up this research, which are reflected in the methodology of this study. Each element is addressed in turn, with the outcome of the application of the model to rugby league analysed within Chapter 10.

The application of the American model to rugby league will be examined using a five-strand approach. This will include:

- An examination of uncertainty of outcome to establish whether this has increased due to the restructuring in rugby league.

- An analysis of demand for the game in terms of attendance at live matches to determine whether, if uncertainty has increased, attendance has also increased.

- An analysis of changes in broadcasting demand for rugby league and the impact on network externalities and revenue generation.

- An analysis of the financial accounts of rugby league teams to determine whether the predicted outcome of the American model has been achieved in rugby league and revenue and profit have risen.

- Examine non-market effects on rugby league to establish whether these have had an effect on the outcome of the application of the model. Also to discover whether the expectations of stakeholders within the game matched the outcomes predicted by the American model.

The empirical work is carried out pre and post the introduction of the model to rugby league in order to establish whether the adoption of the model has resulted in raised uncertainty of outcome, a growth in attendance and increased revenue. As in America, the influence of broadcasting revenue has also risen dramatically and despite its limited inclusion in the literature, broadcasting demand will be examined within this study and the extent of the revenue available from this source explored.

Five major tasks have been utilised to assess the theoretical outcomes of this experiment. The first four examine the financial and economic situation of rugby league both before and after the move to Super League while the final strand addresses the social impact of the restructuring.

The first strand includes an examination of match results in the form of win/loss percentages over a season. This is carried out to analyse uncertainty of outcome within the game and to determine whether the new restructuring has resulted in increased uncertainty. It is accepted that uncertainty of outcome is one of the central features of analytical interest in the economics of team sports and crucial in increasing demand for a game (Cairns, Jennett and Sloane, 1986). Therefore, the rugby league authorities hoped that the re-structuring would result in increased uncertainty of outcome within the game in order to halt Wigan's domination and would ultimately serve to increase both attendance and revenue.

From uncertainty, we look to see the extent to which the changes introduced have affected demand for rugby league in terms of attendance and broadcasting figures. The restructuring effects are also examined to determine what other factors have contributed to the changes.

Within the fourth strand, the financial accounts of the rugby league pre-and post-Super League are examined, which includes financial case studies of five Super League and four non Super League clubs. These are analysed in order to assess whether the application of the American model to British rugby league has resulted in increased revenue as predicted in the literature. Additionally, the data will be used to determine whether the investment from BSkyB has allowed the game to solve its financial problems or whether this appears to have been just a short-term solution.

The final strand encompasses a social survey and semi-structured interviews administered to three stakeholder groups within rugby league, namely players, supporters and club officials. As the aim is to identify the effects of the Super League structure since its implementation in 1996, a longitudinal questionnaire, pre and post-Super League has been employed for the purpose of this study. An appropriate method used to test cause and affect relationships (Douglas and Blomfield, 1956; Heineman, 1996).

This chapter explains in detail the research techniques adopted by this study, including the influence of the theoretical framework provided by the literature review.

5.1 Uncertainty of Outcome

It is accepted that an increased uncertainty of outcome encourages more interest in league matches and therefore helps to raise revenue for the member clubs. It is also acknowledged that uncertainty of outcome will be higher in a profit maximising league as controls are used to try to ensure equality in playing strengths so profits are maximised for the league and its member clubs. Uncertainty of outcome is analysed in order to make an appropriate evaluation of whether the change from a utility model in rugby league to a more profit orientated, approach has resulted in an improvement in crowd figures and revenue.

In order to determine whether the competitive balance within the rugby league has increased, uncertainty of outcome in league games will be analysed. This study has used the basic approach suggested by Noll (1974), and applied by Scully (1974) and Quirk and Fort (1997).

The justification for this methodology lies in the fact that it allows for the use of short-term data, which was necessary due to the lack of subsequent seasons following the re-structuring. A greater number of playing seasons would have been required if regression analysis were to be carried out, which due to the nature of this study was unfeasible. As this is a longitudinal study, it has also been decided to use seasonal or long-term uncertainty, in order to establish whether the restructuring has served to increase the uncertainty of results.

In terms of analysis, the emphasis is on the dispersion or spread of Win/Loss (W/L) percentages in a league and the concentration of championships plus high W/L percentage among league teams. Where teams' W/L percentages are bunched around .500, the league displays a more competitive balance than in a league in which W/L percentages are widely dispersed. As the winning of championships and high W/L percentages among a few teams becomes more concentrated, the uncertainty of outcome within the league is reduced.

Noll (1974) and Scully (1974) agree that to measure the degree of competitiveness in a league is to compare the actual performance of a league to the performance that would have occurred if the league had the maximum degree of competitive balance. This is in the sense that all teams were equal in playing strengths.

Although the easiest way to carry out this measurement is to calculate the range of differences between the highest and the lowest W/L percentages in a league this only takes into account the two extremes. The method utilised in this research, adopted from Quirk and Fort (1997) takes account of every team within the sport of rugby league. This requires the difference between the team's W/L percentage for the season and the league average, which is taken as 0.500, to be calculated.

The difference is squared for each team and the sum of all the totals added together and divided by the number of individual observations to give the mean. The square root of the mean is then calculated to give the standard deviation for the distribution of W/L percentages for the season.

This, known as the realised value of standard deviation is then compared to the idealised standard deviation, which is dependent upon the number of league games, each team play throughout the season. The formula to calculate this, as described by the Noll-Scully approach is equal to:

$$(.5)/N$$

with N denoting the number of games in a season.

The ratio of realised standard deviation divided by the idealised standard deviation is then used to gain a result. If the uncertainty of outcome within a league is high, the ratio would be 1 therefore the closer to 1, the nearer the league is to perfect competitive balance (El Hodiri and Quirk, 1971). Quirk and Fort (1997) observe that for all the American sports leagues the ratio values shown differ significantly from the ideal value of 1. This demonstrates that no league in America has come close to attaining the goal of equality in competitive balance among teams.

For the purposes of this research, seasonal uncertainty for all leagues will be analysed from 1990-1999. In addition, the win/loss percentages for nine case study clubs are examined in greater detail to assess the impact of both league uncertainty and their own, on-field success. The clubs include five Super League clubs, Halifax, London, St. Helens, Sheffield Eagles and Wigan plus four non Super League clubs, Huddersfield, Hull Sharks, Leigh and York. This will determine the impact of restructuring into the Super League on uncertainty and will also examine whether a two or three divisional format has proved most successful in ensuring uncertainty within the game as a whole.

5.2 Demand for Rugby League

The second strand looks at the effects of any change in uncertainty of outcome on attendance. According to the American literature, the level of competitive balance within the league determines the demand for sport (Jones, 1969; Cairns, Jennett and Sloane, 1986).

The attendance analysis will examine firstly whether, if uncertainty of outcome has increased, has this resulted in an increase in spectator interest as predicted within the American model. If uncertainty has been reduced or remained constant, then according to the literature, an accompanying decline in attendance would be expected. Attendance will also be analysed in an attempt to determine whether the league has managed to extend its supporter base and expand beyond its traditional boundaries.

Analysis of any change in demand for rugby league will be carried out using both total and average league attendance figures for each division within the rugby league and the case study clubs. Attendance will be monitored both pre-and post-Super League, from 1990 to 1999, obtained from Rothmans Rugby League Yearbooks. Total attendance data for the league as a whole, examined from the beginning of the professional game, in 1895 to the present day are reproduced from original documents held within the Rugby Football League archives at Red Hall, Leeds.

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5.3 Broadcasting Demand

Conventionally, demand has been measured using live attendance, which is stimulated through increased uncertainty. As discussed in the literature, the increased influence of television on sports means that demand for sport can now also be considered in terms of broadcasting. However, a lack of theory to incorporate the determinants of broadcasting demand means that it has only been partially implemented into the American model and so there is no real framework available for its measurement.

The literature relating to the American model identifies that television has dramatically increased its coverage of sports events and the revenue it provides in return for the sports rights. The increase in revenue from the sale of broadcasting rights has been examined within this research, but is incorporated into Chapter 8, which deals with the changes in revenue and the financial situation of the rugby league.

One issue discussed within the literature, which is most relevant to British rugby league, is the shift from predominantly terrestrial televised sports coverage to satellite and pay-per-view television. This issue is excluded from the American literature, as it does not apply to their broadcasting system, where the major sports are covered by national television coverage.

The move to Super League instigated due to the financial investment from the Satellite Company, News Corporation Ltd, owners of BSkyB in Britain, saw the removal of rugby league from predominantly terrestrial television onto satellite channels.

In order to evaluate the effect of this on the social network externalities, the broadcast data for rugby league before and after the introduction of coverage by BSkyB will be examined. Boardman and Hargreaves-Heap (1999) identify network externalities as important due to the welfare benefits they provide. People like to not only watch a sporting event but also to discuss and talk about them. The more people who watch the event the better is the conversation. If a sport like rugby league is removed from nation wide audiences, then interest in the event could decline and hence the conversational benefits would also be reduced. In the long-term, this could have a detrimental impact not only on the supporter but also on the sport itself.

Rugby League audience figures will be investigated both from the BBC prior to 1996 and Sky Sports viewing figures since rugby league's inclusion onto the satellite station.

The primary data collection involved three days spent at the BBC's research department and one day at BSkyB. Audience figures and performance indicators for rugby league, football and rugby union were collated from 1992, through to 1999, utilising databases held within the television centres. Permission for this work to be carried out was gained from the Heads of Research at the two broadcasting companies, who allowed me the freedom of all the resources they held. This proved advantageous to the research as data not previously available within the public domain was acquired, providing the opportunity for a unique contribution to this study.

The data gained will show the impact of the move from terrestrial to satellite coverage on the game. This was produced by the British Audience Research Board (BARB) and obtained from the BBC's Information and Analysis Department and British Sky Broadcasting's Research Department.

It is recognised however, that this is an inappropriate method of determining any change in broadcasting demand pre-and post-Super League, due to the acknowledged difference in the number of those with access to the two channels. Approximately 54,418 million people have access to the BBC, whereas only 16.6 million have cable or satellite (BARB, 1997).

In order to try to overcome this problem, the audience data for Challenge Cup matches is utilised. This is the only rugby league competition, excluding international events, which has continually remained on the BBC and will be used to determine whether there has been any significant change in viewing since the move to a Super League structure.

After a two-year omission from the BBC, a rugby league highlights show has been screened in three BBC Northern regions. Audience figures obtained from the BBC Information and Analysis Department will be used to highlight any similarities and differences between the more recent data and that relating to games covered prior to the game's exclusion from the terrestrial broadcaster.

5.4 Revenue

The fourth strand is carried out to determine whether the restructuring of rugby league and the application of the American model to the sport has had the predicted effect of increasing revenue. As predicted in the literature by El Hodiri and Quirk (1971), if the application of the model has been successful then uncertainty and attendance will have risen within the game and gate receipts should also have increased.

The Rugby Football League has already cited the desperate financial situation of the majority of its member clubs, as the reason for accepting the BSkyB's investment. They hoped that the £87million would allow clubs to establish a secure long-term financial base.

Any change in the financial position of rugby league will be examined using primary data in the form of club accounts obtained from Companies House, Leeds, where each club is required to submit their financial report at the end of the financial year. This will involve the use of the case study clubs financial statements from 1990-1997/98, which will be analysed utilising the Wilkinson-Riddle and Barker Balance Sheet Analysis. The chapter is primarily concerned with whether the investment, has been successfully managed, to ensure a solid and long-term future base although the significance of the BSkyB investment both in the short and long-term is also addressed.

The main problem for clubs prior to 1996 was identified as the amount paid in terms of players' wages, often representing more than 100% of a club's income. In order to prevent clubs overspending on salaries, a labour market restriction was introduced in 1997 in the form of a salary cap, akin to that in America. The effect of this on rugby league will be discussed and an assessment of whether it has contributed to a reduction in player wages, will be carried out.

Revenue derived from both gate receipts and broadcasting will be examined to determine whether, broadcasting income now provides a greater proportion of the game's revenue than that derived via the turnstiles and the implications of this in the long-term.

Finally, the financial situation for the Rugby Football League as a whole will be examined using accounts obtained by kind permission from the Rugby League's Financial Director, Roy Waudby. It is expected that through analysis of the data, a clear picture will emerge regarding the impact that the investment from News Corporation has had on the game. Also considered will be whether or not, after the money has been withdrawn, the clubs will be in a position to survive independently without the present need for financial support from the game's governing body.

In addition to the economic analysis, the social effect of the change to a Super League accompanied by a shift to a summer season will also be investigated. As noted by Davies *et al* (1995) the demand for professional rugby league is a complex mix of strong cultural determinants and weaker economic influences. Therefore, within this study, non-market factors have been examined alongside those of an economic nature so that an appropriate model for British rugby league may be constructed.

5.5 Non-Market Effects

Chapter 9 of this study examines whether there has been any important non-market effects on the sport of rugby league, its clubs and the communities they represent due to the restructuring. The American model fails to incorporate non-market considerations and so this chapter aims to examine whether through the application of the American model, rugby league has omitted important considerations.

The predicted outcome of the model is for increased attendance and greater revenue generation. The non-market chapter also aims to determine whether the game's stakeholders, (club officials, players and supporters) had specific expectations over restructuring and how these expectations changed pre-and post-Super League.

A difficulty when investigating professional sports clubs' personnel is that the researcher may be regarded as a nuisance or seen as an intrusion into the everyday running of the club. Although some clubs were unwilling to be involved, this problem was to some extent overcome and minimised by my previous experience, working within the sport's professional ranks, and so nine professional clubs of the rugby league agreed to co-operate. These were used as case studies and included five members of Super League, St. Helens, Wigan, Sheffield Eagles, Halifax and London, plus four clubs who were not in the Super League, Leigh Centurions, York, Hull F. C. and Huddersfield.

The clubs were chosen primarily because of the favourable response when approached although in part this also involved snowball sampling, 'a reliance on previously identified members of a group to identify other members of the population' (Fink, 1995). Most of the clubs became involved through different contacts in the game, with Halifax and Huddersfield the only exceptions.

In order to establish the importance of non-market effects on the game, an appropriate social survey was utilised. This qualitative approach comprised of three separate questionnaires, each focusing on a different group within rugby league and was administered before and after the first Super League season. The sample size for the pre-Super League survey was 250, of which approximately 200 questionnaires were returned overall. The pre-Super League questionnaire responses were broken down into seventeen from club officials, sixty-four from players and one hundred and fifteen from supporters. This gave an eighty percent response rate, and although this is high for social research, it is explainable due to the highly emotive feelings surrounding the content of the survey, plus the work of the author within the game, at that time. Post Super League questionnaires gained a lower response rate, of the 250 distributed only sixteen club officials, sixty-one players and one hundred supporters responded.

The same case study clubs were involved in both the pre-and post-Super League, although this does not secure that the same sample was used for the second questionnaire.

The first pre-Super League questionnaire involved a subjective assessment by players towards the new structure and the second examined the attitudes of club officials, namely Chairmen, coaches and managers. The third survey examined the attitudes of club supporters to the changes. Due to the timing of the study, it was not possible to sample subjects at matches therefore instead supporters' clubs were approached, initially via a letter and then a follow up phone-call. All of those asked were very keen to participate, and help was also received from the Rugby League Supporters Association (RLSA) in contacting and questioning their members. Therefore, there was no problem in reaching supporters, who were sampled using a mailed questionnaire for convenience, and a SAE was provided for ease of return.

A social survey can be completely structured which utilises closed questions, where the respondent is offered a choice of alternative responses. This is known as a quantitative questionnaire. At the other end of the spectrum is a qualitative method, whereby the respondent is in conversation with the interviewer, who has no pre-set questions. The present social survey incorporates both a series of structured and pre-coded questions and more qualitative, open-ended questions. The technique of attitudinal scaling, a method frequently used in social surveys has also been adopted within the questionnaires, in an attempt to attain precise information regarding respondents' attitudes. An attitude is a tendency to act or react in a certain manner is reformed by beliefs and has an emotional compact that means they attract and evoke strong feelings.

Due to the new structure and the switch to summer rugby being a highly emotive issue at this time, as indicated by several demonstrations that took place among supporters, the Likert Scale method was utilised. Respondents were required to indicate on a five-point scale whether they Strongly Agree, Agree, are Uncertain, Disagree or Strongly Disagree about a series of statements.

The problems with attitudinal scales however are that people's opinions may not fit exactly within the scale. There is also a tendency for respondents to opt for 'uncertain' if they do not hold a strong opinion on the subject. The more neutral a position the person holds, the more it is likely for the respondent to defend their opinions with far less intensity. Whereas, the more extreme attitudes are usually held with much more vengeance (Oppenheim, 1992).

In an attempt to overcome this problem, open questions were also included as they give the respondent freedom to offer their opinion in their own words. Although this type of question is often difficult to analyse, a classification process known as coding was employed, this involved the devising of a coding frame, so that the results could be quantified with greater ease.

The questionnaire design was established after prior in-depth interviewing which allowed me to gain vivid expressions of general attitudes towards the subject. These were then used to develop statements for use on an attitudinal scale, within the questionnaire.

The first set of questions within the survey came under the title 'Restructuring rugby league' was the same on each of the three questionnaires. These offered pre-coded answers but also the opportunity for the respondent to add extra information if they wished. The players' questionnaire then probed further by asking if they had been consulted prior to the decisions being made, and if yes in what form did this take.

Section two concentrated on the investment in the game by BSkyB, the third area covered the geographical expansion of the game, both contained filter questions. Section four examined increasing the game's popularity via a series of attitudinal questions and also contained an open question used to try and gain a greater insight.

The next section was different for each questionnaire. The players were asked about their income from the game and the supporters and clubs concentrated on the income generated by the game as a whole. The final section addressed the future of the game and the individual's hopes for the future. Also included were factual questions regarding demographic information.

The first phase of sampling was undertaken in the three months prior to the beginning of the Super League season in March 1996. A visit was made to each club where the players and club official questionnaires were completed.

Alongside the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were also carried out with members of each sample. The advantage of this is that the interviewer can follow up ideas and probe further to investigate motives and feelings that the questionnaire cannot do. These in depth interviews were carried out on a one-to-one basis so as to avoid any contamination through copying or bias, which may occur with group administered interviewing. This also helped to build and maintain a rapport between respondent and interviewer.

As a guided interview, questions were set within a framework, but the respondent had sufficient time as required to respond. The indirect technique of 'association' was also utilised, which allowed the respondent to 'say the first thing that came into their head'. This helped to make the respondent less guarded and allowed for a very open interview, meaning the interviewee felt comfortable thereby revealing more.

Despite the interview being a highly subjective technique and the chance of interviewer bias influencing the respondent, the interview process was included because they can give a much greater insight into thoughts and attitudes than the questionnaire alone.

In terms of the classification of interview answers, a dictaphone was used to record the responses, so a full analysis was available, with only a small number of exceptions due to the respondents' unwillingness to be taped. In these instances responses and general attitudes were written down. These results have helped to aid in the development of an ethnography of the social networks of the rugby league.

The second phase of subsequent questionnaires and interviews were designed using feedback after the analysis of the first set of results. This was to ensure that questions were appropriate and continually updated to correspond with the rapidly changing environment within rugby league. This phase of sampling was carried out after the completion of the first Super League season, and all analysis was conducted using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and the statistical computer package, SPSS.

5.6 Conclusions

The economic, financial and social results will be analysed collectively in order to establish whether the American model, has been successfully applied to the British sport of rugby league. Each component of the model will be examined in order to determine whether the effects result in the predicted outcome of profit maximisation for the game.

The overall effect of the application of the American model on rugby league, the change to Super League and to a summer season will be addressed in both economic and non-market terms, in order to establish the most crucial components of demand for professional rugby league. Following the American model, analysis will concentrate on determining whether, by increasing uncertainty of outcome within the game of rugby league, attendance and revenue increase.

Chapter 6

Competitive Balance and Demand for Rugby League

6.0 Introduction

The crux of the American professional team sports model is uncertainty of outcome. On it rests the justification for the interdependence that exists between clubs and the use of product and labour market controls. When all teams are equally balanced in terms of playing strengths and the outcome of a result is uncertain, more supporters are encouraged to attend games thereby providing increased revenue.

As Quirk and Fort (1997) explain, the essential ingredient of the demand by fans for a team sport is the excitement generated because of uncertainty of outcome of league games. If teams become too strong or weak and the league becomes unbalanced then supporter interest begins to wane, eventually resulting in a decrease in revenue.

In 1996, rugby league modified its structure in order to halt the dominance of Wigan, encourage closer on-field competition between clubs, which it was hoped in turn would lead to a rise in attendance figures and ultimately revenue. This chapter reviews the performance of rugby league with respect to competitive balance and examines whether the restructuring of the game has served to increase uncertainty resulting in a rise in crowd figures. Four key issues are addressed:

1. Examine whether the restructuring of rugby league has resulted in increased uncertainty of outcome.
2. Analyse whether, if uncertainty of outcome has increased as predicted by the American model, demand in the form of attendance at live matches has also increased.
3. Analyse the changes in uncertainty and attendance to determine whether restructuring has resulted in any divisional differences within the game.

4. Attempt to determine whether restructuring has resulted in a significant difference between Super League and non-Super League clubs in terms of demand.

In order to determine whether uncertainty of outcome is an important demand determinant for the sport of rugby league in Britain, seasonal uncertainty of outcome has been calculated for every division within the rugby league since 1990. Implications of the different divisional structures applied to the sport will be assessed and any change in uncertainty due to alterations in the number of fixtures or clubs involved is also examined.

It should be noted when analysing these results that the structure of British sports leagues are different from those in America due to their multiple divisional structures. The application of the American model to British professional rugby league has been with the sole purpose of improving uncertainty of outcome and raising revenue within the top division, which is deemed to be of the greatest importance.

Lastly, analysis of attendance figures is carried out, utilising both total and average attendance figures for the League as a whole and the case study clubs, since 1990. This is conducted to reveal if the positively correlated relationship between uncertainty of outcome and attendance, as highlighted in the literature, is evident in the sport of professional rugby league.

6.1 Uncertainty of Outcome

Prior to 1973, rugby league's fixture pattern was a single divisional structure. However, in response to declining attendances, the league structure was altered to a two divisional format, which apart from minor amendments survived until 1991 (Davies *et al*, 1995). Wigan Rugby League Club's dominance since the late 1980's, which continued into the 1990's, led the Rugby Football League to toy with both two and three divisional structures, from 1990. This was in an attempt to find the most efficient way of organising its clubs into a competitive league structure, which would encourage close competition and raise uncertainty of outcome. Ultimately this would help to encourage supporters back to the grounds and raise revenue for the clubs, many of which had severe financial problems.

Uncertainty of outcome has a number of facets and there are various ways to measure competitive balance within a league. In what follows, seasonal uncertainty is presented following the approach suggested by Noll (1974) and Scully (1974) in the previous chapter. The analysis begins with a look at the dispersion of win/loss percentages, for each division since 1990. It then goes on to assess the standard deviation of win/loss percentages to give a more accurate assessment of competitive balance within rugby league.

6.1.1 Dispersion of Win/Loss Percentages

The simplest method of determining competitive balance is by calculating the dispersion range within a league. The dispersion range relates to the difference between the highest and lowest win/loss percentage of clubs within each division. The lower the dispersion figure, the more balanced the clubs are and the higher the uncertainty of outcome. By calculating the average range for each division, the dispersion range for the league as a whole can be attained. From this, comparisons are made to determine whether the new structure, in the case of rugby league has led to a more competitive league.

Table 6.1 covers the period from 1990-1999, indicating dispersion levels for each division within the league.

The results indicate that rugby league as a whole demonstrated the greatest uncertainty of outcome in season 1999, when a two divisional structure was introduced. Although the same structure was in operation during 1990-91, this season recorded the lowest uncertainty between clubs. Apart from 1990-91, the highest average range came in 1996, the first season of Super League.

Table 6.1 – Average Range of Win/Loss Percentages

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Super League	793	731	531	698	761	700	814	719	826	666
Division 1	892	624	649	752	788	795	789	747	559	660
Division 2	0	885	833	0	0	900	864	650	611	0
Average	843	747	671	725	775	798	822	705	665	663

Since then, the dispersion of the league has declined with the last two Super League seasons recording very low ranges, suggesting an improvement in competitive balance.

Although from the results of the dispersion there does not appear to be any real pattern emerging, we can take this one step further and concentrate on, and examine pre and post Super League ranges. By taking average readings for the 6 years pre and 4 years post the start of Super League, we find that uncertainty has improved over this period.

Table 6.2 – Win/Loss Range Pre and Post Super League

	Win/Loss Range (Average) 1990-1996	*Win/Loss Range (Average) 1996-1999*
Super League	702	756
Division 1	750	689
Division 2	873	708
Average	775	659

Table 6.2 demonstrates the overall rise in uncertainty for the rugby league since the start of Super League, with an average range of 775 from 1990-96 and 659 for the four years from 1996. The dispersion range for both Division 1 and Division 2 have reduced slightly, but Super League has increased, resulting in a higher average range, post Super League. This signifies a decrease in uncertainty of outcome during the four Super League seasons and a reduction in the competitive balance of the league.

If we look in greater detail at the range of win/loss percentages, we can indicate clear differences by observing the individual divisions. In addition, any relationship between the number of divisions, matches and clubs and any change in uncertainty can be assessed.

For Super League, there were relatively low ranges between 1992 until 1994, with each average range below 700, with 1996 and 1998 the years with the highest dispersion. Only in 1999, has the range reduced considerably, accompanied by a reversal back to two divisions.

Similarly, Division 1 in the second part of the 1990's indicated low competitive balance, with a considerable reduction in dispersion ranges during seasons, 1998 and 1999. The change back to two divisions in 1999 saw an increase in the win/loss percentage range, although this was only slight. Division 3, perhaps surprisingly, although very high in 1996, displayed the lowest ranges during 1997 and 1998, since the start of the 1990's.

However, although simple, this is not the most precise way of analysing uncertainty within a league. Not all of the clubs in a division are taken into account, with only the top and bottom placed teams used in the calculations. Therefore, in order to ensure greater accuracy of results and incorporate all clubs in the equation, the adopted procedure utilised the standard deviation of win/loss percentage distribution. This is used to examine seasonal uncertainty of outcome for each division and the league as a whole.

6.1.2 Standard Deviation of the Distribution of Win/Loss Percentages

Following the results from the dispersion range of each division, the outcomes from the actual standard deviation are examined to gain a more accurate analysis of uncertainty of outcome within British professional rugby league.

Table 6.3 – Idealised Standard Deviation of Win/Loss Percentage

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Super League	98	98	98	91	91	112	107	107	104	91
Division 1	95	95	95	91	91	112	112	112	91	95
Division 2	-	98	102	-	-	112	107	112	112	-

An interpretation of results requires an understanding that the actual standard deviation gives a figure representing the actual measure gained from the data. The idealised standard deviation figures shown in Table 6.3 reflect increased or decreased changes over time in the number of league games scheduled per team. For example, the table shows how Division 2 moved from a 26 game schedule in 1991-92 to a 24 game schedule the following year. When a three divisional structure was reintroduced in 1995-96 after a two-year absence, the season was then reduced to 20 games.

The significance of this is that as Quirk and Fort's 1997 work on American professional sports found, the more games in a league season, the smaller the dispersion range and the higher uncertainty of outcome tends to be. The results gained from this study compare favourably with this theory, if we equate the average range and number of games per season, overall the range and standard deviation is less when there are more games.

Table 6.4 provides the competitive balance measure for all divisions in the form of the ratio, average actual standard deviation divided by the idealised standard deviation for a league.

Table 6.4 – Standard Deviation of Win/Loss Percentages within the League

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Super League	2.00	1.61	1.61	2.05	2.40	1.67	2.38	2.02	2.28	2.81
Division 1	2.52	2.34	2.24	2.63	2.29	1.93	2.14	1.85	2.02	2.20
Division 2	-	2.81	2.66	-	-	2.18	2.43	2.13	2.00	-
Average	2.26	2.25	2.17	2.34	2.35	1.93	2.32	2.00	2.10	2.51

The closer is the ratio of actual to idealised standard deviation to 1; the more competitive balance exists in the league. The results gained for rugby league show that the values vary between a high of 2.81 for Super League in 1999 and a low of 1.61 for Super League from 1991-1993.

A general observation is that for all divisions within the league, the ratio values differ significantly from the ideal value of 1. This applies for all divisions in each year and hence the overall average. In no year has the league or any division come close to attaining equality between the playing strengths of teams.

Based on the empirical data, years 1995-6 and 1997 show up as the years with most competitive balance, while 1999 and 1994-95 seasons had the least competitive balance. This is partly supported by dispersion analysis in terms of most competitive balance, with 1997 also having a relatively low dispersion range, although 1995-96 displays a relatively high dispersion range. The figures for those with the least competitive balance also differ notably.

A factor significantly affecting the uncertainty of outcome ratio as indicated by Dobson *et al* (1999) appears to be the very structure of the leagues. This defines the number of divisions, number of teams in each division and the number of meetings between each pair of teams. This is supported by Fort and Quirk (1997) who found that the number of divisions within a league appears to be an important contributing factor to the maintenance of competitive balance.

Burkitt and Cameron argued in their 1992 paper regarding the restructuring of rugby league in 1973 that a change from a single division to two divisions has changed the nature of the product being offered. This is because it increases the number of competitive fixtures, as games are not only relevant to the championship but also those affecting promotion and relegation.

A divisional pattern of fixtures therefore, serves to reduce the number of games where the outcomes are regarded as certain. In following this, we would expect uncertainty of outcome over two divisions to increase further when three divisions are introduced.

When we apply this to the results gained in this study however, we find that in practice the change in the number of divisions does not correspond to the theory. Of the four years that the league was organised into two divisions, 1990-91 saw a relatively high uncertainty of outcome, but there was no clear distinction between them and the seasons with three divisions.

It is to be expected that due to the increased chance of promotion and relegation, the three divisions would provide greater competitive balance, but this does not appear to be the case. Furthermore, neither, the number of teams nor the number of matches scheduled per season seems to have any obvious consequence on uncertainty within the league.

6.1.3 Divisional Win/Loss Percentages

These results are then examined further by breaking down the competition into its individual divisions. In Super League, from 1990 there had been a clear rising trend in the ratios, showing a move towards a less competitive balance within the division. This is not really surprising due to Wigan's dominance over the same period. Between 1988 and 1995, they were the most successful team in English rugby league winning the first division championship six times in a row and the Challenge Cup eight times in succession. They had regular season records (Win-Draw-Loss) of 20-0-6 (1990-91), 22-0-4 (1991-92), 20-1-5 (1992-93), 23-0-7 (1993-94), 28-0-2 (1994-95) and 18-0-2 (1995-96).

Season 1991-92 saw the uncertainty of outcome fall significantly as a three divisional structure was introduced this remained the same during the following season and then dropped marginally with the re-introduction of two divisions in 1993-94.

Season 1994-1995 however saw a dramatic fall in competitive balance as Wigan only lost two games all season. The previous year, Wigan only won the championship on points sharing their win/loss % record with two other clubs, Bradford and Warrington, which also lost seven games. This is compounded further by the dispersion ranges, which increased from 531 in 1992-93 to 761 in 1994-5, an increase in average range of 230.

The four following years from the Centenary season until 1999 saw a decline and then a continuing rise in equality between teams, although season 1999 returned to a two division league and showed signs of a return to reduced uncertainty.

Division 1 had a very poor competitive balance in 1990-91. The following season saw the introduction of three divisions, which saw increased uncertainty of outcome in Division 1 accompanied by a higher level of uncertainty in the new division 2. Despite the structure remaining the same, 1992-93 saw a reduction in uncertainty of outcome in both divisions 1 and 2.

The Rugby Football League then reverted back to a two divisional structure, which saw a decline in uncertainty in both divisions consisting of 16 teams, due to the reduction in the number of promotion and relegation battles.

For the next season, the balance within the divisions remained stable but a reversal to three divisions led to a dramatic rise in competitive balance in 1995 although this declined further in 1996. Since the start of the Super League structure in 1996, the uncertainty has declined slightly although 1997 saw a rise in uncertainty for both divisions one and two.

From this data, there appears no meaningful divisional difference between uncertainty of outcome before and after the introduction of Super League. In order to gain a clearer picture of the impact of restructuring, further assessment is required.

If we look at the competitive balance in terms of each individual division and the league as a whole, over the nine-year period, we find a more unambiguous result. Pre and post-Super League averages are utilised to show that for each division, there has been an identifiable change since the start of the Super League structure. Table 6.5 shows the average standard deviation for the six years pre and six years post, Super League.

Table 6.5 Average Standard Deviation, Pre and Post Super League

	1990-1995/96 (average)	1996-1999 (average)	Difference
Super League	1.89	2.37	+ 0.48
Division 1	2.33	2.05	- 0.28
Division 2	2.55	2.19	- 0.36
Average for the League	2.22	2.23	+ 0.01

The first six seasons from 1990-1995/96 saw Super League exhibit a much lower level of uncertainty than both Division 1 and Division 2, although from the start of Super League there is a reversal of this trend. By examining the average standard deviation for the six years pre and four years post the introduction of Super League, we can see that Super League has decreased in competitive balance and Division 1 and Division 2 have improved.

There appeared no real significant difference between uncertainty, pre and post Super League's introduction, using a divisional breakdown of win/loss percentage and the average ratios of 2.22 and 2.23 demonstrate that there has in fact been little change in uncertainty of outcome since the restructuring in 1996.

Table 6.6 illustrates the average data for each division pre and post-Super League. The following considers in greater detail the differences between Super League years in terms of competitive balance. It shows the change in ratio and the difference between ratios for each division in each season.

The first Super League season, 1996 saw the introduction of two new teams, Paris St. Germain and South Wales. Although every division recorded an increase from the previous season, indicating a fall in competitive balance, the biggest change in ratio was found in the two divisions where the new teams were introduced.

This year signalled the start of rugby league's expansion policy, trying to locate clubs in cities, not traditionally known for having a rugby league team. The decline in competitive balance during this season may be due to this expansionist policy.

As Quirk and Fort (1997) explained, expansion in relation to the American League (AL) and the National League (NL) in American Football usually reduced competitive balance. Periods of expansion tend to see weaker teams with low win/loss records and high dispersion ranges. Usually, the very weak win/loss records of expansion teams are matched by unusually strong win/loss records for existing teams during a period of expansion, both of which act to increase dispersion of win/loss percentages in the league. This appears consistent in relation to the Super League, with the inclusion of the two new teams.

Table 6.6 Uncertainty of Outcome – Pre and Post Super League

	1995-96	1996	1997	1998	1999
Super League	1.67	2.38	2.02	2.28□	2.87□
Difference		*+ 0.71**	*- 0.36*	*+ 0.26*	*+ 0.53*
Division 1	1.93	2.14	1.85	2.02	2.20
Difference		*+ 0.21*	*-0.29*	*+0.17*	*+ 0.18*
Division 2	2.18	2.43**	2.13♣	2.00□	-
Difference		*+ 0.25*	*-0.30*	*- 0.13*	-

*Includes Paris St. Germain

** Includes South Wales ♣ Withdrawal of South Wales

□ Introduction of Gateshead Thunder

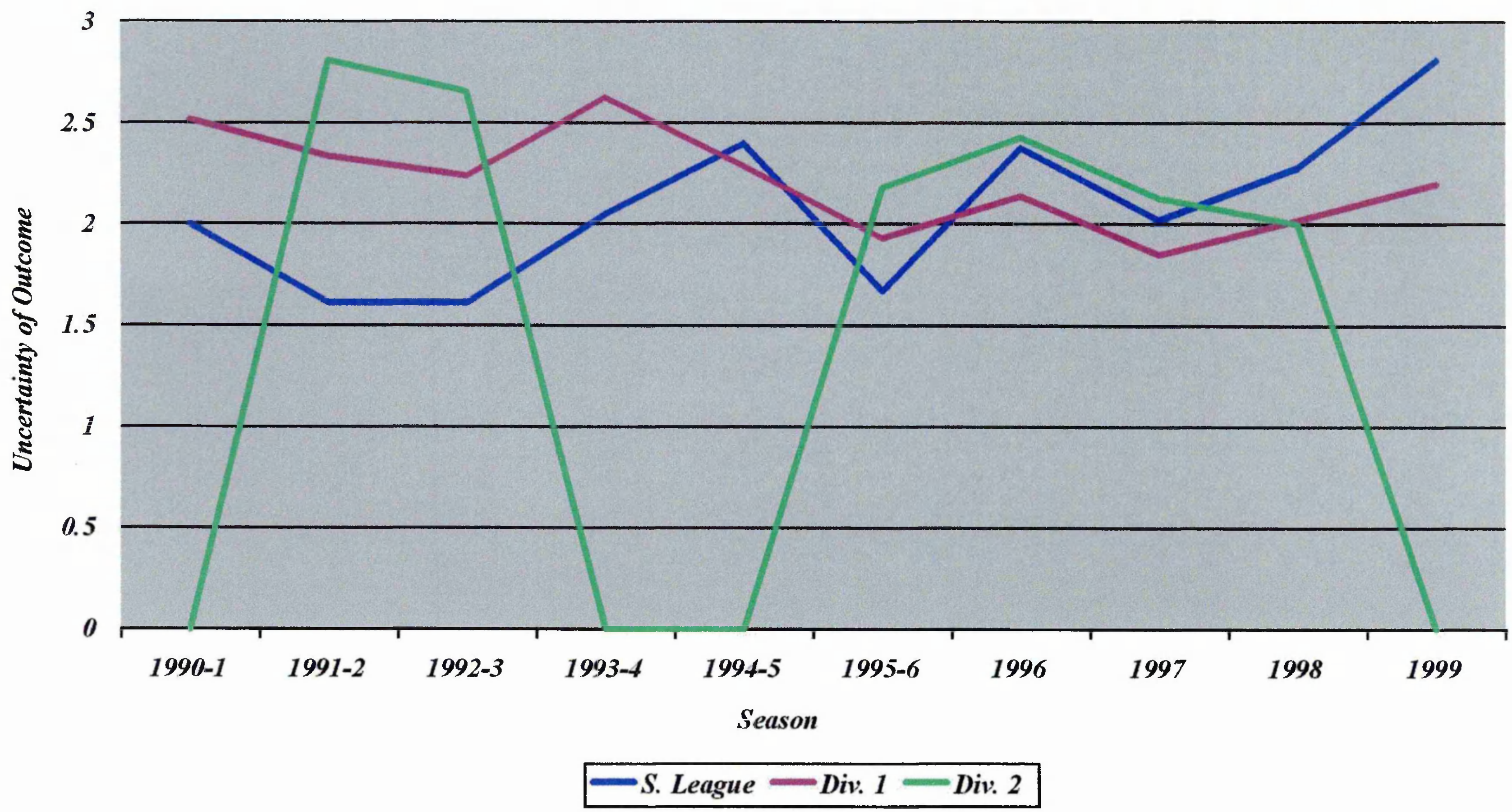
□ Withdrawal of Paris St. Germain, Prescot Panthers and Carlisle

The data is displayed in graphical form (Graph 6.1) to show the unstable nature of uncertainty of outcome within professional rugby league. The decline in uncertainty for all Divisions in 1996 saw an immediate rise the following season, while the next year only one division recorded an increase in their competitive balance. A decline in the ratio for Super League suggests that uncertainty has increased, due probably to the relegation of Workington Town at the end of the previous season. The team had won only two out of their twenty-two games, amassing only four points, serving to reduce the uncertainty of the division.

For Division 2, the withdrawal of South Wales after only one season saw a large increase in uncertainty and competitive balance in 1997, despite them not finishing bottom of the league. The promotion of Hull Kingston Rovers at the end of the first Super League season into Division 1 had also contributed to reduced uncertainty. The team has dominated the second division the previous year losing on only one occasion.

The third season of summer rugby saw the Super League increased from 12 to 14 teams. Despite the withdrawal of Paris, two teams, Hull Sharks and Huddersfield Giants where promoted in order to increase the fixture programme. However, both teams finished second from bottom and last respectively, thereby serving to reduce the competitive balance of the division, a fact supported by the dispersion figures.

Graph 6.1 Divisional Changes in Uncertainty of Outcome 1990-1999



Despite the promotion of the two sides into Super League, uncertainty of outcome within Division 1 still declined. However, the resumption of competition without Prescot Panthers, the team that had propped up the rugby league for several seasons, helped to increase the balance within the second division. The first merger also took place between Carlisle and Barrow, to form a new team Barrow Border Raiders.

Another possible contributing factor to the increased uncertainty within the second division was the introduction of the Red and White Rose Championships. Teams played each other home and away, with the league then divided into two mini leagues on a regional basis. This involved four teams from Lancashire and four from Yorkshire, the winners meeting in the Roses Championship Final. This may well have helped enhance the balance within the division, as Dobson *et al* (1999) noted, 'Regionalisation of lower divisions emerges as a positive recommendation in order to maintain competitive balance'.

The reduction in the number of clubs in the league from 34 to 31 in 1998 raised concern from the Rugby Football League over the small number of fixtures arising from reduced divisional sizes. They were aware that producing too many matches in which the result was predictable would result in a loss of genuine competitiveness between professional clubs (Thomas, 1997).

Due to this, in 1999 the number of matches played by every team in the Super League increased to 30 from 23 the previous year. The inclusion of a new franchise, Gateshead Thunder, into the Super League and the re-introduction of two divisions were an attempt to solve the problem of a limited number of fixtures. This only served to reduce uncertainty in Super League and Division 1's balance was also reduced from the previous season.

The number of fixtures in the second division was also increased from 24 matches in 1998 to 28 in 1999. This meant that every team played its rivals once and then played ten of the teams again. The regime was adopted in the hope of increasing uncertainty of outcome and coming closer to an optimal revenue maximisation strategy. The fixtures for both divisions were dependent on finishing position the previous season, which for example meant that in Super League, Wigan played the two bottom sides, three times.

This may well have impacted upon the competitive balance within each division. According to Dobson *et al* (1999), generally leagues comprising fewer divisions with more teams in each are more egalitarian than those divided into a larger number of smaller divisions.

However, in this instance, this does not appear to be the case, as the reduction in uncertainty within the lower division may be due to the smaller clubs playing opposition of a higher average standard. The merging of Divisions 1 and 2 meant that the range of playing strengths between teams was increased, resulting in a vast difference in terms of on-field performance and hence a reduction in competitive balance.

6.2 Competitive Balance and Demand for Professional Rugby League

Despite Wigan's dominance having been diluted since the introduction of the Super League system in 1996, winning only one championship in four since the start of the new regime, overall uncertainty of outcome within the game appears to have declined. Both the win/loss dispersion figures and the standard deviation data from the league illustrate this fact. In relation to the American model, we would assume that interest in the game through those attending matches, would also have decreased.

In the long-term, uncertainty needs to remain high in order to maintain fans' interest in the game. If the competition becomes stale and too predictable, then support may diminish.

Reduction in uncertainty has been identified as an element that serves to reduce attendance and demand for the sport. Therefore, match attendance figures have been assessed in order to determine the link between uncertainty of outcome and attendance within the professional game of rugby league. In addition, attendance figures have been examined and analysed so that the extent of the game's popularity and the spectator demand over the period since 1990 can be established. Finally, an attempt will be made to determine whether the new three divisional structure has, as hoped made the product more attractive and so reversed or at least reduced the trend of steadily declining gate figures.

6.3 *Attendance Analysis*

As already established, overall uncertainty of outcome within rugby league has declined since restructuring. In accordance with the American model, we would then expect attendance also to have reduced. The following section will firstly examine the game as a whole, assessing both total and average attendance figures. A divisional breakdown will also be included and an examination of pre and post Super League attendance. Lastly, a closer examination of the case study clubs will be made in relation to their attendance records over the ten-year period from 1990-1999.

6.3.1 *Total Attendance Analysis*

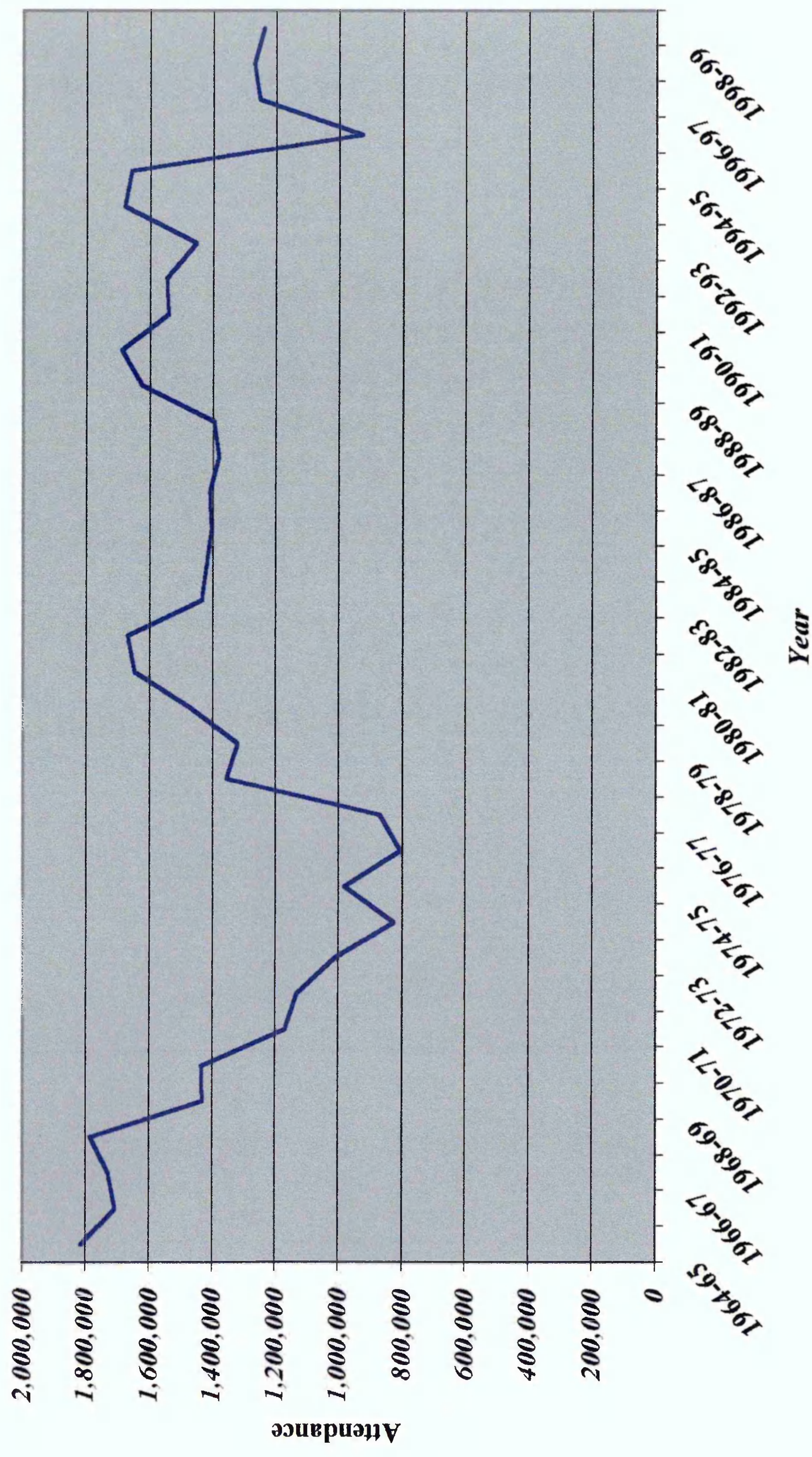
An examination of the total attendance figures for the rugby league since the 1960's as presented in Graph 6.2, shows the decrease from 1964 into the early 1970's.

Despite an upswing from 1977, that continued into the early 1980's, the overall trend has been one of declining attendance. The actual figures since 1990 as indicated in Table 6.7, show that for the season 1995-96 onwards, total attendance has been greatly reduced from those in the previous five seasons.

Table 6.7 Total Attendance Figures – 1990-1999

Year	Total Attendance
1990-1	1,539,805
1991-2	1,548,630
1992-3	1,451,372
1993-4	1,679,897
1994-5	1,658,915
1995-6	928,632
1996	1,241,643
1997	1,269,786
1998	1,239,573
1999	1,639,254

Graph 6.2 Total Attendance Figures for the Rugby League - 1964-1999



The total attendance figures for rugby league, since the start of Super League have decreased. Apart from 1995-96, which was a truncated system due to the introduction of the summer season in 1996, only 1999 attendances have reached those seen in the early 1990's of over 1,500,000. However, apart from the last season to date, it appears that fewer people have been watching professional rugby league than did so before the introduction of Super League. In relation to uncertainty of outcome, this is consistent with the predicted outcome of the American model.

The dramatic rise in total attendance recorded for the 1999 season, with an increase of nearly 400,000 on the previous year was in part due to the change in divisional structure and the number of fixtures scheduled for each team. Table 6.8 presents the change in the total number of matches played within each season. This serves to alter the number of potential matches supporters can attend and thereby changes the perceived demand for the game.

Table 6.8 Changes to the Number of Total Fixtures Played

1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
476	476	450	480	480	330	374	352	377	462

As already identified large changes in total attendance may be due to an increase or decrease in the number of fixtures scheduled within a season. However if we examine two corresponding years in terms of league structure, namely 1993-4 and 1999, when both had a two divisional competitive structure, playing 480 games, the total attendances are different. Season 1993-94 had a higher number of supporters attending games, 1,679,897 than in 1999.

6.3.2 Average Attendance Analysis

In order to try to establish a more precise overview of the demand for live games of rugby league; the average attendance figures were calculated for each season.

Table 6.9 Average Attendance Figures – 1990-1999

1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
3,235	3,253	3,225	3,499	3,456	2,814	3,320	3,607	3,288	3,548

The highest average attendance of 3,607 recorded within the ten-year period since 1990 was in 1997, with the lowest, 2,814 in the Centenary season of 1995-96. The 1999 season recorded the second highest average attendance suggesting that the move to Super League had in fact helped to encourage more supporters to attend rugby league matches. However, overall there has not been any dramatic rise in attendance figures, as hoped and predicted by the Rugby Football League.

This can then be taken one step further by examining the average attendances for seasons, pre and post-Super League to see if there has been any significant difference between them.

Table 6.10 Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League seasons

Season	Total Attendance	Average per game
Pre Super League - 1990-1996	8,807,251	3,272
Post Super League – 1996-1999	5,390,256	3,444

Table 6.10 serves as a further way of assessing the impact of the change to Super League on demand for the game. On average more people watched rugby league in the seasons after the introduction of Super League than attended from 1990 to 1996. This implies that the game is gaining rather than losing support, although again, this increase in average attendance only corresponds to a further 172 supporters per match. In reality, this offers little encouragement for the potential inclusion of new franchises and further expansion for the game. In terms of the American model and its implications for rugby league, it appears that rugby league has failed to either increase uncertainty or attendance.

In order to examine further the implications of the new structure, the following section will address the demand for each individual division within the rugby league. Super

League, Division 1 and Division 2 will all be examined both pre and post 1996. This is in an attempt to try to establish whether the modifications to the game have resulted in a divide between the top flight, full time professional clubs and the lower divisions in terms of supporter demand.

6.4 Divisional Analysis of Attendance Figures

Having analysed the demand for rugby league in a broad sense, examining the league as a whole, a more detailed study of demand involves focusing on the individual divisions. This microanalysis will then proceed to identify any significant differences between the seasons and attempt to assess the impact that the Super League structure has had on the clubs themselves, utilising the case study clubs.

6.4.1 Super League – Attendance Analysis

The first division in rugby league, later renamed Super League under the new restructuring has seen its total attendance decline since the Centenary season. The highest figure of 1,364,056 in 1993-93 was reduced to 606,728 in 1995-96, with total attendance not returning to over 1,000,000 until 1999.

Table 6.11 Total Attendance Figures for Super League – 1990-1999

Year	Total Attendance
1990-91	1,168,407
1991-92	1,185,117
1992-93	1,122,955
1993-94	1,364,056
1994-95	1,330,538
1995-96	606,728
1996	863,978
1997	916,005
1998	910,912
1999	1,317,765

Attendance figures recorded during the period 1995-1998 were lower than in the preceding five years, although attendance increased dramatically in 1999, up 406,853 on the previous season. This could be attributed to the increase in the number of fixtures or due to the reversal back to a two divisional structure. The three seasons with the highest attendance were all seasons in which the league was organised into two divisions, namely 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1999. This suggests that this structure lends itself to higher demand for the top division, possibly due to a reduction of competition within the second division.

Taking into account the rise in the number of fixtures, the average attendance for the Super League is examined for each season 1990-1999 to give a clearer indication of any changes in demand. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, despite low totals, average attendance in both 1996, 97 and 98 are higher than in any other year during the ten-year period, with averages of 6,545, 6,939 and 6,901 respectively. The increase in the number of matches in 1999 led to a slight reduction in support, a decrease of 626 from the previous season.

Table 6.12 Average Attendance Figures for Super League 1990-1999

Year	Average Attendance
1990-91	6,420
1991-92	6,511
1992-93	6,170
1993-94	5,683
1994-95	5,543
1995-96	5,515
1996	6,545
1997	6,939
1998	6,901
1999	6,275

Overall, average attendance for the Super League has increased since the start of 1996 and the summer season. A clearer picture of the average improvement since the restructuring is shown by examining the aggregate figures calculated for the seven years pre and four years post the introduction of Super League. Table 6.13 clarifies the differences between the two periods and clearly shows how far the restructuring and the move to a summer season have encouraged more spectators to attend matches between clubs in the Super League.

However, the rise in attendance has been minimal, equating to an increase of only 649 spectators, on average per game. The extent of the improvement in support at live matches was not as high as had been hoped by the Rugby Football League before the start of the season and the dramatic escalation in support, predicted had not materialised.

Following the theoretical framework of the American model, it is expected that the divisional decrease in uncertainty of outcome would be accompanied by a decline in attendance. The rise although negligible can be partly attributed to the success of a small number of individual clubs, which through proactive marketing and publicity campaigns witnessed thriving support.

Table 6.13 Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	1996-1999
Total Attendance	6,777,801	4,008,660
Number of Games	1,136	606
Average Attendance	5,966	6,615

The emergence of the Super League years as the most favourable in terms of encouraging demand for the game can be analysed further to determine the actual clubs, which have benefited the most from the changes. For ease of analysis, the nine clubs that have remained in the Super League for the four seasons since its evolution are utilised. Tables 6.14 and 6.15 contain average attendance data for Super League clubs, including individual clubs pre and post 1996.

From the results, it appears that five out of the nine clubs have increased their attendance since their inclusion into the Super League. Bradford Bulls recorded the most dramatic strengthening of support, more than doubling their gate figures. Conversely, Wigan whose seven-year winning run ended in 1996, with St. Helens claiming the first Super League Championship also witnessed the largest decline in attendance from 14,062 to 9,629.

Table 6.14 Pre and Post Super League Average Attendance for Individual Clubs

	Pre Super League – 1990-1996	Post Super League – 1996-1999
Bradford Bulls	5,309	12,935
Castleford Tigers	5,477	5,817
Halifax Blue Sox	5,869	5,105
Leeds Rhinos	11,408	11,173
London Broncos	877	4,237
St. Helens	7,748	8,550
Sheffield Eagles	3,039	4,045
Warrington Wolves	5,360	5,118
Wigan Warriors	14,062	9,629

However, the following table shows that overall most of the Super League clubs have witnessed a decline in attendance figures over the period from 1996 to 1999. Only three clubs recorded an increase in percentage change, which outweighed the less successful. Over the four-year period, Leeds have recorded the greatest increase in support from 8,581 in 1996 to 13,482 in 1999, a 57% rise. Bradford Bulls more than doubled their attendance from the pre to post Super League years and Castleford Tigers also improved their support by 37% since the start of the Super League years.

Table 6.15 Average Attendance 1996-1999

	1996	1997	1998	1999	% Change 1996-99
Bradford Bulls	10,346	15,160	13,022	13,212	+ 28%
Castleford Tigers	5,013	4,971	6,403	6,879	+ 37%
Halifax Blue Sox	5,083	5,408	5,670	4,484	- 12%
Leeds Rhinos	8,581	11,024	11,603	13,482	+ 57%
London Broncos	5,700	5,076	3,575	3,033	- 47%
St. Helens	10,221	8,823	7,081	8,201	-20%
Sheffield Eagles	4,534	4,274	4,083	3,546	- 23%
Warrington Wolves	5,157	5,405	4,897	5,012	- 2.8%
Wigan Warriors	10,168	8,684	10,610	9,207	- 9.5%

Overall, the demand for top-flight professional rugby league has increased since the start of Super League. However, there have been varying degrees of success and not all clubs have improved in terms of their level of support. Apart from Wigan, the other

Super League teams saw their attendance rise during the first Super League season in 1996. A reduction for all but four clubs the following year suggests that the hype surrounding the start of the new, summer based rugby league had faded and the initial boost to attendance figures had also waned.

The next area of concentration is the first and second divisions, which were assessed jointly due to the amalgamation of the two at the start of 1999. The changes in attendance for both divisions, over the ten-year period are explored and the significance of different divisional structures is examined.

6.4.2 Divisions 1 and 2 – Attendance Analysis

Rugby League was restructured into three divisions after the 1993-95 season had been reduced to two divisions. The start of Super League in 1996 saw eleven teams in Division 1 and twelve competing for the second division title.

Table 6.16 Total Attendance Figures for Divisions 1 and 2 – 1990-1996

Season	Division 1 Total Attendance	Division 2 Total Attendance	Aggregate Attendance
1990-91	371,398	-	371,398
1991-92	204,304	159,209	363,513
1992-93	168,069	160,348	328,417
1993-94	315,841	-	315,841
1994-95	328,377	-	328,377
1995-96	236,132	85,772	321,904
1996	264,542	113,123	377,665
1997	278,388	75,393	353,781
1998	259,442	69,219	328,661
1999	321,489	-	321,489

In terms of total attendance for Divisions 1 and 2, the reversal to three divisions in 1991-92 saw attendances decline overall, and a further decline the following year. Due to this the Rugby Football League reverted back to two divisions in 1993-4, although the gate figures continued to decrease during the following two seasons. Again, this resulted in a further restructuring during the Centenary season back to three divisions.

Although attendances were reduced again, this was on the whole due to a shortened, practically worthless year, designed to bridge the gap between the traditional winter season and the new summer season planned to begin in March 1996.

The first summer of rugby league saw a substantial rise in demand, with over 55,000 extra spectators attending games in divisions one and two. However since then attendances have again been in decline, resulting in a further restructuring back to two divisions, but accompanied also by another fall in crowd numbers. A definite trend appears through analysis of this data, which is clearly, displayed in Graph 6.3. When a third division is included, the attendance figures of Division one are reduced, while a reversal back to two divisions tends to cause Division one's audiences to rise.

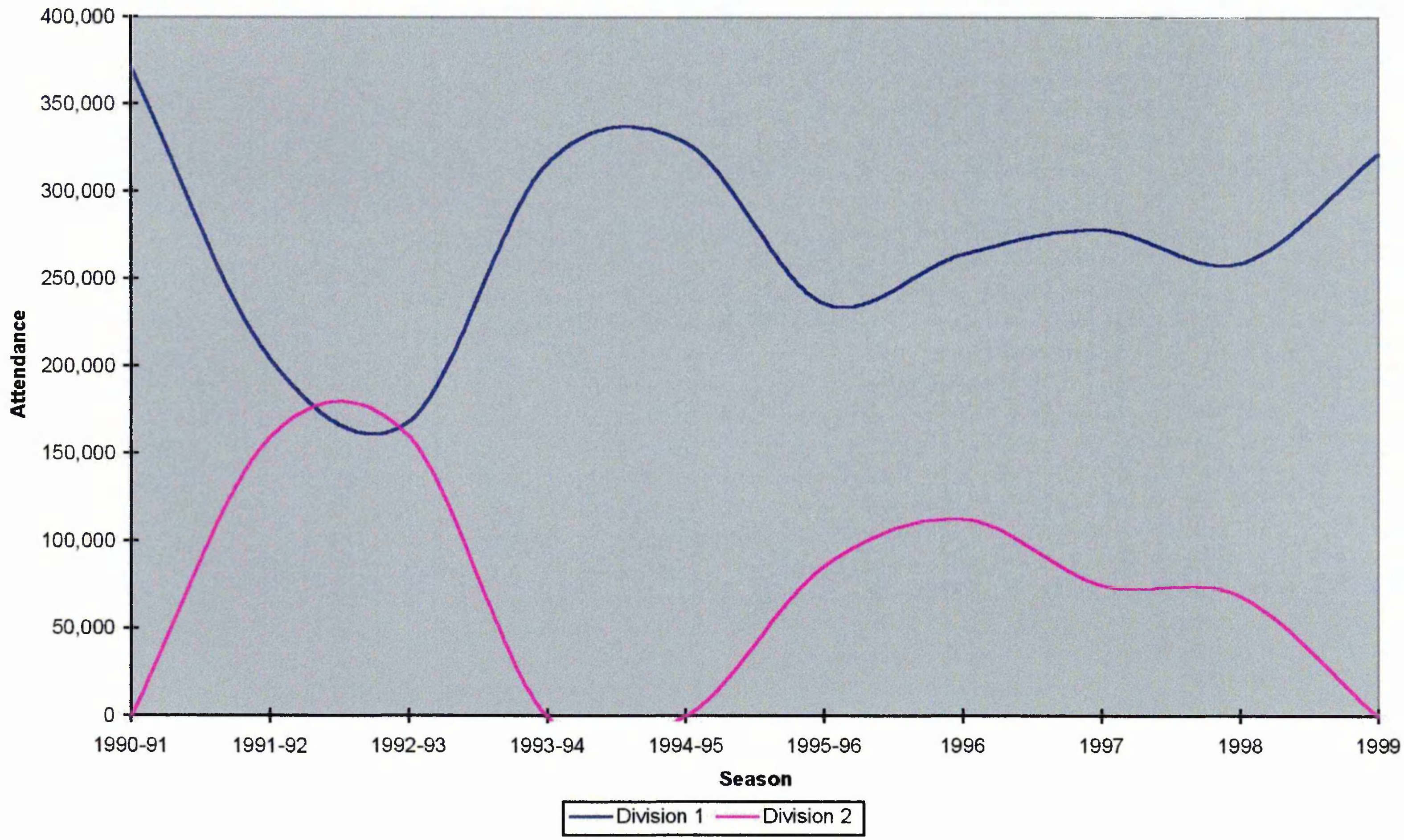
Since the start of 1996, Division 1's crowds have been somewhat erratic, while Division 2's attendance has demonstrated a decline every year.

Table 6.18 shows the average figures for the two divisions. Division 1 has seen an increase in average attendance since the start of the Super League, although in the last two years this has reversed, while Division 2's figures exhibit no real, clear, pattern. Generally, the average for both divisions has been on the increase, although again, the last two seasons have shown dwindling figures.

Table 6.17 Average Attendance Figures for Divisions 1 and 2 – 1990-1999

	Division 1 Average Attendance	Division 2 Average Attendance	Average Aggregate Attendance
1990-91	1,263	-	1,263
1991-92	1,824	875	1,236
1992-93	1,501	1,027	1,225
1993-94	1,316	-	1,316
1994-95	1,368	-	1,368
1995-96	2,146	780	1,463
1996	2,405	857	1,631
1997	2,531	685	1,608
1998	1,572	865	1,341
1999	1,276	-	1,276

Graph 6.3 Total Attendances for Division 1 and 2 from 1990-1999



From the average figures, it appears that at first the two divisions, like the Super League were attracting more fans to the games. However since 1998 there had been a significant reduction in crowds for Division 1, despite the withdrawal of several poorly attended clubs.

Table 6.18 Average Difference in Divisions 1 and 2, Pre and Post Super League

	Division 1	Division 2	Combined Totals
Pre Super League – 1990-1999			
Total Attendance	1,624,121	405,329	2,029,450
Number of Games	1,108	448	1,556
Average Attendance	1,466	905	1,304
Post Super League – 1990-1999			
Total Attendance	1,123,861	257,735	1,381,596
Number of Games	637	322	959
Average Attendance	1,764	800	1,441

Overall, the first division has recorded an increase in supporters by 298, on average per game since the start of the new structure. Contrary to these figures are those for the second division, which have declined over the same period by 105 per game. The combined total average for both divisions leads to an increase in average attendance post Super League of 137 per game.

With closer inspection, using individual clubs, we find that in 1996, seven out of eleven clubs in Division 1 recorded increased average attendance over the previous season. The extent of the improvement ranged from an average increase for Keighley Cougars of 1,084 to the minimal rise in crowds for Batley of 53 additional supporters per game.

Division 2 displayed the same level of increase in terms of the number of clubs, with seven out of the eleven improving on the 1995-96 season (excluding the new club, South Wales). The extent of increases were a great deal more limited however, with Swinton recording the greatest increase of 749, and Bramley the lowest of 22 additional supporters per game.

The second summer season of 1997 saw only five, Division 1 clubs increase their average attendance. Of the teams whose attendance increased, three clubs, Hull Sharks, Huddersfield Giants and Whitehaven finished in the top four, and for most of the season were battling for promotion into the Super League. The clubs with the greatest decline in crowds however, were those at the bottom of the league table, in the relegation zone.

Only four out of the eleven clubs in Division 2 recorded increased crowd figures, resulting in an overall reduction for the league. Again those showing an improvement where the clubs involved in the promotion race, which was tightly fought with the title being decided on the last game of the season. Therefore, the first and second division attendance polarised, with those clubs at the top with a chance of promotion increasing their crowds, while those struggling near the bottom, lost support.

Season 1998 saw the first division attendance, fall from 2,531 in 1997 to 1,572. The best-supported club the previous season had been winners, Hull Sharks, but their promotion into Super League, served to reduce average attendance, considerably. Hull Sharks averaged 6,268 in 1997, whereas Hull Kingston Rovers who headed the 1998 crowd chart had a seasonal average of only 2,306. Of the remainder of clubs, only Widnes increased their attendance, although this was up only slightly from 2,151 to 2,199.

The second division's average attendance for 1998 increased from 685 to 865, with only two clubs, Oldham and Barrow Border Raiders averaging four-figure home crowds. Only four out of eleven clubs displayed a decline in average attendance.

The final season included for analysis within this study is 1999. Due to a continuing decline in attendance, the Rugby Football League and FASDA decided to combine the first and second divisions back into a one divisional structure, consisting of eighteen clubs. In order to increase the number of matches and hence revenue, clubs would play 28 matches, which included playing six of their opponents only once instead of home and away.

Although the total attendance increased, average attendance figures declined, for both the first division independently, and overall from the previous year. Only eight clubs actually recorded lower crowds than in 1998. The majority of the teams, which competed in the second division the previous year, increased their support due to the ability of the fans to watch more attractive, opposition. Conversely, several clubs which had been members of the first division the previous season, experienced a fall in their crowd figures due to the prospect of less appealing games.

6.5 Case Study Clubs – Uncertainty of Outcome, On-field Performance and the Impact on Demand for the Game

All nine of the case study clubs have been examined and analysed in relation to their win/loss percentage, uncertainty within the league and demand for their home games. However, all clubs produced similar results and so this section looks at two clubs in detail, one member of the Super League, St. Helens and Hull Sharks, excluded from the top flight at the start of 1996.

Firstly, the clubs will be examined to show whether demand has increased through their individual attendance figures. These are then analysed in relation to the team's on-field performance using their win/loss percentage and compared with uncertainty of outcome figures in order to establish whether increased uncertainty within the league increases individual club attendance.

6.5.1 Super League Case Study – St. Helens

As already established, overall uncertainty has been reduced minimally within rugby league and to a greater extent within the Super League independently since the start of the summer season in 1996. Attendance has also declined overall although there has been a minimal improvement in the attendance for the Super League.

St. Helens have been arguably the most successful team since the restructuring to Super League, winning the first Super League Championship and the last to date in 1999.

Throughout the 1990's, St. Helens have always been in the first division, with varying degrees of success. In the two seasons from 1991-93, they finished runners up to Wigan, losing in 1992-93 only on points difference, this success is mirrored by their attendance figures.

Table 6.19 Attendance Figures, Pre Super League – 1990-1996

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Total Attendance	96,085	109,940	115,803	108,974	109,849	71,438
Average Attendance	7,391	8,457	8,908	7,265	7,467	7,144
Average Difference	-	+1,066	+452	-1,644	+202	-323

Attendance figures have remained fairly static for St. Helens, with averages between 7-8000 for a season. Season 1992-93 represented their most successful year, finishing as runners up in the league and winning both the Premiership Trophy and the Charity Shield. This was accompanied by the highest average attendance for the six, pre-Super League seasons. The Centenary season recorded the lowest average attendance since the start of the 1990's, although this was mirrored by nearly all clubs due to the problems of a truncated season because of changing from a winter to a summer season.

Table 6.20 Attendance Figures – Post Super League – 1996-1999

	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total Attendance	112,427	97,052	77,894	123,018
Average Attendance	10,221	8,823	7,081	8,201
Average Difference	+3,077	-1,398	-1,736	+1,120

From the start of the Super League I, St. Helens were one of the success stories, with an increase in average attendance of 3,078 from 7,144 in season 1995-96 to 10,221 in 1996. The success off the field, with a 40% increase in crowd figures was mirrored by the team's on-field performance, with the club winning the first ever Super League Championship. However, like at other clubs, the trend of a first successful season followed by a drop in attendance figures was also evident at St. Helens.

From 1996 to 1997, the attendance figures showed a 13.7% decline and a further decrease in 1998 of 19.6% from 1997, giving a total fall in attendance since the start of the Super League of over 30%. The fourth and final season to date, 1999 saw St. Helens record an increase in average attendance of 1,120 per game, to 8,201, although this still remained lower than the first two seasons of Super League.

In terms of the impact of the introduction of Super League on St. Helens, Table 6.21 shows the increase in attendance since the start of the new regime. An increase of just over 802 per game from pre to post Super League demonstrated that St. Helens had been successful in attracting new support, with average attendance consistently higher post Super League. However, in reality, apart from the 1996 season, which saw attendance figures in general rise due to the publicity surrounding the changes in the game, attendance levels have remained fairly static.

Table 6.21 Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	1996-1999
Total Attendance	612,089	410,391
Number of Games	79	48
Average Attendance	7,748	8,550

Throughout the ten-year period, excluding the heightened support in 1996, the range of attendance has been between, a high of 8,908 in 1992-3 and a low of 7,081 in 1998. This demonstrates that even during their Championship winning seasons of 1996, attendance rose to only 10,221, suggesting that this is the limit of support, which St. Helens can attract.

In terms of their performances on the pitch, St. Helens, after finishing runners-up to Wigan several times (1991-93) eventually won the first Super League Championship in 1996 and were crowned champions again three years later. In 1999, despite only finishing second to Bradford Bulls in the league stage, the introduction of a top five play off, allowed them to eventually go on to win the Grand Final.

Table 6.22 Win/Loss percentage for St. Helens, Pre and Post Super League

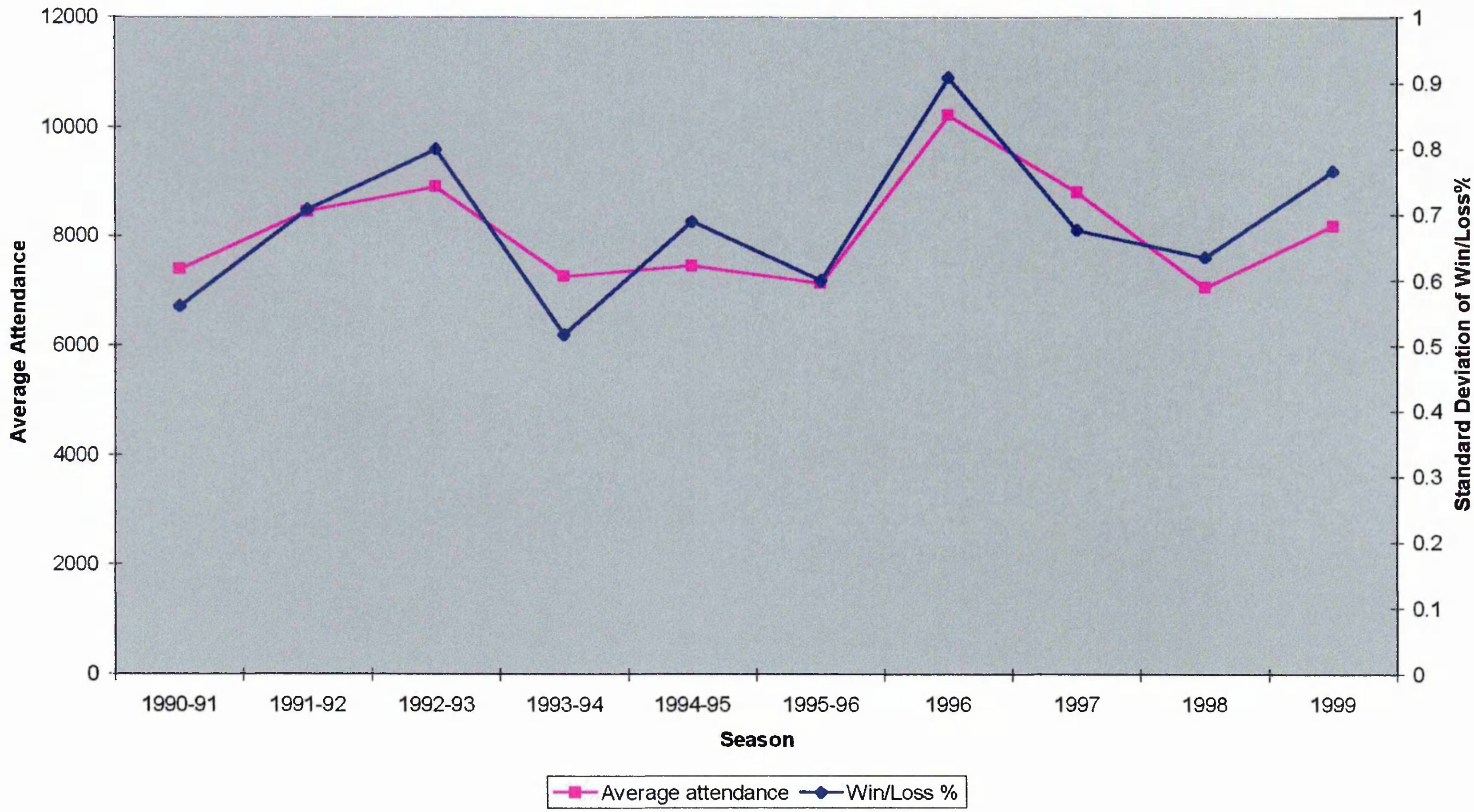
	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Win/Loss %	0.560	0.708	0.800	0.517	0.690	0.600	0.909	0.677	0.636	0.767
League Position	6/14	2/14	2/14	8/16	4/16	2/11	1/12	3/12	4/14	2/14

In terms of demand for St. Helens the pattern that has emerged, correlates highly with the on-field performance of the club. The correlation is as win/loss percentage increases, attendance figures also increase (Graph 6.4). Pre Super League, the two seasons demonstrating greater demand in terms of attendance figures are 1991-1993 (See Table 6.20). These are also the two seasons within which the club recorded the highest win/loss percentages and finished in the highest league position. Similarly, post Super League when St. Helens won the Super League Championship in 1996, they recorded their highest crowd figures of the decade and the highest win/loss percentage. Although after this season attendances were on the decline, they rose again when the club's win/loss percentage increased, they finished second in the league and then went onto win the Grand Final in 1999.

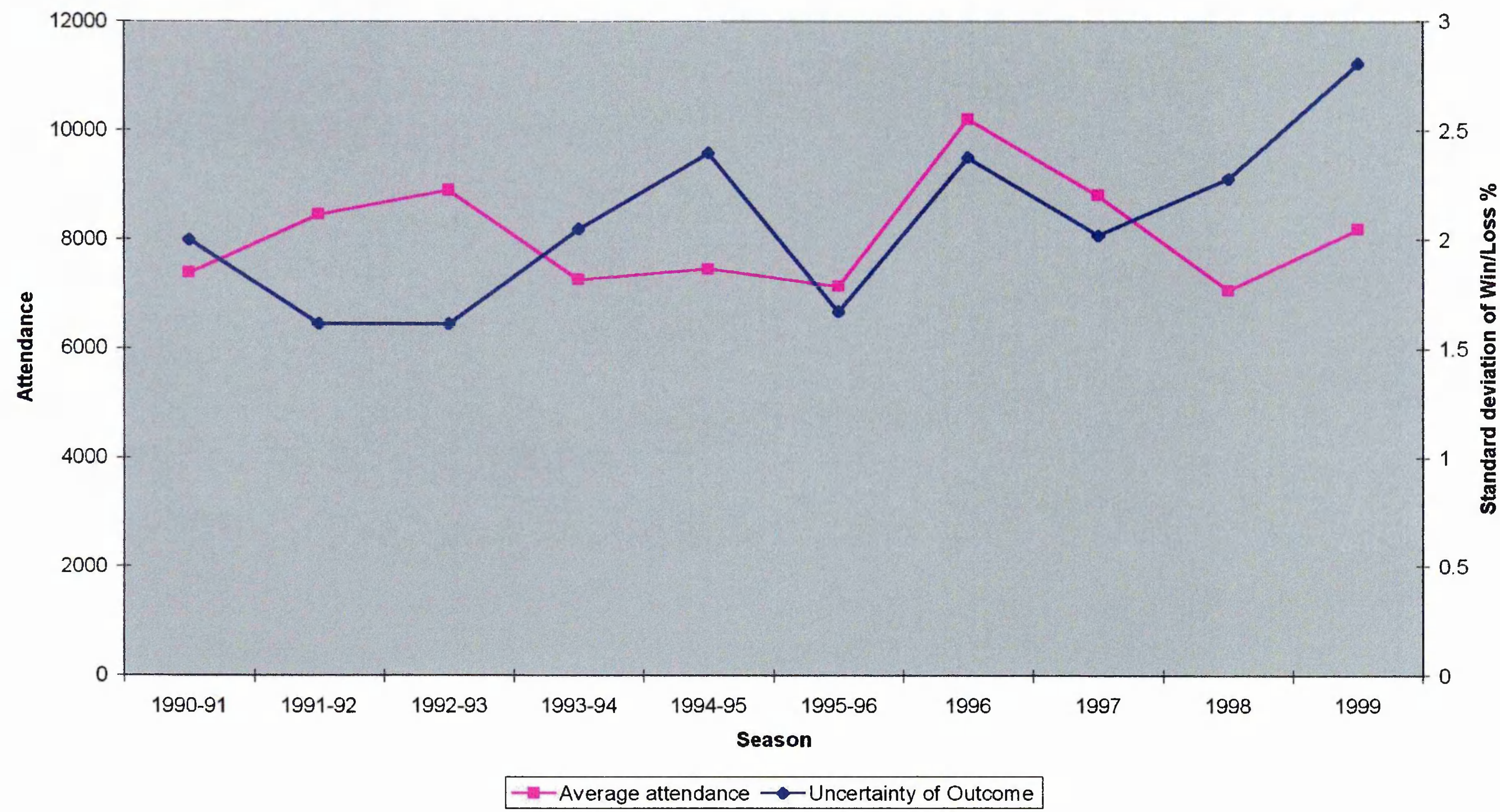
The impact of league uncertainty of outcome on average attendance, unlike the team's performance on the pitch does not appear to have as positive effect. When uncertainty was at its lowest in the league, St. Helens recorded high average attendance. Their highest attendance of the decade in 1996 also saw the lowest competitive balance for the league as a whole (Graph 6.5).

Overall, St. Helens is an example of a club, which has managed to extend its supporter base since the start of Super League, helped by the successful performances of its team on the pitch. However, as with other clubs, the attendance figures for St. Helens since 1996 have been declining and have continued to decline since, with the exception of 1999, when the club won the fourth championship.

Graph 6.4 St. Helens - Average Attendance and Win/Loss%



Graph 6.5 St. Helens - Average Attendance and League Uncertainty of Outcome



6.5.2 Non-Super League Case Study Clubs - Hull Sharks

Hull Sharks formerly Hull F. C. were one of the most successful teams in the early 1980's dominating the game until the mantle was secured by Wigan at the end of the decade. Despite this, Hull remained in the first division, finishing third in 1990-91 and winning the Premiership, with total attendance just over 87,000, on average, nearly 6,700 a game.

The next season Hull recorded a reduction in gate figures, a trend that continued until the start of Super League in 1996. Hull's average attendance declined from 6,699 in 1990 to 2,824 by the Centenary season of 1995-96, a drop of 58% over six seasons.

Table 6.23 Total and Average Attendance for Hull Sharks – 1990-1999

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	87,091	79,596	63,181	64,539	64,319	28,530	30,082	63,591	63,159	66,138
Average	6,699	5,892	4,860	4,314	4,165	2,824	3,008	6,268	5,742	4,409
Difference	+481	-807	-1,032	-546	-149	-1,341	+184	+3,260	-526	-1,333

The decline in support for Hull was halted in 1996, with the start of the Super League. Despite their exclusion from the top tier of rugby league, the club finished third in the first division, attracting a further 184 spectators per game. A dramatic increase of 3,260 in terms of average attendance figures was recorded in 1997, as the club more than doubled its support from the previous season. Apart from 1990-91, this was Hull's highest average attendance of the 90's. The momentum could not be maintained however and the two seasons thereafter saw a return to falling attendance.

Table 6.24 Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	1996-1999
Total Attendance	387,256	222,970
Number of Games	79	46
Average Attendance	4,902	4,847

The switch to Super League meant only a negligible change in average attendance for Hull Sharks, with a decline from pre to post Super League of only 55 supporters per game. Therefore, in terms of demand for the club's matches nothing has changed since the launch of the new structure. Despite Hull's promotion in 1998 and the increase in attendance that accompanied it, this rise did not compensate for the extent of the decline during the other seasons.

The reasons for the change in seasonal attendance can be explained by examining the win/loss percentages for each season since 1990 to 1999. Before Super League, Hull's best performances came in the 1990-91 season when they won seventeen out of twenty-six matches and finished third in the top flight.

Average attendance was also highest during this season. From then the continuing decline in attendance was virtually mirrored by an equivalent decline in win/loss percentage, except in 1995-96 when the club finished fourth in the league, but crowds continued to fall, although they were relegated from Super League to the first division at the end of the 1994-95 season.

Table 6.25 Win/Loss % for Hull Sharks, Pre and Post Super League

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Win/Loss %	0.654	0.423	0.4	0.500	0.241	0.550	0.700	0.900	0.348	0.167
League Position	3/14	12/14	9/14	9/16	15/16	4/11	3/11	1/11	9/12	13/14
Division	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL	1	1	1	SL	SL

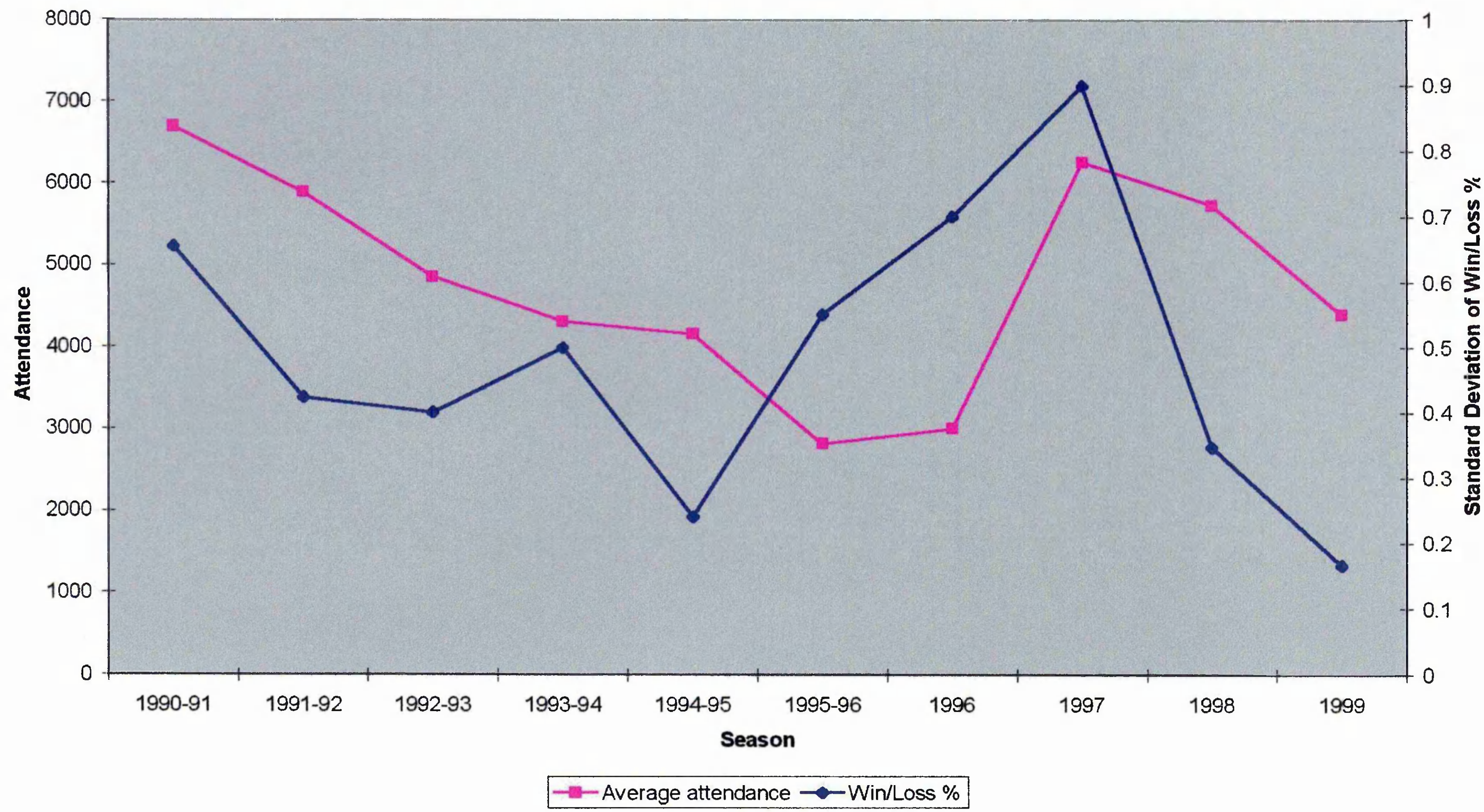
As shown in table 6.25, the rise in win/loss percentage during the first summer season to 0.700 correlates with the increase in attendance. In 1997, the dramatic escalation of support for the club was due to their success on the field. Hull Sharks finished top of the first division, claiming the championship and gained promotion into the Super League. The extent of this success is displayed as a win/loss percentage of 0.900, as the team only lost once throughout the whole season.

The club recorded a decrease in both attendance and win/loss percentage for the following season as competing within a higher division they finished ninth out of twelve teams. They lost the majority of their games and in addition, lost 8.4% of their support from the previous season. The final summer season to date 1999 saw a further decline in attendance and win/loss percentage. The club finished second from bottom with the points difference, the only factor separating them and the bottom club, Huddersfield Giants. They won only five of their thirty league games and a further 23.22% fall in crowd numbers meant only 4,409 on average, attended the club's home matches.

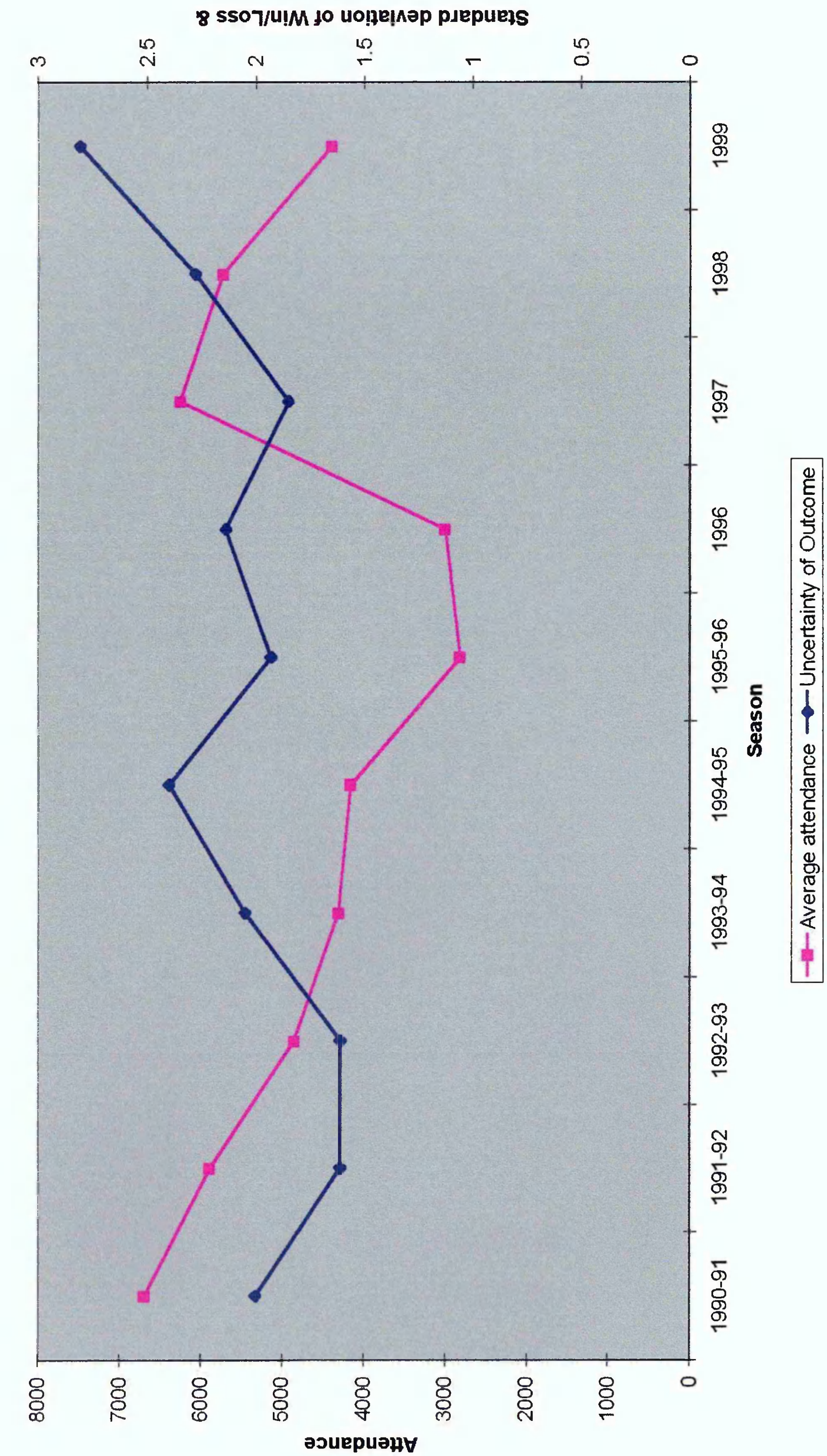
Hull Shark's performance on the pitch correlates highly with changes in attendance, losing spectators due to lack of success on the field and gaining support when performances improves (Graph 6.6). Due to these and various off-field problems, Hull Sharks have been forced into a merger with the new Super League franchise, Gateshead Thunder. These actions were taken in the hope that the financial problems the club faced would be alleviated and allow Hull Sharks to retain their Super League status.

Similarly to St. Helens, the league uncertainty of outcome showed no real pattern or correlation in relation to attendance at Hull Shark's games. Demand seemed to be determined by on-field performance and the club's win/loss% rather than uncertainty within the league (Graph 6.7).

Graph 6.6 Hull Sharks - Average Attendance and Win/Loss %



Graph 6.7 Hull Sharks - Average Attendance and League Uncertainty of Outcome



In terms of demand for the game of professional rugby league, measurable using match attendance data, indications are that the change to a three divisional, Super League structure has caused only minimal, positive reactions. It appears to have helped encourage more supporters to games and hence improve crowd figures, but this is a relatively insignificant number of 'additional' supporters per game.

Despite the increase in average league attendance, in reality, only a minority of clubs have actually been successful in gaining additional support. While the Super League clubs have experienced greater attendance, Divisions 1 and 2 have seen their crowds increase at the start of the new system, but in the past two seasons, begin to decline. This has resulted in a return to two divisions, a structure lastly employed by the rugby league in 1994-95.

Table 6.12 indicated that although attendance has improved, the last two seasons saw an overall decline for the game. In reality, support for rugby league has not increased as dramatically as was hoped prior to Super League's introduction in 1996. The game has failed to recapture the crowds that it enjoyed during the boom years of the 960's and throughout the late 1970's, early 80's. The largest improvement in attendance is recorded in the top division, with the greatest decline recorded for Division two, suggesting a polarization of support between the top and bottom clubs.

The last ten years has been a period of relative stability in terms of demand for rugby league. There has been no obvious or dramatic growth in the number of people watching live games and similarly no substantial downturn. For the sport, there appears very little assurance that it will expand and develop further than its original frontiers. This is compounded by the attendance figures for the six 'on the road' matches played at 'neutral' venues in Bristol, Leicester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Gateshead. They only attracted a total of 31,387 spectators and the survival to date, of only one 'non-traditional' rugby league club since the start of the Super League.

6.7 Uncertainty of Outcome and Demand for Rugby League

The first aim of this chapter was to examine whether the restructuring of rugby league had resulted in an increased uncertainty of outcome. Although Wigan's dominance of the first division has been weakened, with Bradford Bulls and St. Helens both winning one and two titles respectively, it is clear from the data for the ten years covering the period of this study that uncertainty within rugby league has remained fairly static, with only a minimal decline.

This means that the introduction of the new three divisional, Super League structure, with less teams in each division (12-11-12) had failed to raise the competitive balance within the game. It had in fact, served to increase the dispersion of win/losses, reflecting a growing divide in terms of playing strengths between the stronger and weaker teams. Uncertainty of outcome for each division produced comparable results, with the Super League's uncertainty reduced, while uncertainty within Division one and Division two improved, although only marginally, post Super League.

The second main objective was to analyse what effect the change in uncertainty of outcome has had on demand for rugby league in terms of live match attendance. According to the American model, uncertainty of outcome is an important determinant of demand and if it rises within a league, there is a corresponding increase in attendance. In rugby league, this has worked in contrast, as uncertainty has declined but overall attendance has been improved. This could be seen as evidence that within the rugby league, uncertainty is not an important determinant of demand, but instead other additional factors are more significant, including those of a non-market nature.

However, the increase in attendance has only been negligible, equating to just an additional 172 supporters per match. Therefore, the fall in uncertainty within the game can be seen to indicate a relatively unchanged response in terms of demand for the game. In addition, generally more people were attracted to games and attendance rose for individual clubs when the team was performing well and winning the majority of their matches. This demonstrates the importance within rugby league of a team's success on club demand, which is an expected outcome for individual clubs, although it does not influence demand for the whole of the league.

The results overall appear somewhat inconclusive regarding the importance of uncertainty to demand for rugby league. However, they have nonetheless established, that the predicted outcomes of the American professional team sports model, with regards uncertainty and demand have not been achieved within the British sport of rugby league, through the restructuring process.

The changes to the game where examined as the third aim of the chapter, to determine whether the restructuring resulted in any divisional differences. The alterations in divisional uncertainty have already been discussed in terms of the structure of the league and a change to three divisions with a reversal back to two in 1999. There appears to be no real pattern, suggesting neither structure, produces a more favourable level of uncertainty, than the other.

Finally, the last objective of this chapter was to discover whether there is a significant difference in terms of demand for the Super League and non-Super League clubs. The average attendance post-Super League did improve for the top flight, although this was somewhat superficial. Only a minority of clubs actually improved their support but the extent of the escalation in their attendance masked the decline in support for the majority of teams.

In Divisions one and two the initial rise in attendance at the start of Super League subsided and since 1997, there has been a decline in average aggregate attendance for both divisions. The reversal in 1999, back to a two-division league also failed to raise interest, revealing no clear evidence to promote the maintenance of either two or three divisions within the game. An appropriate proposal for the most suitable structure in terms of producing optimal attendance levels is also made more in impractical due to the continuously changing number of teams in the league and their organisation into the separate divisions.

6.8 Conclusion

Overall, the results suggest that changing the structure of the league was unnecessary to raise demand for the game, due to the insignificant effect on attendance. There may be a need for more than just structural alterations to help increase competitive balance within rugby league, which has been previously indicated by Davies *et al* (1995). They found that restructuring on its own would not readjust the likelihood of success for individual clubs or help them to generate support for the league. The introduction of more stringent restrictive controls or policies for instance, regarding both the actual number and location of clubs may be required alongside restructuring to provide a more balanced league and produce more favourable attendance figures for the clubs within the game.

The following chapter examines the broadcasting demand for rugby league. It explores any changes since the introduction of the Super League, to determine whether the restructuring has served to enhance televised viewing of the game. The shift to satellite coverage is also discussed and the potential future problems for the game due to the limited audiences of satellite television are considered.

Chapter Seven
Broadcasting Demand

7.0 Introduction

While Chapter 6 assessed demand for the game of rugby league, in terms of attendance at live games, the purpose of this chapter is to examine demand related to the televised viewing of the sport. Uncertainty of outcome has always been accepted as the basis for demand in sport, measurable by attendance at live games, but more recently with the growing influence of television, audience figures can now be considered an appropriate demand indicator.

Due to the failure of the American model to produce a clear framework for broadcasting demand, from the limited literature available, three main areas have been identified for examination within this chapter:

1. A comparison of broadcasting data, pre and post-Super League to determine any change in demand for televised rugby league.
2. The effects, if any, of a shift from predominantly terrestrial to satellite television coverage.
3. The effects of the changes in broadcasting on network externalities.

In order to carry out this analysis, audience figures, share percentage[1] and television ratings (TVR)[2] for transmissions pre-and post-Super League are utilised. The data contained from the British Audience Research Board (BARB) includes programme details and audience figures for rugby league and association football. It was obtained from the BBC's Information and Analysis Department and BSkyB's Research Department. This data has enabled assessment of the demand for the game pre and post

[1] Share percentage relates to the proportion of people watching rugby league expressed as a percentage of the total amount of people watching television at that time.
[2] TVR is the percentage of all people with access to a television, watching the programme.

the change to Super League, and analyses the effect of the shift from terrestrial to satellite coverage.

Since the 1950's, terrestrial television channels have transmitted rugby league in Britain, although this only included the Challenge Cup and international matches, with no league coverage, shown. The recent financial investment of £87 million from the News Corporation saw the introduction of satellite coverage of the game. In selling the broadcasting rights to BSkyB, the rugby league gave them the licence to televise live Super League games. More recently in 1999, rugby league struck a deal with terrestrial broadcaster BBC, to produce the Super League Show. This included highlights of the weekend's Super League games and was prompted by the perceived need to place the sport back on a nationwide stage.

The following analysis specifically looks at the demand for rugby league, and the effect of both the restructuring and the shift to regular satellite coverage on the game. Possible effects of the changes in broadcasting on network externalities are considered and potential long-term consequences of their effect on the game of rugby league are explored. The revenue obtained from television and its distribution is examined within Chapter 8.

7.1 Rugby League Audience Data, 1990-1995

One aim of this study is to examine any changes in the demand for rugby league. Prior to 1996 and the BSkyB take over of rugby league's Super League, the BBC controlled the game's coverage.

However, it should be noted that the coverage of rugby league during this period was not totally restricted or exclusively shown just on the BBC. The broadcaster, ITV also televised the game throughout the early 1990's on its northern, regional channels in a series called 'Scrum Down'. However, the show was generally screened between 11.00pm-11.30pm, and the audience figures were reflected in the minimal amount of coverage. Average viewing figure where just 0.02 million and the show was only screened during the season 1990-91.

Due to this, the research, in terms of terrestrial coverage of the game has concentrated on the data from the BBC's broadcasting of rugby league. This has included the televising of the Challenge Cup competition including various early rounds, and culminating in the final at Wembley Stadium. Additionally, international matches including GB tours to the Southern Hemisphere and the World Cup competition have been broadcast, although league matches have rarely been televised.

From the broadcast data available, shown in Table 7.1, rugby league attracted average audiences of 31.7 million per year over the period from 1992, for the four years prior to Super League.

Table 7.1 Rugby league's Broadcasts on BBC – 1992-1995

Year	Average Audience (Millions)	Average Share %	TVR %	Duration (Mins)	Accumulative Audience (Millions)
1992	2.06	22.3	3.8	610	10.3
1993	3.1	29.9	5.8	763	31.0
1994	2.7	29.3	5.15	1225	38.7
1995	2.5	25.2	4.6	1959	49.1

Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department

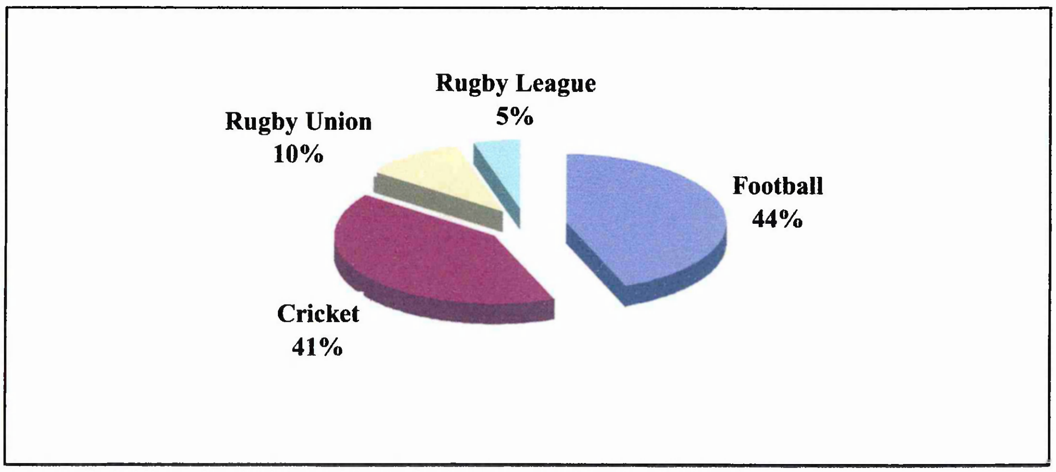
Accumulated audiences for the game reached a peak in 1995 with the total amount of people watching rugby league throughout the season, recorded as 49.1 million. The increase in accumulative audience rose from 10.3 million for 1992 to over 49 million by 1995. This dramatic rise indicates the expansion of the game's television audience, within only a three-year period.

The largest individual audience during the four years was 4.9 million for the 1995 Challenge Cup Final. This equated to the highest share percentage of 49.6% and a TVR of 9.1%. This rating shows that of the UK population with access to a television, the greatest audience recorded for rugby league throughout the four years being examined, was 9.1% of the population.

The average figure was lower that this, ranging from between 5.8% and 3.8 % of the population, who watched rugby league on a regular basis. This demonstrates the minority demand for televised rugby league from 1992-1995, which is considerably lower than the 12% reached by rugby union and 23% for football (BBC Information and Analysis Department). Despite this, the game had also shown over the four years an increasing average audience.

In terms of actual coverage, Table 7.1 shows that in total, coverage of rugby league on BBC rose from 392 minutes (6 hours 32 minutes) in 1992 to 1586 minutes (26 hours 26 minutes) in 1995. In Britain, rugby league has traditionally received less coverage than any other major team sport, as demonstrated in Graph 7.1. The 1990 figures showing the amount of transmission time devoted to each sport on British television demonstrates this fact. During the year, a total of 282 hours of football were shown, 259 hours of cricket and 66 hours of rugby union, all of which compare favourably with rugby league's 29 hours.

Graph 7.1 BBC coverage devoted to the four main Team Sports during 1990



Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department

Throughout the four years before Super League, coverage was generally on a Saturday afternoon, with broadcast start times predominantly scheduled between 2.50pm and 3.00pm, with match kick off times usually, 3.00pm. Games where usually broadcast as part of the 'Grandstand' programme, with the second half coverage shown between 4.00pm and 5.00pm. As Shibli and Gratton (1999) identified in their work on the European Short Course Swimming Championships, this slot, is arguably the most prestigious non-football segment in the programme. This is because it falls between the regular half time football scores round up and the final score.

Of the broadcasts included, 75% covered the entire match (80 minutes +) while the remaining 25% covered just half of the game or pre-recorded highlights. Coverage of only half a game was usually due to the scheduling of another sport, on several occasions this being international rugby union.

The extent of televised coverage was increasing alongside that of the other three professional sports and at the same time television support for the game was also on the increase. Rugby league was enjoying a period of healthy audience viewers, which suggests that televised demand for the game was expanding.

The uniquely regionalised nature of the game may have contributed to lower audience figures than either football and rugby union, both classed as nation-wide sports. The acceptance of the BSkyB investment in exchange for the broadcasting rights to the game was seen as an opportunity by the sport's governing body to expand rugby league beyond its traditional northern territories.

The following section addresses the demand for televised rugby league since the introduction of the Super League in 1996 and the accompanying move to satellite coverage for league games. It assesses the impact of the switch from BBC to BSkyB on the sport and the potential future problems of a total exclusion of the game from terrestrial viewers.

7.2 Rugby League Broadcasting Data 1996-1999

Since the start of Super League in 1996, rugby league has been broadcast not only by the terrestrial broadcaster BBC, but has been shown on the satellite channel, 'Sky Sports', by BSkyB, the British arm of the News Corporation.

The initial benefit for the game, apart from the investment from the sale of its broadcasting rights, which is discussed in the following chapter, has been the amount of coverage. Both the number and hours of broadcasts have increased during the period from 1996 to 1999.

As indicated in Table 7.2, each consecutive year, the hours of coverage devoted to rugby league, have risen, with the transmissions in 1999 more than doubling from the previous year. The number of broadcasts has risen from a high of 16 on BBC, which equated to 1959 minutes a year during 1995, to 17745 minutes in 1999 over 162 transmissions. The majority of broadcasts consisted of either highlight shows in the form of 'Super League World', or 'Rugby League Academy', focusing on youth rugby league. Season 1999 saw coverage extended to include the introduction of the regular screening of highlights from the Australian Super League.

From the start of rugby league's coverage on Sky Sports channels, the highest audiences have been recorded for live games and so not surprisingly the number of live matches has increased. Transmissions comprised thirty-eight live games out of the one hundred and sixty two broadcasts in 1999, thereby making up 23% of rugby league coverage. Total live broadcasts where watched by 2,485,600, an average for the thirty-eight games of just 65,411. The highest individual audience recorded was 167,300 on the 19th March 1999 for a live match between Bradford Bulls and Leeds Rhinos. This recorded a 2.1% share percentage and a TVR of 0.9%.

Table 7.2 Rugby league's broadcasts on BSkyB – 1996-1999

Year	Average Audience (Millions)	Average Share %	*TVR %	Duration (Mins)	Number of Broadcasts	Accumulative Audience (Millions)
1996	0.16	3	1.2	4878	46	7.4
1997	0.12	3.2	0.7	5886	51	6.0
1998	0.04	1.2	0.2	6897	57	2.1
1999	0.036	1.05	0.18	17745	162	5.8

Source: BSkyB Research Department

* Based on a satellite population of 16.6 million (BARB, 1997)

However despite the increased coverage, the accumulative and the average audience figures have declined. Average audiences fell from 0.16 million in 1996 to 0.036 million in 1999, a fall of 22.5% over the four year period. This decline signifies that significantly less than half a million people watch the sport on BSkyB. The share percentage and TVR have also both dropped, with only between 1.2% and 0.18% of the satellite population of approximately 16.6 million watching rugby league. This means that overall less than 1% of the country's population with a satellite facility have watched the game, on average, since 1997.

The following section examines the fall in audience figures, which can be attributed and explained partly by the shift from predominantly terrestrial to satellite coverage, from 1996 to 1999. Also presented is data illustrating the changes pre and post-Super League in terms of the actual decline in demand for the game.

7.3 Comparisons between Terrestrial and Satellite Sports Coverage

The problem encountered when analysing demand for televised rugby league is that both the restructuring and the shift to predominantly satellite coverage took place during the same period. Hence, we have to separate the two issues in order to determine whether demand has declined due to the new structuring or due to the change to satellite television. In order to distinguish between the decreased demand for televised rugby league and the impact the change to satellite has had, the Premier League in football is utilised.

In terms of both average audience figures, share percentage and TVR, football watched on BBC, gained more viewers than the matches on BSkyB since the start of the Premiership. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission (1999) when examining the attempted take over of Manchester United by BSkyB found that on average the ratio between viewers of satellite to terrestrial television was 3:6. This showed that football on terrestrial television attracts double the amount of viewers, gained by the satellite broadcaster's coverage.

Table 7.3 presents the average data for Premier League football during 1997. Average audiences, share percentage and TVR are all greater for the BBC than for BSkyB. Average audiences on BBC are just over 68% higher than those on the satellite station, and the percentage of the population watching football on the BBC is three times higher.

Table 7.3 ***Premier League Football Audience Figures for 1997***

	BBC	BSkyB's Sky Sports
Average Audience (millions)	4.8	1.52
Share percentage	34.3	9.4
TVR (%)	8.8	2.8

Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department & BSkyB Research Department

This is further demonstrated for individual matches in Table 7.4, in which the disparity between the highlights of matches shown on BBC and the same games shown live on BSkyB are displayed. The matches shown on satellite channels were live, and transmitted either on Saturdays at 11.15am, 4.00pm on Sundays or 8.00pm on Monday nights. The games shown on the BBC's Match of the Day were always shown after 10.30pm on a Saturday or after 10.00pm on weeknights. However, those broadcasts on Sky Sports still attracted fewer viewers than the BBC's highlight show.

Table 7.4 ***Performance Indicators for Premier League matches shown on BBC and Sky Sports, 1997***

		BBC Audience (Millions)	BBC Share %	BSkyB Audience (000's)	BSkyB Share %
Wed.1st January	Everton v Blackburn	3.9	30.2	1,367,968	8.5
	Man Utd v Aston Villa			2,038,226	12.7
Sat. 5th April	Chelsea v Arsenal	4.5	39.9	930,160	5.6
Sat 19 April	Liverpool v Man Utd.	4.5	33.9	1,860,320	11.2
Sat 3rd May	Leicester v Man Utd.	3.5	24.2	885,614	5.3
	Liverpool v Tottenham	3.2	34.6	1,331,776	7.9
Monday 5th May	Man Utd. V M'borough	4.1	33.4	1,928,895	11.5
Tuesday 6th May	West Ham v Newcastle	3.1	24.2	1,390,482	8.3
Sun. 11th May	Leeds v Middlesborough	6.0	27.4	1,373,709	8.2
	Man Utd. V West Ham			687,693	4.1

Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department & BSkyB Research Department

The highest average audience for the matches presented in the above table, was for the highlights of the game between Leeds and Middlesborough on Sunday 11^{th} May, attracting 6 million viewers on BBC. The match had been shown live on BSkyB earlier in the day, but gained an average audience of only 1.3 million.

The greatest audience for a live Premier League game on BSkyB was 2,038,226 between Manchester United and Aston Villa, although the highlights on BBC gained nearly 4 million viewers. On Sky Sports, the lowest figures were for Manchester United versus West Ham United, with an audience of only 687,693 and an audience share of only 4.1%. The difference in share percentage overall, shows that on BBC, between 24% and 40% of people watching television at that time, whereas the range for BSkyB's coverage was only 4.1% to 12.7%.

During the year, the game attracting most viewers on BBC was Manchester United and Tottenham, a FA Cup matching with an audience of 10.2 million, gaining a percentage share of 48.6%, nearly half the television watching audience at that time. The lowest audience of the year for the BBC's Match of the Day programme was 2.4 million. Conversely, the greatest audience for a Premiership match shown on BSkyB in 1997 was 2,315,736 between Arsenal and Liverpool, played on Monday 24^{th} March, which gained a share percentage of 14.2%.

Therefore, although audience figures and data for the sport on satellite are weak, there is a much greater demand for the sport on terrestrial television due primarily to its wider availability. This suggests that reduced broadcasting demand for the game is caused by the shift from terrestrial to satellite coverage and so is due to the difference in audience reach rather than a fall in broadcasting demand for the game. If this is the case in football, then we must examine rugby league to try to identify whether the scenario is the same. Have audience figures fallen due to the change to a satellite broadcaster or because demand for televised rugby league has actually declined?

The following section compares like-for-like games on BBC in order to demonstrate whether the fall in audience figures has more to do with the switch to satellite television, than a reduction in broadcast demand for the game of rugby league.

7.4 Changes in Broadcasting Demand, Pre and Post Super League

The fall in broadcast demand for the game of rugby league can be identified, by examining in greater detail the broadcasting figures pre-and post-Super League. Although the number of broadcasts and the hours devoted to coverage of the game have increased, the actual audience figures have declined every year. The severity of this problem is highlighted when comparing audience figures for the four years since 1996 on BSkyB with those of the BBC from 1992-1995.

Table 7.5 demonstrates the difference in performance indicators between the four years before Super League and the four years after. The indicators are used to show the number of people viewing a certain programme at a certain time. These are expressed as percentages and represent in the case of share percentage, what proportion of those watching television are actually watching rugby league. TVR is also expressed in percentage form but uses the number of possible viewers, i.e. how many people who have access to a television are watching rugby league.

Table 7.5 Performance Indicators, Pre and Post Super League

	Average Audience (Millions)	**Share %**	**TVR**
BBC coverage Pre Super League	2.63	26.7	4.9
BSkyB coverage Post Super League	0.067	2.1	0.4

Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department & BSkyB Research Department

The four years pre Super League saw considerably higher average audiences than in the post-Super League years. This is clearly demonstrated by both the share percentage and TVR. The decline in television rating shows that over the years 1992-1995, on average nearly 5% of the televised viewing population watched rugby league. However, since the start of Super League, this figure has dropped, with less than 1% of the UK population watching rugby league on BSkyB.

At first glance, the reason for this dramatic decline could be attributed solely to the change to satellite television for the majority of rugby league coverage. As already explained the benefit of satellite coverage for the game of rugby league has been the increase in the game's television coverage in terms of hours covered. BSkyB transmits mainly live matches compared to the BBC's highlight shows and dictates the majority of rugby league televised now accounting for 96% of all the game's broadcasts.

Satellite stations have a limited, potential audience when compared to that of terrestrial channels, 16.6 million for BSkyB as opposed to 54 million who have access to the BBC (BARB, 1997). Due to this, audience figures are obviously lower due to a smaller audience reach.

The figures on BSkyB are, on average 2.5 million less than those shown on the BBC, highlighting the difference in coverage for the game on the two stations. Similarly, in terms of percentage share, the figures for BSkyB are minimal compared to those of the BBC.

A clearer view of whether there has been a decline in interest for televised rugby league can be obtained by making like-for-like comparisons. This is carried out using data from pre and post Super League, Challenge Cup Final audiences on the BBC, presented in Table 7.6. From the Challenge Cup Final viewing figures since 1992 to 1999 it appears that broadcasting demand has still fallen since the introduction of the Super League, regardless of the switch to predominantly satellite exposure for the game.

Table 7.6 Challenge Cup Final Audience Figures 1992-1999*

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Average Audience (Millions)	4.4	3.3	3.2	3.3	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.1
% Share	47.2	45.4	47.6	42.0	35.1	33.1	36.0	31.0
TVR	8.1	6.1	5.9	6.1	5.2	5.0	5.0	3.9

Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department

*Audience figures per game

There has been a dramatic drop in average audience figures since the start of the Super League era in 1996 and the accompanying shift to, predominantly satellite coverage. More worryingly for the game is the reduction in TVR from 8.1% in 1992 to 3.9% in 1999. The Challenge Cup Final has always been the highlight of the rugby league calendar and the fall in audiences, means that now just under 4% of the population watch this blue ribbon event compared to 8.1% in 1992.

There are also numerous individual examples of declining demand for the game on television. Two million viewers watched the fifth round match between Bradford Bulls and Castleford Tigers in 1998 on BBC. For the equivalent match the previous year, over 3 million watched, further emphasising the serious fall in interest for the game. If we examine the data from Table 7.7 of the average audience figures for the BBC in 1992-1995 (previously shown in Table 7.1) and the corresponding data from the first two years since the start of Super League, this problem is further demonstrated.

As presented in Table 7.7, the amount of coverage in terms of number and duration of broadcasts has declined since 1995. However, although it appears that audiences have also dropped due to a fall in accumulative audience, the figure of 2.1 million in 1997 is equal to the audiences for rugby league during the 1992 season. This suggests that the broadcast demand was just as unstable prior to as post the introduction of satellite coverage. This shows that the game has lost on average 1 million viewers in the space of five years.

Table 7.7 Rugby league's Broadcasts on BBC – 1992-1997

Year	Average Audience (Millions)	Average Share %	TVR %	Duration (Mins)	Number of Broadcasts	Accumulative Audience (Millions)
1992	2.1	22.3	3.8	610	5	10.3
1993	3.1	29.9	5.8	763	10	31.0
1994	2.7	29.3	5.15	1225	14	38.7
1995	2.5	25.2	4.6	1959	20	49.1
1996	2.38	24.7	4.4	995	9	21.6
1997	2.1	24.5	3.9	645	6	12.7

Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department

Since the start of the Super League, BBC's broadcasts of rugby league have only covered the Challenge Cup competition, with no other competitions shown. Previously, the BBC had on certain occasions broadcast rugby league only on its regional channels, in the North, although this type of transmission had not taken place since 1995. The game's authorities were concerned about the reduction in broadcasting demand and that this decline may be a possible contributory factor in the decline in attendance (Tunnicliffe and Walker, 1999). Due to this, Super League (Europe) Ltd. negotiated a deal with the BBC to begin coverage of the game on a regular basis, starting in June 1999, the middle of the fourth summer season.

This saw the start of a new, specialist, rugby league programme, which the BBC named, the 'Super League Show'. It is broadcast on Monday nights for half an hour, starting at 7.30pm, covering highlights from the weekend matches. This is only shown on the BBC 2's North, North East and North West regional channels, where the majority of rugby league clubs and hence supporters are based. The programme began in June 1999 and was shown once a week until the end of the season, with the last transmission on the 9th October 1999.

Table 7.8 gives examples of the key performance indicators relating to the regional broadcasts of rugby league prior to 1996, and gives equivalent data for the Super League show, in order for comparisons to be made. When comparing the figures, a clear decrease in the number of viewers watching the game can be seen, a decline of 16% since 1995. Although the game has been re-scheduled on a regular basis on BBC, fewer people are now watching the game than did four years ago. The highest average audience figures for any given year was 0.5 million in 1992, with 0.1 million the lowest for a regional broadcast of rugby league.

Table 7.8 Rugby League's Regional Broadcasts on BBC – 1992-1999

Year	Average Audience (Millions)	Average Share %	TVR %
1992	0.45	5.5	0.85
1993	0.1	0.6	0.2
1994	0.3	2.4	0.5
1995	0.25	2.2	0.45
1999	0.21	3.1	0.3

Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department

Apart from 1993, season 1999 demonstrates that fewer people in the Northern regions, where rugby league is most popular, now watch the game. One of the problems may be the timing of the programme, which is shown on BBC 2 during peak viewing times on a Monday night, sharing the time slot with Coronation Street on ITV and The Holiday Programme on BBC1. For sports fans with satellite television, there is also a live Premier League match shown at this time every week, which may detract from those tuning in to watch a highlight show on rugby league. On average 212, 000 watch every week, a significant drop from previous figures gained from BBC coverage. The share percentage has slightly increased from the previous three seasons when rugby league was televised on the BBC's regional channels. This may also be due to the timing of the segment, with more people in general watching television at this time than during a Saturday afternoon.

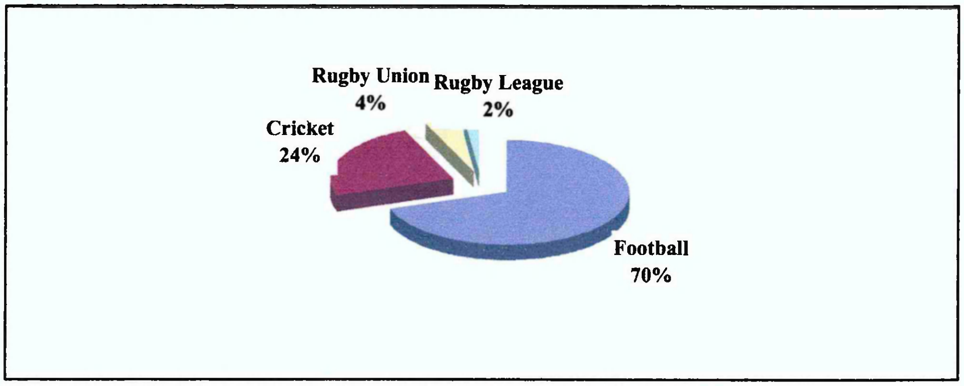
Overall, BSkyB dominated coverage of the game, accounting for 96% of the total rugby league transmissions. However, despite the increase in number of hours broadcast, the actual number of people watching the sport was reduced, which has potentially serious repercussions for the game in the future. The final section within this chapter addresses the implications of the BSkyB investment in the game. It examines the impact of reduced exposure on network externalities, demand for the game in terms of both broadcasting and live attendance and the long-term consequences of the shift to predominately satellite coverage.

7.5 Implications of the Shift to Satellite Television Coverage on Rugby League

This section examines the possible consequences for rugby league of the change to satellite coverage. Although the sport has remained on terrestrial television, the BBC in 1999 only accounted for 19% of the game's coverage, with the remaining 81% broadcast by BSkyB's Sky Sports channels. The amount of coverage has increased since 1992, with more hours of rugby league shown in the past two years than in the previous five. However, due to the limited audience reach of satellite television, rugby league is actually receiving less exposure, in terms of the numbers watching, than in previous years.

Although there has only been three years of live, Super League on Sky Sports, the lack of exposure is already having a detrimental impact on the game. As discussed within the literature review by Broadman and Hargreaves-Heap (1999) the effect of national coverage may impact on, network externalities. If a game is removed from the national audience reach, then fewer people can view the game, which can result in a lack of interest in the sport. People will no longer discuss the game and its personalities, leading to attendances and interest in the game to fall further.

Graph 7.2 BBC coverage devoted to the four main Professional Team Sports during 1998*



Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department & BSkyB Research Department

*It should be noted that this data only includes programme hours listed as individual sporting programmes

Not only has the demand for the game declined but also coverage on national television is still the lowest for the four professional team sports in Britain. The number of hours rugby league is broadcast by the BBC has declined from 5% in 1990 (Graph 7.1) to 2% by 1998 (Graph 7.2). The lack of national coverage highlighted by Graph 7.2 can lead to a lack of interest in the game and have possible effects on future levels of both audiences and support at live matches.

The removal of rugby league from the BBC and the loss of regular national coverage can also have long-term detrimental effects of failing to attract new or young supporters and players to the game. It is firmly acknowledged that television can raise levels of interest and extend games to people previously unaware of the sport (Cashmore, 1996). The loss therefore of sport from national television can result in adverse effects on a game. Audience profile data for those watching the new 'Super League Show' screened on the BBC's northern, regional channels highlights a potential problem area for the future of the game.

The main area of concern is the ageing supporter base that rugby league attracts. There is a clear distinction in terms of the age of supporters watching the specialised rugby league show on BBC. The majority of viewers are over sixty-five years of age in two of the northern regions, and in the Northwest, the majority are within the age category, 55-64 years. This compares with only 2% to 9% of viewers aged between 4-24 years of age, which suggests that, very few teenagers or young adults are interested in watching rugby league. The long-term implications are that if the game fails to attract young supporters, its supporter base could be substantially weakened and eventually crowds will be further reduced.

Table 7.9 ***BBC Audience Profile Data for the 'Super League Show' –1999***

	Northern region (%)	Northeast region (%)	Northwest region (%)
4-15 years	7	5	7
16-24 years	4	2	9
25-34 years	6	4	13
35-44 years	15	11	9
45-54 years	20	14	16
55-64 years	12	11	28
65+ years	37	52	20

Source: BBC Information and Analysis Department

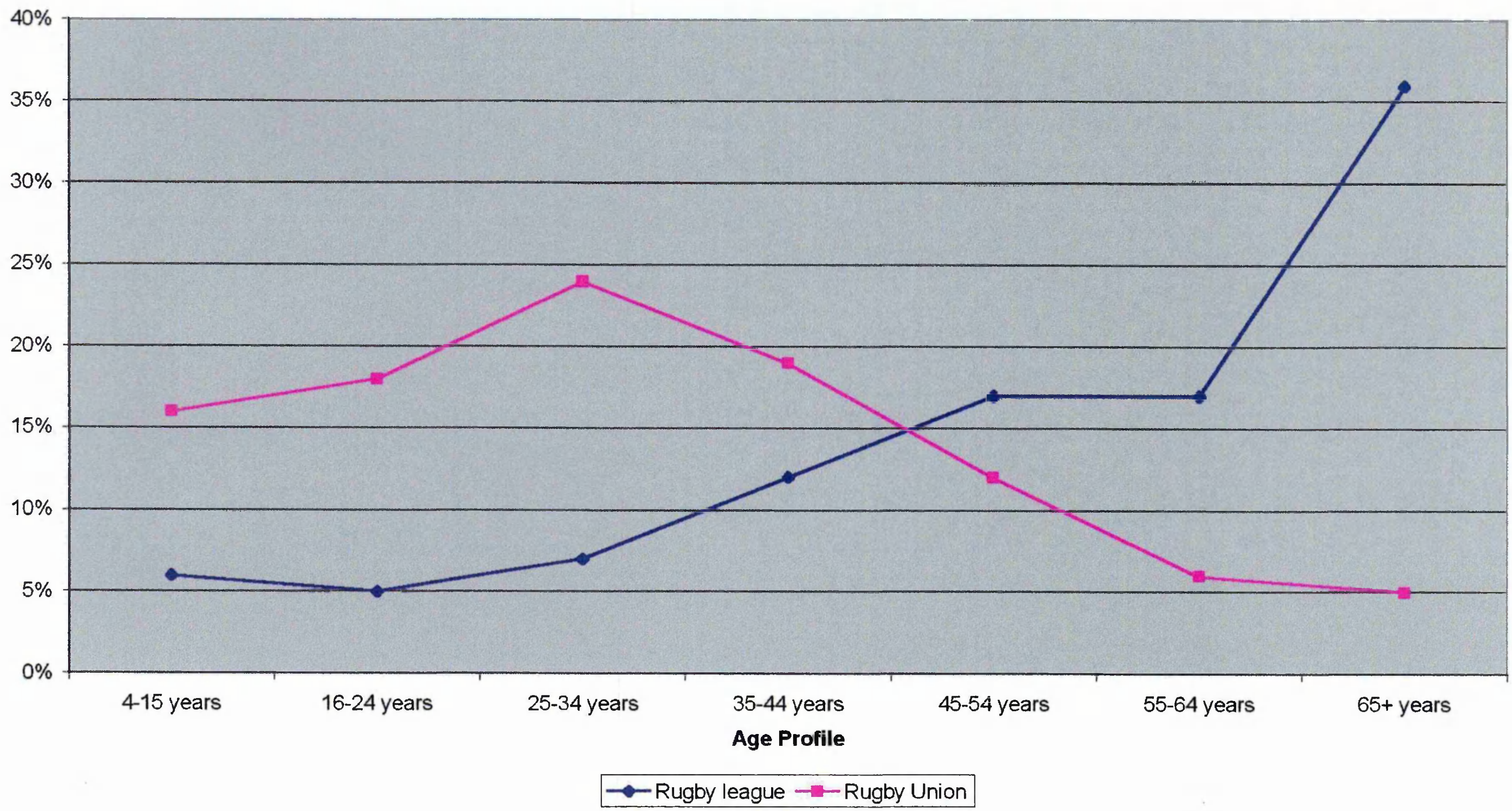
This can also be linked to the network externalities argument put forward by Boardman and Hargreaves-Heap (1999) that if sports are taken off terrestrial channels, less people will be involved in conversational networks, talking about the sport and this could also lead to a decline in interest for the game.

The worry for rugby league regarding its lack of appeal is compounded by age-range figures of viewers for other professional sports. Audience demographics for the Carling Premiership in football reveal that 39% of the viewers were under the age of 34, suggesting a much stronger, younger aged following. Rugby union also has more support from the younger age groups than rugby league, which is demonstrated by Graph 7.3. Union attracts substantially more viewers (58%) under the age of 34 than rugby league (19%) and so has a much more sustainable audience following.

This is emphasised further by the April 1999 report from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission into BSkyB's take-over of Manchester United. The report included data from the NOP Survey (1996), which found that although rugby league was rated as the 4th most regularly watched sport behind football, cricket and boxing, less than 5% of respondents indicated it was their favourite sport. The top three plus wrestling, tennis, skiing, golf, motor sports and athletics all gained more votes than rugby league. This clearly shows that interest for rugby league, although high, is not the preferred option for many supporters, which is clearly demonstrated by both attendance and audience figures.

If demand for televised matches continues to decline, it has been suggested that in the longer term, this may result in a withdrawal of revenue. Broadcasters may remove their support, biased towards sports, which are able to attract the interest from mass audiences (Solberg, 1999). This has already been the case in rugby league, after only two years into the original £87million five-year deal BSkyB renegotiated the contract, reducing the investment considerably due to the low audiences that the game was attracting (See Chapter 8 for more details).

Graph 7.3 Age Profile of Audiences for Rugby League and Rugby Union



7.6 Conclusion

Overall, regardless of the coverage by satellite television, the broadcasting demand for rugby league has declined. Support for the game has always been slight due to its traditionally 'northern' setting but within the last decade, audiences have dwindled even further. The sale of the broadcasting rights to satellite television has resulted in a rise in the number of transmissions but a reduction in the game's viewing figures due to the limited audience reach of satellite companies. The lack of exposure prompted the rugby league authorities after only three years, to negotiate with the BBC, which saw a return to regular coverage on terrestrial television. The aim was to raise the game's profile after its exclusion from nation wide coverage contributed to a reduction in interest. This as discussed can lead to long-term problems of attracting both supporters and future players into the game.

The following chapter examines the financial position of the game and its member clubs. This is to determine whether the result of the experiment in rugby league, of applying the American model to the game has produced the predicted outcome of increased revenue. The failure of rugby league to establish a substantial audience base has already resulted in a reduction in revenue from BSkyB and the withdrawal of future support for the lower division clubs within the game. The impact of the new structure on the financial status of rugby league will be assessed and finally, the implications for the future survival of clubs once the News Corporation money is discontinued, is also explored.

Chapter Eight
Analysis of Financial Statements

8.0 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to determine whether uncertainty of outcome has increased, resulting in a rise in demand for the game and hence an increase in revenue. The objectives of British clubs have always been regarded in terms of playing success and winning rather than maximising profit, as discussed within the literature review. This appears an accurate description concerning the sport of rugby league, which, as an industry has continued to show a decline in terms of turnover and a lack of any real financial growth. Therefore, its financial record hardly suggests great success in terms of profit seeking activities. In order to determine whether the restructuring has improved the financial position of the clubs, the following key issues are examined within this chapter:

1. An analysis of whether the predicted outcomes of the American model have been achieved in rugby league.
2. Examine the influence of the BSkyB investment on the financial status of the rugby league and its clubs.
3. Examine whether the restructuring has improved the financial situation of the clubs.
4. Assess the impact of the introduction of a salary cap and whether it has served to reduce the proportion of clubs' income spent on players' wages.
5. Examine the relationship between gate receipts and broadcasting revenue.

Financial data for the league as a whole was difficult to obtain, with the most appropriate data for the years before the introduction of Super League attained from the Rugby Football League, covering seasons 1990-1993.

Various documentation made accessible by the Rugby Football League for the period since the change to Super League has also been included, although this is, somewhat limited in nature.

The nine case study club accounts have also been examined both pre and post 1996, allowing a year-by-year analysis. Despite attempts made to gain financial data directly from the individual clubs, in all cases this was denied and so the information presented has been attained from Companies House.

Utilising this data, a commentary is offered on the dynamics between the years, pre and post Super League to highlight any changes, plus an attempt to identify their underlying causes. The increased revenue from broadcasting and the impact of both the Bosman ruling on the game's labour market and the introduction of a salary cap are also examined.

8.1 Analysis Pre Super League

The game of rugby league had in terms of its member clubs, been facing financial difficulties for some time. As previously discussed, this was accompanies by a decline in attendance at live matches and hence a reduction in gate receipts. The majority of clubs were operating at a consistent loss, where undercapitalised and had excess borrowings, which many were finding increasingly difficult to service. Table 8.1 shows the gross income of the member clubs via a divisional breakdown, from 1990-1993.

Table 8.1 Gross Income for the Rugby League – 1990-1993

	1990-1991	*1991-1992*	*1992-1993*
First Division Clubs	14,130,000	15,113,000	15,229,000
Second Division Clubs	3,128,000	3,285,000	3,237,000
All clubs	17,258,000	18,398,000	18,466,000

Source: Rugby Football League, 1994.

On average both divisions recorded increases in turnover for each consecutive year during the three seasons, displaying a rise of 6.6% in 1991-92 compared with the previous year and a 0.4% increase in 1992-93. In absolute terms, the turnover for the league increased by only 1,208,000 over the four years, representing a 7% increase over the four-year period, a compound growth only marginally more than 3% (Waudby, 1993). The first division also recorded a rise in turnover of 5% from 1991 to 1992 but only a 0.7% increase, the following season. Division 2 clubs also improved their turnover by 5% from 1990-1991 to 1991-1992 but turnover fell the next season by 1.5%.

The negligible rise in turnover for the game over the period was not sufficient to sustain the financial position of any clubs within the league. When examining the profits/loss, it appears that each clubs is making considerable losses as demonstrated in Table 8.2. Losses for the league exceeded £2.5 million in each of the three seasons, although this has been reduced from over £3.5 million in 1990-91. The aggregate loss over the period was £8,837,000, nearly £9 million for the game as a whole. This equates to between 13.8% and 20.4% loss on turnover for the league during the four years, a trend that was also evident for the individual divisions within the game.

Therefore, rugby league is breaking the first rule of business identified by Wilkinson-Riddle and Barker (1988) 'Is the selling price higher than the cost?' The game's operating costs are clearly higher than the revenue it derives from its main business of producing a game.

In all three seasons, first division clubs recorded greater aggregate losses than those in the second division, but their loss on turnover was much lower ranging from 9.3% to 15% compared with division two's 29%-44%.

Table 8.2 *Net losses*

	1990-91	*1991-92*	*1992-93*
First Division	-2,128,000	-1,404,000	-1,850,000
Second Division	-1,386,000	-1,132,000	-937,000
All Clubs	-3,514,000	-2,536,000	-2,787,000

Source: Rugby Football League, 1994.

Season 1992 saw a 9.9% rise in losses for the league as a whole, compared with only a 0.4% rise in turnover. Costs within the game overall were increasing at a higher rate than revenue and clubs were being forced to meet their day-to-day working capital requirements through loans or overdraft facilities.

At this time it was acknowledged by the Rugby Football League that the financial problems of certain clubs were being aggravated due to the Special Branch of the Inland Revenue examining past misdemeanours of sporting organisations including rugby league. This meant that the clubs were facing substantial liabilities in respect of back duty investigations, which impacted negatively on their current financial standings.

This is emphasised by the individual data for the first division clubs during the four seasons. No club reported an aggregate-trading surplus in the years from 1990, with only one club during this season almost breaking even, reporting losses under £12,000, as shown in Table 8.3. Over half of the clubs recorded losses over this period in excess of £200,000, with one club's aggregate losses over the three years, more than £1 million.

Table 8.3 Aggregate Losses for First Division Clubs - 1990-1993

Aggregate losses over three years	*No. of Clubs*	*Total £'s*
Up to £50,000	3	106,000
Between £51,000 and £10,000	1	90,000
Between £101,000 and £200,000	4	621,000
Between £201,000 and £300,000	1	286,000
Between £301,000 and £400,000	1	313,000
Between £401,000 and £500,000	2	834,000
Between £501,000 and £1 million	3	2,096,000
Over £1 million	1	1,032,000
Total	16	5,378,000

Source: Rugby Football League, 1995.

The main reason for the continual losses within the game was highlighted by the report by GSM in 1993 as a series of flaws in the financial position of the game and its clubs.

It found the main cause of these problems as the continual over payment of players, above a level, which the clubs could realistically afford. This was due in the main to the need for success as indicated in the report by the responses from clubs when asked to provide details of their main objectives. On field success was identified as the main priority for all of the first division clubs and although the second division clubs gave greater emphasis to finance, they still placed a large onus on playing success.

This is clearly demonstrated by examining the relationship between revenue and salary payments. Table 8.4 shows how the financial problems did not prevent the continual rise in spending on players' salaries in both divisions. A rise in players' wages of 3.5% in 1991-92 was increased further the following season, by 17.4%, equating to a 21.5% rise over the three seasons. It was obvious that the cost of wages and salaries were rising quicker than the rise in income. As the objectives of the clubs was to win, they appeared willing to spend more on wages than they could afford, in order to attain the services of the best players, to assure them on field success. Therefore, teams within the rugby league act as utility not profit maximisers, with their principal aim, on-field success, as suggested by Sloane (1971).

Table 8.4 Players Wages – 1990-1993

	1990-1991	*1991-1992*	*1992-1993*
First Division Clubs	9,403,00	9,992,000	11,484,000
Second Division Clubs	2,222,00	2,038,000	2,638,000
All clubs	11,625,000	12,030,000	14,122,000

Over the three seasons, there was a 22% rise in players' wages, despite only a 7% rise in revenue, highlighting that the overpayment of players was one of the crucial factors in the desperate financial situation of the game. Players' wages account for over 60% of gross income every year, as shown in Table 8.5. Over the three seasons, the clubs in Division 2 paid out a slightly higher percentage of their income in the form of wages than those in Division 1, suggesting that the desire for promotion was a justification for their overspending.

Although the need to create competition in each division is important, the fear of relegation coupled with the unrealistic ambition for promotion may well serve to aggravate the quest for success and consequently overspending.

Table 8.5 *Players' Wages as a Percentage of Gross Income*

	1990-1991	*1991-1992*	*1992-1993*
First Division Clubs	66.5	66.1	75.4
Second Division Clubs	71.0	62.0	81.6
All clubs	67.4	65.4	76.5

Source: Rugby Football League, 1994.

The industry as a whole over this period spent between 65.4% and 76.55 of its income on the wages of players, an average of 70%. In 1992-93, the game's income was £18,466,000, of which £10,760,000 was spent on salary payments. This was a predictable outcome for the industry as Welch (1994) had stated several years earlier, from his work with various leagues that a club will spend to the maximum limit of the finance available irrespective of its income.

An additional concern was the decline in revenue from gate receipts. The first division's income from this source totalled £7,581, 000, which equated to 49.8% of gross income, while the £1,042,000 for the second division accounted for only 34.3% of gross income. For the league as a whole, the revenue from gate receipts, including season tickets represented 46.7% of the income generated, with the remainder from grant aid support, sponsorship, loans from the Rugby Football League or bank overdrafts.

As a percentage of gate receipts, player payments from first division clubs averaged 115%, although this ranged from a high of nearly 200% to a low of 79.5%. In the second division the average spent as a percentage of gate income rose to 178%, and despite a low of 79.6%, one club spent over 314% of its revenue from tickets on the wages of its playing staff (Rugby Football League, 1994). For the game as a whole, this was equivalent to 122.5% of income derived at the gate.

Gross income generated had not grown appreciably over the three years, whilst at the same time expenditure, particularly pay roll costs had increased disproportionately. Expenditure, especially on payments to players needed to be curtailed so that it could be met by anticipated income.

Since the start of the contracts system, there has been an escalation of player payments, with the results an average 122.5% of gate receipts and 58.3% of gross income. This is the highest for any comparable sport (Australian rugby league, 33%; Australian basketball, 35%; English football, 47% and USA basketball, 53%). Therefore, competition for players' services needed to be reduced if the overpayment of the players was to be prevented.

In terms of increases, the balance sheet statements show only fourteen clubs out of the rugby league had an excess of assets over liabilities, totalling £9.6 million (Table 8.6). The remainder of clubs were technically insolvent, with an excess of liabilities over assets of £5.3 million. This is showing that the industry is heavily reliant upon fixed assets and clubs borrowing against their ground/fixed assets, in order to match the day to day running of the clubs. This is further supported by the liquidity ratios of the clubs shown in Table 8.13.

Table 8.6 Fixed Assets - 1993

	First Division	Second Division	All Clubs
Fixed assets	6,553,000	3,020,000	9,573,000
Deficiency of net assets	(2,995,000)	(2,342,000)	(5,337,000)
Total	3,558,000	678,000	4,236,000

Source: Rugby Football League, 1994.

An excess of assets over liabilities is vital to the industry to ensure that teams can survive and hence the game itself can continue. However, it has already been demonstrated that no club made a profit during this period and the member clubs are becoming increasingly dependent on handouts from the governing body and loans from banks. Direct income from the clubs' core business, providing rugby league matches for the public was decreasing and if this continued, the clubs would become increasingly more vulnerable.

This led Roy Waudby (1993), Finance Director of the Rugby Football League to state that,

> *'In normal commercial circumstances, there would be no justification for many of these clubs to carry on'.*

The reason for the continual survival of these clubs was due in the main to the extent of their borrowings. Table 8.7 presents the level of borrowing by the game's clubs, which accounts for over 41% of league income for 1993.

Table 8.7 Club Borrowings – 1993

	Bank Borrowing	***Other***	***Total***
First Division Clubs	3,722,000	7,122,000	10,844,000
Second Division Clubs	761,000	1,430,000	2,211,000
League Total	4,483,000	8,572,000	13,055,000

Although the data for rugby league as a whole could not be attained for 1994-95, the game's authorities admitted that at the mid-point of 1995, borrowings had increased and the number of clubs reporting financial turmoil had risen (Rugby Football League, 1995). This suggests that the situation had not improved in the subsequent years but had indeed got worse.

The years from 1990-1995 showed a dismal financial picture, with several clubs going out of existence, like Scarborough Pirates and Nottingham. A financial analysis of the member clubs of the rugby league between 1990-93 revealed several disturbing facts, firstly that the game as a whole was losing nearly £3 million per annum. This, despite a rise in income, although one that barely kept pace with inflation, highlighted the overspending of clubs, dominated by expenditure on wages, which as a percentage of gross income rose from 67.4% in 1990 to 76.5% in 1993. The problem was accompanied by a decline in income from gate receipts, which accounted for only 47% of income as opposed to wages and salaries accounting for 122.5% of gross revenue.

Following this financial analysis of the member clubs of the rugby league between 1991-1993, several worrying facts were revealed, which led to the acceptance by the Rugby Football League of the investment from BSkyB of £87 million. Additionally, it encouraged the introduction of a salary cap to try to prevent overspending and helped, at least in the short-term to stabilise the financial position of the clubs.

The following section utilises the case study club accounts to demonstrate any change from pre to post Super League, in order to identify the impact of the BSkyB investment on the game's clubs. The issue of the salary cap is examined assessing its usefulness to rugby league and the significance of broadcasting revenue is also explored.

8.2 Financial Changes Pre and Post Super League

The £87 million from the News Corporation in 1996 signalled a new era in rugby league. A summer season and the re-introduction of three divisions, plus a substantial pay out for the clubs, suggested a change in the financial fortunes of the game. This section addresses the first and third objectives of this chapter. The first examines whether the predicted outcome of the American model has been achieved and revenue has increased while the second explores whether the restructuring of the game has helped to improve the financial situation of the clubs.

The financial changes since the introduction of the Super League, using the five Super League and four non-Super League clubs (as of March 1996) as case studies for the whole of the game. Account details obtained from Companies House are analysed and the major issues surrounding the financial position of the clubs, identified.

Turnover of clubs within the rugby league has gradually increased from 1990, although the investment nevertheless saw all clubs, as indicated by Table 8.8a record a fairly dramatic rise in turnover during the 1996 season (Table 8.8b).

Table 8.8a Turnover - 1990-1995

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Halifax	-	477,621	760,692	764,972	869,115	797,904
London	-	-	-	-	333,383	1,015,160
St. Helens	900,244	1,027,359	1,183,754	1,387,855	1,291,043	1,341,943
Sheffield	382,225	486,557	494,454	876,058	-	932101
Wigan	-	2,008,535	2,697,546	2,551,939	2,498,936	3289312
York	229,434	238,815	200,849	207,319	217,952	211,917

*Excludes clubs where the Profit/Loss accounts were not available.

Table 8.8b Turnover – 1996-1998

	1996	1997	1998
Halifax	1,179,809	-	-
London	1,622,769	1,957,553	-
St. Helens	3443637	3465383	2613231
Sheffield	2146560	1458000	-
Wigan	3517845	1670104	-
York	283,609	221,478	-

*Excludes clubs where the Profit/Loss accounts were not available.

The money from the broadcasting deal with BSkyB saw turnover for the clubs examined, increase from the Centenary season by between 7% and 157%. Each club recorded their biggest turnover since the start of the decade, during the first Super League year although since then, income has begun to decline. The only exceptions being London, which had a very successful first Super League season and St. Helens, which following the club's Super League Championship season of 1996, also saw its turnover rise and then drop dramatically the following year.

Due to this increase in turnover during 1996, we could also expect the club to record an increase in profit, or more precisely in the case of rugby league, a reduction in the season's losses. However, in terms of absolute pre-tax results, five of the seven teams showed greater losses than in previous years (Table 8.9). Therefore, in terms of profitability, despite the rise in turnover, clubs since 1996 have still overspent as their expenditure levels remains above those of their income.

The virtually continuous losses for all clubs since 1990, demonstrates the weak financial position of the member clubs of the league. Although only a number of case study clubs are examined, both Wigan and St. Helens, two of the most successful clubs during this period are included and so we can take this to be a realistic representation of the game. It appears overall that rather than serve to reduce losses within the sport, the Super League has actually resulted in further loss for clubs.

Table 8.9 ***Pre Tax Profit/Loss***

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Halifax	-	492,373	-44,975	-292,048	-337,905	-7,217	-436,804	-	-
London	-	-	-	-	-329,772	-273,628	-843,834	-375,412	-
St. Helens	-37,278	-126,013	32,595	3,740	1,952	-242,822	-219,451	293,314	-247,063
Sheffield	-19,788	-96,905	-66,350	-1,460	-56,424	144,066	4,973	-588,000	-
Wigan	-	-111,713	-296,781	145,826	-72,166	128,661	-695,800	-1,166,486	-
Hull	-1,077,558	-94,946	-45,167	-39,212	-244,646	-275,543	-70,577	-565,459	-
York	-206,917	27,663	-22,577	-83,684	-104,869	-79,131	16,534	-94,741	-

*Excludes clubs where the Profit/Loss account were not available

Table 8.10 presents, as an indication of the lack of profitability within the game utilising the pre tax profit/losses as a percentage of turnover for the case study clubs. In the case of all clubs, no tax was paid due to the lack of sufficient profit and so both pre and post tax figures are the same.

Table 8.10 ***Pre/Post Tax Profits as a Percentage of Turnover***

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Halifax	-	104%	-6%	-38%	-39%	-0.90%	-37%	-	-
London	-	-	-	-	-99%	-27%	-52%	-19%	
St. Helens	-4%	-12%	3%	0.3%	0.15%	-18%	-6%	8%	-9%
Sheffield	-6%	-20%	-13%	-0.17%	-	15%	0.23%	-40%	-
Wigan	-	-6%	-11%	-6%	-3%	4%	-20%	-70%	-
York	-90%	16%	-11%	-40%	-48%	-37%	6%	-43%	-

Apart from a profit of over 104% recorded by Halifax in 1991 after their promotion into the first division, the highest other profit margin is only 16% for the York club in the same year. The clubs are making continual losses on their accounts, and this has not altered with the restructuring in 1996. Minimal profits for Sheffield and York in the first

Super League season were erased by the following year and despite winning the inaugural summer championship St. Helen's profit in 1997 was also reduced to a 9.5% loss by 1998.

The most crucial point is that rugby league remains unprofitable and continuing losses could eventually lead to the withdrawal of certain clubs from the league. No clubs is profitable at the pre tax level and the investment from BSkyB appears to have just driven up spending. Welch (1994) criticised this type of investment as an aid to help revitalise a game's financial situation by stating,

> *'A uniform increase in revenue available to all clubs has no effect on financial stability of the league. It simply inflates the market.'*

This appears to be true of rugby league, a fact demonstrated further by clubs approaching the Rugby Football League for their second allocation of News Corporation money in advance, due to financial difficulties.

Table 8.11 presents profit/loss data for two of the clubs, St. Helens from the Super League and York from the lower divisions, to demonstrate in greater detail, the lack of profitability.

Before the restructuring, St. Helens recorded losses at the pre-return level, apart from the years 1992-1994, when they recorded minimal profits, the highest being only £32,595 in 1992, equating to 2.8% of turnover. The start of the Super League in 1996 saw the club's turnover more than treble from £900,244 in 1990 to £3,443,637. However, the only year since the start of Super League in which they recorded an operating surplus was during 1997, the year after they won the Super League title. This is despite an increase in revenue of £2,101,694 in 1996, on the previous year.

St. Helens continues to spend more than they can afford and despite the dramatic rise in their income, this is offset by increases in spending. As a non-Super League club, York received less from the investment than St. Helens and so recorded less of a jump in their turnover from the previous year. The club's turnover had remained fairly stable, ranging from a low of £200,849 to a high of £283,609 in the first Super League season. Apart from 1991, York had failed to make a profit in any year until 1996 when they recorded a profit of £16,534. The following season however they made a large pre tax loss of over 42% on turnover.

Table 8.11 Analysis of Profitability for St. Helens

St. Helens			
Year	Turnover (£)	Pre-Tax Profit/Loss (£)	Pre Tax Return on Turnover (%)
1990	900,244	- 37,278	- 4.14
1991	1,027,359	- 126,013	- 12.27
1992	1,183,754	32,595	2.75
1993	1,387,855	3,740	0.27
1994	1,291,043	1,952	0.15
1995	1,341,943	- 242,822	- 18.09
1996	3,443,637	- 219,451	- 6.37
1997	3,465,383	293,314	8.46
1998	2,613,231	- 247,063	- 9.45

Table 8.12 Analysis of Profitability for York

York			
Year	Turnover (£)	Pre-Tax Profit/Loss (£)	Pre Tax Return on Turnover (%)
1990	229,434	- 206,917	-90.19
1991	238,815	27,663	11.58
1992	200,849	-22,577	-11.24
1993	207,319	-83,684	-40.36
1994	217,952	-104,869	-48.12
1995	211,917	-79,131	-37.34
1996	283,609	16,534	5.83
1997	221,478	-94,741	-42.78

These figures demonstrate that the rise in income has resulted in higher spending by the clubs and so both pre-tax profits and pre-tax returns on turnover are decreasing, showing a continuing lack of profitability within the game. Clubs are still required to either cut costs or increase their revenue further from other commercial sources, sponsorship or merchandising, in order to raise profitability.

The financial position of the clubs remains precarious despite the investment in the game, due to a lack of profitability. The following table shows the liquidity for each club, which indicates the amount of money a business, has or will have available (Wilkinson-Riddle and Barker, 1988). Good liquidity is essential if the firm is to continue in business and so is fundamental to a club's survival. A current ratio involves the comparison of current assets with current liabilities; what money is available and what demands are made on it. The lower the ratio the greater is the cause for concern that the business may run out of money.

As Wilkinson-Riddle and Barker (1988) suggest generally a current ratio of less than 1:1 is a concern. As indicated within the table, all clubs within the rugby league recorded ratios of less than 1:1, which implies weak and dangerous liquidity positions.

Table 8.13 Liquidity Ratios – 1990-1998

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Halifax	-	3.35:1	0.97:1	0.93:1	0.30:1	1.04:1	0.09:1	-	-
London	-	-	-	-	-	0.38:1	0.05:1	0.20:1	-
St. Helens	0.29:1	0.22:1	0.22:1	0.13:1	0.24:1	0.09:1	0.15:1	0.18:1	0.11:1
Sheffield	0.17:1	0.21:1	0.25:1	0.27:1	0.15:1	0.45:1	0.40:1	0.09:1	-
Wigan	0.42:1	0.18:1	0.09:1	0.27:1	0.19:1	0.23:1	0.11:1	0.28:1	-
Huddersfield	0.01:1	0.01:1	0.01:1	-	-	0.04:1	0.18:1	0.49:1	-
Hull	0.12:1	0.10:1	0.10:1	0.07:1	0.10:1	0.11:1	0.24:1	0.26:1	-
Leigh	0.13:1	0.06:1	0.13:1	0.06:1	-	-	-	-	-
York	0.28:1	0.31:1	0.14:1	0.35:1	0.08:1	0.08:1	0.01:1	0.00:1	-

This information shows that all of the clubs examined are failing to meet the financial demands made on them and there is no reason to suggest that the remainder of the teams would reveal any significantly different results. Hence rugby league clubs in terms of both profitability and liquidity, display very worrying signs. This means that due to an inadequate return on turnover, weak liquidity and a strong dependency on borrowing, the clubs are facing financial difficulties, extreme enough to affect their very survival.

Overall, it appears that the investment from the News Corporation has done very little with regards to stabilising the financial position of the game and its clubs. There has been a continued trend in over expenditure and so clubs have continued as in previous seasons, with the increased revenue allowing them greater funds to spend.

The next section addresses the question of overpayment of players and the levels of payment derived from both gate receipts and broadcasting income. The introduction of a salary cap and its effect on rugby league will be assessed, plus the long-term effects of continual financial uncertainty within the game.

8.3 A Detailed Analysis of Revenues and Costs with regards to Rugby League

Previously, the main concern for rugby league clubs had been the overpayment of players. A similar problem was found by Skinner (1983) in football, as he examined the relationship between falling gates, income and the proportion of match revenue that was being spent on players' wages. The money from BSkyB allowed the top tier of the game, for the first time to operate as a full time professional sport.

For the clubs that included a break down of expenditure within their accounts, an indication of the rise in players' salaries as a percentage of income is presented in Table 8.14. This shows that since 1996, apart from St. Helens the other clubs have all recorded an increase in the proportion of their income that they spend on wages of players. This suggests that the new structure has encouraged, increased not reduced spending in this area, due to the enlarged rewards for on-field success, which confirms the utility maximisation theory for British sport and rugby league in particular.

Super League clubs receive varying amounts of prize money dependent on their league finishing position. The winners in 1997, St. Helens received £120,000 whereas the teams finishing ninth and tenth gained only £10,000. Also the fear of relegation

from the Super League and the loss of accompanying income of at least £200,000 a year is considered a contributory factor to this problem. The increased pressure on clubs has also raised the demands on players resulting in a growing number of requests for improved benefits and rewards for superior performances.

Table 8.14 Players' Wages as a Percentage of Income

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Sheffield	57.5%	52%	74%	47%	-	46%	53%	75%	-
St. Helens	41%	44%	42%	65%	67%	80%	72%	64%	80%
Wigan	-	83%	70%	75%	84%	70%	121%	155%	-
York	68%	47%	38%	56%	54%	55%	62%	75%	-

In order to combat this growing problem, a solution policy, first discussed in 1994 by the Rugby Football League was once again considered. The idea for a salary cap was adopted from the game of rugby league in Australia. It had been introduced into the Winfield Cup in 1990, when ten clubs had reported near bankruptcy situation. Initially the cap was variable to allow for a period of transition to allow for existing contractual commitments to expire. However, within three years, only two or three clubs still had financial problems and the competition itself had become more evenly matched (Waudby, 1993).

With the size of the recent investment, the member clubs of the Rugby League voted twenty-six to five in favour of imposing some sort of centralised financial control, namely a salary cap. Although it was to have been implemented during the 1996 season, it was not installed until 1998. It was dubbed by many commentators as a revolutionary move, but one that was essential if rugby league clubs were to stop haemorrhaging cash.

The Rugby Football League (1995) identified seven justifiable reasons for the introduction of a salary cap:

- To ensure sufficient stability in membership of clubs to maintain team spirit and public support.
- Prevent the strong clubs obtaining more of the better players at expense of the weaker clubs.

- Provide clubs with an incentive to expend substantial time and effort in the development of grass roots rugby league.
- Restrict clubs in debt to limit and then to eliminate their liabilities.
- For the clubs whose finances are comparatively orderly, it will liberate funds for capital and other projects, which can lead to further revenue generation and hence more money to spend on players in the future.
- It will also increase the balance of the league by preventing one or two clubs monopolising the best players by means of their sheer capacity to pay huge salaries. This competition will lead to a revival in attendances as the results of the matches become more uncertain.
- It will help to provide an element of cost control, which will safeguard the game's future credibility. This is important in attracting sponsorship and television deals.

The salary cap was introduced not to restrict payments to individual players but to put a ceiling on the total that a club could spend on player salaries. In Australia, all clubs had a salary cap of (£1.2m), whereas in Britain, all clubs will have a different cap, defined as 50% of club's relevant income based on money from television rights, gate fees and donations. (Financial Times, 9th January 1998).

Clubs have to forecast their relevant income based on incomes earned in 1997. This income was to include, television rights, gate receipts, season tickets, sponsorship and advertising, donations, investments, profit from merchandising and hospitality plus any other income from commercial activities. Salary cap expenditure includes, player contracts, match fees and national insurance contributions.

Despite its introduction, the salary cap appears to have failed, certainly in terms of the four clubs, which the data was available for within this study that all recorded figures over the 50% limit. A simple explanation apart from the actual over spending could be due to one of the rules surrounding the salary cap. This makes allowances of as much as 30% in respect of payments to players who first played rugby league with the club. This additionally includes players who reside in the immediate vicinity or who originate from an area in which no professional rugby league is played. This is to encourage clubs to develop their own talent instead of overspending on expensive recruits from overseas or from other clubs. In the case of Wigan, this exception to the salary cap applies to the majority of their playing squad and hence the high salary spending figures, in relation to income.

This clear over spending on wages, plus the lack of profitability and growth within the games suggests that eventually clubs will be lost due to their failing financial status.

8.3.1 Broadcasting Income

The other major concern for rugby league is that the only factor allowing the continual survival of many of the clubs is the investment from BSkyB and once this source of revenue has been withdrawn, the game will collapse. The fall in uncertainty and interest in the game via both live attendance and audiences has already resulted in a reduction in broadcasting revenue for the game.

The first contract with the satellite broadcaster BSkyB was signed in 1995 for £87 million over five years, averaging £17.4 million a year. The money was distributed unequally between clubs with those included in the Super League receiving £900,000 a season. In comparison, the first division clubs gained between £200,000 and £700,000, depending on league finishing position the previous season and the second division clubs between £100,000 and £135,000.

The contract with News Corporation was to last for five years, due to expire on December 31st 2000. However, due to the poor audience figures gained for the sport, BSkyB insisted the deal was re-negotiated during the 1998 season into two separate contracts. Each would last for five years from 1999 to 2003. The first was with Super League (Europe) Ltd, which applies to the clubs in the Super League only and was worth just £45 million. The second contract was with the Rugby Football League acting as an agent for the Northern Ford Premiership, which includes the clubs in the first and second division and was worth £10.8 million.

As Tables 8.15 and 8.16 show for St. Helens, which is considered one of the most financially secure clubs within the game, broadcasting demand is increasingly accounted for a greater proportion of income, whilst the revenue generated through gate receipts is falling.

Table 8.15 ***Television Revenue as a Percentage of Turnover – St. Helens***

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Income	900,244	1,027,359	1,183,754	1,387,855	1,291,043	1,341,943	3,443,637	3,465,383	2,613,231
TV revenue	50,300	53,500	67,547	139,500	92,500	111,625	866,750	997,083	936,267
% of Income	5.58%	5.2%	5.7%	10%	7.2%	8.3%	25.2%	28.8%	36%

Table 8.16 ***Gate Receipts as a Percentage of Turnover – St. Helens***

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Income	900,244	1,027,359	1,183,754	1,387,855	1,291,043	1,341,943	3,44,637	3,465,383	2,613,231
Gate receipts	520,116	651,147	724,930	824,273	633,121	738,069	1,393,108	1,181,721	658,786
% of income	57.7%	63.4%	61%	59.4%	49%	45%	40.5%	34%	25%

This trend is the same for all of the case-study rugby league member clubs and demonstrates that the game's reliance on television income is increasing. The declining support from the public in terms of attendance at live games means that the proportion of revenue provided by gate receipts is falling. As commercial income is also insufficient to support the present structure and unlikely to grow sufficiently, he game still remains in a precarious financial position.

The reduction in the money from BSkyB means in real terms, that whereas Super League clubs gained an annual sum of between £850,000 and £900,000 from central distribution, this figure will fall to approximately £500,000 by the end of the current contract agreement. The situation for the clubs of the Northern Ford Premiership is even worse as their income has declined from £500,000 to a level, which by the last year of distribution in 2002 will be approximately £75,000.

After this time, clubs in this division will get no more income from the broadcasting agreement. Therefore, as the clubs are experiencing financial difficulties when in receipt of the BSkyB money, the future looks bleak once this money is terminated.

8.4 Rugby League – The Financial Picture

The report by GSM in 1993 highlighted a series of flaws in the financial position of not only the clubs but the game as a whole. The revenue streams and income for the Rugby Football League highlights further growing problems within the sport. Despite the investment from BSkyB of £87 million, the 1998 Rugby Football League's balance sheet showed an accumulative deficit in excess of £600,000.

Traditionally, the Rugby Football League has received its annual revenue from four main sources, which provided only £4.95 million for the 1998 season.

• The Challenge Cup	£3.75 million
• International Rugby League	£0.75 million
• Grant aid support	£0.325 million
• Sundry sponsorship	£0.15 million

(Tunnicliffe and Walker, 1999)

This demonstrates the significance of the satellite television income for the game and its individual clubs. The television deal with the BBC is worth £5 million so the game receives less than £1 million a year from the BBC, while they get £17.4 million from BSkyB.

For 1999, the Rugby Football League's revenue was approximately £5.5 million. This included the sponsorship of the Challenge Cup by Silk Cut, which is worth £1.8 million and expires in 2001, and two major television agreements. The first of these is with the BBC for its coverage of the Challenge Cup. The five-year deal is worth £8.5 million, with £1.1 million paid in 1999. The second deal is with Sky Sport for the primary rights to international and representative rugby league and secondary rights to the Challenge Cup and the Northern Ford Premiership. This is worth £200,000 per annum for five years, 1999-2003.

The Rugby Football League are also concerned by the lack of sponsorship deals and with viewing figures on Sky so small there is a concern with the lack of big business promoting the sport. Investments were attracted from wealthy businessmen, for example

David Lloyd at Hull Sharks, Richard Branson bought London Broncos and Dave Whelan, boss of JJB Sports, who now owns Wigan. However, the decrease of around £300,000 a year for the Super League clubs due to the renegotiating of the contract is bound to cause problems.

Of the thirty-two clubs, seven are or have been in administration, with Halifax, Doncaster, Hull Sharks, Keighley and York all having suffered financial hardship. Owing to the reduction in television revenue, salaries have also declined, which has raised the question over whether players can continue as full time professionals or whether they will have to return to semi-professional status (Ekoku, 1999).

8.5 Conclusion

In the past, the game of rugby league has been reliant on gate receipts as its main source of income, resulting in the clubs living with the constant threat of financial insecurity that has been prevalent in the sport.

Despite the BSkyB investment, overall it appears that the new structure has failed to improve the financial situation of the game and the clubs themselves have failed to address the problem through either their own budgeting or via the league imposed, salary cap. The desire for success and the consequences of the Bosman ruling has resulted in the freedom of movement for players and the perceived need by the clubs to offer higher inducements to attain and retain their playing staff.

The decline in uncertainty has meant the accompanying reduction in demand for the sport through either television or attendance at games. As a result of this, there has been a fall in gate receipts, which most clubs were once highly dependent on for income. The dramatically higher amounts of revenue obtainable via the sale of broadcasting rights has led the game of rugby league on to satellite television. This is in return for the vast payouts that the independent satellite and cable broadcasters seem able and willing to pay. Unfortunately for rugby league the lack of interest shown by the general public, has led to the early re-negotiation of the BSkyB contract, resulting in a reduction in income for the Super League clubs of approximately £300,000 a season.

If rugby league is to survive as a full time professional sport, it requires greater effort in the stabilising of its finances. The industry's reliance on the income from satellite television needs to be reduced by expanding the number of various revenue-producing sources. Without prompt action it appears that more clubs will go out of business in addition to those already lost like Bramley, South Wales and Carlisle. The only other viable option at this time seem to be the merging of clubs, which has recently resulted in the amalgamation of Huddersfield and Sheffield and Hull Sharks and Gateshead Thunder.

The negative aspect of this policy is discussed in the following chapter, which addresses the social and cultural determinants for the game. It highlights the intense opposition to the mergers and the potential loss of support if this approach continues to transpire. The attitudes and opinions of respondents from three groups within rugby league are questioned relating to numerous issues specific to the game and any change in these views, pre and post the introduction of Super League are assessed. Finally, the effects of non-economic factors on the application of the American professional team sports model to rugby league are explored.

Chapter 9

Non-Market Effects

9.0 Introduction

The final strand of this research addresses the non-economic factors related to the restructuring of rugby league. Although it has already been established within the American model that uncertainty is an important determinant of demand, it is has also been suggested that a key point of omission from the American Professional Team Sport model is the effect of non-market factors on the workings of professional sport. Within the literature, the relevance of non-economic effects has often been over-looked, although increasingly there is debate among researchers as to how important socio-cultural aspects of sports are (Sloane, 1971, 1980; Osgerby, 1988; Davies *et al*, 1995). The aim of this chapter is to examine the effects of these non-economic factors on rugby league through four main objectives:

1. Assess the stakeholders' specific expectations over restructuring and the differences between them and the predicted outcome of the application of the model.
2. Examine the effect of non-economic factors on the application of the American model to rugby league and identify the actual outcomes of the experiment.
3. Analyse the socio-demographic data of the three major stakeholder groups within the game.
4. Determine whether a purely economic and financial analysis would omit important factors.

The social surveys carried out were part of the test, of whether the American model is applicable to Britain and also provided further possible financial hypothesis to be tested.

This chapter involves pre and post Super League questionnaires administered to three stakeholder groups; club officials, players and supporters, utilised in order to assess the consensus of opinion with regards to the proposed changes within the game. The discussion then progresses to review the changes in perception and feelings once the first Super League season was completed and highlights major shifts in attitude from the three main respondent groups

A crucial issue of this chapter is the extent to which people involved in the sport of rugby league see its community effects and traditions as more important than financial considerations. There have been a number of previous attempts at explaining the social importance of sport and its traditions. Lawrence & Rowe (1986) suggest that many people view sport as a way of national or cultural identity. Stone (1981) in his study of rugby league found a complex mix of strong cultural determinants and weaker economic influences created demand for the game. However, in general, the economic literature fails to offer any real detailed analysis of the socio-cultural factors that may affect professional team sports.

Therefore, this chapter aims to evaluate the importance of non-market effects and to assess whether they should be included as a fundamental element within a model for British professional team sports.

9.1 Specific Expectations of Stakeholders in relation to the Restructuring

The acceptance of the BSkyB investment and the shift to a summer season, which saw the introduction of the Super League was the biggest change in rugby league since its split from rugby union in 1895. This section examines three main issues:

1. Were stakeholders in favour of the restructuring?
2. Why did they feel change was necessary?
3. What expectations did they have from the restructuring of the game?

9.1.1 Were stakeholders in favour of the restructuring?

In order to find out whether the stakeholders were in favour of the restructuring, the first question within the social survey asked them to indicate their preference with regards the changes to rugby league.

Table 9.1 presents the findings, which show that the majority of club officials (94%) and players (83%) expressed their preference towards the restructuring and were in favour of the change to the new Super League structure. Within the majority of players there was a clear division between Super League and non Super League players with a greater percentage (63%) of Super League players wanting the change opposed to only 37% of non Super League players. However, although the overall response from players was positive to the structural, financial and 'social' change, this favourable response, after further analysis appeared somewhat superficial with several areas of dissension identified.

The main bone of contention was that there had been a total lack of consultation between the Rugby League hierarchy at Red Hall and the very people playing the game, the players. This was a view strongly supported by the RLPPA Chairman, Nick Grimoldby,

> *'Players should have been allowed to discuss matters and it would have been better if they had been consulted by the Rugby Football League first'.*

No player was asked or balloted about their thoughts and ideas relating to the impending take over by the News Corporation or advised on how it would affect them on a personal level. Most of the officials had been in the game in some capacity for over twenty years and recognised and were willing to change as a means of attracting new support. They were also undoubtedly aware of the precarious financial position of the clubs and hence were more receptive to the changes than some of the supporters.

The supporters were more divided on the issue, with 40% supporting the changes, 24% preferring the game to be continued to be played in winter and 20% favouring a summer season but without any restructuring of the league. Only 7% wanted to leave the game in its present structure.

Table 9.1 Preference to Changes in Rugby League

	Club Officials %	Players %	Supporters %
Leave Rugby League in its present framework	0	5	7
Change to 'Super League'	94	83	41
Change to summer rugby without restructuring	6	10	20
Restructure the game but play in winter	0	2	24
Other	0	0	8

Overall the move to Super League and the new structure was accepted and gained the approval of the majority of stakeholders. These results compare favourably with the findings from the other surveys carried out during the same period by supporters' and players' organisations. The Rugby League Supporters Association (R.L.S.A.) found that nearly 42% of their members backed the new changes and there was a similar response from the Rugby League Professional Players Association and from several phone polls carried out by Yorkshire Television's regional news programme, Calendar.

9.1.2 Why were the changes necessary?

Stakeholders were then asked to indicate why they felt that changes to the sport of rugby league were necessary.

Table 9.2 Reasons changes were required to the game

	Club Officials %	Players %	Supporters %
To allow top clubs greater voting rights and therefore more say in the running of the game than the smaller clubs	5.9	1.6	2.6
To have more divisions and so allow for closer competitions between clubs of the same level	0	7.8	8.7
To increase the attractiveness of the game and thereby encourage more support	47.1	67.2	57.4
To allow the game to be played in the summer in better conditions and climate	41.2	15.6	23.5
Other	5.9	4.7	7.0

The most popular reason for change given by all three, stakeholder groups was in order to increase the attractiveness of the game, which would help encourage more support. Over 67% of players supported this response including Abi Ekoku (Bradford Bulls), Bright Sodje (Sheffield Eagles) and Chico Jackson (Hull Sharks), while James Lowes of Bradford Bulls added that,

> *'The new structure was a good idea and the time had come when the game had to do something to make itself more attractive'.*

The opportunity for the game to be played in better conditions and climate was the second reason given as being of greatest importance for change, which in time may help to increase support and revenue, with the impact of closer competition between clubs and greater voting rights for the top clubs, rated as least important.

The overall support for the changes, in order to encourage greater interest in the game was also compounded by the financial necessity for the investment from BSkyB. The then Chief Executive of the Rugby Football League, Maurice Lindsay insisted that the investment was a once in a lifetime opportunity to get things right and the game had no choice but to accept the pay out (Guardian, September 14th 1996). Over 60% of those questioned within each stakeholder group indicated that the game could not have survived as a professional sport in its present form without the investment. Of those who had felt that the game would survive regardless of the input from news Corporation, 83% felt that only the big clubs would have survived. David Howes, Chief Executive of St. Helens said,

> *'There may have been one or two clubs gone by the wayside, but the game would have survived'.*

The majority of players (61%) felt that without this money, rugby league would not have survived, 59% of officials agreed while 67% of supporters disagreed. Stakeholders were again divided however over the issue of the investments' distribution.

Table 9.3 *Was the investment fairly distributed?*

	Club Officials	Players	Supporters
	%	%	%
Yes	47	44	26
No	53	56	72

Although the majority of all three respondent groups felt that the money had not been fairly distributed, club officials and players were fairly evenly split. The supporter's results however showed a greater disparity between responses, with over 70% indicating that the money had not been fairly distributed. Due to the significant difference between the two results, these figures were then cross tabulated, indicating that the majority of fans who said no, supported non Super League clubs, as demonstrated in Table 9.3.1

Table 9.3.1 *Cross tabulation of: Club by 'Was the investment Fairly Distributed'*

	Yes	No
	%	%
Super League Club	52	27
Non Super League Club	48	74

The majority of non Super League supporters felt that they should have received a greater percentage as small clubs would find it difficult to survive while big clubs would just get richer. Officials (63%), players (50%) and 43% of supporters said they needed more as their expenditure was greater and they felt that the bigger clubs are more successful in attracting people to games and hence generated more income for the game, therefore deserving the most. There proved to be a clear divisional issue between Super League and non Super League players with most seeming to vote depending on their own personal situation i.e. if the situation proved more favourable to them or not.

The general consensus of all three represented groups was that an equal division of the money between all clubs would have been the most favourable outcome, with 41.7% of club officials, 40% of players and 39% of supporters agreeing. A number said the money could have been used to reduce the financial gap between clubs in the upper and lower divisions. But it is perhaps surprising therefore, that despite an equal division of revenue being the most preferable method of distribution, as suggested by the American model, in reality this did not happen.

Many supporters (61%) and players (97%) felt clubs that the Rugby Football League wanted to succeed got more help at the expense of some of the smaller, traditional clubs, many of which have been ignored. Although only 28% of club officials agreed, with the majority of 53% disagreeing, just over 50% of supporters and 83% of players agreed that the Rugby Football League were concerned with big city teams like Leeds, Bradford and London.

9.1.3 What expectations did the Stakeholders have?

The expectations of those involved with the game of rugby league was high after the announcement of the £87million investment and the accompanying changes, a combination of restructuring and a switch in playing season. Not all of those questioned were in favour of the alterations to the sport but most hoped that the changes would allow rugby league to increase its attendances through making the game more attractive, expanding into non-traditional areas and saw an opportunity for the sport to regain financial stability.

Increased attractiveness of the game was expected through the move from a winter to a summer season, allowing matches to be played in better conditions. It was also anticipated by over 60% of stakeholders and 93% of club officials that the broadcasting contract with BSkyB and the increased publicity and media coverage accompanying the introduction of Super League and resulting from the marketing company adopted jointly by BSkyB and the Rugby Football League would create greater interest on a national rather than a regional level for the game. This would then contribute to raising the game's profit and encourage more people to attend in person. Additionally, the extension of the 'match day experience' for supporters in the form of dancing girls, jugglers, pop groups and all singing, all dancing mascots was aimed at improving the pre-match and half time entertainment. Although 77% of players agreed only 40% of supporters agreed or strongly agreed that this would encourage people to watch the game.

A further priority was that as the changes helped to establish rugby league into a more attractive sport, support for and the status of the game would be raised and allow it to expand beyond the limits of the traditional, Northern counties in which it had been played since 1895 and establish itself on a nationwide stage. Of the club officials, 47% and 42% of supporters expressed their hopes for expansion and national recognition for the game.

Respondents were also questioned as to whether they thought the game would expand and in which cities they thought rugby league clubs would develop. The majority of each stakeholder group expected the game to expand from its northern strongholds, outside of its M62 corridor and the Cumbrian boundaries.

Table 9.4 Would the restructuring allow the game to expand and develop?

	Club Officials	Players	Supporters
	%	%	%
Yes	88	86	64
No	12	14	36

The two cities gaining the greatest support in terms of their potential for success were London and Newcastle. Between 36% and 59% of respondents thought London would establish a successful rugby league team and between 40% and 77% said Newcastle. The reasons given for these expectations were due to Newcastle's millionaire owner, Sir John Hall who had already stated his intention to help financially in the development of a club in the city and similarly London, with the backing of Australian millionaire businessman and Director of Brisbane Broncos, Barry Maranta.

Chief Executives, David Howes (St. Helens), Ian Clough (York) and Nigel Wood (Halifax) all commented that those teams would survive due to the men behind them. Other expected locations for potentially successful rugby league expansion teams included Manchester, Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

Apart from improving the product offered and expanding the game's supporter base, stakeholders had high expectations that the dramatic changes would ultimately contribute to an improvement in the financial position of the game's clubs. The majority of stakeholders indicated that they felt the investment had given the game the lifeline it needed and the BSkyB money plus an extension of support would provide the increased revenue necessary to stabilise the financial positions of the clubs.

Lastly, the game had been dominated by Wigan throughout the late 1980's and into the 1990's. This was seen as detrimental and a deterrent for many fans and often blamed and held responsible for declining interest in the game. One of the main reasons behind the change in structure was to try and help equalise the playing balance of all teams and restore some level of unexpectancy within the game. Over 60% of supporters expected that the restructuring would encourage greater competition and contribute to improving attendances, a fact supported by 70% of both club officials and players. It was expected that Wigan's unrivalled dominance would end and interest in the game would be renewed.

In addition to the other two major stakeholder groups, the supporters questioned clearly identified the issue of facilities and expected, due to the investment, there to be a significant improvement in the provision of covered terraces/seating, changing facilities, toilets and catering and refreshment areas. It was also acknowledged by the majority that this would serve to encourage more people to attend.

Finally, the stakeholders were questioned with regards the long-term consequences of the News Corporation's investment being withdrawn after the five-year period and what their future expectations for the game were.

Although prior to the start of Super League no club official felt that rugby league would be finished as a professional game after five years, 35% were uncertain about its future. Only 18% thought that the game had a prosperous future and it was added by most of those who expressed this view that this would only apply to the top clubs within the Super League. Ray Unsworth, coach at Wigan commented, *'If clubs grabbed the opportunity and worked positively, the future would be assured'*.

Of the players and supporters only 11% and 12% respectively were worried that the game would not survive, 45% of players and 31% of these respondent groups were uncertain and expressed concern that the game may survive but could be forced to revert back to its previous part time status or may continue but only on an amateur basis. They did emphasise that this was very much dependent on how the News Corporation money was utilised and invested throughout the five years.

Future expectations for the game were primarily that it would expand, firstly on a national level and then on an international stage. 53% of players, 47% of club officials and 42% of supporters expressed their hopes for national recognition for rugby league, although 20% of supporters stated their hope for simply the game to survive.

Overall, the responses from the social survey indicated that expectation from all stakeholder groups was high and they were concerned with raising the attractiveness of the game through the changes plus the increased publicity and entertainment packages on offer, which compounded by the improvement of facilities for supporters, would encourage more spectators, helping not only financially but also allowing the game to develop and expand on a national level.

The following section examines the stakeholders' expectations in relation to the predicted outcomes of the application of the American model and identifies similarities and differences between the two.

9.1.4 Stakeholder Expectations and the Predicted Outcomes of the Application of the American Model

The expectations of the stakeholders, discussed in 9.1.3 are very similar to the predicted outcomes of the application of the model. The American professional team sports model is based on increased uncertainty of outcome within the league, achieved through expansion into cities with greater supporter potential, via new franchises, which will attract more people to matches, hence raise attendance levels and ultimately revenue.

Increased interest was hoped to be achieved through the diluting of Wigan's dominance via the restructuring, while expansion was to be attained by way of the merging or movement of clubs, although this action was not warmly welcomed, an issue discussed in more detail later within this chapter.

The financial stability of clubs was expected through the appropriate application of the investment, the increase in gate revenue through larger crowds and by the introduction of a salary cap to prevent overspending on player's salaries. Despite the similarities between the expectations and predictions there are obvious and significant differences in both the methods used to achieve them and the structure of the whole game compared to that of the American model of sports, which has resulted in several areas of contention.

Therefore, it should be noted that although the expected outcomes of the changes to rugby league, identified by the stakeholders via the social survey, mirror the predictions, the two are in fact very different in origin. The stakeholder expectations are based on personal hopes for the game on a practical level, which obviously fails to acknowledge the theoretical structure of the model. Hence, differences that occur, although often appearing as minor altercations, did in practice often prove highly significant.

While this section has concentrated on the expectations of the stakeholders with regards the restructuring and addressed these expectations in relation to the predicted outcomes of the American professional team sports model, the following section explores the effect of non-economic factors on the application of the American model and the actual outcomes of the restructuring on the game of rugby league.

9.2 The Effect of Non-economic Factors on the Application of the American model to Rugby League

Although non-economic factors are not an integral part of the American professional team sports model they have been examined within this study in order to establish their significance to rugby league.

Through the restructuring of the game into three divisions and rescheduling to a summer season, the Rugby Football League attempted to improve uncertainty, in order to increase support, a fact predicted by the American model. Prior to the start of the Super League this was a move supported by the majority of stakeholders within the sport, although a significant number had altered their opinions by the end of the first season. Only 47% of club officials, 33% of players and 37% of supporters were happy with the present Super League structure. The main area of discontent among the respondents however was the game being played in summer and not because of the introduction of a three divisional system.

The switch from a traditional winter season to playing during the summer was the biggest major change to the sport, which it was hoped would attract more spectators due to better playing and watching conditions. As already demonstrated, the attendance figures since the change do not indicate that the switch in season has been a success. Unsurprisingly, when the three respondent groups were asked whether they thought the new structure and the switch to summer had been a success, there was no real, strong support from any group.

Table 9.5 Respondents response to: The first summer season has been a success in attracting big crowds to games.

	Club Officials	Players	Supporters
	%	%	%
Strongly Agree	0	10	0
Agree	35	30	13.3
Uncertain	12	34	37
Disagree	47	23	40
Strongly Disagree	0	3.3	10

Responses were fairly evenly split with 47% of club officials and 26.6% of players disagreeing. Only 13.3% of supporters agreed, while half felt it had not been a success.

One of the reasons given by 80% of supporters was due to there being too many alternatives to watching rugby league in the summer. As one fan commented,

> *'The sport will not only have to compete with cricket, there is golf, athletics, tennis, bowls, horse racing, Olympic Games, day trips to the country, annual holidays, gardening etc'.*

Over 47% of officials disagreed but the players were evenly split with 25% agreeing, 36% uncertain and 38% disagreed.

Although the majority of players (89%) and all of the club officials (100%) agreed that summer rugby had made the game more attractive, only 40% of supporters actually agreed that it had increased the appeal of the game, with 43.4% actually disagreeing that the game was more attractive. Additionally, 80% of players agreed but the majority of respondents, 33% of supporters and 47% of club officials felt that the summer had not helped to raise publicity. Post season, all of the club officials (100%), 90% of players and 57% of supporters wanted the game to continue to be played during the summer, although 30% of supporters expressed a desire to revert back to winter.

The reason for the disdain over a change in season is due to the tradition of the game being typically a northern sport, played in the middle of winter. By switching to summer, it changes the very nature of the sport. The long-established patterns of game attendance were being broken and the long-standing habits associated with the sport were being removed, which it was felt could serve to destroy the links between the fans and clubs.

The British Amateur Rugby League Association (BARLA) expressed their concern over the new regime and the impact of the seasonal differences. They felt that this would not only affect supporters, but also meant that the amateur rugby league ranks, through which most future professionals are developed would play in winter while the new professional league would be played in the summer. Ultimately this would lead to problems when players stepped up from the amateur to professional levels and may even serve to discourage potential professionals from entering into the higher ranks.

Secondly, one of the key components adopted from American professional sport by the rugby league officials was the use of franchise moves to help position clubs in locations most suitable in terms of population size. It was hoped by the Rugby Football League that this policy would help the game to expand, develop and establish itself in other non-traditional areas in order to raise its supporter base.

The start of the Super League in 1996 saw the inclusion of two new clubs from outside the traditional boundaries, Paris St. Germain and South Wales plus the inclusion into the top flight of London Broncos. This led to highly optimistic expansion plans by the Rugby Football League on both a national and international level. The necessity for clubs in cities with optimum potential support was an issue determined however by factors of a socio-cultural rather than of an economic or financial nature.

Prior to Super League, respondents had supported the need for change to rugby league's structure and organisation to increase the attractiveness of the game and to help it expand onto a national level.

David Howes explained,

> *'If expansion fails, Super League fails. I think the game has to expand to other areas or the Super League is a failure'.*

Although the majority of all groups, 100% of club officials, 89% of players and 74% of supporters had expressed the view that geographical expansion was important for the success and development of the game, the controls implemented to do this were not willingly accepted. Attempts to adopt main components of the American sports model and implement measures to assure the game's progression were halted due to pressure from the major stakeholder groups and in particular a great deal of hostility openly expressed by the game's supporters.

Most supporters felt the game would expand and develop beyond its M62 corridor but they were reluctant for their clubs to move. Problems were caused due to the suggestion that clubs should either move locations, which in American sports is regularly seen through the utilisation of franchise moves to help position clubs in areas more suitable in terms of population size and has been accepted for many years, or though the merging of clubs.

This is based on the same rational as the American franchise system where differences in population size among geographical locations of various leagues members are seen as a major factor in preventing equality in competition. Therefore, the system advocates the movement of teams to locations that are sought out as possessing the largest market potential, in order to gain greater revenue through the gate.

The tendency has been for clubs with larger populations to gain franchises and as Sloane (1980) stated

> *'Success in sport is being increasingly associated with large cities because spectator sports are by definition market orientated'.*

There are many examples in American professional sports, Washington Senators, baseball team moved to Bloomington, Minnesota in 1961 becoming the Minnesota Twins, which were then relocated again in 1972 to Arlington, Texas to become the Texas Rangers.

The idea of relocating clubs to larger populated areas was viewed as important in order to expand the game nationally and was adopted by the Rugby Football League, starting with the introduction of a team from Paris. Just as important however was the expansion of rugby league across Europe, as Super League's success became dependant on the proposed introduction of teams from Spain, Italy and Russia. The majority of both club officials (59%) and players (64%) felt that this was important, although only 30% of supporters agreed, with the majority indicating they felt it unfair to help new teams rather than those already established, traditional clubs.

The Chief Executive of the Rugby Football League, Maurice Lindsay, described the idea of fast tracking clubs as,

> *'A good idea and the only way forward if rugby league is to expand'.*

Although 65% of officials agreed with this statement over 76% of supporters disagreed. The player's responses were more evenly split with 54% agreeing and 46% disagreeing that fast tracking was necessary. Despite this, new franchises were admitted. Paris St. Germain in 1996 and Gateshead in 1998 were 'fast tracked' into the Super League, while South Wales entered the second division at the start of the first Super League season. However, post-Super League there was a marked decline in the proportion of both club officials and supporters who believed the game would expand and that fast tracking was important.

The reason for this dramatic shift in respondent's opinion may be due to the withdrawal of South Wales from the league at the end of 1996 after only one season in existence. Additionally, due to disappointing attendance figures and financial difficulties, Paris St. Germain also folded and similarly Gateshead Thunder, a new franchise installed into Super League for 1999, only survived until the end of the season. This did not suggest that in the future, new teams would be successful in evolving, developing, obtaining and retaining Super League status.

This could as Welch (1994) wrote,

> *'Be attributed to more than just financial or economic factors'.*

He went on to say that

> *'Newly formed clubs have no tradition to support them, so if they get into financial difficulties they often disappear after just 2-3 seasons'.*

In addition to the failure of new franchises the most emotive issue surrounding rugby league, has been the possible merging of clubs in order to combine finances and to raise support.

The Rugby Football League wanted, in areas with two or more teams, a merger to take place between neighbouring clubs. Despite a £1 million incentive to the two Hull teams, the move towards a merger was rejected. There was also constant talk of a Calder team, consisting of Castleford, Wakefield and Featherstone, plus Sheffield and Doncaster becoming South Yorkshire, although neither had been realised at the time of writing.

However the restructuring and talk of mergers served to offend and alienate many loyal supporters as numerous fans expressed their disdain and opposition. Many were incensed due to both the speed of change and the lack of any real consultation. One supporter said '*Rugby league needed the money, Yes, but surely there could have* been *other ways and means of doing it'*. '*Keep rugby league in winter as it should be'*, another commented, '*Super League is not about sport, it is simply about money; one hundred years of heritage down the pan. It's a disgrace'*. Others referred to the game as having '*sold its soul'*, which became the common phrase used amongst supporters to describe their disapproval of the reorganisation. The extent of feeling against both merges and the restructuring itself serves to illustrate the importance of non-market factors to the major stakeholders within the game.

The effect of this on the communities the clubs represent was clearly reflected by the demonstrations at rugby league grounds throughout the country. These demonstrations were complemented by the publication 'Merging on the Ridiculous: The Fan's Response', published within a week of the announcement regarding the proposals for a Super League, produced by a group of fans, it includes antidotes, stories and opinions, all protesting against the changes.

Somewhat surprisingly then was the result from the majority of respondents when questioned regarding the merger issue and whether they felt they would be necessary to secure the future of certain clubs. Table 9.6 displays the results.

Table 9.6 ***Responses to the statement: Eventually, certain clubs will have to merge as their only option for survival.***

	Club Officials	Players	Supporters
	%	%	%
Strongly Agree	18	17	13
Agree	65	47	44
Uncertain	19	25	20
Disagree	0	6	14
Strongly Disagree	6	0	5

Over 57% of supporters felt that mergers would be necessary if the expected outcomes of increased attendance, expansion and financial stability were to be met. The majority of both players (64%) and club officials (83%) agreed that in certain cases, merging might be the only option for survival. Many of the officials interviewed were realistic about the situation that the game faced. David Howes of St. Helens and Nigel Wood, Chief Executive of Halifax, both although considering themselves traditionalists felt that it had become a *'fact of life'* and a financial necessity for clubs in small catchment areas to have to merge in order to survive.

The financial necessity eventually led Carlisle and Barrow to merge in 1998, a trend, which has continued in recent months as certain clubs have been compelled, as the only viable option to amalgamate. Huddersfield and Sheffield have become Huddersfield Sheffield Giants and the newest franchise Gateshead Thunder was forced to sell its Super League status to Hull Sharks.

The changes to the game and the inclusion of several clubs from outside of the traditional rugby league areas, plus the merging of long-time, established teams saw a large number of respondents agree that the game was in fear of losing its community values. Many of the recent developments within rugby league go against the sport's traditions and although pre-Super League this was disputed by the majority of both club officials and players, there was a significant turn around in opinion post-Super League. Concern was voiced over the failure to preserve traditions and many of those questioned felt that the game was being removed from its roots (87% of supporters, 47% of club officials and 49% of players).

A reason suggested by many stakeholders was that the game was becoming too 'Americanised'. They identified the replacing of the traditional English club titles of Town, Trinity and Northern with suffixes like Vikings, Wildcats, Bulldogs and Giants. This was supported by author, George Moorhouse (1995) who proclaimed that, *'Americanisation is rearing its head in rugby league'.*

Donnelly (1993) also suggested,

> *'As rugby league is busy reinventing itself for mass consumption, American theory and traits are transferred and slowly infiltrated, a process that involves the cultural, economic and political diffusion of American idea, values and social forms'.*

Many supporters also saw the move to 'entertainment packages' as a further extension of the 'Americanisation process'. Within the survey over 65% of club officials felt that pre-match and the half time entertainment were important tools to encourage more people to attend. This fact was reflected in the great emphasis some clubs like Keighley Cougars, Leeds Rhinos and Bradford Bulls put on match day entertainment. Meir (1999) emphasised that clubs were encouraged to develop their 'match day packages' as family entertainment by the Rugby Football League authorities. Examples of this can be seen at Bradford, where the club has created the 'Odsal Experience' with music, a mascot known as 'Bull-man' and a rodeo bull for children to ride. Leeds had also introduced a mascot, Ronnie the Rhino and many other clubs have followed suit.

However, on reflection only 23% of club officials said they felt the organised entertainment did actually encourage supporters to attend games. A number of supporters (83%) questioned also expressed the view that it was not an important factor when deciding whether to attend a rugby league game.

The major concern with the changes induced to try to improve the finances of the game is that as traditions are lost, in the long-term, this may have a knock on, detrimental effect in terms of the level of support.

Spracklen (1995) highlighted in his work on rugby league that,

> *'Changes to the game and the breaking down of traditional ties may mean in the future, rugby league may become, instead of a game surrounded by tradition and identity, a game with no firm base and without any real support. The community has been acknowledged as an important element in the involvement of spectators and the mobilisation of local, regional, national and emotional identifications'.*

This idea has been reiterated by several other commentators of the game including Stone (1981) who stated that,

> *'Without sufficient infrastructure and bedrock supporters, professional rugby league would find the maintenance of support, difficult and expansion, impossible'.*

Davies *et al* (1995) added that,

> *'The game has deep cultural roots with the clubs providing local identity and pride in the communities they represent. Rugby league supporters follow their sport in preference to others because of involvement at the amateur level and the intergenerational ties. Once these ties are broken, rugby league has needed to secure future support by attracting a new type of spectator away from the traditional areas if it is to survive.'*

Due to the recent upheaval in a game that they once considered belonged to them, a number of fans have discontinued their support. Over 80% of supporters view rugby league as having been lost to the mass media and commercialisation, 50% of which, thought there was too much razzmatazz involved and the game was becoming more like American football, entertainment, rather than sport.

Many supporters commented that the game was being taken away from them, as the emphasis of the game was now more about money rather than playing to win. Regarding the investment, the consensus of opinion was that players were now able to command any fee and too much money was going to pay players wages rather than improve facilities and developing the game. This led to another area of the game affected by non-economic factors, the introduction and implementation of market controls.

Club officials agreed that too large a proportion of the BSkyB money was being used to pay players and the introduction of a salary cap was testimony to this fact. In order to rectify the problem and prevent salaries increasing dramatically, as had happened in football, the rugby league authorities announced their intention to introduce a salary cap during the 1997 season. The majority of club officials when questioned replied that player's wages were the least important area for expenditures, closely followed by buying new players. Despite this, all of the officials voiced concern over the issue of spending too much of the BSkyB money on salaries.

Ian Clough, Chief Executive of York said,

> *'Many clubs will waste the money, spending it on players. The problem is that once the money was talked about, players came in with bigger demands. Certain clubs fell for it'.*

Several officials, despite ranking buying players an their salaries as least important, still admitted spending a substantial proportion of their money on players, in order to obtain on-field success in the hope that it would lead to off-field profits. The general consensus from club officials is that although they acknowledged the importance of adhering to a stringent and tight budget, the desire for on-field success through the purchasing of new players appears too great.

The aim of the cap was to limit spending on player's wages to 50% of the clubs' income, whereas previously certain clubs had been spending over 120% of their revenue on salaries. Prior to Super League, the majority of all respondents thought that a salary cap was an appropriate measure to prevent clubs overspending and to stabilise the finances, although perhaps unsurprisingly 21% of players disagreed with its implementation. Every club official (100%) recognised the advantage of a salary cap, with the majority (71%) emphasising its usage in helping teams to improve their budgeting thereby helping to improve and stabilise the financial positions of many of the clubs. Only 12% looked upon it negatively as a detrimental way of reducing their ability to afford to buy or retain the players they wanted. Of the supporters who responded, 90% agreed that a salary cap was a good idea in order to prevent clubs over spending on wages.

However, post Super League the attitudes had changed somewhat. Players were asked if they had become financially better off under the new system. 44% said their financial situation had improved, whereas 56% said there had been no improvement in their financial position. The results were then cross-tabulated to indicate which players' wages had increased.

Table 9.7 Cross tabulation: Financially better off by Club

	Super League Players	Non-Super League Players
	%	%
Yes	59	32
No	41	68

Overall as expected more Super League players said they were now in a better financial position whereas a significantly greater percentage of non-Super League players said their financial position had not improved with the introduction of the new system. It could be seen as a worrying fact that so many players indicated that they were better off due to the investment despite the financial poverty of the clubs. However, it should be noted that the full time position of many of the Super League players has been viewed as a high risk, which has meant most giving up secure employment in exchange for a playing career with employers, financially unstable in most cases.

Hence, despite the financial difficulties encountered by the increased salaries of players, the non-economic factors of prestige, community benefits and the status that accompanies a successful team, the financial and economic considerations are neglected in favour of a greater emphasis on winning through the payment of high wages in order to acquire the best playing staff possible. Hence this is a clear example of rugby league being a utility rather than profit maximising institution.

This section has addressed the effect of non-economic factors on the application of the model to ruby league and examined several issues relating to decisions made within the game that were not determined by or were made regardless of, financial considerations. The following explores the actual outcomes of the experiment and establishes whether they correspond favourably to the predicted outcomes of the model and the hopes of the major stakeholder groups.

9.2.1 Actual Outcomes of the Experiment

The actual outcome of the experiment in relation to the predicted outcomes by the three stakeholder groups was similar in some cases but certain areas and outcomes failed to be realised.

In terms of the new restructuring, the hope was that Wigan's dominance of the game would be relinquished. Over 70% of officials and players agreed with 61.7% of supporters that the new structure would help prevent Wigan's continuing domination. This was reflected in the actual outcome of the Super League competition, as they won only one championship in the first four years of the new structure, with Bradford Bulls winning twice and St. Helens champions in the inaugural season. Despite this, overall uncertainty was not increased as discussed in Chapter 6.

The second factor relating to the American model was the prediction that attendances and television audiences would rise. This was also supported by the major stakeholders, 65% of club officials and 55% of players, although the actual affect of the new structure on attendance was very poor, as acknowledged within the social survey by 24% of supporters. Similarly, although over 60% of all three groups indicated that broadcasting of the game would help to stimulate interest and encourage more supporters to attend, again, in reality this was not the case, as supported by evidence in Chapter 7. Not surprisingly therefore, are the results from the post-Super League questionnaire, which indicate that there was a clear switch in opinion with 24% of club officials, 41% of players and only 7% of supporters actually expressing the view that television coverage had been an influential factor in encouraging increased support for the game.

Table 9.8 Respondent responses to: The increased television coverage of games has encouraged more people to attend games

	Club Officials	Players	Supporters
	%	%	%
Strongly Agree	0	21	0
Agree	24	20	7
Uncertain	12	34	23
Disagree	59	16	50
Strongly Disagree	0	8	20

Despite the investment, analysis of the game's financial statements shows that the fiscal problems are still evident. Respondents to the social survey did not acknowledge this however as fewer, post-Super League, felt that mergers would be necessary for the survival of clubs than prior to the new structure (71% of officials; 65% of players and 33% of supporters). This could be attributed to the lack of mergers taking place and the failure of new franchised teams to establish themselves. If a further survey had been carried out at the end of the 1999 season, the findings may have been different due to the merging of a number of teams at that time.

In terms of the concern from stakeholders regarding the threat of the new structure destroying rugby league's identity, 77% of club officials, 56% of players but only 47% of supporters disagreed that the changes would alter the nature of the game. Similarly, the majority of all three respondent groups agreed that it was important that the roots of the game and its traditions were not forgotten, aided by the coverage by television.

In reality, the restructuring of the game itself led to certain concessions on the part of the rugby league. Several main areas have already been acknowledged and discussed but in addition to a change in season, the increased utilisation of marketing strategies via 'game day packages' and a change from the traditional club names, there have been numerous other alterations to the game.

The conclusion of the Regal Trophy and the introduction of a 'play off' system rather than the contemporary league championship basis plus the inequitable distribution of funds were seen by 83% of players and over 80% of supporters as clear indicators that the ownership of the game was no longer with the fans, but the game was becoming entrenched as a thoroughly commercialised venture, consistent with large multinational media operations, more concerned with audience figures and the sale of satellite dishes than the game itself.

Although 62% of players and 53% of club officials thought that the game would be successful in fulfilling its expansion policies and establishing itself in non-traditional rugby league areas, as already indicated although three new clubs were admitted into the league, all three failed to secure their future status within the professional ranks of rugby league. Therefore, the hope for national and international, expansion and recognition by 53% of players, 47% of club officials and 42% of supporters have not been realised. Over 94% of officials identified rugby league as a highly marketable product, but in reality this has not been proved.

This led to a level of concern regarding the game's future, as it remains unclear what impact the loss of the BSkyB money will have. The majority of all the respondent groups indicated an uncertain future for the sport, with the threat of a return to part time players, or the game assuming only an amateur status.

Overall, despite the investment and the changes to the game, the predicted outcome of the American model and the hopes of the stakeholders have not been realised. The failure of the sport to expand, to raise its support levels and attempt to secure its financial standing have for the most part failed. Therefore, it appears that there are a number of discrepancies between the predicted outcomes and the expectations of the stakeholders, and the actual outcomes of the Super League experiment.

The following section focuses on the demographic characteristics of the respondent groups in order to identify any significant changes, pre and post-Super League. The final section within this chapter will then examine the disparity between predicted and actual outcomes alongside the demographic data in an attempt to establish possible explanations for the inconsistencies. Finally, the question of whether a purely economic and financial analysis would omit important factors will be addressed.

9.3 Demographic Information Regarding Respondents

The three main objective of the social survey was to examine the demographic characteristics of stakeholders involved in the game of rugby league, in order to analyse whether there had been any significant change from pre to post the introduction of Super League.

Respondents were asked a series of personal questions relating to age, place of residence, club support/employed by and how long they have been watching/involved in the game. The socio-demographic questions were included for each group of respondents although the spectator results provided the most interesting data in respect of the characteristics of the game's supporter base. Owing to this, firstly club officials and players will be examined and then the findings related to the support for the game, changes in the pattern of support due to the Super League and the effect of the change in interest on the sport are explored.

9.3.1 Demographic analysis of club officials and players

All of the club officials were male and the majority (58%) were under 40 years of age. 35% were between 40 and 50 years old and 6% over 50 years. All had been involved in the game for over fifteen years with the majority of 64% having been involved in some capacity, generally player/coach for over twenty years.

The players were also asked certain questions relating to the effect that the changes to the game had had on them. The most interesting data was produced from questions regarding employee status. Of the players questioned, 64% said they would class themselves as full time players. Of those, 83% were Super League players and only 17% were non-Super League players, namely those on the overseas quota at lower league clubs. Many Super League players had to give up any other form of employment in order to become full time and so their salaries had to reflect this. Nearly all Super League players (87%) agreed that they would be financially better off under the new system. Overall it seems that Super League players are full time professionals and those in Divisions one and two are playing on a part time basis.

Of those players, 52% said they would be better off with nearly half saying the changes would have no effect on their financial position. Many non-Super League clubs would continue to pay on a part time or pay as you play basis, meaning very little, if anything had actually changed for those players at clubs excluded from the top division. Of those playing on a part time basis, over 47% work full time, a further 22% are full time students and 11% have part time employment in addition to playing rugby league.

9.3.2 Supporter Demographics

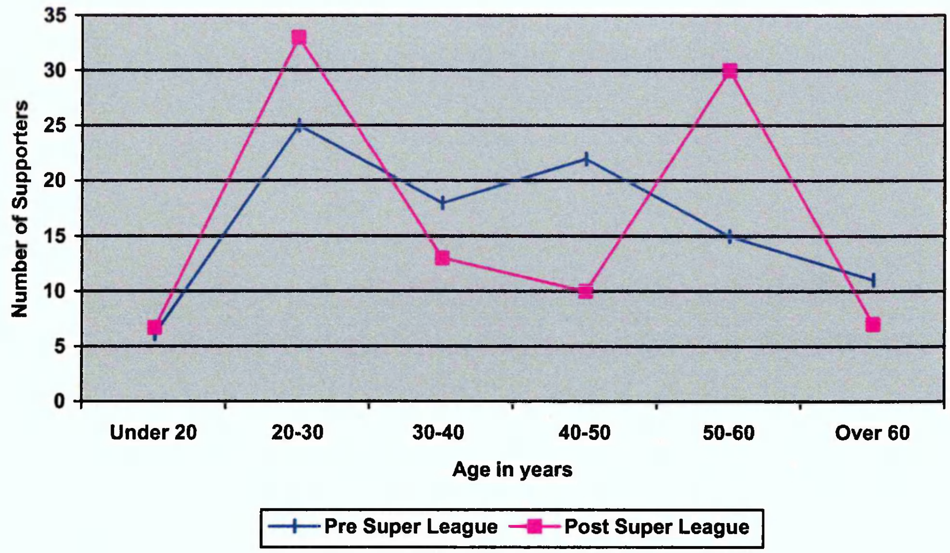
Firstly there was a clear gender division among the supporters that was confirmed by the Rugby Football League's own report carried out in November 1995, which found 62% of respondents were male and 38% female. Both Critchley (1999) and the Rugby League Supporters Association (RLSA), which gained similar findings from their own survey, support these figures further. However these figures are expected and compare with those of other professional team sports, like football and rugby union, which are both male dominated in terms of playing and from where they derive their support, although this is slowly changing.

The main area of interest however is the age range of supporters. Already within Chapter 7, the growing age of supporters watching the game on television has been demonstrated. From the social survey results, a similar trend is revealed with regards supporters attending live matches, thereby compounding concerns surrounding the sports ageing support base.

As shown in Graph 9.1, in prior to Super League, the majority of supporters were between the ages of 30-50 years with a significant number over 50 years of age. Although 25% were between 20-30%, only 6% were under 20. This suggests possible problems in terms of the generation of new fans in the future and the current ageing supporter population. Again these figures reflect the patterns gained from other surveys by the Rugby Football League, which also worryingly found only 8.6% of supporters were under 16, the largest percentage were between 40 and 60 years old. This trend in age structure altered only marginally post-Super League as despite there being an increase in 20-30 year olds and a slight rise of 0.6% in the number of fans under the age of 20, at the same time the number of supporters aged between 50-60 had doubled.

It was hoped that the introduction of the new Super League, the accompanying publicity combined with a summer season would appeal to a wider spectrum of the population and encourage more women, families and younger fans in general to attend games. This was aided by the donation of free game tickets to local school children from various clubs including London, Bradford and Sheffield.

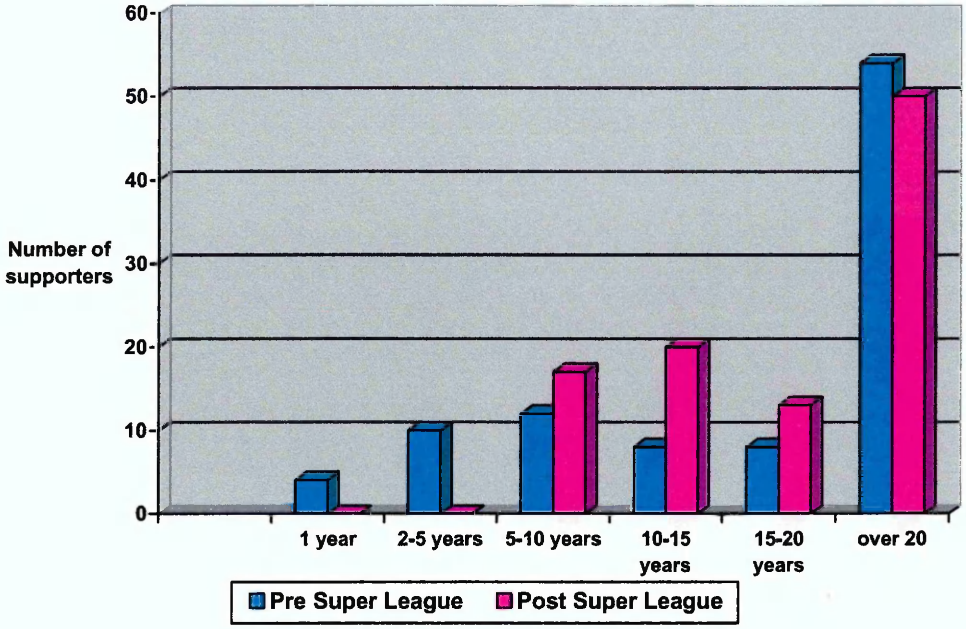
Graph 9.1 Pre and Post Super League – Age Difference of Supporters



The problem is further clarified when examining the number of seasons that fans have been attending matches. Supporters were questioned regarding the length of time they had been watching rugby league and attending live games. Unsurprisingly, the majority of those questioned (54%) had been attending for over 20 seasons, with many of those further adding, 'all of their lives', although only 12% having been attending for less than 5 years.

The following graph shows simply the lack of success that the game has had in recent years of attracting new supports to the game. Again these results are mirrored by those from other report findings, namely those of the RLSA, which found that most people had been following their club for over 20 years. The Rugby Football League's official questionnaire discovered 54% had been attending for over ten years and only 6% had been attending for less than one year.

Graph 9.2 Number of seasons, supporters have been attending



The post Super League questionnaire results provide similar findings with the majority of supporters having been attending games for over five years and the results suggest very little success for the game in attracting 'new support'. This highlights and identifies a potential future problem that looks set to continue as rugby league is currently supported by an ageing fan base. If the game fails to attract new, younger followers, within several generations the local bedrock support for many clubs may be lost. Within the next 30 years, this could then result in the game losing its long established, traditional support and the current decline may continue, as problems of decreasing attendance, escalate. This would then lead to a struggle to either continue or establish family ties to rugby league and the clubs that have always been focal points for many northern communities.

The concern regarding reduced interest from supporters is that this can eventually have a knock on effect in terms of the number playing the game. If interest for the game is reduced, less young players will want to get involved, instead preferring more attractive sporting options. A similar problem was identified with participation and membership of gymnastics in the Netherlands. A decline in membership has meant less people especially the young are joining gym clubs. Deckers and Gratton (1995) found that over

75% of those questioned were over 30 years of age and more than a half over 50. Similarly, in rugby league, the problem is one of entry and not one of exit. As with young gymnasts, young rugby league players are joining clubs to a much lesser extent than in previous generations. This may then serve to add to the decreased number of players coming into the professional game, which has been happening over the last seven years, indicated by a marked decline in the number of open age teams (BARLA, 1999). Ultimately this can effect the future development of British players and the success of the game both nationally and internationally.

9.4 Would a purely economic and financial analysis omit important factors?

From the results of the social survey and the actual course of events within the game, it seem apparent that certain outcomes of the application of the model can be accredited to the social and community influences on the game from the major stakeholders, rather than financial or economic considerations.

The most obvious example is the issue of mergers, as demonstrations by fans at various clubs resulted in a failure by both club officials and the Rugby Football League to secure the merging of neighbouring teams. Respondents illustrated that the continued existence of the club they supported was of greater importance than any economic or financial considerations. If the existence of such ties were disregarded, then the failure of mergers in economic terms would be difficult to assess. The extent of the opposition against the mergers proved sufficient to prevent what financially would have been beneficial, but from a social stance would have been detrimental to the communities within which the clubs are situated. The omission of social issues or the failure to acknowledge their significance to rugby league would have proved damaging to this study. As demonstrated by the social surveys, the qualitative results identify the importance of social factors to the communities within which the game is played.

The exclusion of such a chapter from this work would therefore not only disregard the extent of feeling and emotions surrounding the Super League establishment, but it would neglect to provide a holistic representation of the situation within which professional rugby league found itself both prior to and since the implementation of the new structure.

Examining the sport of rugby league from a purely economic perspective, following the notion that the game operates only within financial constraints would prove inappropriate.

However, although traditionally, the importance of winning has been stressed to a far greater degree than profit maximisation, since the birth of Super League, in order to attempt the switch from a utility to a more profit maximising approach as discussed within the literature and accepted as crucial to the American professional team sports model, the game has begun to change its identity and transform itself to become more attractive to fans. This as Falcous (1998) argues,

> *'Could lead to a dissolution of parochial community attachments and the fragmentation of live spectating rituals'.*

The investment firstly from BSkyB, the move recently by successful businessmen, plus the expansion policy of the games' authorities and the introduction of various new initiatives previously unheard of in within the sport have signified a change in its nature.

It appears that the game has tried to reverse the trend of declining attendance and support, through the ongoing process of 'Americanisation' utilising purely economic constraints, shown via the introduction of more financial restrictions like the salary cap, the potential for more franchise moves and various revenue sharing policies.

In the short term this has provided the game with at least a financial reprieve, but it has also led to the beginning of a breakdown in traditional ties with the communities and has also severed links with its past that may never be repaired.

As a consequence of gaining the investment to provide financial security, the game has destabilised its fan base due to the extent of the speed and the number of changes initiated without prior consultation of either players or supporters. Once the initial BSkyB investment is relinquished, due to the breakdown of the once strong 'communal' ties, clubs may find themselves in greater financial strife than they were prior to 1995.

Therefore, the use of a purely financial and economic analysis would clearly have resulted in the absence of several crucial elements within rugby league. The study would have lacked a realistic approach and failed to acknowledge that the shaping of policies within the game is to some extent still supporter driven and as presented by the demographic information, the continuous backing and support by fans is a necessity if the game is to have any future.

9.5 Discussion and Conclusions

While the previous three chapters have been primarily concerned with the economic and financial aspects of professional team sports, this final results chapter has concentrated on the socio-cultural impact of the changes to rugby league. The major social issues surrounding the establishment of the Super League have been identified using empirical data obtained from the two social surveys. The consequences of these changes on the people involved in the game have been realised through an examination of the attitudes and opinions of club officials, players and supporters.

The chapter was intended to show firstly, specific stakeholder expectations regarding restructuring, their attitudes and opinions, plus the differences between them and the predicted outcome of the application of the American model. Secondly, any changes in these views once the Super League structure was in operation were identified and the difference between them and the actual outcomes were examined. Thirdly, the socio-demographics of the three major stakeholder groups were analysed, the relevance of them to the future of the game was considered and their impact on demand for rugby league, discussed. Finally, the notion of whether a purely economic and financial analysis would omit important factors was determined.

On many issues the officials and players were divided in their opinions from those of supporters who appeared more resistant to change. This is possibly due to the close community ties associated with the sport and the populations of the towns and cities represented by its clubs, which play a large role and have a great influence on the lives of those involved.

The Rugby Football League and club officials made many of the alterations to the game without any consultation of players or supporters. Fans disputed many of the new modifications, accepted as successful by officials, which suggests a lack of communication between what the supporters want and what the game's officials are providing. In order to secure future support for the game, the governing body needs to be more willing to listen to the supporters and their opinions of the game. In turn, the supporters must be prepared to accept the financial problems and the limiting appeal of the game, which have necessitated a number of the changes now in operation.

Despite the positive feelings of expectancy and anticipation regarding the new era and the future of the game of rugby league, within one season potential future problems have already been exposed. It appears apparent that traditions and socio-cultural factors are especially pertinent to the game and relevant issues to be taken into account when deciding on and enforcing change.

This section concludes the results chapters of this work, which have attempted to address all of the issues pertinent to rugby league and the change to the Super League. The following chapter will analyse and discuss the results, drawing together the main findings of the research and examine possible reasons for differences between the predicted and actual outcomes of the application of the American model.

Chapter 10
Analysis

10.0 Introduction

This study examines the effect of the application of an American professional team sports model, the underlying basis for the thesis, on rugby league through an evaluation of the economic, financial and social factors related to the game. More specifically, it explores the effects of the introduction of the Super League structure and a summer season on the game of rugby league.

Chapter 10 attempts to draw together and analyse each of the empirical research components in relation to the American professional team sport model in order to determine whether its application has been successful for the game of rugby league. This chapter focuses on three main issues:

1. The outcomes of applying the American model to rugby league; Did it work?
2. An assessment of the disparity between the theoretical framework and its practical application in an attempt to explain the differences in outcome between American team sports and British rugby league.
3. An analysis to determine whether the outcomes for British rugby league could have been different if the American professional team sports model had been fully implemented

The analytical framework adopted throughout the study in order to assist in the investigation and explanation of the changes to professional rugby league is the American Professional Team Sport model, which includes three inter-related strands. The first concentrated on competitive balance within a league and the necessity for high uncertainty of outcome. The second is concerned with the impact of uncertainty of outcome on demand for the game and the third relates to the revenue streams produced through the attempted maximisation of both uncertainty and demand for the sport.

This chapter draws together the individual elements of the American model and analyses the research findings, which relate to the analytical framework. It suggests reasons why the disparity between the theory and its practical applications to British rugby league exist while the potential implications of this on future policy within the game are examined in the final chapter.

10.1 Research Objectives

Six objectives were developed to assess the changes to rugby league and the usefulness of the American model as the basis for the restructuring of the game. These are first, to examine the historical development of the sport and recognise its problems and the possible root causes of them. The second objective is to review the economics of professional team sports literature and identify the key components of the American model.

The third objective of this study examines the differences between professional team sports in the UK and US and considers whether non-market factors are important elements within British sport. An analysis of broadcasting demand is the fourth objective, which examines the extent to which it has been integrated into the American model, while objective five evaluates to what extent the model has been adopted by rugby league.

Finally, the last objective reviews the effect of the application of the American professional team sports model on rugby league and the people involved in the game. These objectives are examined within the analytical framework, used to report the research findings in this chapter.

10.2 Outcomes of the Application of the American Professional Teams Sports Model to Rugby League

This section addresses the outcomes of the application of the American model to rugby league in an attempt to determine whether the 'experiment' worked. As already discussed the position adopted by the literature is that demand for sport is determined by high uncertainty of outcome, which is considered the basis of the American professional team sports model (El Hodiri and Quirk, 1971). The aim of the restructuring by the Rugby League was to improve uncertainty of outcome within the sport in order to ensure closer competition between the teams, which would then result in a rise in demand, measurable through attendance figures.

In order to measure any change in uncertainty within rugby league it was necessary to utilise an appropriate methodology. The problem in its measurement is due to the different forms identified by Cairns, Jennett and Sloane (1986), uncertainty of match or seasonal outcome or uncertainty in terms of long-run domination by one club. Previously regression analysis has been widely used, although various methods and approaches have been adopted. However, the appropriateness of the test is dependent on the particular hypothesis being examined and due to the nature of this work, as a short-term, longitudinal, pre and post study, the approach deemed most suitable was a calculation of seasonal uncertainty using the standard deviation of win/loss percentage.

Quantitative data revealed that while Divisions One and Two saw an improvement in their uncertainty levels by 12% and 14% respectively, the Super League recorded a 20% decline. Therefore, overall the restructuring of rugby league into three divisions has resulted in a minimal reduction in uncertainty (0.5%) within the game and hence a decline in the competitive balance of the league as a whole (see Section 6.2 for further discussion). Theoretically it would seem that the greater chance of promotion or relegation due to an increase in the number of divisions, with fewer teams in each, would promote improved uncertainty, but in practical terms this appears to have had a detrimental effect on the balance within the sport. In reality, little has changed and although Wigan's dominance has been diluted, the balance within the league has not been strengthened and so the first issued to be addressed as part of objective six, the application of the American model in order to raise uncertainty of outcome has failed.

Following the framework of the American model, we can expect that the minimal reduction in uncertainty has also resulted in a decline or a stabilisation in demand for the game as suggested within the current literature (Jones, 1969; Sloane, 1971, 1980; Cairns *et al*, 1986; Peel and Thomas, 1988). To determine whether this has been the case in rugby league, the following section examines the change in demand for rugby league since the restructuring. This is identified within this study firstly in terms of the utilisation of both attendance figures at live matches and secondly through analysis of the game's television audiences.

10.3 Framework to Determine the Demand for the Game of Rugby League.

The changing nature of sports leagues means that demand can now be considered in two distinct ways. It is segmented firstly into the demand for the product, measurable through live attendance at home matches, which is the accepted determinant of demand. Secondly, in recent years, this has also begun to include broadcasting and audience figures. The coverage and revenue that television has provided demonstrates its increasing influence on sports. However, within the literature this failed to be fully integrated into the USA model and so despite the lack of any clear methodology to measure the effects, the demand for televised coverage of rugby league is explored within this section, while the impact of broadcasting income and its distribution are examined and discussed later within this chapter.

10.3.1 Attendance Demand

From the attendance data utilised to determine demand for rugby league during the ten-year period 1990 to 1999, it appears that despite the reduced uncertainty, there has been a rise in attendances. Sloane (1971) suggested that when over domination occurs spectator interest may be substantially reduced but despite Wigan's superiority having subsided the increase in attendance has been only minimal, with a 5% improvement, equivalent to 172 extra supporters per game over the four years the Super League has been in existence. Overall, demand for the game has remained relatively stable, as attendances have neither risen dramatically nor reached the levels achieved pre Super League.

The implementation of the new league structure plus the move to summer rugby, which many fans have not adjusted to, has failed to attract sufficient additional support, resulting in the beneficial effects being inequitably distributed. The greatest rise can be attributed to clubs in the Super League (10.9%), while those in Division Two, as one may expect, exhibited an overall decline in average attendance of 11.6%. This reveals a growing divide between those at the top and bottom, with interest centred on the elite. However, not all clubs within the top flight were successful in expanding their level of support. Although clubs like Bradford, Leeds and Castleford saw their gate figures increase by 51%, 27% and 25% respectively from 1996 to 1999 most witnessed a decline, signifying a dramatic rise for a minority and emphasising the growing imbalance between clubs.

In order to rectify the situation, the sport was restructured again in 1999 with a reversal back to two divisions and a rise in the number of fixtures, a deliberate move by the Rugby Football League to raise revenue through attempting to improve the competitiveness of the game. Additionally, the recent merging of teams for example, Sheffield and Huddersfield, perennially lower placed teams in the Super League may eventually result in the beneficial effects of an improved competitive balance for the league, once the structure experiences a period of stability.

However, in 1998 a new play off-system, akin to that in Australia was introduced, again an instrument utilised to improve the league's competitive balance. Such a mechanism would according to Noll (1974) serve to reduce the importance of uncertainty of outcome and so could explain its lack of significance to rugby league and hence the rise in attendance despite a fall in uncertainty.

Ultimately, the results regarding the significance of uncertainty in determining the level of demand for British rugby league appear to be somewhat inconclusive, suggesting that either uncertainty of outcome is not an important factor of demand or that it is important and the marginal improvement in attendance can be attributed to actions of individual clubs for example through marketing, rather than the changes made to the game as a whole.

10.3.2 Broadcasting Demand

Although uncertainty of outcome has always been measured by demand for live matches (Bird, 1982; Schofield, 1983; Jennett, 1984; Cairns, 1983), due to the present rapidly changing environment within professional sport, broadcasting demand is now an important issue for consideration. One of the criticisms placed on the current literature is the American model's failure to identify and incorporate recent changes with respect to broadcasting demand. This research firstly examined any change in the amount and type of rugby league coverage due to a switch from predominantly terrestrial to satellite coverage, which showed an increase in terms of the number of games and hours transmitted. This can in the main, be attributed to BSkyB's satellite coverage that resulted in live games being broadcast at least twice weekly throughout the season. However, the main issue is the broadcasting demand for rugby league, which despite its increased transmission has actually declined.

Since 1992 demand for televised rugby league had been increasing with over 49 million watching the game on television during the World Cup year of 1995, however since 1996 and the move to BSkyB, audience figures have plummeted and now stand at 5.8 million for the year 1999, a drop of over 43 million since 1995.

It could be suggested that this is attributable to the limited potential audience of BSkyB, which does not provide the nationwide coverage offered by terrestrial broadcasters, and has also caused the other major sports in Britain, football, rugby union, golf and cricket, similar problems with falling viewing figures. However, when comparing like for like, pre and post Super League audiences on the BBC, demand has still declined for the televised game.

This has further implications for the sport as the concern is for the detrimental, long-term, knock-on-effects of reduced exposure, which may lead to a curtailing of interest in a game that most people can no longer watch on a regular basis. This may manifest itself through a possible reduction in attendances at live matches and a further reduction in audiences although perhaps more worryingly are the long-term implications, which might be more severe, with problems associated with a lack of future support.

The 'efficiency argument' introduced by Boardman and Hargreaves-Heap (1999) and discussed in detail within the literature review seems appropriate for British rugby league. They suggest that it is through television that interest in the game is maintained, during the match and for sometime after, the event is talked about. However, by moving to satellite coverage less people will watch and enjoy the sport, thereby reducing the 'conversational good' of the game.

Less people talking about an event means less interest is generated, which can result in a reduction in attendance. The biggest danger is that a lack of television exposure by BSkyB to a younger population means a lack of support from future generations to watch and follow the game, and may also cause a failure to provide the new stars of the future (Gratton and O'Keeffe, 1999). From this study, it is already evident within rugby league as both the demographics of supporters who attend live matches (Chapter 9.3.2) and those who watch on television (Section 7.5) show that the game has an ageing supporter base and a failure to attract new fans could result in an even greater decline of the sport in the future.

This is also supported by figures from the amateur rugby league authority, BARLA (1999), which indicate that the number of open age players is falling. There is therefore, concern regarding whether sufficient people will be interested enough to take up the game and so not only has the application of the American model failed to raise support through the gate or via audience figures, it has also contributed to further questions regarding the actual future development and survival of the sport.

Ultimately this could result in a loss of both television coverage and income, as broadcasters rethink the suitability of the game to the station. Through this research, this trend is already evident and is seen to be occurring within rugby league after only four years of satellite broadcasting, an issue discussed in more detail within the following section.

Finally, within the American model, it was predicted that an increase in demand should also raise revenue and profit. This is examined in relation to the financial situation of rugby league and the impact of the investment on the clubs is also discussed.

10.3.3 Financial Statements

The trend evident within rugby league prior to Super League of growing financial problems has not been altered by recent changes to the game. Due to a lack of any improvement in attendance, revenue from gate receipts has remained lower than outgoings and so income has not been raised sufficiently to challenge the growing losses of the clubs and turn them into profitable organisations.

The profit motive was a contributory factor to the game's restructuring, which together with the £87 million from the News Corporation's investment, it was hoped would stabilise the financial position of the clubs. However, this has not been the case. Despite a considerable increase in income from the BSkyB investment, the recent merging of four Super League clubs served to demonstrate adequately the reality that clubs cannot survive independently.

The financial problems stem not only from the game's regionally limited supporter base but also from the desire for winning and playing success, which still outweighs all financial considerations. There is a continuing tendency to overspend on players' wages and increases in income appear to have no bearing on the overall financial stability of the clubs concerned as a greater proportion of income is spent on salaries in attempts to secure the services of the best players.

This is confirmed by the results of this research from the financial statement analysis and compounded by the players' responses to the social survey, with nearly 43% admitting their financial positions had improved due to enhanced contracts. Therefore, despite the implementation of a salary cap, players are still receiving higher wages than pre-Super League.

It is acknowledged by McPherson *et al* (1989) that the size of live audiences at games and hence gate receipts counts for less than in the past, with teams and leagues gaining an increasingly large proportion of their revenue from the sale of broadcasting rights. It can be argued however that if demand for televised games continues to decline in the long-term, it could result in a loss or reduction in revenue as broadcasters pull out of contracts with sports leagues. This is already been seen in rugby league, only two years into the television contract with BSkyB, which was renegotiated for a further five years at only £44 million. Therefore, this leads to questions regarding how the withdrawal of the money will affect the game, which continues to lack any real stable financial base and whose member clubs have made very little progress in securing their financial positions.

10.4 Differences Between the Theoretical Framework and its Practical Application

As shown in 10.3, overall the application of the American professional team sports model failed to achieve the predicted effect on British professional rugby league. Despite the new structure, uncertainty of outcome declined and attendance rose negligibly while profits within the league failed to materialise as revenue increased but only through the television investment.

The following section aims to identify and explore the reasons for this failure, by addressing two broad objectives from the experiment. Firstly, the main similarities and differences between the theoretical framework and its practical application to rugby league and secondly, it identifies possible reasons for the failure and the inconclusive results gained from the research.

10.4.1 Similarities and Differences

Rugby league has been used in this study in an attempt to place a British sport within the model of American professional team sports, in order to establish the appropriateness of the model to the game. However, the first point of note is that the

American model was not fully, but only partially implemented and hence the changes made to rugby league are not the changes required by the American model.

There are certain key omissions and differences from the American sports model, which can be used to explain its failure in rugby league. Firstly, a major issue excluded from the American model but highlighted by the economic of professional team sports literature is the objectives of professional sports in the two respective countries. The literature assumes that American sports tend to be profit or wealth maximisers, whereas British sports are concerned more with maximising playing success or utility. The two main proponents of which have been Dabscheck (1975) and Sloane (1971, 1980). They insist that the lack of profitability in British sports (as shown in rugby league) compared to American sports suggests that teams are more concerned with winning than profits or maintaining the equilibrium of a league to ensure the survival of all competing teams and so this helps to explain the difference in policy generation and development.

Both Dabscheck (1975) and Sloane (1971, 1980) therefore identify utility maximisers as willing to buy players above their economic rent, for more than they can afford to pay in order to improve a team's success. This leads to the need for balance, although acknowledged, to be ignored in a practical sense as success is measured by on-field results. The move to Super League was an attempt by the rugby league authorities to shift to a more profit maximising approach in order to improve the often precarious, financial positions of its member clubs.

The importance of maximising profit to American sports teams is emphasised by the nature of competition and its organisation. However, due to the difference in objectives, the mechanisms used in American professional sports to profit maximise are absent from British sports. It has been argued that the close community ties and the loyalty factor attributed far more to fans in Britain than in America prevents the necessary changes being adopted. Hence, although uncertainty is important in Britain, it seems less critical due to the continued desire for success and winning rather than equality.

The greatest testimony to this was the failure of the majority of supporters to accept the introduction of franchises or the merging of teams. Although the use of franchises is a common occurrence in America, utilised to reduce financial pressure, this type of operation is unheard of in Britain. However, due to the financial problems in British rugby league, certain clubs have been forced to merge or move to new locations, while new franchises have also been installed in an attempt to expand and make the game stronger.

In spite of this, unlike in America, the concept of geographical relocation and the introduction of new clubs from outside the traditional area was not a success as all of the franchises introduced since 1996 have failed to become established. Therefore, the expansion policy introduced in order to place teams in the most suitable locations where demand is deemed to be greater, did not bear fruition. This could be attributed both to a lack of tradition on the part of the new emerging teams and the desire to maintain traditions between towns and the clubs that represent them.

The differences between American and British sports in terms of organisational structure have also been highlighted within this work by the failure of the restructuring to produce a rise in uncertainty. This has meant that the game remains significantly different from that of a league with 'perfect competitive balance'. One reason for this, which needs to be considered when trying to apply an American model to British sports, is it may be due to the structural differences, which exist between British and U.S. sports leagues. Within American professional sport, there is usually only one league or the league is 'hermetic' as described by Hoehn and Szymanski (1999) with the divisional system utilised in British league, not evident. This refers to a closed league, with only one division like the NBA, and hence the promotion or relegation mechanism is superfluous, un-required to determine the movement between the divisions.

In contrast British sports tend to be open in nature operating in leagues and organised into a number of divisions, so it could be argued that the introduction of an American style league would result only in a rise in uncertainty for the top division. It is unclear and can only be suggested that the application of the model was primarily to benefit just the top division, the Super League, and hence the reason why a divisional breakdown was included. However, whether the increased uncertainty was expected to benefit only the top division remains unimportant, as the restructuring still failed to promote increased competition in the Super League.

A notable point regarding the optimising of uncertainty within American sport is that despite the utilisation and enforcement of certain restrictions and controls to ensure equilibrium is maintained, American sports leagues themselves still also differ significantly from the ideal ratio value of 1 (Table 10.1).

As American sports leagues have demonstrated growth, through both expansion and profitability, this could lead to the suggestion that uncertainty of outcome is not as important in determining demand for the game and ultimately profit maximisation, as the current literature advocates. It may also be the case that the controls imposed by American sports leagues are sufficient to allow the maintenance of the clubs and the continued success of the league.

Table 10.1 Average Ratio of Actual over Idealised Standard Deviation

League	Ratio
American League	2.20
National League	2.12
National Basketball Association (NBA)	2.43
National Football League (NFL)	1.66
National Hockey League (NHL)	1.95
British Rugby League*	2.22

Adapted by Quirk and Fort, 1997

*1990-1999

Apart from the NBA, American sports leagues remain more competitively balanced than British rugby league and so it could be argued that there is failure on the part of the game's governing body to enforce stringent enough restrictive controls. There may also however, be other determinants of demand as suggested by Jennett (1984) that although increased long-run uncertainty of outcome may be necessary to secure a league's future, it is unlikely to be sufficient. Therefore, as league balance is far more equal amongst sports clubs in America, additional factors may be at work within British sports, which serve to reduce the uncertainty.

One of these factors identifiable within the literature is that American sports leagues operate as cartels (Noll, 1974). This is related to the need for independence among clubs to ensure the maintenance of a league's structure, through which competition is arranged. As explained in Section 3.2, leagues tend to operate along the lines of formal cartels, as a club requires its opposition to survive in order to ensure its own survival. Schofield (1982) identified five main functions of cartels. These are restated to determine the differences in structure between British professional rugby league and American professional sports.

The first is to control the size and organisation of the league. British leagues including rugby league are administered under the auspices of a hierarchical governing body, which makes decisions regarding size, any type of restructuring and the number of divisions.

The second purpose of the league acting as a cartel is to defend against external competition. Although the emergence of rival leagues is evident in America and more recently in Australia with Rupert Murdoch's Australian Super League competing alongside the Australian Rugby League (ARL), this has not occurred within British rugby league since the breakaway from rugby union in 1895. The Rugby Football League does however work to prevent the incorporation of new teams, if it is thought that they would destroy the balance of the league or detrimentally affect the game and its established clubs. Similarly, when new clubs evolve the governing body makes the decision whether to integrate them into the league dependent on whether they are positioned in a geographical location deemed suitable in terms of their potential support and revenue generating capacity.

Both in terms of product diversification and improvement through the continued changing of rules, the Rugby Football League satisfies the third objective of a sports cartel and it also works to attract additional, supplementary sources of income from broadcasting and sponsorship. Prior to Super League, the Rugby Football League acted the same as an American league. Each club was affiliated to the governing body with a representative from each club on the board, giving them all an equal right to vote and make decisions regarding issues of structure and policies concerning the organisation and management of the game. However, since the start of Super League despite primarily working as a cartel, fundamental errors were made. These relate to the two final and most important objectives of the cartel, which are to promote equality across the league in terms of both labour and product markets through the utilisation of various restrictive practices.

Firstly, with the start of the new Super League structure, the top echelon of the game has become removed from the lower division as the sport was divided into two factions with the formation of a breakaway organisation.

The first, known as Super League Europe (Ltd.) comprised all members of the newly formed Super League while the remaining clubs in the first and second division, became known as First and Second Division Association (FASDA). This split led to differing voting rights for teams with those in the Super League allowed four votes, double that of the first division clubs. Accompanying this split was also a reduction in collaboration between clubs with the launch of several fragmented policies by each group. This has ultimately led to an obvious shift in the balance of power in favour of the Super League clubs and to significant differences between the American model and its practical application to rugby league. These differences are related to various practices and policies determined by the body of club representatives making up the leagues, to control the balance between member clubs.

The first major difference from the American model was the equalisation of revenue distribution. Unlike America, where each club receives equal amounts of revenue from the sale of national broadcasting rights, the BSkyB money was divided unequally between members, depending on their league finishing positions during the last winter season. Therefore, revenue sharing policies of the rugby league have tended to favour those clubs that are members of the Super League.

However, not only was there a significant difference between the distribution of revenue between division, with the top clubs in the Super League gaining £900,000 while those in Division two received only £150,000, but there was also a clear split between clubs in the same division. Therefore, the failure to equalise revenue distribution lent itself to a widening gap between the elite in the Super League and the poorer clubs in the lower divisions. This was heightened further due to the removal of a 6% levy on clubs in the top division, which left those in Divisions One and Two without an established form of income and further hindered the equalisation process within the sport.

These restrictions deemed appropriate in America not only serve to equalise revenue distribution but also help with the equal distribution of playing talent. Within American sport, the mechanism used is a player draft but for various reasons, this control that helps to achieve and maintain equilibrium within the labour market was not utilised in British rugby league. The main rationale behind it is that it allows the weaker, lower placed teams to have the first choice of players from the American collegiate system, which is the way of entry into the professional ranks and helps to maintain the balance between competing clubs.

However, this type of structure is absent from rugby league and from the British system as a whole and so the very basis of sport's organisation and fabric is different, which as Welch (1994) states means that,

> *'There are no real restrictions on player recruitment, which results in the strong getting stronger and the weak getting weaker'.*

The difference in revenue was compounded further by the introduction of a salary cap, which was applied in order to restrain overpayment of players and prevent overspending in order to help clubs stabilise their financial accounts. Although Cairns *et al* (1986) identified a maximum wage control as being largely dismantled, this type of restriction has been utilised in the NBA since 1984 and in the NFL since 1974 (Hoehn and Szymanski, 1999). More recently in Australia, each rugby league club has a salary cap of £1.2 million, although in the British game a different system was used. The implementation of the salary cap was to allow club to spend a fixed percentage of income from all sources on player payments, starting with a cap of 51% in 1997, reduced to 50% in 1998 (Tunnicliffe and Walker, 1999). This means that every club has a different salary cap figure defined as 50% of a club's salary relevant income (Waudby, 1993), which includes all money from television rights, gate fees and donations.

Hence, despite the cap appearing an adequate enough control in theory, the problem in practice is that teams may over predict their income for the forthcoming year and the result may be overspending on salaries, which the clubs cannot afford. Similarly, it also enables the more successful clubs, which attract greater levels of income to continue to buy up the superior playing talent. With the investment from BSkyB, it was hoped that clubs would utilise the money to stabilise, but as the income has increased, a greater proportion of revenue has been spent on salaries.

Although turnover for all clubs increased considerably in 1996 due to the first allocation of BSkyB money, the majority of case study clubs still retained losses in the year. The proportion of club revenue derived from gate receipts has been steadily reducing and only the increased broadcasting revenue has eased the serious financial plight. The continuing tendency of clubs to overspend on wages has meant that even the considerable increase in income has had no bearing on the overall financial stability of the clubs concerned. As Welch (1994) summed up,

> *'The problem is whenever a club receives more income, this often goes on increased payments to players or to reduce overdrafts'.*

Therefore, the product controls implemented at the start of the Super League in 1996 have not been adequate. This has led to the failure of the game to achieve the expected outcomes and rather than closing the gap between clubs, served only to polarise them further.

Lastly, whereas in America, professional sports are shown on cable television, which is watched by the majority of the population, in England the limited viewing audiences for satellite television has led to a reduction rather than an improvement in exposure for the game. Broadcasting on terrestrial television however offers sport and its sponsors access to a potentially larger audience and also guarantees the viewer can see major sporting events for a minimal fee. Hence, the sale of rights, although financially more lucrative than that obtainable from terrestrial channels, has served to reduce the coverage of the game and instead removed it from the popular media domain it enjoyed previously.

Combined, the exclusion from the British game of the draft system, its failure to equalise the distribution of revenue, a lack of franchise movements or success and the fundamental differences in league structure are all key areas that have been disregarded, and this has proved crucial in contributing to the failure of the model to be fully implemented and ultimately to provide the positive outcomes predicted.

The final section within this chapter draws together the differences in objectives between professional sports organisations in the two respective countries and attempts to explain whether if fully implemented, the model would have been successful when applied to British rugby league. In addition suggestions are offered as to the reasons for the differences and the implications of social and cultural factors are discussed.

10.4.2 Could the Outcomes have been different if the American Professional Team Sports model had been fully implemented?

From the results obtained from this research it can be suggested that the failure of the application of the model to rugby league can be attributed predominantly to its only partial implementation. Therefore, firstly the observation is made that rugby league is not the same as the American model. The question of why has already been discussed, highlighting the fundamental differences in structure, ideology and organisation between professional sports in America and Britain. However the question of whether full implementation would have produced very different results is harder to quantify.

It seems appropriate to suggest that the differences between sports league in the two countries are significant and as British sports are unlikely in the near future, if ever, to adopt all of the mechanisms used by their American counterparts, the full implementation of the model into British professional sports is never likely to be achieved.

One of the fundamental differences that cannot be altered is the limited supporter base of rugby league compared to American professional team sports. Teams in the USA are considerably removed from each other in terms of location, which limits the possibility for substitution by consumers and so helps clubs maximise profits. However, due to the close proximity of teams in England, the potential likelihood for substitution is much greater as more than one team is often found within a city, for example, Sheffield United and Sheffield Wednesday, Manchester United and Manchester City. This serves to reduce the possible market share for each club and so fails to promote profit maximisation. In rugby league, most clubs have a strong brand name but their strength is only evident within their local area. When this was challenged by the Rugby Football League's 'merger policy' there was strong protests from supporters. There may therefore be problems associated with further franchise movements or even whether existing fans would continue to identify with and support a team some distance from its historical origin.

Nevertheless, if the model had been adopted exactly it appears from the results of the social survey and the reaction of supporters to the merging of clubs that full implementation would have only served to further alienate fans due to the extent of change required. The introduction of new franchises from outside the game's time-honoured boundaries like Gateshead also caused outrage amongst supporters as they were seen to be contributing to the diluting of the relationship between communities and their clubs, which serve as focal points and the basis of local attraction.

Previous work by Stone (1981) indicated that without sufficient infrastructure and bedrock support, professional rugby league would find the maintenance of their fan base difficult and expansion impossible. This was reiterated by Davies *et al* (1995) whose work on rugby league highlights the game's deep cultural roots, with clubs providing local identity and pride in the communities they represent. They insist that the game must be loyal to its bedrock supporters and true to its traditions if it wants to survive. Therefore, it can be argued that the close community ties and the loyalty factor attributed far more to fans in Britain than in America prevents certain changes from being introduced.

Despite this, the move by rugby league to adopt an American style league meant the game was forced to dismantle a one hundred year structure and change to a summer schedule in order to comply with Rupert Murdoch's plans for a Super League. It appears that commercial considerations clearly came before those intrinsic to the sport itself.

The fact that football, rugby league, rugby union and cricket in Britain are still seen as sports rather than businesses or industries differentiates them from the American professional team sports, which are run predominantly for profit. The social and cultural differences that exist plus the fundamental differences in structure combine to prevent total implementation of an American model to British sport.

The emphasis within rugby league remains on performance success with winning as the main goal, a fact intrinsically linked to traditional ties with the local communities. The implementation of the complete American model would neglect to consider social and cultural factors, which are regarded as highly influential in people's decision to attend matches. Therefore, if the model had been fully implemented, it may still have failed to achieve the predicted outcome due to a combination of social constraints and the limited supporter base of rugby league compared to American professional team sports.

10.5 Conclusion

Overall, demand for the game in terms of audience and attendance appears to be one of decline or at best, has displayed no change since before Super League. The expansion of support predicted by the Rugby Football League not only on a national but international stage has failed to materialise and with less, nation wide televised coverage, there appears little opportunity to turn the situation around.

The limited supporter base for rugby league compared to American professional sports meant that the game was always likely to struggle to expand regardless of the policies implemented. The American model for professional team sports may be the most suitable in order to ensure survival and financial success for both the leagues and clubs. However due to the 'social importance' of sport in British society, this may never fully be achieved and a total profit maximising situation never be realised. Therefore, social and cultural factors must be accepted as important elements of demand and integrated into a model for sport in this country. Such factors are intrinsically linked with club objectives and hence the need for assimilation of both into a model for rugby league.

Chapter 11
Conclusions

11.0 Introduction

The final chapter concludes and summarises the main themes of the study. It considers some of the implications of the findings and its potential contributions to research. This thesis is predominantly about rugby league, changes to its organisation and their effects but was designed as a case study and a vehicle for exploring broader issues relating to professional team sports.

It is divided into three sections, with the first providing a summary of the research, its aims and the methodology utilised to examine them, plus the findings of this study. The second section illustrates the wider implications of the research to the sport of rugby league, with potential future problems highlighted. The appropriateness of the American model to professional team sports in Britain is reviewed plus the non-economic factors and the model's only partial implementation are considered. Finally, the last section identifies the opportunities for further research within this field.

11.1 Summary and Review

Although the volume of literature on professional team sports is increasing, and has done so considerably during the period of this study, there are many areas within the field, still under-researched. This study has concentrated on the professional sport of rugby league using the American model of professional team sports as its framework. Both theoretical and empirical aspects of professional team sports have been drawn out but in particular the impact of uncertainty of outcome on demand for the sport has been reviewed, although both financial and social factors have also been considered.

Chapter 1 involves a synopsis of the aims and the major issues of the study. The circumstances surrounding the selection of the research matter were explained in relation to recent events, which have changed the essence of the sport of rugby league. Parallels with the move to a Premiership in football and an outline of the main elements of the American model were also included. There were seven main objectives of the study; the first was to examine the historical antecedents of rugby league, to set the changes to a Super League in context.

To review the economics of professional team sports literature and examine the key components of the American professional team sports model was the second aim. Differences between team sports in the USA and UK were investigated including the significance of non-economic factors and the problems for rugby league of adopting the American model were highlighted. The fourth objective was to examine broadcasting demand for the sport and explore its integration into the American model. Objective five addresses the extent to which the American professional team sports model has been adopted by rugby league, while objective six examines and analyses the effects of its application on the sport. Finally, an overview and summary of the organisational structure of the thesis was provided.

Chapter 2 concentrated on the history of rugby league, which was regarded as a highly relevant consideration to the study. In order to understand the significance of certain changes made to the game by the Rugby Football League, an appreciation of the traditions and the relationship between 'club and community' was deemed necessary. The game's one hundred-year history is reviewed, from its conception in 1895, after the split with rugby union, to its Centenary in 1995, when the intervention of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation resulted in a remodelling of many aspects of the sport. The chapter concludes by highlighting recent problems faced by the majority of the member clubs of the league and the potential risks if long-term solutions were not promptly found.

The professional team sports literature was critically reviewed in Chapter 3, the majority of which is American in origin. This chapter was divided into three main research fields, the first concerned with uncertainty of outcome and its importance in determining demand for professional sports. The second section explores the theory of cartel behaviour and the necessity for interdependence and co-operation between members of a league, in order to maintain competitive balance. The application of product and labour market controls to sports leagues are assessed in the third section and their importance in preventing inequality between clubs was reviewed. Within this chapter, the American professional team sports model is defined and differences in the market controls utilised by America and Britain are discussed.

Finally, although research in this area is relatively limited, the differences in objectives of sports clubs, in both Britain and America are outlined. The issues of broadcasting demand including revenue generation, implications on sports and their stakeholders are discussed and television's impact on attendance, network externalities and the shift to satellite television coverage in Britain are evaluated.

The fourth chapter involved an examination of rugby league from its Centenary in 1995. Comparisons between football, with its move to the Premiership and rugby league's shift to Super League are examined and the influence of Rupert Murdoch and the fight for control of Australian rugby league are discussed. The actual changes made to rugby league are presented and the extent to which the American model has been applied to rugby league is discussed, highlighting the differences and similarities between sports in the two countries.

The methodology applied to this study is the basis of the fifth chapter, which is divided into five strands. Firstly, the approaches used to investigate the economic and financial considerations are examined and secondly, those pertaining to the social and cultural factors, relevant to rugby league, are discussed.

To establish the effects of the application of the American model on rugby league, the uncertainty of outcome, attendance figures and audience viewing data were collated and analysed. Financial accounts were then examined utilising the Wilkinson-Riddle and Barker, Balance Sheet Analysis programme (1988) for the case study clubs to determine whether revenue has increased. Two social surveys were also carried out, pre and post the introduction of the Super League structure, investigating in depth, the attitudes and opinions relating to the changes.

Chapter six explored longitudinal changes in levels of competitive balance within rugby league, revealing that there had been an overall negligible increase in uncertainty since the start of the re-structuring in 1996. This provides a basis from which to determine whether 'a decrease in uncertainty would result in a decline in attendance' (Sloane, 1971). The assessment of total and average attendances, pre and post-Super League demonstrates that despite the fall in uncertainty, attendance figures had actually improved. However, as one may expect, the rise in attendance, was relatively minimal and accentuated by a dramatic increase in the attendance figures for three or four successful clubs.

Only a minority of clubs actually improved their attendance figures and less still, improved them significantly. Further analysis concentrating on individual divisions revealed that repeatedly, those at the top were stimulating greater levels of support. Nearly every team in Divisions 1 and 2 experienced dwindling gate figures, a fact substantiated by the analysis of case study clubs.

Overall, this set of results revealed that the decrease in uncertainty of outcome and the negligible rise in attendance meant the application of the American model to rugby league had failed to achieve the outcomes predicted within the literature.

Demand for the game was continued in Chapter 7, which discussed the topic of broadcasting demand. The selling of live broadcasting rights to BSkyB emerged as one of the most problematic issues for the Rugby Football League. Although there was increased transmission of rugby league on television, audience numbers have declined which through the utilisation of football and rugby union data can be partly attributed to the shift to satellite coverage.

Despite wanting to raise awareness and interest for the game, the average viewing figures on BSkyB have seen a dramatic reduction compared to those of the BBC before 1996. Additionally however, since the start of Super League, average viewing figures on the BBC have also declined. This demonstrates that overall television demand for the game has fallen and cannot be attributed solely to the limited, potential audience of the satellite broadcaster.

The shift to satellite television has also caused additional problems regarding network externalities due to its limited audience reach. In the future subsequent reductions in exposure for the game could lead to a further fall in attendance, loss of broadcasting revenue and a declining interest in the game.

Chapter 8 investigates in detail the financial position of the game of rugby league, concentrating on both its governing body and its member clubs. This was carried out to ascertain the effect that the restructuring and the investment have had on the game's financial position. The impact of the investment from BSkyB is discussed and its possible future effects in terms of revenue provision are considered.

An analysis of the nine case study clubs' accounts was used to identify their economic status and serves as an indicator of the financial position for the remaining clubs within the game. The analysis provided a very worrying picture, with all clubs, recording substantial losses, showing no signs of growth and providing debt ratios, which are a serious cause of concern. For some however, financial problems have already caused their withdrawal from the rugby league, namely Prescot Panthers and the newly formed teams in 1996, Paris St. Germain and South Wales. More recently, certain clubs have been forced to merge.

While the previous three chapters have been primarily concerned with the economic aspects of professional team sports, the final results chapter concentrated on the non-economic impact of the changes. Social surveys were carried out before the start of the Super League in 1996 and at the beginning of 1997, after the completion of the first summer season. Club officials, supporters and players from both Super League and non-Super League clubs were questioned regarding the major issues surrounding rugby league at the time.

A major worry highlighted by the survey results was the game's ageing supporter base. Most of those questioned had been attending rugby league matches for over 20 years with the majority over the age of 50. The lack of young spectators therefore is significant, as this could have, not only a possible detrimental impact on the numbers of potential professional players coming into rugby league but it also casts doubts over future support for the game.

Chapter 10 examined in detail the research findings in relation to the analytical framework adopted from the American professional team sports model. The framework is made up of three strands, all inter-related to ensure the survival of professional sports leagues.

The first strand relates to the uncertainty of outcome hypothesis, the belief in which, has shaped the very structure and nature of many professional sports leagues. This element distinguishes between uncertainty of outcome within the game of rugby league before and after the introduction of the Super League structure.

Strand 2 examines the notion indicated by the current literature (Jones, 1969; Cairns *et al*, 1986; Peel and Thomas, 1988) that a fall in uncertainty of outcome suggests an accompanying reduction in demand for the game. This is identified within this study through the utilisation of both attendance and live audience figures.

The majority of league members witnessed declining attendance, although this was offset by the rise in gate figures for three Super League clubs, Bradford Bulls, Castleford Tigers and Leeds Rhinos. A similar outcome was derived from the broadcasting demand data, with reduced interest in the game on television and a move to satellite coverage causing additional problems on network externalities.

The predicted outcomes of the model are addressed within the final strand of Chapter 10. Financial statements were analysed to determine whether the restructuring had resulted in increased revenue for all member clubs within the league. Incorporated into this was the need for collaboration between clubs to both form and preserve a sporting league structure. The acceptance of this theory leads then to an appreciation of the necessity for the cartelisation of leagues, so that competitive balance between competing teams can be sustained. In turn, the league's equilibrium is maintained through the utilisation of a multitude of controls installed by the cartel on both labour and product markets.

11.2 Research Implications and Contributions

This study has the potential to make some practical considerations in terms of possible future modifications to the sport of rugby league and to British sport in general. However, perhaps more importantly it includes a number of implications for contemporary debate about the managing of professional team sports and the appropriateness of a global model. The remainder of this chapter positions the study's findings in the context of the wider literature pertaining to professional team sports and looks at some possible models and notes feasible directions for future research.

11.2.1 Implications for Professional Team Sports

This study is unique as it is the first attempt to apply the American model of professional team sports to a British game. It has been suggested by Gratton and Lisewski (1981) that the practice of contrasting the American and British sporting scene is dangerous as it leads to the conclusion that British professional sport would solve many of its problems by adopting the business practices of North American sport. This research appears to support the previous work of Gratton and Lisewski, as despite the adoption of an American system into rugby league, its failure to achieve the predicted outcomes, due in part to the model's only partial implementation also identifies significant differences between sports in the two countries.

However, despite this the relevance of the professional team sports literature to the professional sports industry cannot be ignored. The breadth of this research, which examines a diversity of issues means that it contributes to a continuing discussion about the distinctions between American and British team sports and offers areas for consideration by governing bodies and clubs alike.

As this thesis concentrates solely, to the exclusion of any other sports on rugby league, it seems fitting that observations related directly to the game are highlighted. Work on rugby league should obviously be continued and built on in the future as lessons from such empirical research can be learnt and adopted in practical terms by managers, chief executives, club owners and the policy makers. For the sport of professional rugby league, the implications of this research are extensive. Firstly, since the offer from News

Corporation of the financial investment, it seems apparent that the Rugby Football League with no thought of the long-term picture has offered short-term solutions to problems. The implications of such changes should be evaluated and proposals for the future should be developed in order to safe guard the survival of the sport.

It appears however, that regardless of alterations to the game's structure or patterns of play, demand for the game remains limited. Its traditionally narrow supporter base, located primarily in the northern counties of England contributes to its repeated failure to expand and attract new followers from non-conventional areas.

This has been exacerbated by the lack of nation wide television coverage for the sport due to its switch to satellite coverage, which is failing to market and promote the game adequately outside its 'home' regions. Owing to this, it is imperative that the governing body works to maintain interest in its strongholds and takes into consideration the views of its supporters before making any additional, radical changes, which may serve to alienate fans further.

The seemingly obvious necessity for financial stability has, as indicated by several of the chief executives questioned in this study often been overlooked by the desire for playing success. This leads to an unbalanced league plus increasing financial problems. The inadequate installation of certain restrictions to maintain equilibrium between competing teams in the market and the failure of the governing body to monitor the salary cap indicates the need for more stringent supervision of such controls if they are to be sufficiently effective.

Additionally, the selling of the live television rights by rugby league to BSkyB demonstrated the extent of revenue generation obtainable from broadcasters, which needs to be considered in relation to the extent of national coverage available. The limited audience reach of satellite stations should not be ignored and the obvious implications of this on the marketing and publicity of the sport should be determined prior to future decisions being made.

This is also true of further changes to the sport, as the move to Super League, due to the lack of consultation with either players or especially supporters led to an immediate protest by fans against the new structure. It seems important from the survey work that social and cultural factors appear highly influential in determining people's decisions to attend games. This is especially crucial before the future integration of new franchises or the merging of established clubs, which may serve to not only weaken their own fans but could also weaken the appeal for long-standing supporters of opposing teams.

The importance of social factors to the business of sport in England is recognised and so among the contributions of this present study is its attempt to integrate ethnography into sports economic research. Undoubtedly, one of the main reasons why British researchers have rarely attempted to link economic and social factors in a model for professional team sports is the lack of such investigation within the American research. However, it is apparent from this study that there is a need for the assimilation of both social and cultural considerations into a model for rugby league. Additionally, these factors must be accepted as important and strong elements of demand as they are intrinsically linked with club objectives of success on the field and so require integration into a model for professional sport in Britain as a whole.

The absence of such non-economic elements from the American framework renders it to a great extent, unsuitable for use within a British sporting context. It fails to account for the differences in objectives and although uncertainty is important in Britain, it seems less critical, due to the continued desire for success and winning rather than equality. The American model for professional team sports may be the more suitable in order to ensure survival and financial success for both the leagues and clubs. However, due to the 'social importance' of sport in British society, this may never fully be achieved and a total profit maximising situation never realised.

In addition, American sports have for several decades depended highly, if not solely on income from broadcasting. National television rights are equally divided between clubs but due to the vastness of the country, regional television rights, unheard of in the UK, are negotiated on an individual basis by individual clubs. In contrast the potentially enormous amounts of revenue available from television is only just beginning to be exploited in Britain. Hence, the income from this source and the issues surrounding broadcasting are relatively new, although continually increasing in a rapidly changing environment.

Income from broadcasting and the profit maximising approach of American sport has resulted in the introduction of various controls over income from various sources and its distribution. The early literature in particular addresses the question of whether sports clubs should be classed as businesses like in any other industry or whether sport should be exempt from legal ramifications due to its unique nature. However, in America, it has been accepted that sport cannot be classed as a business, which has allowed the use of restrictive practices to attempt to retain a balance within a league. Similarly, the distribution of playing talent is also manipulated, in order for equilibrium in the league to be assumed.

In contrast, British sports leagues tend to be open in nature, organised into divisions, with the promotion and relegation mechanism used to determine movement between the upper and lower divisions. Regulatory measures are, although evident, limited in comparison with those used in America and often do not serve to equalise the distribution of income, instead often benefiting the top clubs at the expense of those in the lower leagues. The movement of players is also much freer, partly due to the utility approach and partly due to EEC directives, enforcing the free movement of labour between the member countries.

The final section of this thesis identifies possible areas for further research and considers how the findings of such work can be used practically within professional team sports to improve both their structure and management in the future.

11.3 Future Research

The purpose of this research is an examination of the effects of restructuring on rugby league. As the scope of this is vast, the study opens up several possibilities for future research. Firstly, although the emphasis has been on rugby league, this work has provided a basis for the development of a British model for professional team sports. As a result of the majority of literature being predominantly American in origin, analysis of demand for British sport and the differences between the major games has tended to be of a rather limited nature. Therefore, it would be both appropriate and useful in the future if more attention was paid to the British sports of rugby league, rugby union, football and cricket. Very little work has been done on British professional team sports and their currently, rapidly changing nature strengthens claims for further examination, that would be beneficial for the development of a more accurate professional team sports model for Britain.

The accepted basis for economic research of professional teams sports is the American model, although the fundamental differences between American and British sports needs further work. These differences contribute to differing market restrictions and the relationship between utility maximisers, which also requires additional, suitable investigation.

Additionally, the use of both product and labour market restrictions to equalise balance also requires greater attention, having failed to secure any real detailed analysis. Such controls are utilised in Britain to a far lesser extent than is evident in America and have received only limited observation. The recent Bosman ruling allowing greater freedom of movement for players has only had limited coverage, despite altering the very basis of the labour restrictions traditionally used within British sports.

Furthermore, with the increasing influence of television in British sport, the absence of specific empirical work related to the impact on live attendance and the shifts in viewer demographics is considered another area for possible future research. Increasingly the globilisation of sport is resulting in a breakdown of traditional boundaries. This, in the main is not due to any effort from fans but stimulated by the vast millions from television, that have become part of sport, and the potential revenue which they will offer in the future. This is especially pertinent to British sport at the present time, with dramatically increasing amounts of revenue being pumped into sport by satellite companies, resulting in often, drastic changes to the equilibrium of sporting structures.

There are also now increasing changes to sport fuelled primarily by the growing influence of television and the competition between broadcasters for the financial benefits gained from the owning of sports rights. In both British and American literature, broadcasting's impact has been largely overlooked, with no methodology constructed for use within empirical research. The demand determinants for rights have been ignored within the professional team sports literature and have only been addressed to date within the media and broadcasting literature. The dramatic emergence in Britain, of satellite television within the last fifteen years requires more extensive work and although it is currently the topic of much debate a more detailed assessment would be beneficial in the development of a more accurate professional team sports model.

Apart from the broadcasting issue, the other area identified from the present study as being important to British sports is the impact of non-economic factors on the managing and running of sports leagues. Due to the differences already discussed between sports in the U.S.A. and U.K., the American model fails to integrate such factors, which have been deemed important to Britain. Differences in objectives of sports clubs in the two countries and the close ties that British teams have with their communities, unheard of in America have been identified as reasons for this omission.

The recent changes in Britain, which are breaking down traditional ties and links with communities, are continually turning sport into a more business-like, profit orientated industry. The shift from a utility to a profit maximising approach is becoming increasingly evident within British sport and the effect of this on the 'social role' sport plays, especially in the long-term needs to be addressed.

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Super League Clubs

Halifax Blue Sox

Halifax started the century in the old second division but soon gained promotion after finishing runners-up at the end of the 1990-91 season. Since then, they have retained their Division 1 (Super League) status. Attendances have in general remained fairly stable, although after promotion, average attendance increased dramatically by 2,723, due to their inclusion in the top flight. In the following years they remained in mid table positions, but from 1994, crowd numbers again began to decline, despite their best performance, finishing third in the Centenary season of 1995-96.

The introduction of Super League saw Halifax remain in the top division, finishing sixth out of the twelve clubs. Attendances did improve although only marginally from the Centenary season by 426 on average per match, an increase of 6.4%. Attendance values for the club are displayed in Table H1, with the average difference for each year also included.

Table H1. Total and Average Attendance for Halifax Blue Sox – 1990-1999

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	62,416	93,520	83,872	99,120	84,004	46,571	55,912	59,485	62,368	67,257
Average	4,458	7,194	6,452	6,608	5,600	4,657	5,083	5,408	5,670	4,484
Difference	- 1,463	+2,723	- 729	+156	-1,008	-943	+426	+325	+263	-1,186

Season 1997 again saw a small improvement after a move from their traditional home Thrum Hall to the Shay, which they were to share with the city's football club. The following year proved to be the clubs most successful for many years, as they finished third in the league table. This was accompanied by an increase in gate figures with total attendance up just over 9,000 on the previous year.

The following season saw the third successive increase in attendance for the club. Their performance on the field also improved, as they finished third out of twelve teams in the top division, reaching the newly installed top five play offs. Despite not winning the Grand Final, they still had their most successful season in Super League. Season 1999 however, saw their attendance decline by over 1,000 supporters per game, as the team finished only ninth out of fourteen clubs.

For Halifax Blue Sox the Super League appears to have resulted in an overall decrease in average attendance, pre and post Super League, as shown in Table H2. A decline, in total attendance can be explained by the difference in the number of games, whereas the average attendance has shown a fall of over 700 per game since the start of Super League.

Table H2. Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	1996-1999
Total Attendance	469,503	245,022
Number of Games	80	48
Average Attendance	5,869	5,105

In addition to the change in attendance, the following table presents the difference in win/loss percentage for Halifax in every season since 1990. This is based on the number of games won per season, the higher the figures the more successful the club in terms of their on-field performance.

Table H3. Win/Loss % for Halifax, Pre and Post Super League

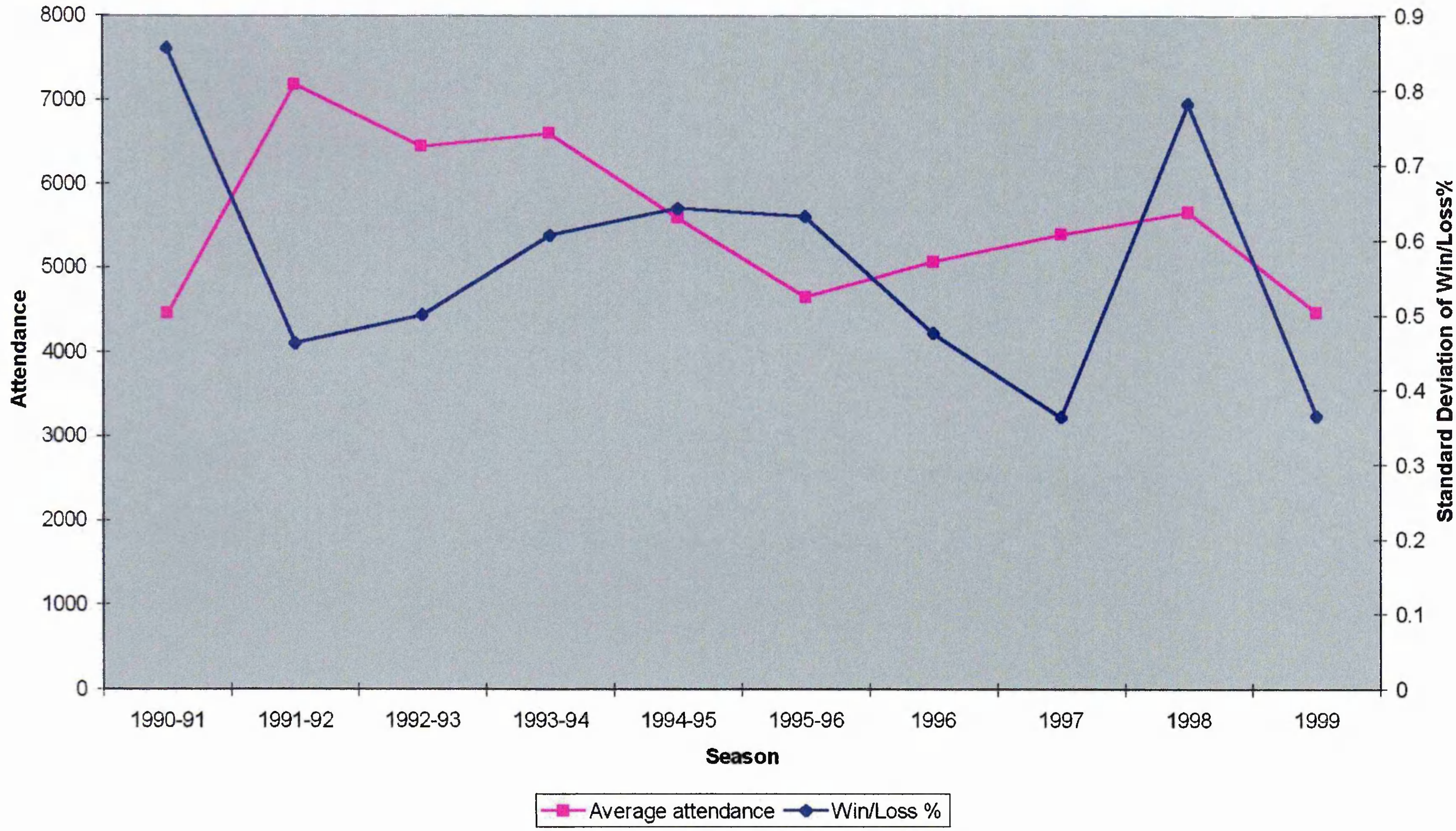
	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Win/Loss %	0.857	0.462	0.500	0.607	0.643	0.632	0.476	0.364	0.783	0.366
Division	1	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL

As demonstrated, apart from season 1990-91, when Halifax came runners up in the second division and gained promotion to the top flight, there success on the pitch has bee fairly steady, with mid-table positions becoming the norm. The first two seasons of Super League saw their number of winning games reduced, although in 1998 they finished third in Super League. This is demonstrated by their high win/loss %, as they won 18 out of 23 matches, although the following season they failed to maintain this level and returned to a mid-table position.

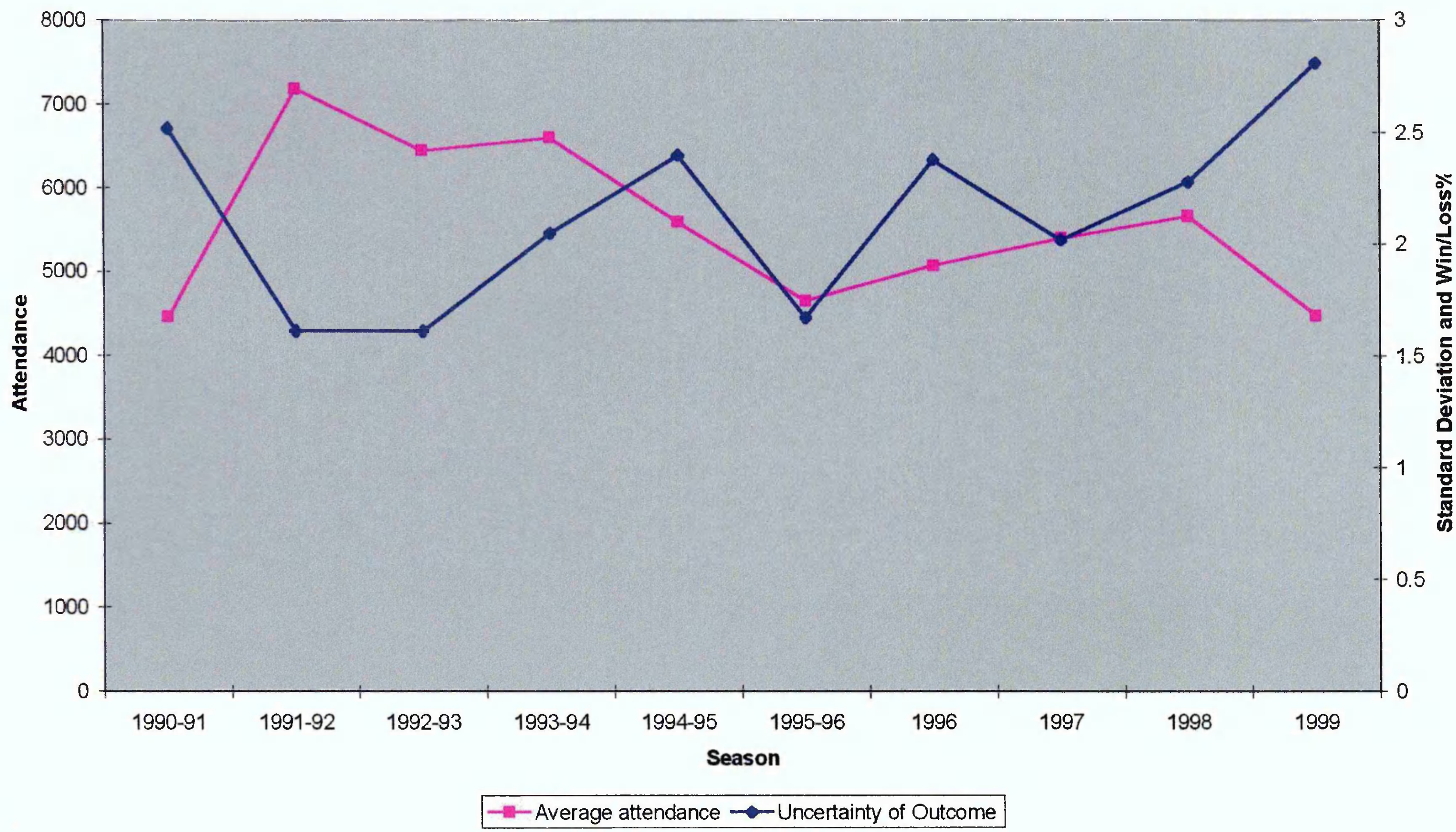
In general, Halifax has only added slightly to their previous gate figures and has failed to attract significantly more support. The dispersion of their average attendance ranges from a high of 7,193 in 1992-92 to a low of 4,458 the previous year, despite this being their most successful season. Although the introduction of Super League did encourage more spectators, with average attendances rising from the previous year, this was only minimal and figures never increased to over 6,000.

There does not appear any real pattern to the attendance figures, although the highest average attendance of the Super League era was recorded during their most successful season in 1998. Apart from this, both attendance figures and win/loss %'s tend to fluctuate, with an increase in on-field success not always been reflected in attendance data. Overall, attendance figures have not reached those of the early 1990's, and since then, despite a rise in 1998, there has been a further fall in attendance of 12%, since the start of the new system in 1996.

Graph H1. Halifax Blue Sox - Average Attendance and Win/Loss%



Graph H2. Halifax Blue Sox - Average Attendance and League Uncertainty of Outcome



The capital city has, in the past twenty years had a rugby league club, playing under various names, but it has never been very successful, despite a wish from the Rugby League authorities for such a club to succeed. Problems with establishing a stable home ground and more importantly, lack of support has resulted in minimal crowds throughout their existence, compounded by a lack of any real success on the field of play.

The club began life in 1980 as Fulham and it was not until 1994-95, when it was bought out by millionaire businessman Barry Maranta that it became known as the London Broncos. Maranta was already part owner of the Australian equivalent Brisbane Broncos, buying London with the hope of emulating Brisbane's success.

However, their only real success came in 1993-94 when they were the beaten finalists in the old second division, Premiership competition. The introduction of the Super League and their inclusion in the top flight, despite finishing second from bottom in the Centenary season gave the club a real opportunity to excel and make their mark on the sport.

Since 1990-91, a London based team had always been in the second division, with their top finishing position coming in 1993-94 when they finished third out of thirteen clubs. Static attendance figures reflected their lack of on field success, with the average never exceeding 760.

Table L1. Total and Average Attendance for London Broncos – 1990-1999

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	7,804	10,134	7,753	11,013	11,357	23,865	62,699	55,840	39,326	45,500
Average	557	724	554	734	757	2,386	5,699	5,076	3,575	3,033
Difference	-284	+167	-170	+180	+23	+1,629	+3,313	-623	-1,501	-542

During the 1994-95 season, the club adopted the name London Broncos and gained success, resulting in their promotion to Division 1 in the Centenary season. The response was dramatic with a large rise in attendance, on average up to 2,386, an increase of 1,630.

The announcement of a Super League in 1996, with a club's inclusion dependant on finishing position during the centenary season meant that despite finishing second from bottom, London were included in the new look Super League. The increased publicity surrounding the new structure and their membership in the top division led to an immediate increase in attendance during the first season of over 3,000. This was aided by a top four finishing position, with the team winning over half of its matches but also the handing out of free tickets for local school children, which helped to boost crowd figures.

During the second Super League season there was a decline in total attendance of nearly 7,000, equating to an 11% decrease, despite the club finishing runners up in the league. The decline in team performance, winning only 10 out of 23 games, the following season was accompanied by a decline in attendance. The fall in crowds during 1988 was dramatic, with a decrease of over 16,500 in total attendance, equating to a reduction of 1,501 on average. This meant an actual average reduction in attendance from the start of Super League, of 35%.

Despite the original satisfaction with attendance figures, the trend for the club now seemed to be rather worrying a fact noted by the rugby league authorities. They expressed their concern about London's attendance in 1998, as early as June 24th, when at that mid season point their average attendance was as low as 2,480 (Bradford Telegraph and Argus, June 24th 1998). Season 1999 saw the crowds at London decrease even further to 3,033, which meant the club had recorded declining attendance figures every year since the beginning of the Super League.

Table L2 demonstrates the average difference in attendance, pre and post-Super League. Although, London's crowds have been declining since 1996, they still remain higher than those previously recorded during the early 1990's due to the team's inclusion in the Super League.

Attendance has been heightened in two main ways, firstly because bigger clubs with larger travelling support help to increase crowd figures and due to the improved quality of opposition, more supporters following London are encouraged to attend games.

Table L2. Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	1996-1999
Total Attendance	71,926	203,365
Number of Games	82	48
Average Attendance	877	4,237

In terms of their on field performance, London Broncos had their best seasons during 1993-95, finishing third and fourth in the old second division. Because of this and the restructuring into three divisions during the Centenary season, they were included in Division 2. A poor season however did not prevent their inclusion into the Super League at the end of the final winter season of 1995-96.

Table L3. Win/Loss % for London Broncos, Pre and Post Super League

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Win/Loss %	0.654	0.500	0.462	0.750	0.690	0.350	0.571	0.789	0.435	0.464
Division	1	1	1	1	1	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL

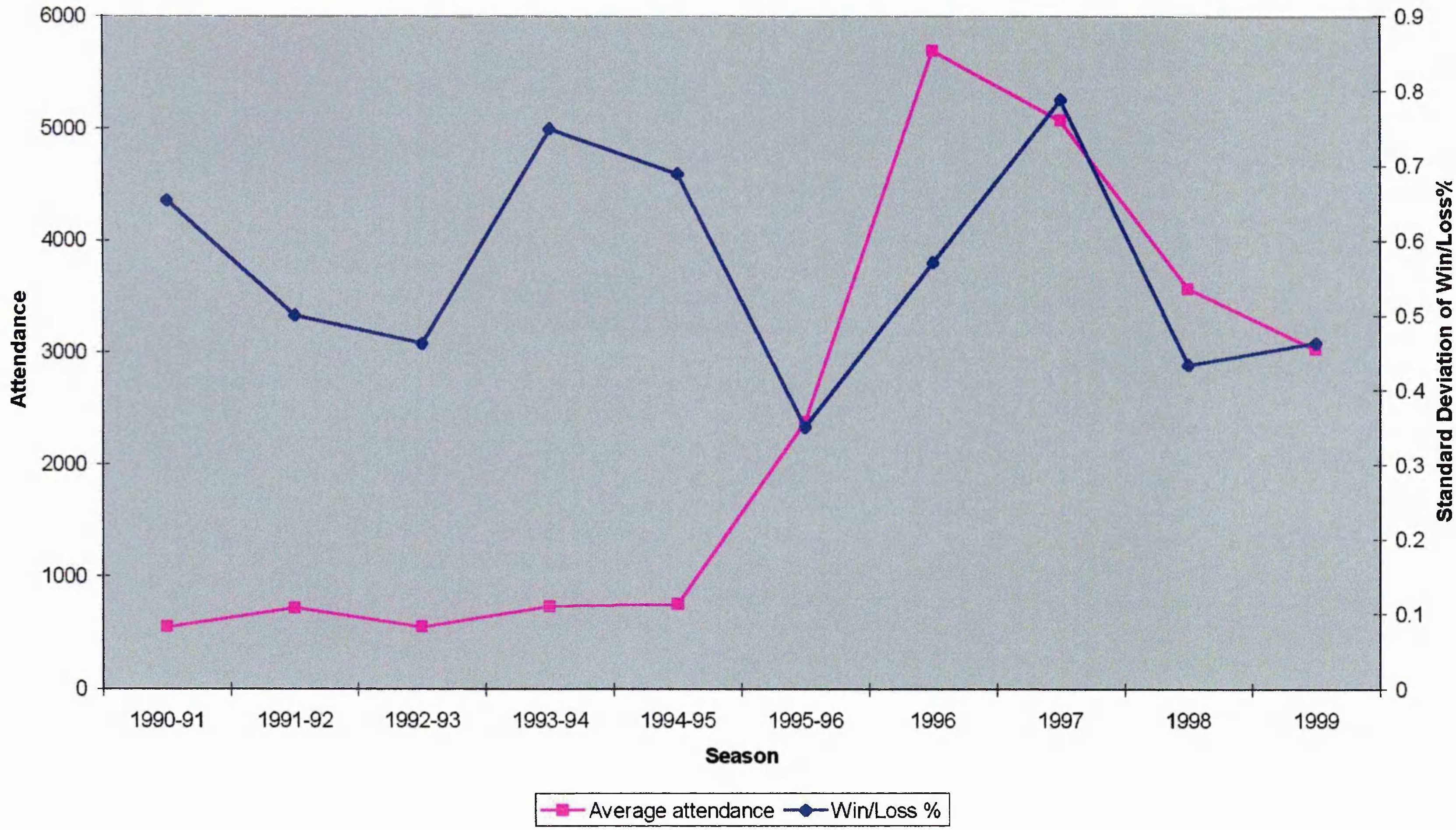
Season 1997 proved the most successful for London, as indicated in Table L3. The team finished runners up in Super League, winning fifteen, drawing three and loosing only four games. However, this success did not continue as they reached only a mid-table position in 1998 and finished eighth in 1999.

Generally, on-field success was accompanied by higher interest in the club and hence raised attendance. Those years with low win/loss %, for example 1992-93, saw the lowest gate figures. One exception was the Centenary season when, although London finished second from bottom, attendances increased dramatically, due to their inclusion in the top division.

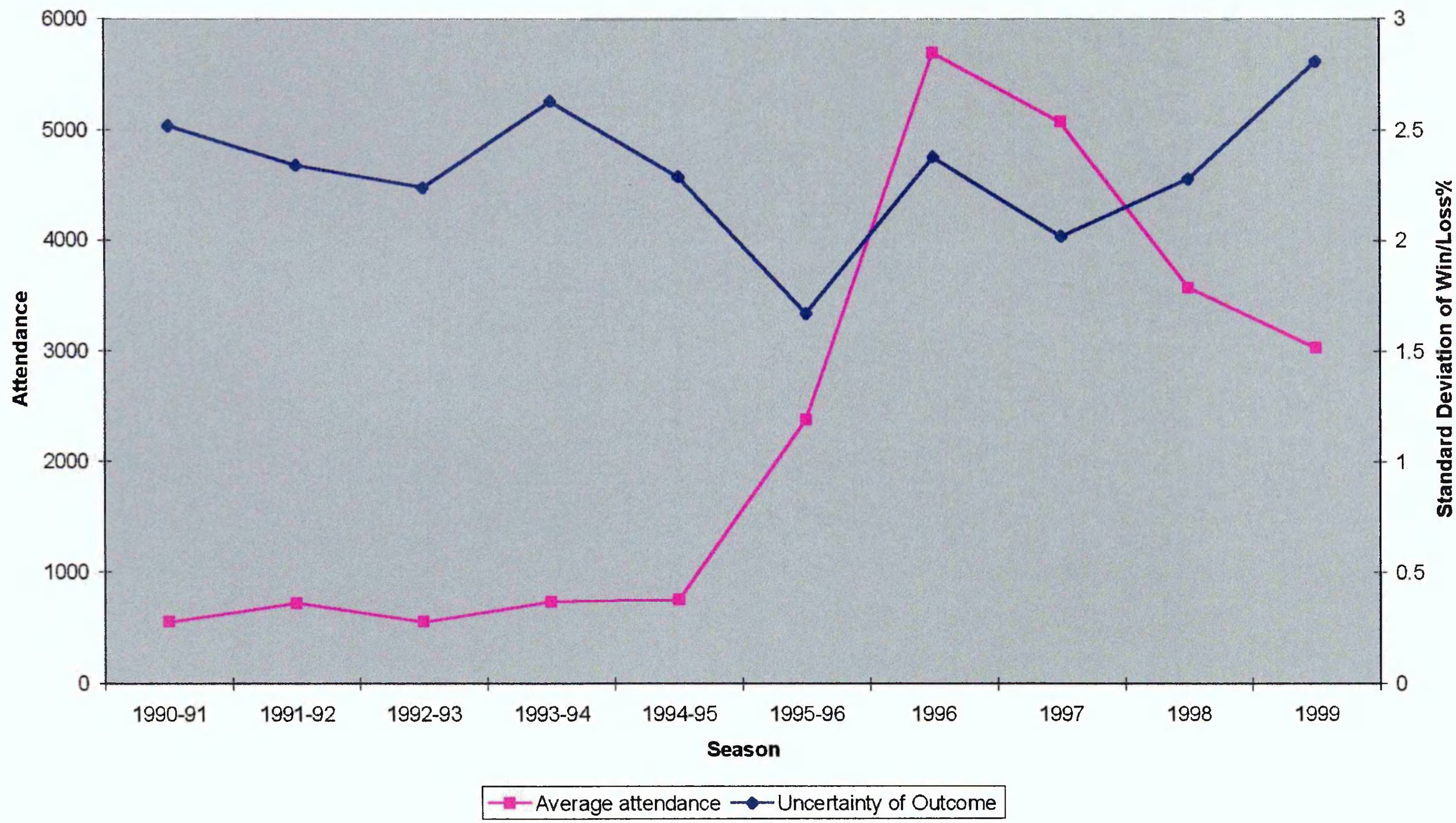
In terms of the demand for London Broncos, their inclusion in the Super League did help to encourage more supporters to the games. However, this was short-lived and apart from the first Super League season in 1996, the following years witnessed a declining trend in crowd figures. London recorded a 47% reduction in attendance figures from the start of Super League in 1996 to 1999, the most dramatic decline by any club.

The concern is that if the trend continues and London struggles to attract further support, the possibility of fast-tracking other southern, franchised clubs may be limited. If the demand for rugby league in the south of England is not accepted as viable due to lack of interest and new clubs are not expected to attract enough support, further expansion plans for the game may be halted.

Graph L1. London Broncos - Average Attendance and Win/Loss%



Graph L2. London Broncos - Average Attendance and League Uncertainty of Outcome



Sheffield Eagles

Table SE1 shows the changes in attendance for the Sheffield club over the ten-year period from 1990-1999. There was a dramatic reduction in crowd figures for season 1991-92 due to the clubs relegation from the first division the previous year into the old second division. The following two seasons saw increased yet stable crowds for the club, which declined again in 1994-5. The Centenary season of 1995-96 saw Sheffield Eagles actually increase their attendance, surprising as the majority of clubs recorded a fall in crowds during this year.

Table SE1. Total and Average Attendance for Sheffield Eagles – 1990-1999

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	52,423	35,087	39,898	44,699	39,928	31,061	49,874	47,010	44,098	53,189
Average	4,033	2,435	3,069	3,050	2,662	3,106	4,534	4,274	4,009	3,546
Difference	-7	-1,596	+634	-19	-389	+445	+1,428	-260	-265	-463

Sheffield showed a similar pattern to many other clubs from the start of the Super League, with an initial rise in attendance from 3,106 in the Centenary season to 4,534. The following seasons however, all saw a reduction in the numbers attending live games. Despite the fall throughout the late 1990's, the attendance figures still remained elevated above those prior to Super League's introduction.

Table SE2 illustrates the club's average attendance pre and post-Super League, highlighting the greater demand for Sheffield Eagles since 1996 than in the six years before. However, despite this rise, an average of 4,000 per game is considerably lower than most other Super League teams. Sheffield recorded the lowest post Super League attendance of all the teams, which have remained in the top flight since the re-structuring in 1996 (Table 6.9). In addition, apart from London Broncos, they also recorded the highest fall in attendance, of 23% from 1996 to 1999.

Table SE2. Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	1996-1999
Total Attendance	243,096	194,171
Number of Games	80	48
Average Attendance	3,039	4,045

Sheffield Eagles started the 1990-91 season in the first division but poor performances with only seven wins out of twenty-six resulted in a thirteen out of fourteen teams finishing position and relegation to the second division. Immediately the following year, the club returned to the top flight winning the second division championship, only seven years after the club was formed.

Table SE.3. Win/Loss % for Sheffield Eagles, Pre and Post Super League

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Win/Loss %	0.292	0.778	0.400	0.571	0.500	0.500	0.455	0.409	0.381	0.345
League Position	13/14	1/8	10/14	6/16	8/16	5/11	7/12	8/12	8/12	10/14
Division	SL	1	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL	SL

Since promotion in 1992-93, Sheffield have remained in the top division with their best season coming in the following season, finishing sixth in the table, winning twenty out of thirty matches. On-field performance since 1996 has seen Sheffield remain in mid-table position apart from in 1999, when they finished only fourth from bottom.

Their Championship winning season in 1991-2 actually saw their attendance figures fall dramatically from the previous season by over 1,500. This was due to the drop in divisional status, but this was reversed the following year, with the club's return to the top flight. The 1992-93 season saw an average rise per game of 634 despite the team only winning ten matches. This can be attributed to their re-introduction to Division 1, as the prospect of more attractive teams encouraged more fans to attend.

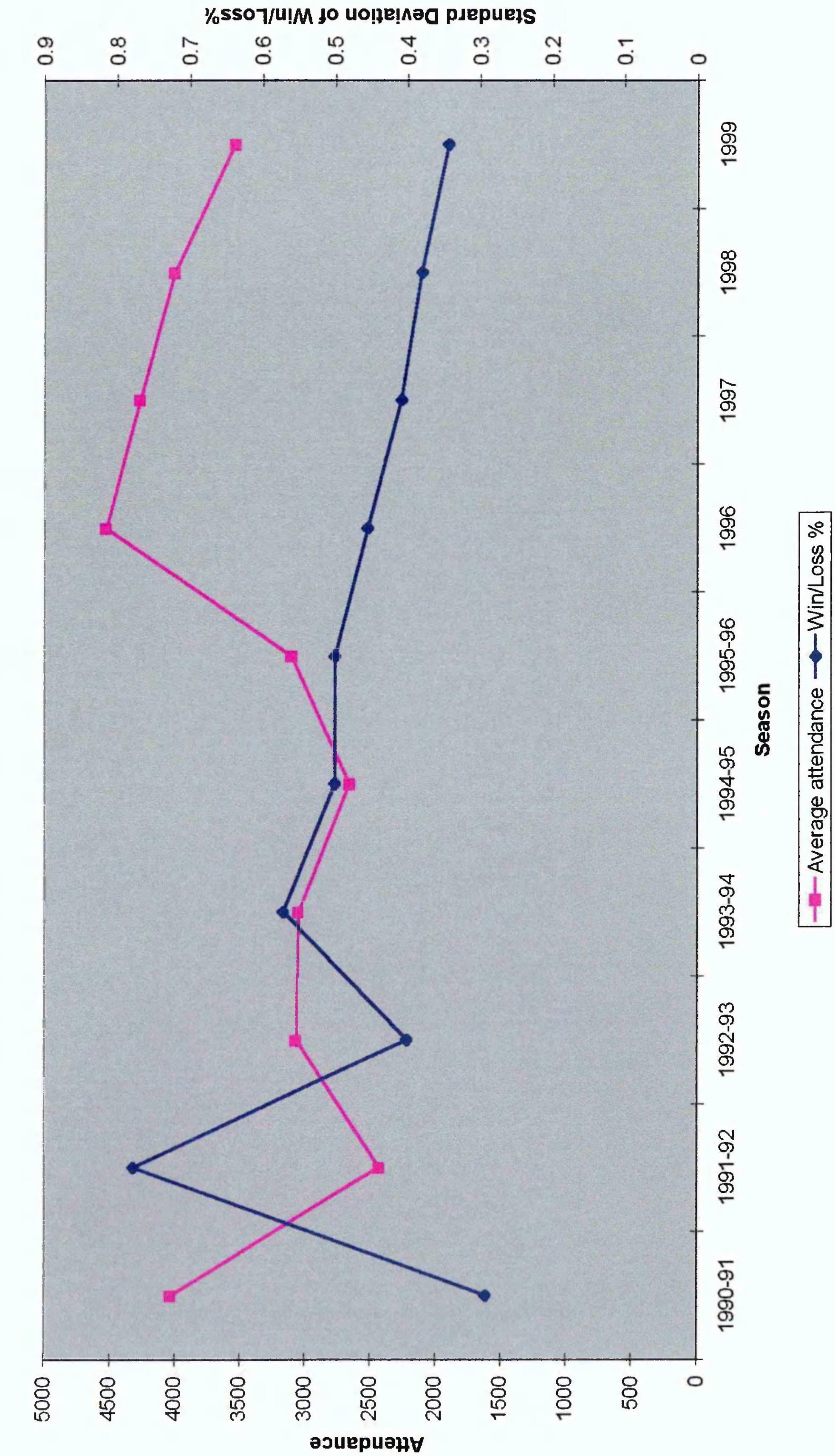
The following two seasons saw continued decline as the club only managed mid table positions despite an increase in their win/loss %. Surprisingly, unlike other clubs, Sheffield recorded an improvement in match attendance during the truncated, Centenary season of 1,507 due to an improved finishing position, fifth in the first division, the best in their history.

The Super League years not only saw steadily declining win/loss %'s as the team consistently failed to perform well on the pitch. As shown in table SE3, in 1996 the club recorded a win/loss % of 0.455, which dropped to 0.345 by 1999. This fall was accompanied by a corresponding decline in attendance, as each season saw a further reduction in crowd numbers.

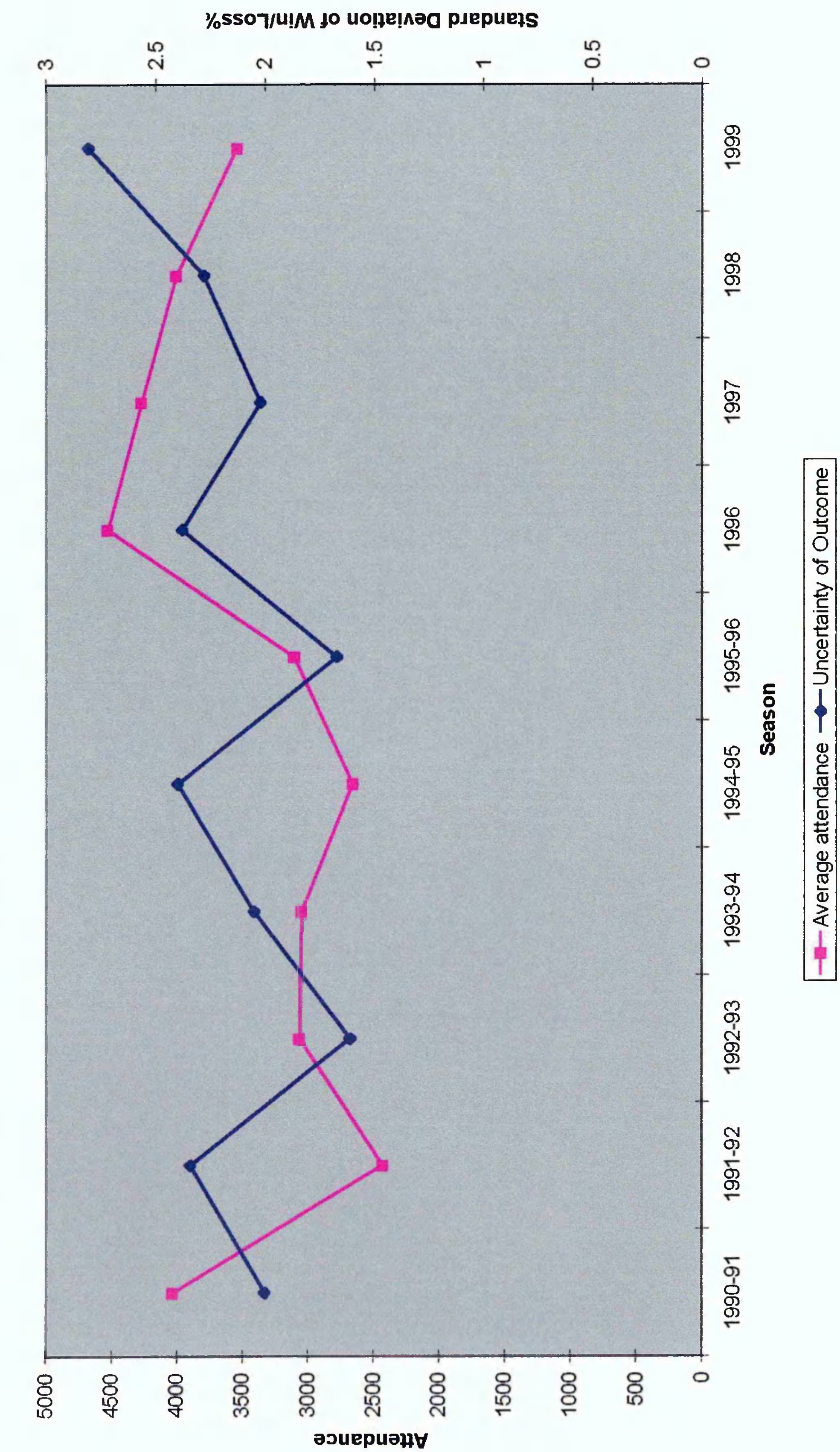
Sheffield Eagles despite not being a 'traditional' rugby league club, having only been formed in 1984, have established themselves as one of the top clubs in the rugby league. Apart from the second division title, the club has never won any major league honours and continues to attain a mid-table league position. Demand for the club has remained static during the last ten-years despite an increase in 1996. Overall, there has been no dramatic change in the number of supporters the club is attracting and likewise no sizeable shift in win/loss %.

Due to additional problems, which have been addressed throughout this study, low levels of support and a lack of any real on-field success, eventually forced the club to merge at the end of 1999 with Super League rivals, Huddersfield Giants. It is hoped that a combination of the two clubs will result in a more successful playing side and a pooling of support, culminating in higher, average attendance.

Graph S1. Sheffield Eagles - Average Attendance and Win/Loss%



Graph S2. Sheffield Eagles - Average Attendance and League Uncertainty of Outcome



Throughout the 1980's, Wigan dominated the sport of rugby league like no other club in the modern era. This trend continued into the 1990's, as they won the first division every year from 1990-96 and the Challenge cup. They were also the Premiership winners except in 1992, when they were beaten finalists and won the World Cup Challenge in both 1991-92 and 1993-94 beating Brisbane Broncos on both occasions.

Their success every year up to and including the Centenary season has meant that their crowd figures have always been very healthy, with only slight fluctuation. As demonstrated in table W1, the club has enjoyed a large supporter base.

Table W1. Attendance Figures, Pre Super League – 1990-1996

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Total Attendance	188,409	182,527	189,195	218,133	213,136	119,471
Average Attendance	14,493	14,040	14,553	14,542	14,209	11,947
Average Difference	+ 520	- 453	+513	-11	- 333	- 2,248

In 1990, Wigan attracted on average 14,493 to their games, outdrawing every other team and beating the second most popular team, Leeds by over 3,000 per match. Their gate figures remained relatively static until the Centenary season of 1995-96 when attendance decreased by 16% although this was a trend mirrored by most other clubs in the league. This was due to a reduction in the number of games and the shortened and to many seemingly pointless, final winter season before the introduction of the new summer style competition.

The stability of Wigan's attendance can be demonstrated by comparing the maximum average recorded in the 1992-93 season of 14,542 to the lowest in 1990-91 of 14,041, a difference of only 501 over the years 1990 to 1995.

Since the start of Super League however, Wigan's attendance have not been as high as in previous seasons, and declined further than those recorded in 1995-96.

A further decrease the following season saw Wigan's average attendance fall below 10,000, the lowest for over twelve years. Although 1998 saw a rise in crowds as Wigan won their first 'Super League' Championship, the increase was still not sufficient to reproduce the numbers of spectators watching the team during the 1980's and early 1990's.

Table W2. Attendance Figures, Post Super League – 1990-1996

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Total attendance	111,850	95,522	116,706	138,109
Average Attendance	10,168	8,684	10,610	9,207
Average Difference	- 1,779	- 1,302	+1,926	-1,403

Table W3. Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	**1996-1999**
Total Attendance	1,110,871	462,187
Number of Games	79	48
Average Attendance	14,062	9,629

For Wigan, the change to Super League had a detrimental effect on their attendance, with the average declining from 14,062 during seasons 1990-1996, to 9,629 for the four Super League seasons. This decline of over 4,400 a game equates overall to a 68.5% drop in attendance.

Wigan's record on the pitch had always been very impressive, as the club won every championship from 1990-1996, demonstrated in table W4. With the introduction of the Super League, many people hoped and thought that Wigan's dominating reign would come to an end and make the competition in the future more uncertain and hence more exciting.

Despite a fairly successful season, St. Helens beat them to the championship by one point, a draw with London proving to be the crucial match and the loss of the crucial two points. This was the first time they had failed to win the league in seven seasons.

Season 1997 proved even more disappointing as Wigan finished in only fourth place, loosing eight of their twenty-two matches.

The clubs fortunes changed for the better in 1998, as they became the third Super League champions. They lost only two games throughout the season and went on to win the inaugural Grand Final against Leeds Rhinos at Old Trafford.

Table W4. Win/Loss % for Wigan Warriors, Pre and Post Super League

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Win/Loss %	0.833	0.846	0.800	0.767	0.933	0.900	0.905	0.636	0.913	0.724
League Position	1/14	1/14	1/14	1/16	1/16	1/11	2/12	4/12	1/12	4/14

The club could not repeat this feat the following year, finishing fourth in the league and despite making the play-offs lost to Castleford Tigers.

Wigan's win/loss percentage remained high throughout the first seven seasons of the 1990's, attendance fluctuating between minimally from 1990-1995. The Centenary season saw a substantial reduction in attendance, commensurate with the decline in other clubs. The win/loss percentage also declined despite Wigan still finishing top of the league table.

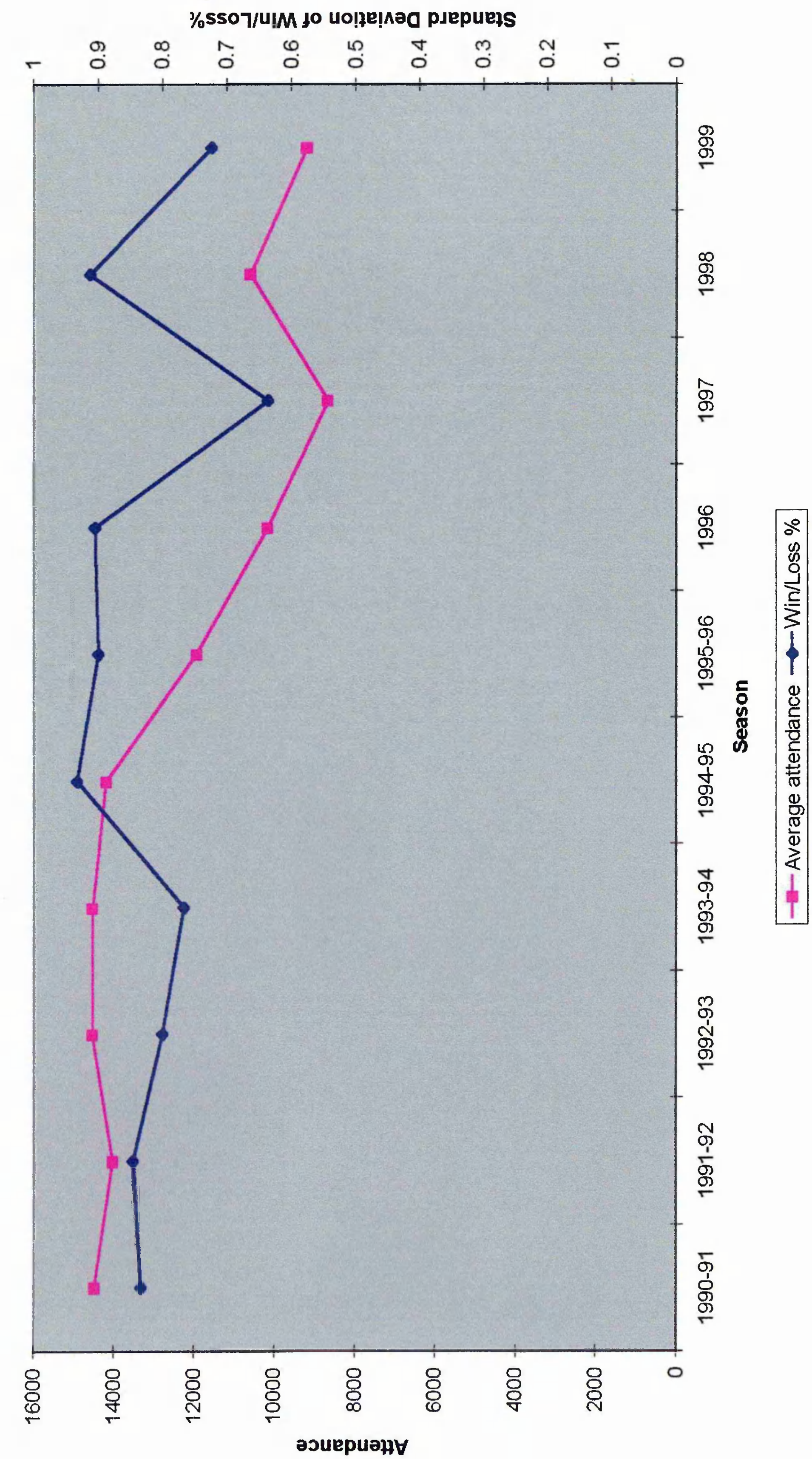
As runners-up in the first Super League season, the attendance declined as the club had, what was for them, an unsatisfactory season. The following season, 1997 saw a further decline in attendance, accompanied by a similar reduction in win/loss percentage, as the club finished only fourth, behind Bradford Bulls, London Broncos and St. Helens. The third Super League season saw attendance rise considerably and win/loss percentage as Wigan became Champions. This season saw the highest average attendance for the club since the start of Super League and the greatest win/loss percentage since 1994-95. Failure of the club to continue this success into the next season caused a reduction in both crowd numbers and win/loss percentage.

For the game of rugby league, the introduction of the Super League system but more importantly the financial assistance to allow the players at the top clubs to become full time professionals resulted in an end to Wigan's dominance.

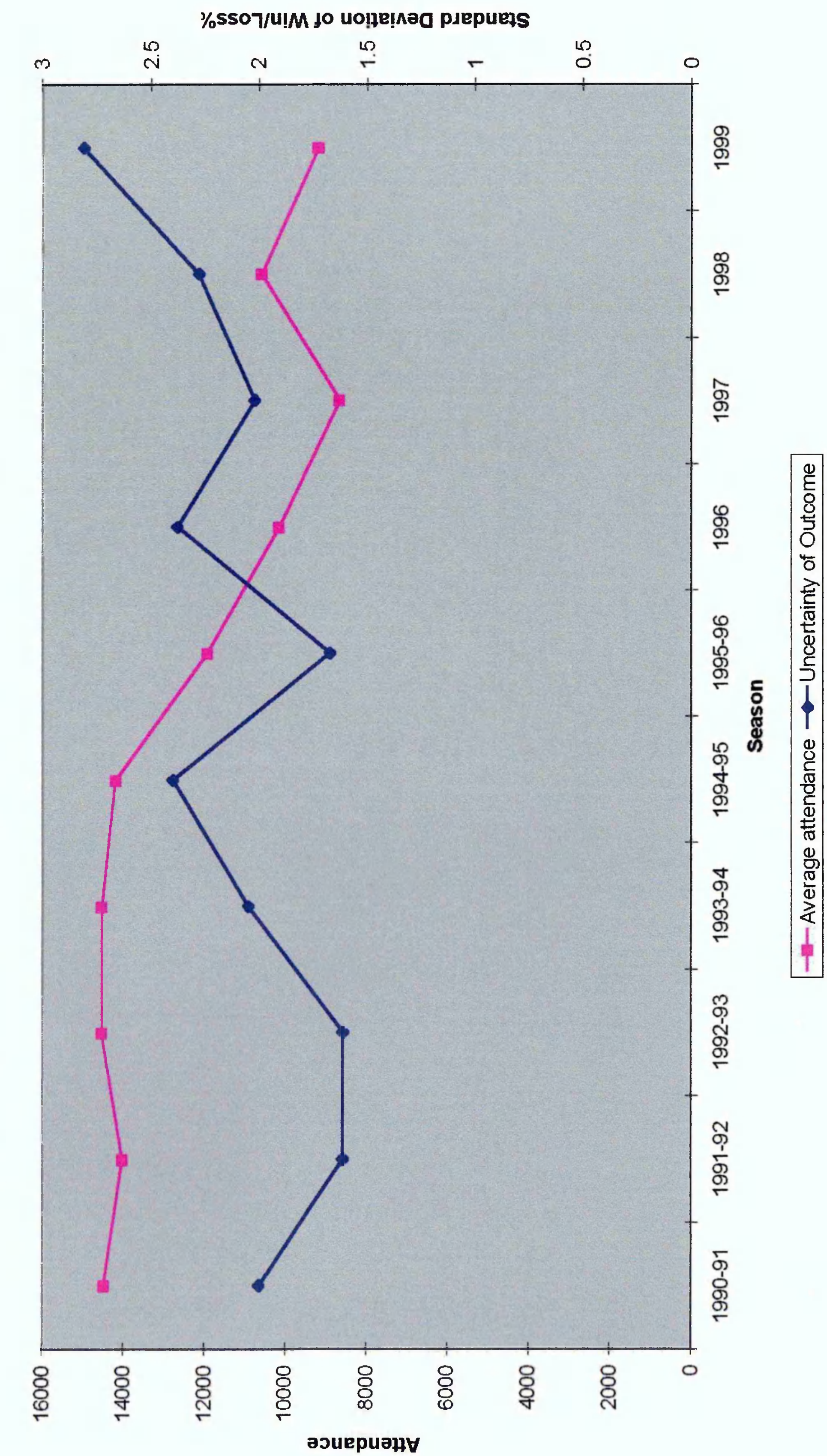
The club that had previously won the last seven Championships has only won one of the four Super League titles, with St. Helens and Bradford Bulls winning the other three between them. Due to the decline in success for the club, attendance figures have also dropped since the Centenary season. The season 1998 saw an increase in those watching the team of 1,926 per game although this was short lived, as the numbers fell the following season by 1,403.

For rugby league as a whole, the end to Wigan's dominance may have served to increase interest overall, especially for the clubs that have enjoyed on-field success. For the club itself, support has weakened and despite claiming the third Super League title, crowds did not return to their previous levels. This suggests that the strength of Wigan in terms of their playing success was a major factor in supporters choosing to attend games. However, now that their superiority has been reduced, fans are less inclined to watch and so demand for the club has declined.

Graph W1. Wigan Warriors - Average Attendance and Win/Loss%



Graph W2. Wigan Warriors - Average Attendance and League Uncertainty of Outcome



Non-Super League Clubs

Huddersfield Giants

Huddersfield has spent the majority of the last ten years in the first division (old second division, with average attendances ranging from a high of 5,142 to 1,306. A switch to three divisions in 1991-92 and due to finishing in the bottom half of the second division, Huddersfield resumed the following season in Division 3. Although attendance did increase during this season, the following year saw a reversal in the trend.

Table HD1. Total and Average Attendance for Huddersfield Giants – 1990-1999

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	18,290	29,532	27,789	33,405	44,297	24,276	33,444	37,234	56,562	55,891
Average	1,306	2,272	1,985	2,227	2,904	2,428	3,040	3,385	5,142	3,726
Difference	-328	+965	-286	+242	+677	-478	+612	+345	+1,757	-1,416

The following two seasons, 1993-95, Huddersfield recorded a rise in crowd numbers, although similarly to many other teams, the Centenary season saw attendances decrease.

The first three years of Super League saw Huddersfield's attendance increase from an average of 3,344 in 1996 to 5,142 in 1998. The next year however, attendance dropped by 1,416 on average to 3,726.

Table HD2. Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	1996-1999
Total Attendance	177,589	183,131
Number of Games	81	46
Average Attendance	2,193	3,981

The change in demand for the Huddersfield Giants, pre and post Super League is shown in Table HD2. Average attendance has increased from 2,193 to 3,981 since 1996, demonstrating that more people are now attending matches than did so before the restructuring. One reason for the rise in attendance, post 1996 is due to Huddersfield being involved in the promotion race to gain membership of the Super League. Huddersfield began the first summer season in the new Division 1, eventually gaining promotion in 1998.

Table HD3. Win/Loss % for Huddersfield Giants, Pre and Post Super League

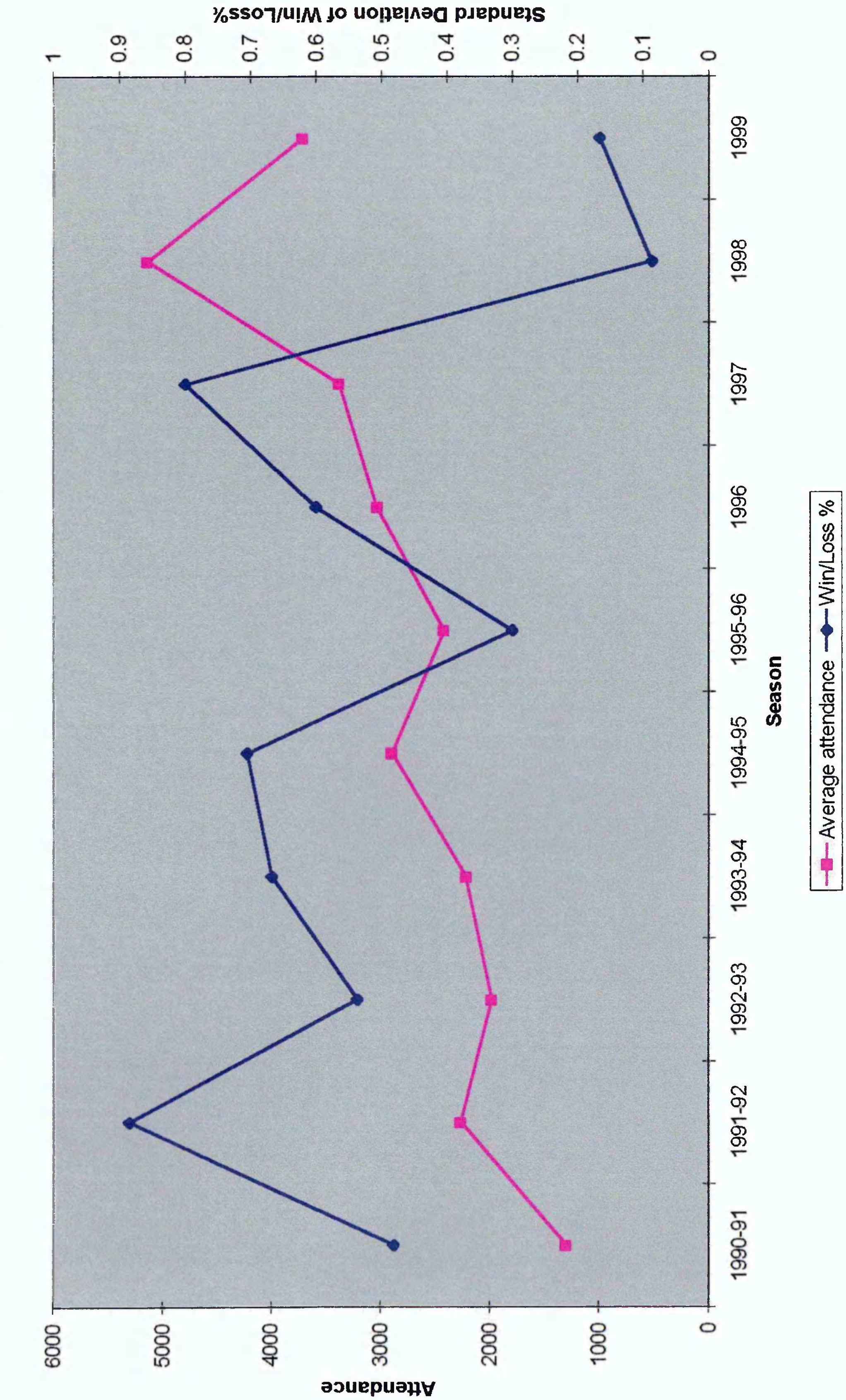
	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Win/Loss %	0.481	0.885	0.536	0.667	0.704	0.300	0.600	0.800	0.087	0.167
League Position	11/21	1/14	3/8	5/16	3/16	9/11	5/11	2/11	12/12	14/14
Division	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	SL	SL

As Table HD3 illustrates, Huddersfield won the Division 2 Championship (old division 3) in 1991-2 and recorded their highest win/loss % of 0.885, loosing only three games all season. Since then, the highest win/loss % was recorded for the second Super League season, 1997, when the club finished runners-up in the first division.

The last two Super League years saw Huddersfield Giants finish bottom of the division, with win/loss %'s of only 0.087 and 0.167. The change in the strength of their performances has often caused similar changes in the level of demand for the club's live matches. Huddersfield's promotion winning season of 1991-92 also saw a rise in average attendance of 965 from the previous year. The two other seasons when the club was in the promotion race, eventually finishing fifth and third, 1993-95 also recorded increased attendance.

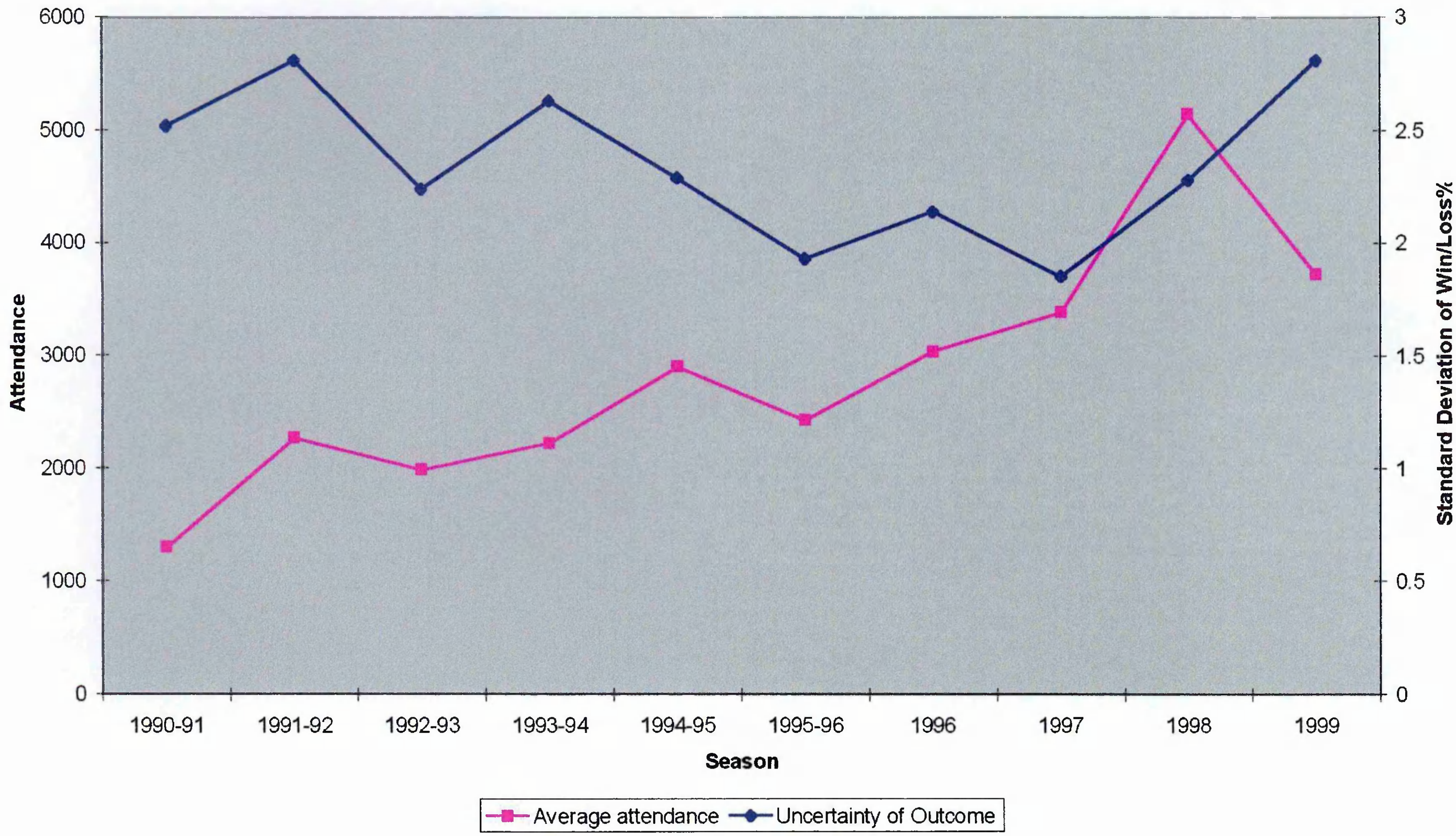
Although in 1996, Huddersfield were in the first division, attendance figures did increase as the team finished fifth, recording a greater win/loss % than in the previous year. The following year crowds increased again as the team finished second and gained promotion into the Super League. Despite poor performances in both 1998 and 1999, with the club, finishing bottom of the league on both occasions, support increased due to the team's inclusion in the top flight.

During the final summer season to date, 1999, Huddersfield's attendance decreased by over 1,400 on average, although still remained elevated due to the fight to avoid relegation. Huddersfield finished bottom only on point's difference from Hull Sharks, with their final league positions undecided up until the last day of the season. However, due to various difficulties both teams have since been forced to merge. Huddersfield with Sheffield Eagles and Hull Sharks with the new franchise, Gateshead Thunder.



Graph HD1. Huddersfield Giants - Average Attendance and Win/Loss%

Graph HD2. Huddersfield Giants - Average Attendance and League Uncertainty of Outcome



Leigh Centurions

Within the last ten seasons, Leigh have been members of the top division, twice, the first division on four occasions and in the second division four times. Due to this average attendance has ranged from a high of 3,840 in 1992-93 to a low of 1,140 in 1998. From 1991-92, attendance began to rise until 1993-94 when a fall in average attendance was recorded. This decline continued into the new Super League 'era' until 1997 when attendance rose to 1,188, a minimal drop the following season of 48 supporters per game, was reversed in 1999, with a further increase of 660.

Table LC1. Total and Average Attendance for Leigh Centurions – 1990-1999

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	24,066	43,196	49,920	50,775	23,250	11,950	12,564	11,880	17,097	25,202
Average	1,719	3,014	3,840	3,385	1,550	1,195	1,142	1,188	1,140	1,800
Difference	-2,849	+1,295	+826	-455	-1,835	-355	-53	+46	-48	+660

As Table LC1 shows attendance for the club during the years since 1996 have failed to reach the levels attained from 1991 through to 1994. It is also interesting to note that the return to two divisions in 1999 resulted in a dramatic increase in attendance for Leigh. This may be due to the increased possibility of promotion or the prospect of matches against a higher level of opposition, which has increased supporter interest and encourage more fans to attend live matches.

Despite Leigh's fluctuating divisional status, they began the Super League years in division two, the lowest division, of which they remained members until the switch to two divisions in 1999. The effect on Leigh of a switch to the summer regime was to reduce their attendance further. Except a slight improvement in 1999, as indicated in Table LC2, the new structure failed to improve crowd figures and elevate them back to pre Super League levels

Table LC2.   Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	1996-1999
Total Attendance	203,157	66,743
Number of Games	81	50
Average Attendance	2,508	1,335

An average decline of 1,173 per game meant a 53% reduction in attendance from pre to post Super League. This suggests that Leigh have failed to capture any further support since the start of 1996 and have lost over half of the spectators they had during the early 1990's.

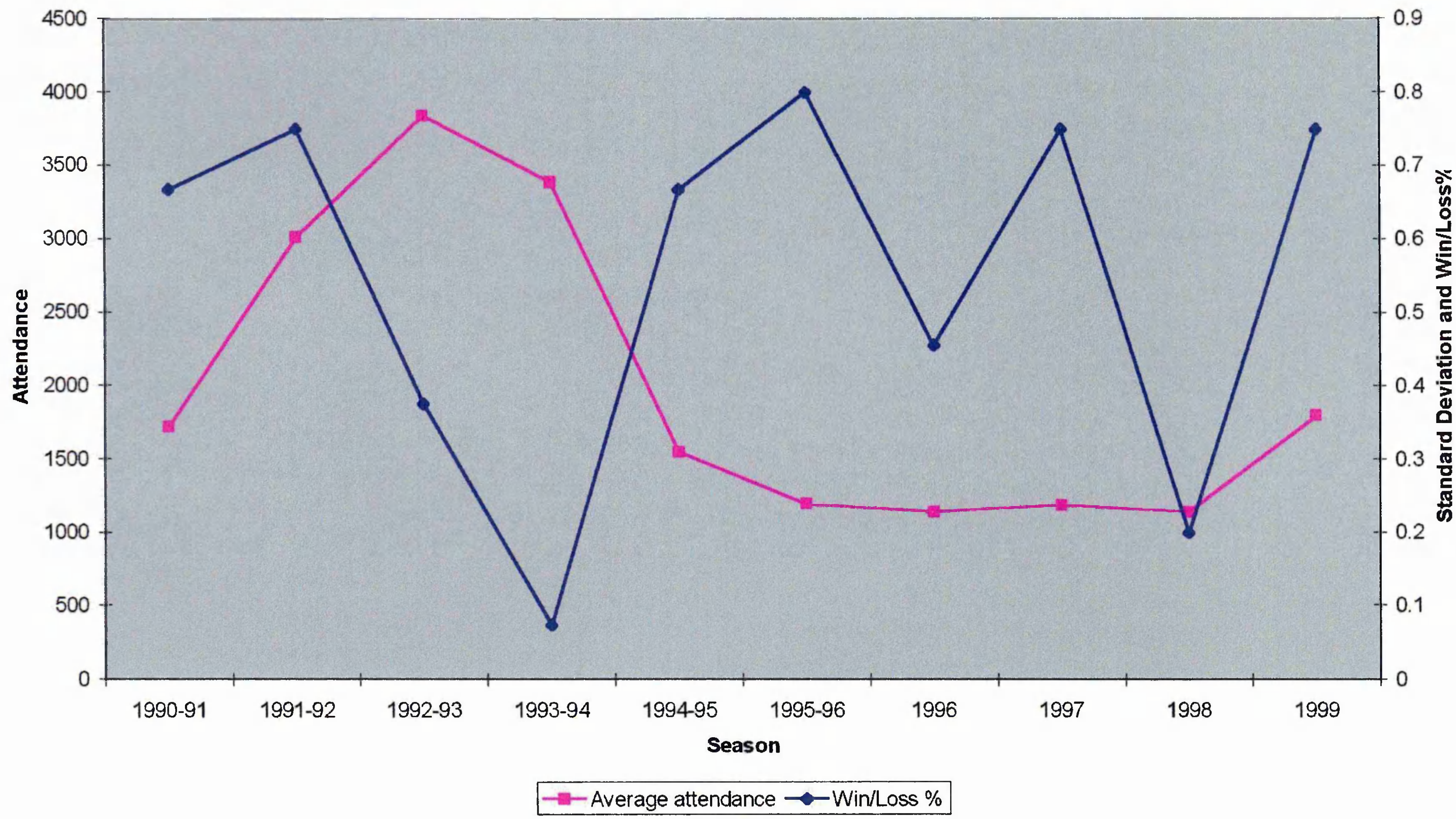
Table LC3.   Win/Loss % for Leigh Centurions, Pre and Post Super League

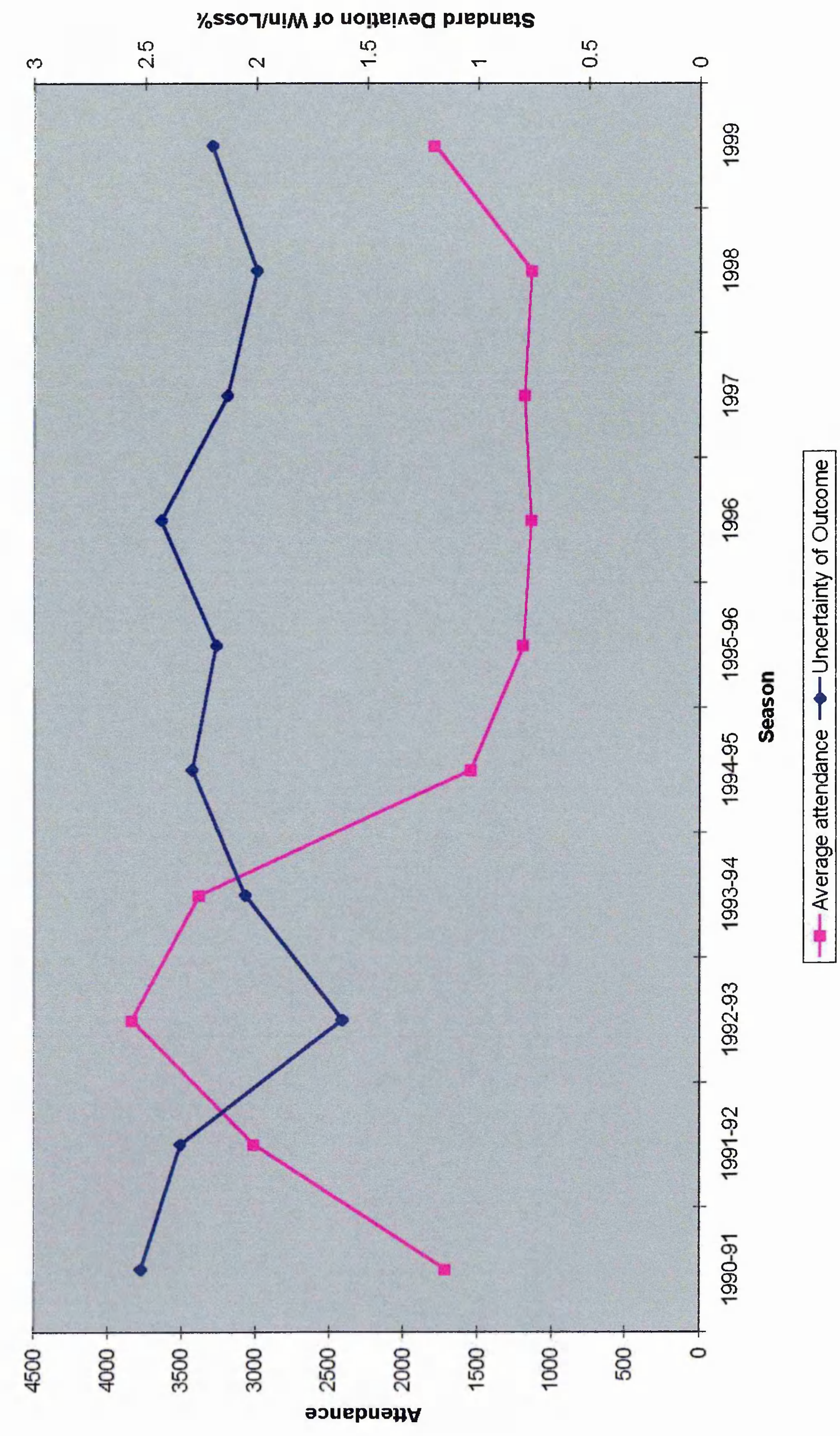
	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Win/Loss %	0.667	0.750	0.375	0.074	0.667	0.800	0.455	0.750	0.200	0.750
League Position	5/21	2/8	11/14	16/16	11/16	6/11	7/12	3/11	8/8	5/18
Division	1	1	SL	SL	1	2	2	2	2	1

The highest win/loss percentage for Leigh was recorded in the Centenary season when they won sixteen of their twenty games. In the three seasons that the Centurions recorded win/loss percentage scores of 300, attendance figures increased. The only other year when attendance figures rose was in 1992-93 and despite a low win/loss percentage, this can be attributed to the team's promotion into the first division.

The demand for Leigh's home games appears highly dependent on their on-field performance, as with most of the other case study clubs, examined. Successful seasons in terms of either, a high % of games won or following promotion to a higher division are those years where attendance is highest or the greatest increase from the previous season is demonstrated.

Graph LC1. Leigh Centurions - Average Attendance and Win/Loss%





Graph LC2. Leigh Centurions - Average Attendance and League Uncertainty of Outcome

York

York has been perennially, a low division club, constantly promoted and relegated between Divisions 1 and 2 since 1990. In 1989 they moved to the new Ryedale Stadium, a ground on the outskirts of the city, owned by York City Council, where they have played their home matches ever since. Average attendance during the first part of the 1990's lingered around 1,300, with their highest average for a season recorded in 1990-91 of 1,857, which has not been bettered since.

Table Y.1. ***Total and Average Attendance for York – 1990-1996***

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Total attendance	26,000	16,721	20,410	18,956	16,805	6,422
Average attendance	1,857	1,184	1,701	1,264	1,120	642
Average difference	-638	-676	+520	-390	-191	-478
Division	1	1	2	1	1	2

As Table Y1 indicates, since 1990 attendances have been declining except for in 1992-93 when despite relegation the previous season, attendance rose with the club finishing fourth out of thirteen, its best position during the 1990's. A mid table position the following two years, not only saw a decline in attendance figures but resulted in York's inclusion in the third division, when a return to a three divisional structure was made in 1995-96.

Table Y.2. ***Total and Average Attendance for York – 1996-1999***

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Total attendance	7,349	6,100	7,924	13,720
Average Attendance	668	610	792	980
Average Difference	+26	-58	+182	+188

For 1996 and the start of the Super League, York remained in the lower division, although experienced a slight improvement in attendance overall by 927 for the season, although this only equates to an extra 26 supporters per game. Season 1997 again saw a decline, though in both 1998 and 1999 increased attendance were recorded of 182 and 188 respectively.

The rise in average attendance to 980 in 1999 was the highest average recorded since 1994-5, helped by a return to a two divisional structure and a seven, out of eighteen teams, finishing position. Despite the increase in matches in 1999, the equivalent number of games played in the corresponding league structure in 1993-5 still saw comparably higher attendance in total and average figures recorded.

Since the start of Super League, York's attendance has declined, as they have failed to reach the number of supporters recorded, during the pre Super League era. As shown by table Y3, the average attendance since 1996 has been reduced by 553 per game, a decline consistent with the overall reduction in Division 2 attendance since the start of the new regime.

Table Y3. Average Difference between Pre and Post Super League Seasons

	1990-1996	1996-1999
Total Attendance	105,314	35,093
Number of Games	80	45
Average Attendance	1,316	780

The significant fall in support for the club suggests that in order for survival, York must attempt to attract increased support, in order to improve their revenue from gate-receipts. This will prove essential once the FASDA deal with BSkyB is concluded in 2003, with no further money available from broadcasting.

To establish in which seasons, York were most successful in terms of the number of games won, win/loss %'s were calculated for each season as shown in table Y4. Season 1990-91 appears the most successful season for the club, as they finished fourth in Division 2, winning twenty out of twenty-six games, although poor performances the following year led to relegation to the third division. The two following seasons saw a reversal back to two divisions, with York finishing in mid-table positions in Division 2 both years.

Table Y.4. Win/Loss % for York, Pre and Post Super League

	1990-1	1991-2	1992-3	1993-4	1994-5	1995-6	1996	1997	1998	1999
Win/Loss %	0.770	0.192	0.708	0.586	0.536	0.526	0.409	0.400	0.700	0.630
League Position	4/21	7/8	4/13	9/16	9/16	6/11	8/12	7/11	2/8	7/18

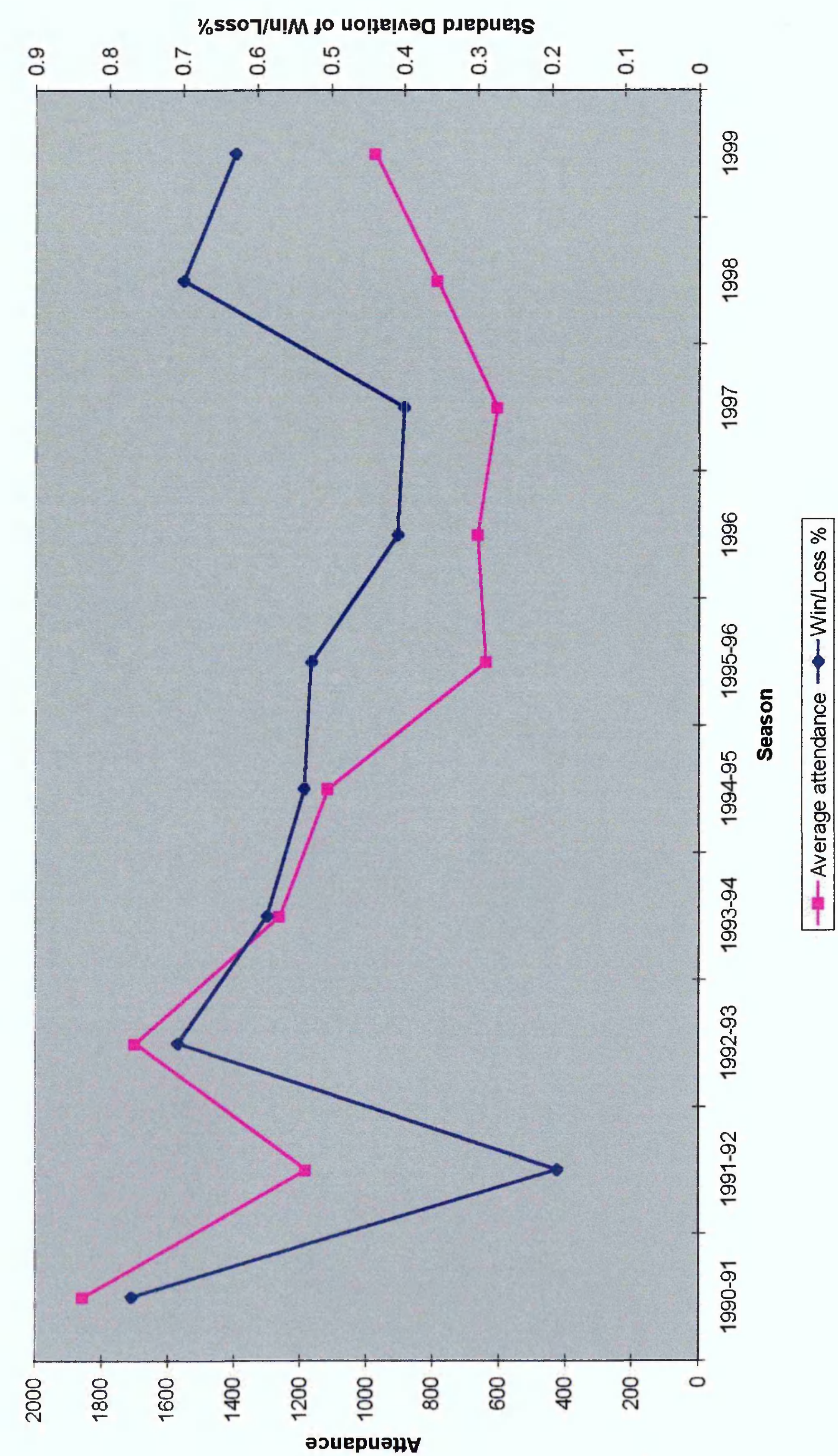
The Super League years, starting in 1996 again saw York remain in the lower division, within which they remained until the combining of Divisions 1 and 2 in 1999. Their most successful year of this period was 1998, when they finished runners-up in the second division.

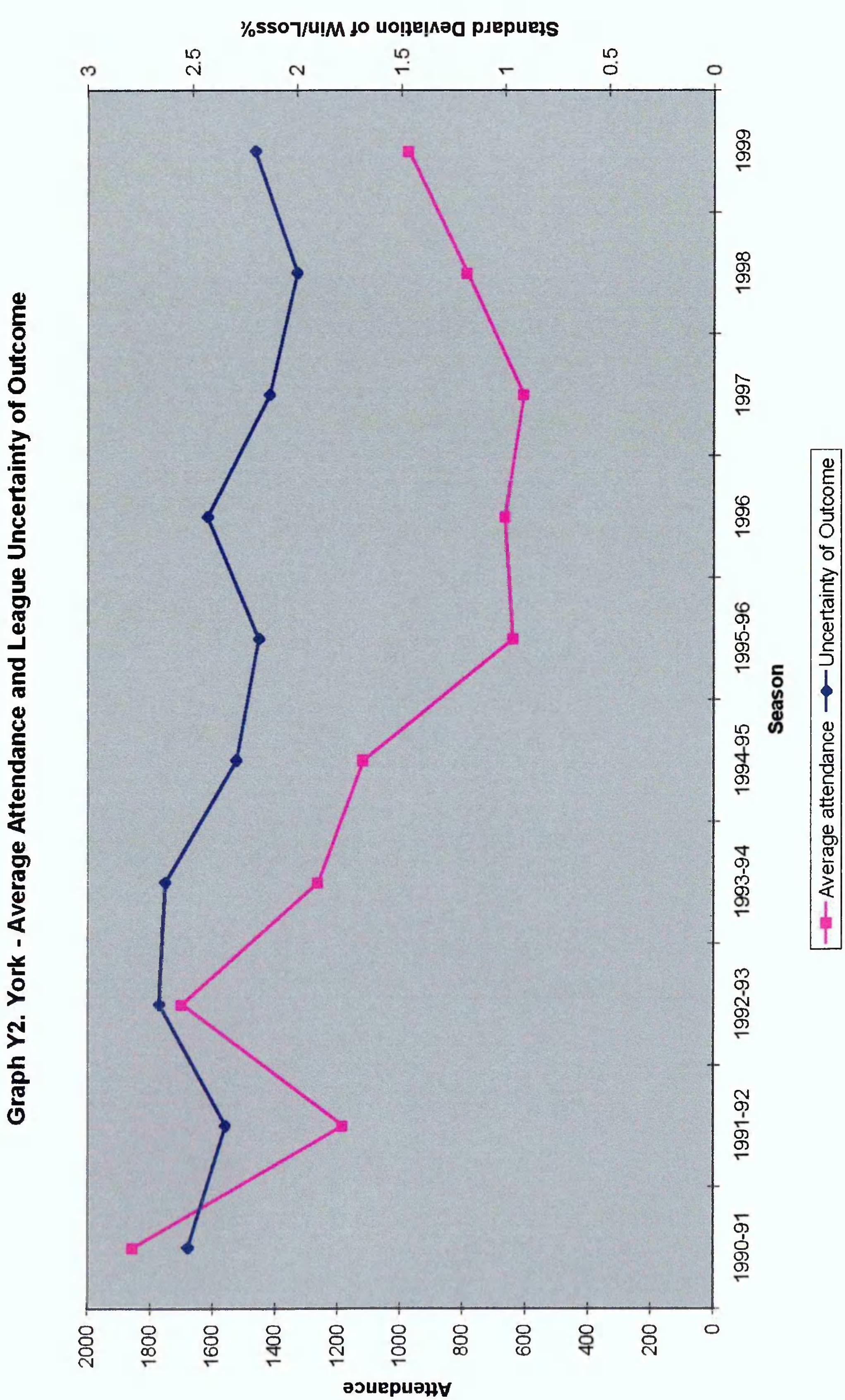
York's attendances appear to relate very high to their on-field performances, usually gaining more support when they are performing well in the league. Before 1996, their two most successful seasons on the pitch were 1990-91 and 1992-93 winning the majority of their matches. This correlates highly with attendance, as the corresponding years recorded the highest average attendance of 1,857 and 1,701 respectively.

Since the start of summer rugby, York has not had a great deal of on-field success remaining in lowest division throughout. Their best season was in 1998 when they finished second in the division. This saw a rise in crowd numbers, which continued the following season, as York finished seventh in the newly formed Division 1. York has always remained a small club, usually languishing in the lower divisions of the rugby league. Despite the introduction of summer rugby and Super League, York remains in a similar position, failing to achieve sufficient on-field success to bring them promotion into the higher divisions.

In terms of demand for the game of rugby league in York, support seems to be waning, as crowds attending games are poor. The extent of this problem clarified by the fact that they have lost, on average, 1,000 supporters since the start of 1996. Although two improved seasons saw a return by a number of fans, this was minimal and not sufficient to sustain a professional club, long-term. Demand for York appears very much driven by their performances in the league. Their supporter base however, is and has been for some time small, as the club has not seen their average crowds rise above 2,850 in the last fifteen years. A lack of any real base support therefore, means that during less successful periods, the club's crowds are effectively, negligible.

Graph Y1. York - Average Attendance and Win/Loss%




Graph Y2. York - Average Attendance and League Uncertainty of Outcome
Attendance
2000
1800
1600
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
Standard Deviation of Win/Loss%
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
1990-91
1991-92
1992-93
1993-94
1994-95
1995-96
1996
1997
1998
1999
Season
Average attendance
Uncertainty of Outcome

Halifax Blue Sox

Profit & Loss Account	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**
Turnover	477621	760092	764972	869,115	797904	1179809
Operating Costs	969994	805067	1059020	1207020	805121	1616613
Profit on Ordinary Activities pre Tax	-492373	-44975	-294048	-337905	-7217	-436804
Taxation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Profit/Loss post Tax	-492373	-44975	-294048	-337905	-7217	-436804
Dividends	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retained Loss for the Year	-492373	-44975	-294048	-337905	-7217	-436804
Profits/Losses b/f	0	-492373	-537348	-831396	-1169301	-1176518
Profits/Losses c/f	-492373	-537348	-831396	-1169301	-1176518	-1613322
FIXED ASSETS						
Tangible Assets	62983	104452	115906	103752	92230	453798
Investment	1000	1000	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	63983	105452	115906	103752	92230	453798
CURRENT ASSETS						
Stock	0	0	0	0	0	15000
Debtors/Investments	46207	59365	46015	93165	34815	28953
Cash	234042	64098	35139	1145	274543	30867
Total Current Assets	280249	123463	81154	94310	309358	74820

Halifax Blue Sox

CREDITORS	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Amounts Payable < 1 Year	83605	127173	87366	316473	297466	856300
Total Current Assets	196644	-3710	-6212	-222163	11892	-781480
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	260627	101742	109694	-118411	104122	-327682
CREDITORS						
Amounts Payable > 1 Year	130000	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL NET ASSETS	130627	101742	109694	-118411	104122	-327682
CAPITAL & RESERVES						
Called Up Share Capital	623000	639090	941090	1050890	1280640	1285640
Reserve for Capital Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0
Profit & Loss Account	-492373	-537348	-831396	-1169301	-1176518	-1613322
Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL CAPITAL	130627	101742	109694	-118411	104122	-327682
Profitability						
Pre-Tax Return on Sales	-103.09%	-5.92%	-38.44%	-38.88%	-0.90%	-37.02%
Post-Tax Return on Sales	-103.09%	-5.92%	-38.44%	-38.88%	-0.90%	-37.02%
Growth						
Turnover Growth (abs)		282471	4880	104143	-71211	381905
Turnover Growth (%)		59.14%	0.64%	13.61%	-8.19%	47.86%
Operating Costs Growth (abs)		-164927	253953	148000	-401899	811492
Operating Costs Growth (%)		-17.00%	31.54%	13.98%	-33.30%	100.79%
Liquidity						
Current Ratio	3.35	0.97	0.93	0.30	1.04	0.09
Acid Test	3.35	0.97	0.93	0.30	1.04	0.07
Cash Ratio	2.80	0.50	0.40	0.00	0.92	0.04

Halifax Blue Sox

Income	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**
Gate receipts						
Season Tickets						
Programme sales						
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0
RFL Distributions						
TV fees						
Sponsors						
Merchandising						
Expenditure						
Total Wages	386830	494946	553582	660263	697800	1747928
Players Wages						
No of Players	47	46	43	40	57	60
Transfer fees received						
Transfer fees paid						
Balance	0	0	0	0	0	0

London Broncos

Profit & Loss Account	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover	333383	1015160	1622769	1957553
Operating Costs	663155	1288788	2466603	2332965
Profit on Ordinary Activities pre Tax	-329772	-273628	-843834	-375412
Taxation	0	0	0	0
Profit/Loss post Tax	-329772	-273628	-843834	-375412
Dividends	0	0	0	0
Retained Loss for the Year	-329772	-273628	-843834	-375412
Profits/Losses b/f	0	-329772	-603400	-1447234
Profits/Losses c/f	-329772	-603400	-1447234	-1822646
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Assets	11733	42140	27486	10556
Investment	0	49	49	130
Total Fixed Assets	11733	42189	27535	10686
CURRENT ASSETS	1994	1995	1996	1997
Stock	0	0	0	0
Debtors/Investments	400	249736	68871	260573
Cash	0	142187	1029	496
Total Current Assets	400	391923	69900	261069

London Broncos

CREDITORS	1994	1995	1996	1997
Amounts Payable < 1 Year	341505	1018378	1485408	1294401
Total Current Assets	-341105	-626455	-1415508	-1033332
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	-329372	-584266	-1387973	-1022646
CREDITORS				
Amounts Payable > 1 Year	0	18734	58861	0
TOTAL NET ASSETS	-329372	-603000	-1446834	-1022646
CAPITAL & RESERVES				
Called Up Share Capital	400	400	400	4010
Reserve for Capital Expenditure	0	0	0	795990
Profit & Loss Account	-329772	-603400	-1447234	-1822646
Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0	0
TOTAL CAPITAL	-329372	-603000	-1446834	-1022646
Profitability				
Pre-Tax Return on Sales	-98.92%	-26.95%	-52.00%	-19.18%
Post-Tax Return on Sales	-98.92%	-26.95%	-52.00%	-19.18%
Growth				
Turnover Growth (abs)	333383	681777	607609	334784
Turnover Growth (%)	0.00%	204.50%	59.85%	20.63%
Operating Costs Growth (abs)	663155	625633	1177815	-133638
Operating Costs Growth (%)	0.00%	94.34%	91.39%	-5.42%
Liquidity				
Current Ratio	0.00	0.38	0.05	0.20
Acid Test	0.00	0.38	0.05	0.20
Cash Ratio	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.00

St. Helens

Profit & Loss Account	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**
Turnover	900244	1027359	1183754	1387855	1291043	1341943	3443637	3465383	2613231
Operating Costs	937522	1153372	1151159	1384115	1289091	1584765	3663088	3172069	2860294
Profit on Ordinary Activities pre Tax	-37278	-126013	32595	3740	1952	-242822	-219451	293314	-247063
Taxation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Profit/Loss post Tax	-37278	-126013	32595	3740	1952	-242822	-219451	293314	-247063
Dividends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retained Loss for the Year	-37278	-126013	32595	3740	1952	-242822	-219451	293314	-247063
Profits/Losses b/f	21707	-15571	-141584	-108989	-105249	-103297	-346119	-565570	-272256
Profits/Losses c/f	-15571	-141584	-108989	-105249	-103297	-346119	-565570	-272256	-519319
FIXED ASSETS									
Tangible Assets	410571	444336	449745	1387067	1391763	1426759	1439045	1454806	1431834
Investment	1026	1026	1026	26	26	26	26	27	2
Total Fixed Assets	411597	445362	450771	1387093	1391789	1426785	1439071	1454833	1431836
CURRENT ASSETS									
Stock	20228	29453	29878	19759	21058	39213	18124	39321	50320
Debtors/Investments	81389	81414	80692	31948	98901	5896	182123	147663	92845
Cash	20904	26654	26333	30813	60131	41883	1140	1160	1160
Total Current Assets	122521	137521	136903	82520	180090	86992	201387	188144	144325

St. Helens

CREDITORS	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Amounts Payable < 1 Year	429257	631563	630163	623962	749276	928239	1323347	1034347	1286620
Total Current Assets	-306736	-494042	-493260	-541442	-569186	-841247	-1121960	-846203	-1142295
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	104861	-48680	-42489	845651	822603	585538	317111	608630	289541
CREDITORS									
Amounts Payable > 1 Year	13432	10904	9500	9500	9500	15257	85075	83280	11254
TOTAL NET ASSETS	91429	-59584	-51989	836151	813103	570281	232036	525350	278287
CAPITAL & RESERVES									
Called Up Share Capital	7000	7000	7000	7000	7000	7000	7000	7000	7000
Reserve for Capital Expenditure	100000	75000	50000	25000	0	0	0	0	0
Profit & Loss Account	-15571	-141584	-108989	-105249	-103297	-346119	-565570	-272256	-519319
Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0	909400	909400	909400	790606	790606	790606
TOTAL CAPITAL	91429	-59584	-51989	836151	813103	570281	232036	525350	278287
Profitability									
Pre-Tax Return on Sales	-4.14%	-12.27%	2.75%	0.27%	0.15%	-18.09%	-6.37%	8.46%	-9.45%
Post-Tax Return on Sales	-4.14%	-12.27%	2.75%	0.27%	0.15%	-18.09%	-6.37%	8.46%	-9.45%
Growth									
Turnover Growth (abs)		127115	156395	204101	-96812	50900	2101694	21746	-852152
Turnover Growth (%)		14.12%	15.22%	17.24%	-6.98%	3.94%	156.62%	0.63%	-24.59%
Operating Costs Growth (abs)		215850	-2213	232956	-95024	295674	2078323	-491019	-311775
Operating Costs Growth (%)		23.02%	-0.19%	20.24%	-6.87%	22.94%	131.14%	-13.40%	-9.83%
Liquidity									
Current Ratio	0.29	0.22	0.22	0.13	0.24	0.09	0.15	0.18	0.11
Acid Test	0.24	0.17	0.17	0.10	0.21	0.05	0.14	0.14	0.07
Cash Ratio	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00
Turnover	900244	1027359	1183754	1387855	1291043	1341943	3443637	3465383	2613231
Total Wages	365465	446555	492313	895736	870743	1068317	2484413	2205762	2099703

%	41%	44%	42%	65%	67%	80%	72%	64%	80%
St. Helens									
Income	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**
Gate reciepts	422449	541805	592280	670883	460970	6118492	1393108	1181721	658786
Season Tickets	97667	109342	132650	153390	172151	156094	0	0	0
Programme sales	6602	2031	3727	10014	0	0	0	0	0
Total	526718	653178	728657	834287	633121	6274586	1393108	1181721	658786
RFL Distributions	13550	4875	7000	14000	7325	13175	0	0	0
TV fees	50300	53500	67547	139500	92500	111625	866750	997083	936267
Sponsors	118138	126023	196330	224617	183704	201490	567122	533109	488457
Merchandising	47788	87688	94865	86109	74935	96437			
Expenditure									
Total Wages	365465	446555	492313	895736	870743	1068317	2484413	2205762	2099703
Players Wages	196405	275692	253897	680170	645399	815648	1694314	1474546	1448135
No of Players	46	50	50	50	50	62	60	61	64
Transfer fees received	91300	74098	71734	55150	252350	132120	621850	123000	477500
Transfer fees paid	371981	489102	457817	229368	172500	188550	719050	95500	432000
Balance	-280681	-415004	-386083	-174218	79850	-56430	-97200	27500	45500

Sheffield Eagles

Profit & Loss Account	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover	382225	486557	494454	876058		932101	2146560	1458000
Operating Costs	402013	583462	560804	877518	56424	788035	2141587	2046000
Profit on Ordinary Activities pre Tax	-19788	-96905	-66350	-1460	-56424	144066	4973	-588000
Taxation	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0
Profit/Loss post Tax	-19788	-96905	-66350	-1460	-56424	144066	4957	-588000
Dividends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retained Loss for the Year	-19788	-96905	-66350	-1460	-56424	144066	4957	-588000
Profits/Losses b/f	-30498	-50286	-147191	-213541	-215001	-318479	-174413	-169456
Profits/Losses c/f	-50286	-147191	-213541	-215001	-318479	-174413	-169456	-757456
FIXED ASSETS								
Tangible Assets	2494	13026	15431	29929	32617	40614	129400	163000
Investment	115300	72000	8000	7916	41500	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	117794	85026	23431	37845	74117	40614	129400	163000
CURRENT ASSETS								
Stock	300	11500	13575	7946	7295	6750	3789	17000
Debtors/Investments	31405	43473	63215	69778	42561	149073	142575	33000
Cash	1047	3183	1556	9902	8374	168	43803	37000
Total Current Assets	32752	58156	78346	87626	58230	155991	190167	87000

Sheffield Eagles

CURRENT ASSETS	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
CREDITORS								
Amounts Payable < 1 Year	195632	281404	310118	325505	388171	344409	469926	992000
Total Current Assets	-162880	-223248	-231772	-237879	-329941	-188418	-279759	-905000
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	-45086	-138222	-208341	-200034	-255824	-147804	-150359	-742000
CREDITORS								
Amounts Payable > 1 Year	0	3769	0	9767	10401	14049	6537	3000
TOTAL NET ASSETS	-45086	-141991	-208341	-209801	-266225	-161853	-156896	-745000
CAPITAL & RESERVES								
Called Up Share Capital	5200	5200	5200	5200	5200	7500	7500	7500
Reserve for Capital Expenditure	-50286	-147191	-213541	-215001	-271425	5060	5060	5060
Profit & Loss Account	0	0	0	0	0	-174413	-169456	-758000
Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL CAPITAL	-45086	-141991	-208341	-209801	-266225	-161853	-156896	-745000
Profitability								
Pre-Tax Return on Sales	-5.18%	-19.92%	-13.42%	-0.17%		15.46%	0.23%	-40.33%
Post-Tax Return on Sales	-5.18%	-19.92%	-13.42%	-0.17%		15.46%	0.23%	-40.33%
Growth								
Turnover Growth (abs)		486557	7897	381604	-876058	932101	1214459	-688560
Turnover Growth (%)		127.30%	1.62%	77.18%	-100.00%		130.29%	-32.08%
Operating Costs Growth (abs)		583462	-22658	316714	-821094	731611	1353552	-95587
Operating Costs Growth (%)		145.14%	-3.88%	56.47%	-93.57%	1296.63%	171.76%	-4.46%
Liquidity								
Current Ratio	0.17	0.21	0.25	0.27	0.15	0.45	0.40	0.09
Acid Test	0.17	0.17	0.21	0.24	0.13	0.43	0.40	0.07
Cash Ratio	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.09	0.04

Sheffield Eagles

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*
Income								
Gate reciepts	151345	134212	125946	182313				
Season Tickets	0	0	0	0				
Programme sales	27875	28501	14534	22965				
Total	179220	162713	140480	205278				
RFL Distributions	7000	0	0	0				
TV fees	0	0	27000	44000				
Sponsors	104238	135150	147043	195164				
Merchandising	19361	18415	18802	25945				
Expenditure								
Total Wages	219799	252873	366161	414251	0	428107	1144000	1090000
Players Wages								
No of Players	0	0	0	0	0	43	47	33

Wigan Warriors

Profit & Loss Account	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover	0	2008535	2697546	2551939	2498936	3289312	3517845	1670104
Operating Costs	0	2120248	2994327	2406113	2571102	2571102	4213645	2836590
Profit on Ordinary Activities pre Tax	92372	-111713	-296781	145826	-72166	128661	-695800	-1166486
Taxation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Profit/Loss post Tax	92372	-111713	-296781	145826	-72166	128661	-695800	-1166486
Dividends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retained Loss for the Year	105859	-111713	-296781	145826	-72166	128661	-695800	-1166486
Profits/Losses b/f	-358767	-252908	-364621	-661402	-515576	139160	267821	-427979
Profits/Losses c/f	-252908	-364621	-661402	-515576	139160	267821	-427979	-1594465
FIXED ASSETS								
Tangible Assets	2623478	3891688	4397268	6395869	6858653	4448715	4578478	4533579
Investment	1000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	2624478	3891688	4397268	6395869	6858653	4448715	4578478	4533579
CURRENT ASSETS								
Stock	23767	0	0	0	34750	96050	52814	10420
Debtors/Investments	162494	380253	210181	446960	216735	260639	229091	956139
Cash	300084	1182	550	1999	100	100	100	597
Total Current Assets	486345	381435	210731	448959	251585	356789	282005	967156

Wigan Warriors

CREDITORS	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
Amounts Payable < 1 Year	1168662	2076445	2366921	1691976	1319117	1571459	2590201	3501840
Total Current Assets	-682317	-1695010	-2156190	-1243017	-1067532	-1214670	-2308196	-2534684
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	1942161	2196678	2241078	5152852	5791121	3234045	2270282	1998895
CREDITORS								
Amounts Payable > 1 Year	183479	712839	1054020	1761202	2326137	2112900	1844937	2740036
TOTAL NET ASSETS	1758682	1483839	1187058	3391650	3464984	1121145	425345	-741141
CAPITAL & RESERVES								
Called Up Share Capital	16000	16000	16000	16000	16000	16000	16000	16000
Reserve for Capital Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Profit & Loss Account	-252908	-364621	-661402	211326	139160	-727315	-1423115	-2589601
Revaluation Reserve	1995590	1832460	1832460	3164324	3309824	1832460	1832460	1832460
TOTAL CAPITAL	1758682	1483839	1187058	3391650	3464984	1121145	425345	-741141
Profitability								
Pre-Tax Return on Sales	0.00%	-5.56%	-11.00%	5.71%	-2.89%	3.91%	-19.78%	-69.85%
Post-Tax Return on Sales	0.00%	-5.56%	-11.00%	5.71%	-2.89%	3.91%	-19.78%	-69.85%
Growth								
Turnover Growth (abs)		2008535	689011	-145607	-53003	790376	228533	-1847741
Turnover Growth (%)		0.00%	34.30%	-5.40%	-2.08%	31.63%	6.95%	-52.52%
Operating Costs Growth (abs)		2120248	874079	-588214	164989	0	1642543	-1377055
Operating Costs Growth (%)		0.00%	41.23%	-19.64%	6.86%	0.00%	63.88%	-32.68%
Liquidity								
Current Ratio	0.42	0.18	0.09	0.27	0.19	0.23	0.11	0.28
Acid Test	0.40	0.18	0.09	0.27	0.16	0.17	0.09	0.27
Cash Ratio	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Turnover	0	2008535	2697546	2551939	2498936	3289312	3517845	1670104
Total Wages	1494257	1667593	1892684	1900350	2089309	2306706	4241718	2580287
%		83%	70%	75%	84%	70%	121%	155%

Wigan Warriors

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Income								
Gate reciepts						1544560	1587999	
Season Tickets						468297	0	
Programme sales						0	0	
Total	0	0	0	0	0	2012857	1587999	0
RFL Distributions						28991	5529	
Television, advertising and sponsorship						970853	1145464	
News Corporation						0	763125	
Expenditure								
Total Wages	1494257	1667593	1892684	1900350	2089309	2306706	4241718	2580287
Players Wages								
No of Players	50	52	60	76	79	82	77	83

Huddersfield Giants

Profit & Loss Account	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover								
Operating Costs			164963					
Profit on Ordinary Activities pre Tax			-164963					
Taxation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Profit/Loss post Tax			-164963					
Dividends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retained Loss for the Year			-164963					
Profits/Losses b/f			-308154	-473117			-158909	-665012
Profits/Losses c/f		-308154	-473117	-473117		-158909	-665012	-1800299
FIXED ASSETS								
Tangible Assets	38651	34042	2033			132389	29076	21715
Investment	0		0			19	20	398000
Total Fixed Assets	38651	34042	2033	0	0	132408	29096	419715
CURRENT ASSETS								
Stock	2000	1500	2000			4690	9565	5619
Debtors/Investments	0	0	1086			26031	78319	245336
Cash	462	1009	291			-23766	847	3593
Total Current Assets	2462	2509	3377	0	0	6955	88731	254548

Huddersfield Giants

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
CREDITORS								
Amounts Payable < 1 Year	180853	344605	478427			195863	503839	517582
Total Current Assets	-178391	-342096	-475050	0	0	-188908	-415108	-263034
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	-139740	-308054	-473017	0	0	-56500	-386012	156681
CREDITORS								
Amounts Payable > 1 Year	0	0	0			2409	134000	1039000
TOTAL NET ASSETS	-139740	-308054	-473017	0	0	-58909	-520012	-882319
CAPITAL & RESERVES								
Called Up Share Capital	100	100	100			10000	25000	400000
Reserve for Capital Expenditure	0		0			90000	120000	120000
Profit & Loss Account	-139840	-308154	-473117		0	-158909	-665012	-1800299
Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0					397980
TOTAL CAPITAL	-139740	-308054	-473017	0	0	-58909	-520012	-882319
Profitability								
Pre-Tax Return on Sales	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Post-Tax Return on Sales	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Growth								
Turnover Growth (abs)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turnover Growth (%)	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Operating Costs Growth (abs)		0	164963	-164963	0	0	0	0
Operating Costs Growth (%)		0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Liquidity								
Current Ratio	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.18	0.49
Acid Test	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.16	0.48
Cash Ratio	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.12	0.00	0.01

Hull Sharks

Profit & Loss Account	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover	559953	827140	725348	717844	523483	964537		
Operating Costs	667711	922086	770515	757056	768129	1240080		
Profit on Ordinary Activities pre Tax	-107758	-94946	-45167	-39212	-244646	-275543	-70577	-565459
Taxation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Profit/Loss post Tax	-107758	-94946	-45167	-39212	-244646	-275543	-70577	-565459
Dividends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retained Loss for the Year	-107758	-94946	-45167	-39212	-244646	-275543	-70577	-565459
Profits/Losses b/f	0	-427104	-522050	-567217	-596770	-691416	-826618	-897195
Profits/Losses c/f	-427104	-522050	-567217	-596770	-691416	-826618	-897195	-1462654
FIXED ASSETS								
Tangible Assets	1173570	1573490	1582906	2074450	2188905	2362845	1414172	1482479
Investment	0	0	0	80	80	80	100	100
Total Fixed Assets	1173570	1573490	1582906	2074530	2188985	2362925	1414272	1482579
CURRENT ASSETS								
Stock	4478	12730	16604	14508	500	500	500	500
Debtors/Investments	48745	59861	60981	53079	102637	82638	81819	132616
Cash	660	833	4837	1034	0	2742	128425	228489
Total Current Assets	53883	73424	82422	68621	103137	85880	210744	361605

Hull Sharks

CREDITORS	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Amounts Payable < 1 Year	499466	716658	867548	923340	993254	791809	883891	1389892
Total Current Assets	-445583	-643234	-785126	-854719	-890117	-705929	-673147	-1028287
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	727987	930256	797780	1219811	1298868	1656996	741125	454292
CREDITORS								
Amounts Payable > 1 Year	131918	427858	338124	302067	277955	617679	942075	916751
TOTAL NET ASSETS	596069	502398	459656	917744	1020913	1039317	-200950	-462459
CAPITAL & RESERVES								
Called Up Share Capital	442688	443963	446388	455188	618003	692896	696050	1000000
Reserve for Capital Expenditure	195	195	195	195	195	195	195	195
Profit & Loss Account	-427104	-522050	-567217	-596770	-691416	-826618	-897195	-1462654
Revaluation Reserve	580290	580290	580290	1059131	1094131	1172844	0	0
TOTAL CAPITAL	596069	502398	459656	917744	1020913	1039317	-200950	-462459
Profitability								
Pre-Tax Return on Sales	-19.24%	-11.48%	-6.23%	-5.46%	-46.73%	-28.57%	0.00%	0.00%
Post-Tax Return on Sales	-19.24%	-11.48%	-6.23%	-5.46%	-46.73%	-28.57%	0.00%	0.00%
Growth								
Turnover Growth (abs)		267187	-101792	-7504	-194361	441054	-964537	0
Turnover Growth (%)		47.72%	-12.31%	-1.03%	-27.08%	84.25%	-100.00%	0.00%
Operating Costs Growth (abs)		254375	-151571	-13459	11073	471951	-1240080	0
Operating Costs Growth (%)		38.10%	-16.44%	-1.75%	1.46%	61.44%	-100.00%	0.00%
Liquidity								
Current Ratio	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.07	0.10	0.11	0.24	0.26
Acid Test	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.10	0.11	0.24	0.26
Cash Ratio	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.16

Hull Sharks

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*
Income									
Gate reciepts	263736	400008	305035	304234	271140	295812			
Season Tickets	84129	106773	119158	97874	87238	107775			
Programme sales	7519	16656	-11452	10486	-1727	8202			
Total	355384	523437	412741	412594	358378	403587			
RFL Distributions	23145	22331	43624	21129	10000	294506			
TV fees	14000	53000	50040	68216	20000	44000			
Sponsors	61790	111792	109543	91405	70859	120918			
Merchandising	0	0	24090	-5103	-3169	-1062			
Expenditure									
Total Wages	411604	563553	520425	452374	533875	739788			
Players Wages	0	0	0	0	0	0			

Leigh Centurions

Profit & Loss Account	1990	1991	1992	1993
Turnover				
Operating Costs	0	0	0	0
Profit on Ordinary Activities pre Tax				
Taxation	0	0	0	0
Profit/Loss post Tax	0	0	0	0
Dividends	0	0	0	0
Retained Loss for the Year	0	0	0	0
Profits/Losses b/f		0	-253399	-102531
Profits/Losses c/f	0	-253399	-102531	-253399
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Assets	12704	8628	12704	8628
Investment	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	12704	8628	12704	8628
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stock	6150	4826	6150	4826
Debtors/Investments	11369	9198	11369	9198
Cash	265	1912	265	1912
Total Current Assets	17784	15936	17784	15936

Leigh Centurions

CREDITORS	1990	1991	1992	1993
Amounts Payable < 1 Year	133017	277961	133017	277961
Total Current Assets	-115233	-262025	-115233	-262025
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	-102529	-253397	-102529	-253397
CREDITORS				
Amounts Payable > 1 Year	0	0	0	0
TOTAL NET ASSETS	-102529	-253397	-102529	-253397
CAPITAL & RESERVES				
Called Up Share Capital	2	2	2	2
Reserve for Capital Expenditure				
Profit & Loss Account	-102531	-253399	-102531	-253399
Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0	
TOTAL CAPITAL	-102529	-253397	-102529	-253397
Profitability				
Pre-Tax Return on Sales	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Post-Tax Return on Sales	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Growth				
Turnover Growth (abs)		0	0	0
Turnover Growth (%)		0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Operating Costs Growth (abs)		0	0	0
Operating Costs Growth (%)		0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Liquidity				
Current Ratio	0.13	0.06	0.13	0.06
Acid Test	0.09	0.04	0.09	0.04
Cash Ratio	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01

York Vikings

Profit & Loss Account	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover	229434	238815	200849	207319	217952	211917	283609	221478
Operating Costs	436351	211152	223426	291003	322821	291048	267075	316219
Profit on Ordinary Activities pre Tax	-206917	27663	-22577	-83684	-104869	-79131	16534	-94741
Taxation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Profit/Loss post Tax	-206917	27663	-22577	-83684	-104869	-79131	16534	-94741
Dividends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retained Loss for the Year	-206917	27663	-22577	-83684	-104869	-79131	16534	-94741
Profits/Losses b/f	530096	323179	350842	328265	244581	241646	162515	220522
Profits/Losses c/f	323179	350842	328265	244581	241646	162515	220522	125781
FIXED ASSETS								
Tangible Assets	901029	869541	843956	734885	722309	700270	609619	597821
Investment	61704	1000	1000	0	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	962733	870541	844956	734885	722309	700270	609619	597821
CURRENT ASSETS								
Stock	10187	8876	7381	2803	6964	0	0	0
Debtors/Investments	71025	67519	23385	31336	5285	12080	1102	662
Cash	12026	10087	10910	2077	160	1841	0	0
Total Current Assets	93238	86482	41676	36216	12409	13921	1102	662

York Vikings

CREDITORS	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Amounts Payable < 1 Year	338927	274999	297484	102355	161718	175782	109777	183041
Total Current Assets	-245689	-188517	-255808	-66139	-149309	-161861	-108675	-182379
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	717044	682024	589148	668746	573000	538409	500944	415442
CREDITORS								
Amounts Payable > 1 Year	281666	197389	165500	203505	191251	213271	155492	148481
TOTAL NET ASSETS	435378	484635	423648	465241	381749	325138	345452	266961
CAPITAL & RESERVES								
Called Up Share Capital	67909	92320	95820	97220	98630	121150	124930	141180
Reserve for Capital Expenditure	44290	41473	41473	41473	41473	41473	0	0
Profit & Loss Account	-206917	27663	-64487	40193	241646	162515	220522	125781
Revaluation Reserve	530096	323179	350842	286355	0	0	0	0
TOTAL CAPITAL	435378	484635	423648	465241	381749	325138	345452	266961
Profitability								
Pre-Tax Return on Sales	-90.19%	11.58%	-11.24%	-40.36%	-48.12%	-37.34%	5.83%	-42.78%
Post-Tax Return on Sales	-90.19%	11.58%	-11.24%	-40.36%	-48.12%	-37.34%	5.83%	-42.78%
Growth								
Turnover Growth (abs)		9381	-37966	6470	10633	-6035	71692	-62131
Turnover Growth (%)		4.09%	-15.90%	3.22%	5.13%	-2.77%	33.83%	-21.91%
Operating Costs Growth (abs)		-225199	12274	67577	31818	-31773	-23973	49144
Operating Costs Growth (%)		-51.61%	5.81%	30.25%	10.93%	-9.84%	-8.24%	18.40%
Liquidity								
Current Ratio	0.28	0.31	0.14	0.35	0.08	0.08	0.01	0.00
Acid Test	0.25	0.28	0.12	0.33	0.03	0.08	0.01	0.00
Cash Ratio	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00

York Vikings

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Income								
Gate reciepts	118569	83184	63409	57273	69579	82583	55576	33986
Season Tickets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Programme sales	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	118569	83184	63409	57273	69579	82583	55576	33986
RFL Distributions	30786	50082	41254	49970	32350	37511	171835	91298
TV fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sponsors	0	0	0	29277	41371	26384	28608	85254
Merchandising	42460	66503	39638	49696	18786	11194	15422	10940
Expenditure								
Total Wages	156793	112344	77192	115132	116642	116178	174443	166379
No of Players	0	45	46	46	46	45	49	47
Transfer fees paid	0	0	0	13998	49249	26740	6360	1487

Sheffield Hallam University

CLUBS

Lisa Ann O'Keeffe
Leisure Industries Research Centre

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the attitudes and feelings of Rugby League Clubs with regards to the restructuring of the game and 'The Super League'. I would be very grateful if you could spare the time to respond and thank you in advance for your co-operation.

This questionnaire is strictly confidential.

Restructuring Rugby League

From March 1996, the game of Rugby League is to become a summer sport and has been restructured into the 'Super League'

1. Please indicate your preference from the following statements, by ticking one of the following boxes.

Leaving Rugby League in its present framework	☐	1
Changing to the 'Super League'	☐	2
Changing to summer rugby without restructuring the game	☐	3
Restructuring the game but continuing to play in the winter	☐	4
Other (Please state)____________________	☐	5

2. If you felt that changes were required to the game, please indicate the reason, which you feel is of greatest importance, by ticking one of the following boxes.

To allow the top clubs greater voting rights and therefore more say in the running of the game than the smaller clubs	☐	1
To have more divisions and so allow for closer competitions between clubs of the same level	☐	2
To increase the attractiveness of the game and thereby encourage more support	☐	3
To allow the game to be played in the summer in better conditions and climate	☐	4
Other (Please state)____________________	☐	5

Investment in the game

The News Corporation has invested £87 million in the game of Rugby League, the money being distributed amongst the clubs, with those in the 'Super League' gaining a larger percentage than those in Divisions 1 and 2.

3. In your opinion could the game of Rugby League have survived without the financial investment from the News Corporation and BSkyB?

Yes (Please go to question 4)	☐	1
No (Please go to question 5)	☐	2

4. Please indicate the main reason why you feel the game would have survived without the investment

The game has already survived 100 years without major investment	☐	1
Rugby League is becoming more popular and steadily gaining support	☐	2
Bigger clubs would survive but smaller clubs would fold	☐	3
The fans would not let the clubs go out of business	☐	4
Other (Please state)____________________	☐	5

(Please go to question 6)

5. Please indicate the main reason why you feel the game would not have survived without the investment

Crowds are decreasing and people are no longer attending games	☐	1
Many clubs cannot afford to stay in business due to financial problems	☐	2
The game is still primarily played in the North and many people in the South are not aware of the existence of Rugby League	☐	3
Rugby Union has become a professional game, so more players may have been willing to switch codes if money had not been invested in the game of League	☐	4
Other (Please state)____________________	☐	5

6. In your opinion has the financial investment been fairly distributed amongst the clubs?

Yes (Please go to question 7) ☐ 1

No (Please go to question 8) ☐ 2

7. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you think the money has been fairly distributed

Bigger clubs have greater expenditure and so need the most money ☐ 1

Bigger clubs have earned the right to a larger percentage of the money as they are the successful teams who bring most money into the game and so deserve the rewards ☐ 2

Smaller clubs do not deserve any more money ☐ 3

Other (Please state)__________________________________ ☐ 4
(Please go to question 9)

8. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you do not think the money has been fairly distributed

Bigger clubs will get richer, and smaller clubs will find it increasingly difficult to compete and survive ☐ 1

Smaller clubs are more in need of the money ☐ 2

It is not being used to ensure that traditional Rugby League clubs are being helped ☐ 3

Other (Please state)__________________________________ ☐ 4

How should the money have been distributed in your opinion?

All clubs should have received an equal share ☐ 1

Clubs should be given money according to need ☐ 2

Those in the lower divisions should have received a larger percentage than those in the Super League, so the financial gap between clubs can be reduced ☐ 3

Other (Please state)__________________________________ ☐ 4

Geographical Expansion

9. Will the introduction of the 'Super League' allow the game to spread from its mainly northern roots and establish itself in other areas?

Yes (Please go to question 10)	☐	**1**
No (Please go to question 12)	☐	**2**

10. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you think the game of Rugby League will establish itself in other areas

Increased publicity and media coverage	☐	**1**
England's capital now having a team	☐	**2**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**3**

11. In which non-traditional Rugby League areas do you think the game will develop and succeed? (Tick as many boxes as apply)

Newcastle	☐	**1**
London	☐	**2**
Birmingham	☐	**3**
Leicester	☐	**4**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**5**

12. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you think the game of Rugby League will never establish itself in other areas

It always has been and always will be a northern game	☐	**1**
Rugby Union is a nation-wide game, and the dominant Rugby game	☐	**2**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**3**

Increasing the Games Popularity

13. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
In the form of Rugby League we have a marketable product, which we can sell nationally and to the rest of the world	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Improved stadium, changing and eating facilities will encourage more people to games	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Pre-match entertainment is to be a major part of the new Super League match structure. This will help to increase support	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The broadcasting of Rugby League to millions of TV viewers will encourage more people to attend games	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will increase its support nationally due to the new restructuring of the game	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Recent rule changes are a good idea to make the game more attractive	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Geographical expansion is very important for the success and development of Rugby League	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

14. How can the game of Rugby League promote itself and increase its media profile?

____
____
____

Clubs and The Super League

15. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Clubs not in the Super League will find it very difficult to survive	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Requirements for the new season, in terms of ground capacity and facilities have been a problem due to space availability and finance	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The wages of Rugby League players should now be on a par with those of professional soccer players	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The recent financial investment in the game will result in bigger transfer fees like in soccer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

16. How will the money you receive be most effectively spent to secure the future of the club?
Please rank the following in order of importance, with 1 being most important and 7 being the least important.

Buying new players ☐

Players wages ☐

Coaching staff ☐

Managerial and financial staff ☐

Improving facilities ☐

Grass roots of the game ☐

Promotion and publicity ☐

17. In your opinion, how will relegation from the Super League affect the future of a club?

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The Future of the Game

Over the next five years the Rugby League will receive money from The News Corporation and March 1996 will see the beginning of a new era, with the start of summer rugby in the shape of the 'Super League'. The aim is to increase the support for the game on a national level.

18. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rugby League will lose its identity, the nature of the game will be changed and therefore will no longer be the game we know today	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
It is very important that the roots of the game and its traditions are not forgotten	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League is in danger of becoming like American Football, full of razzmatazz and governed by television	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually, certain clubs will have to merge, as their only option for survival	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The restructure will give an opportunity for other teams to succeed and perhaps stop the game being dominated by Wigan so that the outcome of games will be less predictable and therefore more people will attend	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will no longer survive as a professional sport once the financial investment from The News Corporation has been withdrawn after five years	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually Rugby League and Rugby Union will merge in order to ensure the survival of rugby	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

19. What are your hopes for the future of Rugby League?

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About Yourself

Name	____________________
Date of birth	____________________
Town residing in	____________________
Occupation	____________________
Marital Status	____________________
Position at the Club	____________________
Number of years involved in Rugby League	____________________

Thank you very much for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire

Sheffield Hallam University

PLAYERS

Lisa Ann O'Keeffe
Leisure Industries Research Centre

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the attitudes and feelings of Rugby League players with regards to the restructuring of the game and 'The Super League'. I would be very grateful if you could spare the time to respond and thank you in advance for your co-operation.

This questionnaire is strictly confidential.

Restructuring Rugby League

From March 1996, the game of Rugby League is to become a summer sport and has been restructured into the 'Super League'

1. Please indicate your preference from the following statements, by ticking one of the following boxes.

Leaving Rugby League in its present framework	☐	**1**
Changing to the 'Super League'	☐	**2**
Changing to summer rugby without restructuring the game	☐	**3**
Restructuring the game but continuing to play in the winter	☐	**4**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**5**

2. If you felt that changes were required to the game, please indicate the reason which you feel is of greatest importance, by ticking one of the following boxes.

To allow the top clubs greater voting rights and therefore more say in the running of the game than the smaller clubs	☐	**1**
To have more divisions and so allow for closer competitions between clubs of the same level	☐	**2**
To increase the attractiveness of the game and thereby encourage more support	☐	**3**
To allow the game to be played in the summer in better conditions and climate	☐	**4**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**5**

3. Were you consulted prior to decisions being made about changes to the game?

Yes	☐	**1**
No	☐	**2**

4. If yes, please indicate what form this consultation took

Questionnaire	☐	**1**
Interview	☐	**2**
Players Forum	☐	**3**
Other (Please state)____________________	☐	**4**

<u>**Investment in the game**</u>

The News Corporation has invested £87 million in the game of Rugby League, the money being distributed amongst the clubs, with those in the 'Super League' gaining a larger percentage than those in Divisions 1 and 2.

5. In your opinion could the game of Rugby League have survived without the financial investment from the News Corporation and BSkyB?

Yes (Please go to question 6)	☐	**1**
No (Please go to question 7)	☐	**2**

6. Please indicate the main reason why you feel the game would have survived without the investment

The game has already survived 100 years without major investment	☐	**1**
Rugby League is becoming more popular and steadily gaining support	☐	**2**
Bigger clubs would survive but smaller clubs would fold	☐	**3**
The fans would not let the clubs go out of business	☐	**4**
Other (Please state)____________________ (Please go to question 8)	☐	**5**

7. Please indicate the main reason why you feel the game would not have survived without the investment

Crowds are decreasing and people are no longer attending games	☐	1
Many clubs cannot afford to stay in business due to financial problems	☐	2
The game is still primarily played in the North and many people in the South are not aware of the existence of Rugby League	☐	3
Rugby Union has become a professional game, so more players may have been willing to switch codes if money had not been invested in the game of League	☐	4
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	5

8. In your opinion has the financial investment been fairly distributed amongst the clubs?

Yes (Please go to question 9)	☐	1
No (Please go to question 10)	☐	2

9. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you think the money has been fairly distributed

Bigger clubs have greater expenditure and so need the most money	☐	1
Bigger clubs have earned the right to a larger percentage of the money as they are the successful teams who bring most money into the game and so deserve the rewards	☐	2
Smaller clubs do not deserve any more money	☐	3
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	4

(Please go to question 11)

10. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you do not think the money has been fairly distributed

Bigger clubs will get richer, and smaller clubs will find it increasingly difficult to compete and survive	☐	1
Smaller clubs are more in need of the money	☐	2
It is not being used to ensure that traditional Rugby League clubs are being helped	☐	3
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	4

How should the money have been distributed in your opinion?

All clubs should have received an equal share	☐	**1**
Clubs should be given money according to need	☐	**2**
Those in the lower divisions should have received a larger percentage than those in the Super League, so the financial gap between clubs can be reduced	☐	**3**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**4**

<u>**Geographical Expansion**</u>

11. Will the introduction of the 'Super League' allow the game to spread from its mainly northern roots and establish itself in other areas?

Yes (Please go to question 12)	☐	**1**
No (Please go to question 14)	☐	**2**

12. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you think the game of Rugby League will establish itself in other areas

Increased publicity and media coverage	☐	**1**
England's capital now having a team	☐	**2**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**3**

13. In which non-traditional Rugby League areas do you think the game will develop and succeed? (Tick as many boxes as apply)

Newcastle	☐	**1**
London	☐	**2**
Birmingham	☐	**3**
Leicester	☐	**4**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**5**

14. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you think the game of Rugby League will never establish itself in other areas

It always has been and always will be a northern game	☐	1
Rugby Union is a nation-wide game, and the dominant Rugby game	☐	2
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	3

Increasing the Games Popularity

15. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Improved stadium, changing and eating facilities will encourage more people to games	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Pre-match entertainment is to be a major part of the new Super League match structure. This will help to increase support	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The broadcasting of Rugby League to millions of TV viewers will encourage more people to attend games	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will increase its support nationally due to the new restructuring of the game	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Recent rule changes are a good idea to make the game more attractive	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Geographical expansion is very important for the success and development of Rugby League	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

16. How can the game of Rugby League promote itself and increase its media profile?

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Income

17. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rugby League will become as popular and as wealthy as soccer in England	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League players will become as highly paid stars of the future generations like their soccer counterparts	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The wages of Rugby League players should be on a par with those of professional soccer players	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The recent financial investment in the game will result in bigger transfer fees like in soccer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

18. On a personal level will you be financially better off with the new structure?

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

19. Will there be increased pressure on you due to the introduction of the Super League and an increasingly obvious need for clubs to succeed in order to survive?

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

The Future of the Game

Over the next five years the Rugby League will receive money from The News Corporation and March 1996 will see the beginning of a new era, with the start of summer rugby in the shape of the 'Super League'. The aim is to increase the support for the game on a national level.

20. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rugby League will lose its identity, the nature of the game will be changed and therefore will no longer be the game we know today	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
It is very important that the roots of the game and its traditions are not forgotten	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League is in danger of becoming like American Football, full of razzmatazz and governed by television	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually, certain clubs will have to merge, as their only option for survival	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The restructure will give an opportunity for other teams to succeed and perhaps stop the game being dominated by Wigan so that the outcome of games will be less predictable and therefore more people will attend	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will no longer survive as a professional sport once the financial investment from The News Corporation has been withdrawn after five years	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually Rugby League and Rugby Union will merge in order to ensure the survival of rugby	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

21. What are your hopes for the future of Rugby League?

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<u>About Yourself</u>

Name ____________________

Date of birth ____________________

Years playing professional rugby league ____________________

Club ____________________

Previous clubs ____________________

International honours ____________________

22. Would you class yourself as a full or part time professional?

Full time	☐	**1**
Part time	☐	**2**

23. If part time, what else are you currently doing?

Studying full time	☐	**1**
Studying part time	☐	**2**
Working full time	☐	**3**
Working part time	☐	**4**
Other (Please state)____________________	☐	**5**

Thank you very much for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire

Sheffield Hallam University

SUPPORTERS

Lisa Ann O'Keeffe
Leisure Industries Research Centre

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the attitudes and feelings of Rugby League Supporters with regards to the restructuring of the game and 'The Super League'. I would be very grateful if you could spare the time to respond and thank you in advance for your co-operation.

This questionnaire is strictly confidential.

Restructuring Rugby League

From March 1996, the game of Rugby League is to become a summer sport and has been restructured into the 'Super League'

1. Please indicate your preference from the following statements, by ticking one of the following boxes.

Leaving Rugby League in its present framework	☐	**1**
Changing to the 'Super League'	☐	**2**
Changing to summer rugby without restructuring the game	☐	**3**
Restructuring the game but continuing to play in the winter	☐	**4**
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	**5**

2. If you felt that changes were required to the game, please indicate the reason which you feel is of greatest importance, by ticking one of the following boxes.

To allow the top clubs greater voting rights and therefore more say in the running of the game than the smaller clubs	☐	**1**
To have more divisions and so allow for closer competitions between clubs of the same level	☐	**2**
To increase the attractiveness of the game and thereby encourage more support	☐	**3**
To allow the game to be played in the summer in better conditions and climate	☐	**4**
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	**5**

Investment in the game

The News Corporation has invested £87 million in the game of Rugby League, the money being distributed amongst the clubs, with those in the 'Super League' gaining a larger percentage than those in Divisions 1 and 2.

3. In your opinion could the game of Rugby League have survived without the financial investment from the News Corporation and BSkyB?

Yes (Please go to question 4)	☐	1
No (Please go to question 5)	☐	2

4. Please indicate the main reason why you feel the game would have survived without the investment

The game has already survived 100 years without major investment	☐	1
Rugby League is becoming more popular and steadily gaining support	☐	2
Bigger clubs would survive but smaller clubs would fold	☐	3
The fans would not let the clubs go out of business	☐	4
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	5

(Please go to question 6)

5. Please indicate the main reason why you feel the game would not have survived without the investment

Crowds are decreasing and people are no longer attending games	☐	1
Many clubs cannot afford to stay in business due to financial problems	☐	2
The game is still primarily played in the North and many people in the South are not aware of the existence of Rugby League	☐	3
Rugby Union has become a professional game, so more players may have been willing to switch codes if money had not been invested in the game of League	☐	4
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	5

6. In your opinion has the financial investment been fairly distributed amongst the clubs?

Yes (Please go to question 7)	☐	**1**
No (Please go to question 8)	☐	**2**

7. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you think the money has been fairly distributed

Bigger clubs have greater expenditure and so need the most money	☐	**1**
Bigger clubs have earned the right to a larger percentage of the money as they are the successful teams who bring most money into the game and so deserve the rewards	☐	**2**
Smaller clubs do not deserve any more money	☐	**3**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**4**

(Please go to question 9)

8. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you do not think the money has been fairly distributed

Bigger clubs will get richer, and smaller clubs will find it increasingly difficult to compete and survive	☐	**1**
Smaller clubs are more in need of the money	☐	**2**
It is not being used to ensure that traditional Rugby League clubs are being helped	☐	**3**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**4**

How should the money have been distributed in your opinion?

All clubs should have received an equal share	☐	**1**
Clubs should be given money according to need	☐	**2**
Those in the lower divisions should have received a larger percentage than those in the Super League, so the financial gap between clubs can be reduced	☐	**3**
Other (Please state)________________________________	☐	**4**

Geographical Expansion

9. Will the introduction of the 'Super League' allow the game to spread from its mainly northern roots and establish itself in other areas?

Yes (Please go to question 10)	☐	**1**
No (Please go to question 12)	☐	**2**

10. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you think the game of Rugby League will establish itself in other areas

Increased publicity and media coverage	☐	**1**
England's capital now having a team	☐	**2**
Other (Please state)____________________	☐	**3**

11. In which non-traditional Rugby League areas do you think the game will develop and succeed? (Tick as many boxes as apply)

Newcastle	☐	**1**
London	☐	**2**
Birmingham	☐	**3**
Leicester	☐	**4**
Other (Please state)____________________	☐	**5**

12. Please tick one box to indicate which statement best describes why you think the game of Rugby League will never establish itself in other areas

It always has been and always will be a northern game	☐	**1**
Rugby Union is a nation-wide game, and the dominant Rugby game	☐	**2**
Other (Please state)____________________	☐	**3**

<u>Increasing the Games Popularity</u>

13. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Improved stadium, changing and eating facilities will encourage more people to games	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Pre-match entertainment is to be a major part of the new Super League match structure. This will help to increase support	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The broadcasting of Rugby League to millions of TV viewers will encourage more people to attend games	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will increase its support nationally due to the new restructuring of the game	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Recent rule changes are a good idea to make the game more attractive	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Geographical expansion is very important for the success and development of Rugby League	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

14. How can the game of Rugby League promote itself and increase its media profile?

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Income

15. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rugby League will become as popular and as wealthy as soccer in England	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League players will become as highly paid stars of the future generations like their soccer counterparts	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The wages of Rugby League players should be on a par with those of professional soccer players	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The recent financial investment in the game will result in bigger transfer fees like in soccer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

16. How do you rate attending a Rugby League game in terms of value for money? Would you say it was:

Excellent	☐ 1
Good	☐ 2
O.K.	☐ 3
Poor	☐ 4
Very Poor	☐ 5

17. Is the price of an adult ticket for a game of Rugby League:

Too High	☐ 1
Reasonable	☐ 2
Too Low	☐ 3

18. In your opinion, what is a reasonable price:

£______________

The Future of the Game

Over the next five years the Rugby League will receive money from The News Corporation and March 1996 will see the beginning of a new era, with the start of summer rugby in the shape of the 'Super League'. The aim is to increase the support for the game on a national level.

19. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rugby League will lose its identity, the nature of the game will be changed and therefore will no longer be the game we know today	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
It is very important that the roots of the game and its traditions are not forgotten	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League is in danger of becoming like American Football, full of razzmatazz and governed by television	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually, certain clubs will have to merge, as their only option for survival	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The restructure will give an opportunity for other teams to succeed and perhaps stop the game being dominated by Wigan so that the outcome of games will be less predictable and therefore more people will attend	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will no longer survive as a professional sport once the financial investment from The News Corporation has been withdrawn after five years	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually Rugby League and Rugby Union will merge in order to ensure the survival of rugby	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

20. What are your hopes for the future of Rugby League?

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About Yourself

Name ______________________

Date of birth ______________________

Town residing in ______________________

Occupation ______________________

Marital Status ______________________

Club you Support ______________________

21. How were you first introduced to Rugby League?

____
____

22. How long have you been attending Rugby League games?

1 Season	☐	**1**
2-5 Seasons	☐	**2**
5-10 Seasons	☐	**3**
10-15 Seasons	☐	**4**
15-20 Seasons	☐	**5**
Over 20 Seasons	☐	**6**

Thank you very much for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire

Sheffield Hallam University

Lisa O'Keeffe
Leisure Industries Research Centre

CLUBS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the attitudes and feelings of Rugby League Club Officials concerning the first summer season and 'The Super League'. I would be very grateful if you could spare the time to respond and thank you in advance for your co-operation.

This questionnaire is strictly confidential.

Restructuring Rugby League

1. The first Super League, Summer season is now complete, if the choice was available which framework for Rugby League would you prefer?

Leaving Rugby League in its present framework	☐	1
Revert back to winter but continue with a three division structure	☐	2
Returning to two divisions but continue to play in the summer	☐	3
Revert back to the Rugby League structure prior to the introduction of Super League	☐	4
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	5

Investment in the game

2. After the first year of financial investment by the News Corporation and BSkyB, do you now feel that Rugby League could have survived without the injection of capital?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

3. In your opinion has the money from News Corporation and BSkyB been fairly distributed amongst the clubs?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

4. With the inclusion of Paris St. Germain and London Broncos, and the fast tracking of South Wales into the Super League, do you think the game will be successful at establishing itself in these and other non traditional Rugby League areas?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

5. In your opinion is it fair to fast track teams in non-traditional areas and give them greater help to develop than traditional teams because geographical expansion is important to the success of Rugby League?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

6. Is it important that teams from Spain, Italy, Ireland etc., are allowed into the League, so that it will become a truly 'European' Super League?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

7. Do you agree with Maurice Lindsay and the Rugby League that fast tracking teams into the Super League is a good idea and the only way forward if Rugby League is to expand?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

The Games Popularity

8. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The new structure and playing in summer has bought increased media coverage and publicity for the game	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The increased TV coverage of games has encouraged more people to attend games	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Pre match entertainment has helped to encourage increased support	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The first summer season has been a success in attracting big crowds	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
New rule changes have been beneficial in making the game quicker And more exciting for fans	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Summer Rugby

The hard grounds have caused more injuries	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Summer rugby has made the game faster and more attractive for spectators	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
League will become the leading summer sport in the country	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
There are too many alternatives to watching rugby in summer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

The Effects of Commercialisation and Media

9. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The game is becoming too commercialised with increased emphasis on money and less on winning or improving performance	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League is becoming more like American football full of razzmatazz	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The recent financial investment in the game will result in bigger transfer fees similar to those in soccer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Due to the amount of money in the game, players are now in a position to command any figure they want	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The wages of Rugby League players should now be on a par with those of professional soccer players	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

10. Do you think the introduction of the salary capping in January 1997 is a good idea to help prevent clubs spending more on wages of players than they can afford?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

11. What implications does the introduction of the salary cap pose for clubs?

___

___

___

Clubs and the Super League

12. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Clubs not in the Super League have found it difficult to survive	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Framing the Future requirements in terms of ground capacity and facilities have been hard to implement due to space availability and finance	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
A larger number of Teams are needed in Each division as more Games will bring in Much needed income	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
A reversal back to two divisions would provide the most economically stable environment for clubs and the league as a whole	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually there will Only be one 'Super League' with the Remainder of the clubs acting as feeder clubs playing at an amateur level	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Two Codes

13. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professionalisaton of union will result in the loss of many good league players	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
There will be two Rugby codes, Union played in the winter and League played in the summer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually Rugby Union will become the dominant code	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League and Union will eventually merge into one code	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The BSkyB deal was instigated in order to eventually merge the codes and pose an opposition to football	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

The Future of Rugby League

14. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rugby League is in fear of loosing its identity and community values if small clubs are allowed to go under	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Clubs will have to merge to ensure their survival	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will now flourish, and continue to, even if in five years time the Murdoch money is no longer available	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will become as popular and as rich as soccer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually there will be one professional league	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Clubs which the rugby league want to succeed are getting too much help whilst traditional smaller clubs have been shunned	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The Rugby League is only concerned with big city teams	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
More money should be utilised to improve the game at grass roots and amateur levels as from here come the players of the future	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

15. What do you think the future holds for the game of Rugby League?

____
____
____

About Yourself

Name ______________________________

Date of Birth ______________________________

Town residing in ______________________________

Occupation ______________________________

Marital Status ______________________________

Position at the Club ______________________________

Number of years involved in Rugby League ______________________________

Thank you very much for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire

Sheffield Hallam University

Lisa Ann O'Keeffe
Leisure Industries Research Centre

PLAYERS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the attitudes and feelings of Rugby League Players concerning the first summer season and 'The Super League'. I would be very grateful if you could spare the time to respond and thank you in advance for your co-operation.

This questionnaire is strictly confidential.

Restructuring Rugby League

1. The first Super League, Summer season is now complete, if the choice was available which framework for Rugby League would you prefer?

Leaving Rugby League in its present framework	☐	1
Revert back to winter but continue with a three division structure	☐	2
Returning to two divisions but continue to play in the summer	☐	3
Revert back to the Rugby League structure prior to the introduction of Super League	☐	4
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	5

Investment in the game

2. After the first year of financial investment by the News Corporation and BSkyB, do you now feel that Rugby League could have survived without the injection of capital?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

3. In your opinion has the money from News Corporation and BSkyB been fairly distributed amongst the clubs?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

Geographical Expansion and Fast Tracking

4. With the inclusion of Paris St. Germain and London Broncos, and the fast tracking of South Wales into the Super League, do you think the game will be successful at establishing itself in these and other non traditional Rugby League areas?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

5. In your opinion is it fair to fast track teams in non-traditional areas and give them greater help to develop than traditional teams because geographical expansion is important to the success of Rugby League?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

6. Is it important that teams from Spain, Italy, Ireland etc, are allowed into the League, so that it will become a truly 'European' Super League?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

7. Do you agree with Maurice Lindsay and the Rugby League that fast tracking teams into the Super League is a good idea and the only way forward if Rugby League is to expand?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

The Games Popularity

8. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The new structure and playing in summer has bought increased media coverage and publicity for the game	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The increased TV coverage of games has encouraged more people to attend games	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Pre match entertainment has helped to encourage increased support	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The first summer season has been a success in attracting big crowds	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
New rule changes have been beneficial in making the game quicker and more exciting for fans	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Summer Rugby

The hard grounds have caused more injuries	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Summer rugby has made the game faster and more attractive for spectators	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
It has been more physically demanding playing in summer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
There are too many alternatives to watching rugby in summer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

The Effects of Commercialisation and Media

9. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The game is becoming too commercialised with increased emphasis on money and less on winning or improving performance	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The increased media coverage and the desire for monetary gain via success has led to greater pressure on you to perform well, week in and week out	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League is becoming more like American football full of razzmatazz	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Due to the amount of money in the game, players are now in a position to command any figure they want	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The recent financial investment in the game will result in bigger transfer fees similar to those in soccer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

10. Have you been financially better off under the new system?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

11. Do you think the introduction of the salary capping in January 1997 is a good idea to help prevent clubs spending more on the wages of players than they can afford?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

Two Codes

12. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professionalisation of union will result in the loss of many good league players	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
There will be two Rugby codes, Union played in the winter and League played in the summer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually Rugby Union will become the dominant code	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League and Union will eventually merge into one code	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The BSkyB deal was instigated in order to eventually merge the codes and pose an opposition to football	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

The Future of Rugby League

13. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rugby League is in fear of loosing its identity and community values if small clubs are allowed to go under	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Clubs will have to merge to ensure their survival	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will now flourish, and continue to, even if in five years time the Murdoch money is no longer available	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will become as popular and as rich as soccer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually there will be one professional league	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Clubs which the rugby league want to succeed are getting too much help whilst traditional smaller clubs have been shunned	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The Rugby League is only concerned with big city teams	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
More money should be utilised to improve the game at grass roots and amateur levels as from here come the players of the future	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

14. What do you think the future holds for the game of Rugby League?

____
____
____

About Yourself

Name ____________________

Date of Birth ____________________

Years playing professional rugby league ____________________

Club ____________________

Previous clubs ____________________

International honours ____________________

15. Would you class yourself as a full or part time professional?

Full	☐	1
Part	☐	2

16. What else are you currently doing if you are part time?

Studying full time	☐	1
Studying part time	☐	2
Working full time	☐	3
Working part time	☐	4
Other (Please state)	☐	5

Thank you very much for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire

Lisa Ann O'Keeffe
Leisure Industries Research Centre

SUPPORTERS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the attitudes and feelings of Rugby League Supporters concerning the first summer season and 'The Super League'. I would be very grateful if you could spare the time to respond and thank you in advance for your co-operation.

This questionnaire is strictly confidential.

Restructuring Rugby League

1. The first Super League, Summer season is now complete, if the choice was available which framework for Rugby League would you prefer?

Leaving Rugby League in its present framework	☐	1
Revert back to winter but continue with a three division structure	☐	2
Returning to two divisions but continue to play in the summer	☐	3
Revert back to the Rugby League structure prior to the introduction of Super League	☐	4
Other (Please state)________________________	☐	5

Investment in the game

2. After the first year of financial investment by the News Corporation and BSkyB, do you now feel that Rugby League could have survived without the injection of capital?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

3. In your opinion has the money from News Corporation and BSkyB been fairly distributed amongst the clubs?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

Geographical Expansion and Fast Tracking

4. With the inclusion of Paris St. Germain and London Broncos, and the fast tracking of South Wales into the Super League, do you think the game will be successful at establishing itself in these and other non traditional Rugby League areas?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

5. In your opinion is it fair to fast track teams in non traditional areas and give them greater help to develop than traditional teams because geographical expansion is important to the success of Rugby League?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

6. Is it important that teams from Spain, Italy, Ireland etc., are allowed into the League, so that it will become a truly 'European' Super League?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

7. Do you agree with Maurice Lindsay and the Rugby League that fast tracking teams into the Super League is a good idea and the only way forward if Rugby League is to expand?

Yes	☐	1
No	☐	2

The Games Popularity

8. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The new structure and playing in summer has bought increased media coverage and publicity for the game	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The increased TV coverage of games has encouraged more people to attend games	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Pre match entertainment has helped to encourage increased support	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Stadium, changing and eating facilities have improved at grounds	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
New rule changes have been beneficial in making the game quicker and more exciting for fans	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Summer Rugby

The first summer season has been a success in attracting big crowds	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Summer rugby has made the game faster and more attractive for spectators	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
League will become the leading summer sport in the country	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
There are too many alternatives to watching rugby in summer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

The Effects of Commercialisation and Media

9. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The game is becoming too commercialised with increased emphasis on money and less on winning or improving performance	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The introduction of a salary cap in January 1997 is a good idea to help prevent them spending more on players wages than they can afford	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League is becoming more like American football full of razzmatazz	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Due to the amount of money in the game, players are now in a position to command any figure they want	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The recent financial investment in the game will result in bigger transfer fees similar to those in soccer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

10. How do you rate attending a Rugby League game in terms of value for money? Would you say it was:

Excellent	☐ **1**
Good	☐ **2**
OK	☐ **3**
Poor	☐ **4**
Very Poor	☐ **5**

<u>Two Codes</u>

11. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professionalisaton of union will result in the loss of many good league players	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
There will be two Rugby codes, Union played in the winter and League played in the summer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually Rugby Union will become the dominant code	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League and Union will eventually merge into one code	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The BSkyB deal was instigated in order to eventually merge the codes and pose an opposition to football	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

The Future of Rugby League

12. Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rugby League is in fear of loosing its identity and community values If small clubs are allowed to go under	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Clubs will have to merge To ensure their survival	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will now flourish, and continue to, even if in five years time the Murdoch money is no longer available	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Rugby League will become as popular and as rich as soccer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Eventually there will be one professional league	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Clubs which the rugby league want to succeed are getting too much help whilst traditional smaller clubs have been shunned	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The Rugby League is only concerned with big city teams	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
More money should be utilised to improve the game at grass roots and amateur levels as from here come the players of the future	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

13. What do you think the future holds for the game of Rugby League?

____

____

____

About Yourself

Name ______________________

Date of Birth ______________________

Town residing in ______________________

Occupation ______________________

Marital Status ______________________

Club you support ______________________

14. How long have you been attending Rugby League games?

1 Season ☐ **1**

2-5 Seasons ☐ **2**

5-10 Seasons ☐ **3**

10-15 Seasons ☐ **4**

15-20 Seasons ☐ **5**

Over 20 Seasons ☐ **6**

15. Please indicate which activity, if any, you will attend throughout the first winter season in which Professional Rugby League will not be played

Professional Rugby Union ☐ **1**

Amateur Rugby League ☐ **2**

Soccer ☐ **3**

Ice Hockey ☐ **4**

Other (Please state)______________________ ☐ **5**

Thank you very much for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire

Club Officials - Pre Super League Questionnaire Results

What is your preference for the restructuring of the game?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Change to the Super League	16	94.1	94.1	94.1
	Changing to summer rugby	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

If you felt that changes were required please indicate which are of the greatest importance?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Top clubs get more voting rights	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Increase attractiveness	8	47.1	47.1	52.9
	Allow the game to be played in summer	7	41.2	41.2	94.1
	Other	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Could the game have survived without the financial investment?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	35.3	35.3	35.3
	No	11	64.7	64.7	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Why do you feel the game would have survived?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	11	64.7	64.7	64.7
	The game has already survived 100 years	1	5.9	5.9	70.6
	Only big clubs would survive	5	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Why do you feel that the game would not have survived?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	5	29.4	29.4	29.4
	Crowds are decreasing	3	17.6	17.6	47.1
	Clubs have financial problems	8	47.1	47.1	94.1
	The game is still 'Northern'	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Has the money been fairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	8	47.1	47.1	47.1
	No	9	52.9	52.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Why do you think the money has been fairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	9	52.9
	Big clubs spend more	2	11.8
	Big clubs are successful	5	29.4
	Other	1	5.9
	Total	17	100.0

Why do you think the money has been fairly distributed?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	52.9	52.9
	Big clubs spend more	11.8	64.7
	Big clubs are successful	29.4	94.1
	Other	5.9	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Why do you think the money has not been fairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	7	41.2	41.2	41.2
	Big clubs will get bigger	7	41.2	41.2	82.4
	Smaller clubs need money	1	5.9	5.9	88.2
	Other	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

How should the money have been distributed?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	5	29.4
	All clubs should get equal	5	29.4
	Clubs should all get the same	4	23.5
	Other	3	17.6
	Total	17	100.0

How should the money have been distributed?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	29.4	29.4
	All clubs should get equal	29.4	58.8
	Clubs should all get the same	23.5	82.4
	Other	17.6	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Will Super League allow the game to spread from its Northern roots?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	15	88.2	88.2	88.2
	No	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Why do you think the game will establish itself in other areas?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Increased publicity	14	82.4	82.4	94.1
	Other	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Will the game survive in Newcastle?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	23.5	23.5	23.5
	Yes	13	76.5	76.5	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Will the game survive in London?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	7	41.2	41.2	41.2
	Yes	10	58.8	58.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Will the game survive in Birmingham?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	16	94.1	94.1	94.1
	Yes	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Will the game survive in Leicester?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	15	88.2	88.2	88.2
	Yes	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Will the game develop elsewhere?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	12	70.6	70.6	70.6
	Yes	5	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Why will the game never establish itself in other areas?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	9	52.9	52.9	52.9
	Always been a Northern game	2	11.8	11.8	64.7
	Union is the dominant game	2	11.8	11.8	76.5
	Other	4	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

In the form of Rugby League we have a marketable product?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	11	64.7	64.7	64.7
	Agree	5	29.4	29.4	94.1
	Disagree	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Improved stadium and facilities will encourage more people to games

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	9	52.9	52.9	52.9
	Agree	8	47.1	47.1	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Pre match entertainment will increase support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	35.3	35.3	35.3
	Agree	5	29.4	29.4	64.7
	Uncertain	5	29.4	29.4	94.1
	Disagree	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Tv will encourage more people to attend games

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	35.3	35.3	35.3
	Agree	6	35.3	35.3	70.6
	Uncertain	5	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

The game will increase its support due to the new restructuring

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	3	17.6	17.6	17.6
	Agree	8	47.1	47.1	64.7
	Uncertain	5	29.4	29.4	94.1
	Disagree	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Recent rule changes are a good idea to make the game more attractive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	3	17.6	17.6	17.6
	Agree	11	64.7	64.7	82.4
	Uncertain	3	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Geographical expansion is very important for the games success

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	9	52.9	52.9	52.9
	Agree	8	47.1	47.1	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

How can the game of Rugby League promote itself?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9
	Development officers	1	5.9
	Coverage in the media	4	23.5
	High profile sponsors	1	5.9
	Better marketing	4	23.5
	Rugby panel Tv show	1	5.9
	More professional attitude	1	5.9
	Cheaper tickets	1	5.9
	Unified strategy	2	11.8
	Other	1	5.9
	Total	17	100.0

How can the game of Rugby League promote itself?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	5.9	5.9
	Development officers	5.9	11.8
	Coverage in the media	23.5	35.3
	High profile sponsors	5.9	41.2
	Better marketing	23.5	64.7
	Rugby panel Tv show	5.9	70.6
	More professional attitude	5.9	76.5
	Cheaper tickets	5.9	82.4
	Unified strategy	11.8	94.1
	Other	5.9	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Clubs not in the Super League will find it difficult to survive?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Strongly Agree	1	5.9	5.9	11.8
	Agree	4	23.5	23.5	35.3
	Uncertain	5	29.4	29.4	64.7
	Disagree	6	35.3	35.3	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Ground and facility requirements area a problem due to space availability and finance?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Strongly Agree	2	11.8	11.8	17.6
	Agree	10	58.8	58.8	76.5
	Uncertain	1	5.9	5.9	82.4
	Disagree	3	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Wages of players should be on a part with those of soccer players?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Uncertain	3	17.6	17.6	23.5
	Disagree	9	52.9	52.9	76.5
	Strongly Disagree	4	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

The investment in the game will result in bigger transfer fees?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Strongly Agree	1	5.9	5.9	11.8
	Agree	3	17.6	17.6	29.4
	Uncertain	4	23.5	23.5	52.9
	Disagree	8	47.1	47.1	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Buying new players

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	23.5	23.5	23.5
	Most important	2	11.8	11.8	35.3
	Important	1	5.9	5.9	41.2
	Fairly important	4	23.5	23.5	64.7
	Ok	2	11.8	11.8	76.5
	Irrelevant	2	11.8	11.8	88.2
	Insignificant	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Players wages

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	23.5	23.5	23.5
	Important	1	5.9	5.9	29.4
	Fairly important	1	5.9	5.9	35.3
	Ok	2	11.8	11.8	47.1
	Irrelevant	3	17.6	17.6	64.7
	Insignificant	6	35.3	35.3	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Coaching staff

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Most important	1	5.9	5.9	17.6
	Very important	1	5.9	5.9	23.5
	Important	3	17.6	17.6	41.2
	Fairly important	3	17.6	17.6	58.8
	Ok	4	23.5	23.5	82.4
	Irrelevant	3	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Managerial and financial staff

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	3	17.6	17.6	17.6
	Most important	5	29.4	29.4	47.1
	Very important	2	11.8	11.8	58.8
	Fairly important	1	5.9	5.9	64.7
	Ok	2	11.8	11.8	76.5
	Irrelevant	1	5.9	5.9	82.4
	Insignificant	3	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Improving facilities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	3	17.6	17.6	17.6
	Most important	4	23.5	23.5	41.2
	Very important	3	17.6	17.6	58.8
	Important	3	17.6	17.6	76.5
	Fairly important	1	5.9	5.9	82.4
	Ok	1	5.9	5.9	88.2
	Insignificant	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Grass roots of the game

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Most important	1	5.9	5.9	17.6
	Very important	5	29.4	29.4	47.1
	Important	2	11.8	11.8	58.8
	Fairly important	2	11.8	11.8	70.6
	Ok	3	17.6	17.6	88.2
	Irrelevant	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Promotion and publicity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Most important	3	17.6	17.6	23.5
	Very important	4	23.5	23.5	47.1
	Important	5	29.4	29.4	76.5
	Fairly important	2	11.8	11.8	88.2
	Irrelevant	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

How will relegation affect the future of a club?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Depends on the long term	8	47.1	47.1	52.9
	Needs to put finances in order	3	17.6	17.6	70.6
	Reduction in income	1	5.9	5.9	76.5
	Less coverage and exposure	2	11.8	11.8	88.2
	Lose supporters	1	5.9	5.9	94.1
	More determind to get back	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league will lose its identity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Agree	1	5.9	5.9	11.8
	Uncertain	2	11.8	11.8	23.5
	Disagree	11	64.7	64.7	88.2
	Strongly Disagree	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Its important that the roots of the game are not forgotten

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Strongly Agree	3	17.6	17.6	23.5
	Agree	12	70.6	70.6	94.1
	Disagree	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Rugby League is in danger of becoming like American Football

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Agree	3	17.6	17.6	23.5
	Uncertain	7	41.2	41.2	64.7
	Disagree	5	29.4	29.4	94.1
	Strongly Disagree	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Certain clubs will have to merge in order to survive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Strongly Agree	3	17.6	17.6	23.5
	Agree	11	64.7	64.7	88.2
	Uncertain	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

The restructuring will stop Wigan's dominance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Strongly Agree	3	17.6	17.6	23.5
	Agree	9	52.9	52.9	76.5
	Uncertain	3	17.6	17.6	94.1
	Disagree	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

The game will no longer survive as a professional sport after five years

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Uncertain	6	35.3	35.3	41.2
	Disagree	7	41.2	41.2	82.4
	Strongly Disagree	3	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

League and Union will eventually merge

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Agree	3	17.6	17.6	23.5
	Uncertain	7	41.2	41.2	64.7
	Disagree	3	17.6	17.6	82.4
	Strongly Disagree	3	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

What are your hopes for the future of Rugby League?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	2	11.8
	Game to expand	6	35.3
	Clubs run as businesses	1	5.9
	Become a national sport	1	5.9
	High profile	1	5.9
	Expand nationally	2	11.8
	Compete with football	2	11.8
	Better facilities	1	5.9
	More professional	1	5.9
	Total	17	100.0

What are your hopes for the future of Rugby League?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	11.8	11.8
	Game to expand	35.3	47.1
	Clubs run as businesses	5.9	52.9
	Become a national sport	5.9	58.8
	High profile	5.9	64.7
	Expand nationally	11.8	76.5
	Compete with football	11.8	88.2
	Better facilities	5.9	94.1
	More professional	5.9	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Your age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 30	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	30-35	5	29.4	29.4	41.2
	35-40	3	17.6	17.6	58.8
	40-45	4	23.5	23.5	82.4
	45-50	2	11.8	11.8	94.1
	Over 50	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Marital status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	2	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Married	13	76.5	76.5	88.2
	Divorced	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Is your club in Super League or not?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Super League Club	9	52.9
	Non-Super League Club	8	47.1
	Total	17	100.0

Is your club in Super League or not?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Super League Club	52.9	52.9
	Non-Super League Club	47.1	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Number of years involved in the game?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 5	1	5.9	5.9	5.9
	5-10	1	5.9	5.9	11.8
	10-15	3	17.6	17.6	29.4
	15-20	1	5.9	5.9	35.3
	20-25	3	17.6	17.6	52.9
	Over 25	8	47.1	47.1	100.0
	Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Players - Pre Super League Questionnaire Results

What is your preference for the restructuring of the game?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Leaving rugby league in its present framework	3	4.7
	Changing to the Super League	53	82.8
	Changing to summer rugby without restructuring the game	7	10.9
	restructuring the game but continuing to play in winter	1	1.6
	Total	64	100.0

What is your preference for the restructuring of the game?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Leaving rugby league in its present framework	4.7	4.7
	Changing to the Super League	82.8	87.5
	Changing to summer rugby without restructuring the game	10.9	98.4
	restructuring the game but continuing to play in winter	1.6	100.0
	Total	100.0	

If you felt changes were required please indicate the reason which you feel is most important

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	2	3.1
	Top clubs get more votes and more say	1	1.6
	More divisions and so closer competitions	5	7.8
	Increase attractiveness and so get more support	43	67.2
	Allow game to be played in the summer	10	15.6
	Other	3	4.7
	Total	64	100.0

If you felt changes were required please indicate the reason which you feel is most important

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	3.1	3.1
	Top clubs get more votes and more say	1.6	4.7
	More divisions and so closer competitions	7.8	12.5
	Increase attractiveness and so get more support	67.2	79.7
	Allow game to be played in the summer	15.6	95.3
	Other	4.7	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Were you consulted about the decisions to be made about changes to the game?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	No	62	96.9	96.9	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

If yes what form did this consultation take?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	62	96.9	96.9	96.9
	Interview	1	1.6	1.6	98.4
	Players forum	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Could the game have survived without the financial investment?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	25	39.1	39.1	39.1
	No	39	60.9	60.9	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Why do you feel the game would have survived without the investment?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	38	59.4
	The game has already survived 100years	9	14.1
	The game is becoming more popular	3	4.7
	Big clubs would survive but small clubs would fold	10	15.6
	Fans would not let the clubs go out of business	3	4.7
	Other	1	1.6
	Total	64	100.0

Why do you feel the game would have survived without the investment?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	59.4	59.4
	The game has already survived 100years	14.1	73.4
	The game is becoming more popular	4.7	78.1
	Big clubs would survive but small clubs would fold	15.6	93.8
	Fans would not let the clubs go out of business	4.7	98.4
	Other	1.6	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Why do you feel the game would not have survived without the investment?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	22	34.4
	Crowds are decreasing	9	14.1
	Many clubs could not afford to stay in business	19	29.7
	The game is still played in the north	5	7.8
	Players may play union now that it is professional	7	10.9
	Other	2	3.1
	Total	64	100.0

Why do you feel the game would not have survived without the investment?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	34.4	34.4
	Crowds are decreasing	14.1	48.4
	Many clubs could not afford to stay in business	29.7	78.1
	The game is still played in the north	7.8	85.9
	Players may play union now that it is professional	10.9	96.9
	Other	3.1	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Has the money been fairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	43.8	43.8	43.8
	No	36	56.3	56.3	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Why do you think the money has been fairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	34	53.1
	Big clubs spend more and so need more money	13	20.3
	Big clubs are successful so they deserve the money	15	23.4
	Other	2	3.1
	Total	64	100.0

Why do you think the money has been fairly distributed?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	53.1	53.1
	Big clubs spend more and so need more money	20.3	73.4
	Big clubs are successful so they deserve the money	23.4	96.9
	Other	3.1	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Why do you think the money has not been fairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	24	37.5
	Big clubs will get bigger and others will find it hard	20	31.3
	Small clubs are more in need of the money	17	26.6
	It is not being used to help traditional clubs	1	1.6
	Other	2	3.1
	Total	64	100.0

Why do you think the money has not been fairly distributed?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	37.5	37.5
	Big clubs will get bigger and others will find it hard	31.3	68.8
	Small clubs are more in need of the money	26.6	95.3
	It is not being used to help traditional clubs	1.6	96.9
	Other	3.1	100.0
	Total	100.0	

How should the money have been distributed?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	16	25.0
	All clubs should get an equal share	19	29.7
	Clubs should get the money according to need	15	23.4
	Those in lower league should get more so the gap is reduced	10	15.6
	Other	4	6.3
	Total	64	100.0

How should the money have been distributed?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	25.0	25.0
	All clubs should get an equal share	29.7	54.7
	Clubs should get the money according to need	23.4	78.1
	Those in lower league should get more so the gap is reduced	15.6	93.8
	Other	6.3	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Will super league allow the game to spread?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	55	85.9	85.9	85.9
	No	9	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Why do you think the game will establish itself in other areas?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	9	14.1	14.1	14.1
	Increased publicity	51	79.7	79.7	93.8
	Englands capital now having a team	4	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Will the game survive in Newcastle?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	38	59.4	59.4	59.4
	Yes	26	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Will the game survive in London?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	33	51.6	51.6	51.6
	Yes	31	48.4	48.4	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Will the game develop in Birmingham?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	54	84.4	84.4	84.4
	Yes	10	15.6	15.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Will the game develop in Leicester?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	57	89.1	89.1	89.1
	Yes	7	10.9	10.9	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Will the game develop elsewhere?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	46	71.9	71.9	71.9
	Yes	18	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Why will the game never establish itself in other areas?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No response	37	57.8
	Always has been and will be a northern game	9	14.1
	Union is the dominant code	16	25.0
	Other	2	3.1
	Total	64	100.0

Why will the game never establish itself in other areas?

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	57.8	57.8
	Always has been and will be a northern game	14.1	71.9
	Union is the dominant code	25.0	96.9
	Other	3.1	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Improved stadium and facilities will encourage more people

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	24	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Agree	29	45.3	45.3	82.8
	Uncertain	9	14.1	14.1	96.9
	Disagree	2	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Pre match entertainment will increase support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	20	31.3	31.3	31.3
	Agree	29	45.3	45.3	76.6
	Uncertain	11	17.2	17.2	93.8
	Disagree	4	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

TV will encourage more people to attend games

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	19	29.7	29.7	29.7
	Agree	26	40.6	40.6	70.3
	Uncertain	12	18.8	18.8	89.1
	Diagree	6	9.4	9.4	98.4
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

The game will increase its support due to the new restructuring

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	9	14.1	14.1	14.1
	Agree	26	40.6	40.6	54.7
	Uncertain	24	37.5	37.5	92.2
	Disagree	5	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Recent rule changes are a good idea to make the game more attractive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	9.4	9.4	9.4
	Agree	25	39.1	39.1	48.4
	Uncertain	25	39.1	39.1	87.5
	Disagree	7	10.9	10.9	98.4
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Geographical expansion is very important for the success and development of the game

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	29	45.3	45.3	45.3
	Agree	28	43.8	43.8	89.1
	Uncertain	7	10.9	10.9	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

How can the game of rugby league promote itself?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	18	28.1	28.1	28.1
	Family game	6	9.4	9.4	37.5
	Strike a deal with terrestrial TV	10	15.6	15.6	53.1
	Loose cloth cap image	6	9.4	9.4	62.5
	Stop infighting and all work together	1	1.6	1.6	64.1
	Greater links with union	2	3.1	3.1	67.2
	6.00	2	3.1	3.1	70.3
	7.00	2	3.1	3.1	73.4
	8.00	7	10.9	10.9	84.4
	9.00	4	6.3	6.3	90.6
	10.00	3	4.7	4.7	95.3
	11.00	2	3.1	3.1	98.4
	12.00	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Rugby League will become as popular as soccer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Agree	4	6.3	6.3	9.4
	Uncertain	18	28.1	28.1	37.5
	Disagree	25	39.1	39.1	76.6
	Strongly Disagree	15	23.4	23.4	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Players will become stars like their soccer counterparts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	3	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Agree	4	6.3	6.3	10.9
	Uncertain	16	25.0	25.0	35.9
	Disagree	27	42.2	42.2	78.1
	Strongly Disagree	14	21.9	21.9	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Wages of players should be on a par with those of soccer players

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	23	35.9	35.9	35.9
	Agree	22	34.4	34.4	70.3
	Uncertain	11	17.2	17.2	87.5
	Disagree	7	10.9	10.9	98.4
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

The financial investment in the game will result in big transfer fees like in soccer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Agree	22	34.4	34.4	37.5
	Uncertain	21	32.8	32.8	70.3
	Disagree	13	20.3	20.3	90.6
	Strongly Disagree	6	9.4	9.4	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Will you be better off financially?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	48	75.0	75.0	75.0
	No	16	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Will there be increased pressure on you due to Super Lleague?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	51	79.7	79.7	79.7
	No	13	20.3	20.3	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league will loose its identity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Strongly Agree	3	4.7	4.7	7.8
	Agree	4	6.3	6.3	14.1
	Uncertain	17	26.6	26.6	40.6
	Disagree	36	56.3	56.3	96.9
	Strongly Disagree	2	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Its important the roots of the game are not forgotten

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Strongly Agree	19	29.7	29.7	32.8
	Agree	30	46.9	46.9	79.7
	Uncertain	6	9.4	9.4	89.1
	Disagree	7	10.9	10.9	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league is in danger of becoming like american football

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Strongly Agree	5	7.8	7.8	10.9
	Agree	21	32.8	32.8	43.8
	Uncertain	20	31.3	31.3	75.0
	Disagree	15	23.4	23.4	98.4
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Certain clubs will have to merge inorder to survive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	3	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Strongly Agree	11	17.2	17.2	21.9
	Agree	30	46.9	46.9	68.8
	Uncertain	16	25.0	25.0	93.8
	Disagree	4	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

The restructuring will stop Wigans dominance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Strongly Agree	9	14.1	14.1	20.3
	Agree	37	57.8	57.8	78.1
	Uncertain	11	17.2	17.2	95.3
	Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	96.9
	Strongly Disagree	2	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

The game will no longer survive as a professional sport after the money has been withdrawn

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	3	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Strongly Agree	1	1.6	1.6	6.3
	Agree	6	9.4	9.4	15.6
	Uncertain	29	45.3	45.3	60.9
	Disagree	24	37.5	37.5	98.4
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

League and union will eventually merge

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	3	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Strongly Agree	2	3.1	3.1	7.8
	Agree	7	10.9	10.9	18.8
	Uncertain	16	25.0	25.0	43.8
	Disagree	18	28.1	28.1	71.9
	Strongly Disagree	18	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

What are your hopes for the future of Rugby League?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	13	20.3	20.3	20.3
	Game to expand	34	53.1	53.1	73.4
	Clubs run as a business	6	9.4	9.4	82.8
	Become a National sport	4	6.3	6.3	89.1
	High profile	1	1.6	1.6	90.6
	Expand nationally	1	1.6	1.6	92.2
	Compete with football	2	3.1	3.1	95.3
	Better facilities	2	3.1	3.1	98.4
	More professional	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Would you class yourself as full or part time?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Full time	41	64.1	64.1	67.2
	Part time	21	32.8	32.8	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

If part time what else are you currently doing?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	41	64.1	64.1	64.1
	Studying full time	5	7.8	7.8	71.9
	Studying part time	3	4.7	4.7	76.6
	Working full time	11	17.2	17.2	93.8
	Working part time	3	4.7	4.7	98.4
	Other	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Supporters - Pre Super League Questionnaire Results

What is your preference for the restructuring of the game?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Leaving rugby league in its present framework	8	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Changing to the Super League	47	40.9	40.9	47.8
	Changing to summer rugby without restructuring the game	23	20.0	20.0	67.8
	restructuring the game but continuing to play in winter	28	24.3	24.3	92.2
	Other	9	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

If you felt changes were required please indicate the reason which you feel is most important

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	.9	.9	.9
	Top clubs get more votes and more say	3	2.6	2.6	3.5
	More divisions and so closer competitions	10	8.7	8.7	12.2
	Increase attractiveness and so get more support	66	57.4	57.4	69.6
	Allow game to be played in the summer	27	23.5	23.5	93.0
	Other	8	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Could the game have survived without the money?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	.9	.9	.9
	Yes	45	39.1	39.1	40.0
	No	69	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

What is the main reason you think the game would survive?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	66	57.4	57.4	57.4
	The game has already survived 100 years without investment	9	7.8	7.8	65.2
	The game is more popular and gaining support	10	8.7	8.7	73.9
	Big clubs would survive small clubs would'nt	22	19.1	19.1	93.0
	Fans would'nt let clubs go out of business	3	2.6	2.6	95.7
	Other	5	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Why do you think the game would not survive?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	43	37.4	37.4	37.4
	Crowds are decreasing	13	11.3	11.3	48.7
	Clubs cannot afford to stay in business	44	38.3	38.3	87.0
	Game is still primarily played in the north	9	7.8	7.8	94.8
	Players would be willing to switch to union without the cash	3	2.6	2.6	97.4
	Other	3	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Has the money been fairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	1.7	1.7	1.7
	Yes	30	26.1	26.1	27.8
	No	83	72.2	72.2	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Why do you think the money has been fairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	82	71.3	71.3	71.3
	Big clubs spend more so need most money	8	7.0	7.0	78.3
	Big clubs bring money into game and so deserve the rewards	23	20.0	20.0	98.3
	Small clubs do not deserve the money	1	.9	.9	99.1
	Other	1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Why do you think the money has been unfairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	31	27.0	27.0	27.0
	Small clubs will find it increasingly hard to survive	53	46.1	46.1	73.0
	Small clubs are more in need of the money	13	11.3	11.3	84.3
	Traditional clubs are not being helped	14	12.2	12.2	96.5
	Other	4	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

How should the money have been distributed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	27	23.5	23.5	23.5
	All clubs should recieve an equal share	34	29.6	29.6	53.0
	Clubs should be given money according to need	23	20.0	20.0	73.0
	Small clubs should get more so the financial gap is reduced	21	18.3	18.3	91.3
	Other	10	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Will the Super League allow the game to spread and expand?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	.9	.9	.9
	Yes	73	63.5	63.5	64.3
	No	41	35.7	35.7	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Why do you think the game will establish itself in other areas?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	40	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Increased publicity and media coverage	66	57.4	57.4	92.2
	England's capital having a team	7	6.1	6.1	98.3
	Other	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Will the game survive in Newcastle?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	61	53.0	53.0	53.0
	Yes	54	47.0	47.0	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Will the game develop in London?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	73	63.5	63.5	63.5
	Yes	42	36.5	36.5	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Will the game develop in Birmingham?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	101	87.8	87.8	87.8
	Yes	14	12.2	12.2	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Will the game develop in Leicester?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	106	92.2	92.2	92.2
	Yes	9	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Will the game develop elsewhere?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	96	83.5	83.5	83.5
	Yes	19	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Why will the game never establish itself in other areas?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	66	57.4	57.4	57.4
	Always has been and will be a northern game	26	22.6	22.6	80.0
	Union is the dominant code	11	9.6	9.6	89.6
	Other	12	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Improved stadium and facilities will encourage more people

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	44	38.3	38.3	38.3
	Agree	58	50.4	50.4	88.7
	Uncertain	8	7.0	7.0	95.7
	Disagree	5	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Pre match entertainment will increase support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	14	12.2	12.2	12.2
	Agree	32	27.8	27.8	40.0
	Uncertain	39	33.9	33.9	73.9
	Disagree	25	21.7	21.7	95.7
	Strongly Disagree	5	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

TV will encourage more people to attend games

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	.9	.9	.9
	Strongly Agree	25	21.7	21.7	22.6
	Agree	44	38.3	38.3	60.9
	Uncertain	26	22.6	22.6	83.5
	Diagree	14	12.2	12.2	95.7
	Strongly Disagree	5	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

The game will increase its support due to the new restructuring

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	9	7.8	7.8	7.8
	Agree	43	37.4	37.4	45.2
	Uncertain	36	31.3	31.3	76.5
	Disagree	21	18.3	18.3	94.8
	Strongly Disagree	6	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Recent rule changes are a good idea to make the game more attractive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	16	13.9	13.9	13.9
	Agree	59	51.3	51.3	65.2
	Uncertain	26	22.6	22.6	87.8
	Disagree	7	6.1	6.1	93.9
	Strongly Disagree	6	5.2	5.2	99.1
	43.00	1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Geographical expansion is very important for the success and development of the game

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	.9	.9	.9
	Strongly Agree	47	40.9	40.9	41.7
	Agree	38	33.0	33.0	74.8
	Uncertain	18	15.7	15.7	90.4
	Disagree	9	7.8	7.8	98.3
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

How can the game of rugby league promote itself?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	23	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Family game	17	14.8	14.8	34.8
	Strike a deal with terrestrial TV	42	36.5	36.5	71.3
	Loose cloth cap image	4	3.5	3.5	74.8
	Stop infighting and all work together	6	5.2	5.2	80.0
	Greater links with union	1	.9	.9	80.9
	Compete with football	5	4.3	4.3	85.2
	Better facilities	6	5.2	5.2	90.4
	More professional	3	2.6	2.6	93.0
		2	1.7	1.7	94.8
		2	1.7	1.7	96.5
		2	1.7	1.7	98.3
		2	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Rugby League will become as popular as soccer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Agree	9	7.8	7.8	12.2
	Uncertain	24	20.9	20.9	33.0
	Disagree	46	40.0	40.0	73.0
	Strongly Disagree	31	27.0	27.0	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Players will become stars like their soccer counterparts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	5.2	5.2	5.2
	Agree	10	8.7	8.7	13.9
	Uncertain	31	27.0	27.0	40.9
	Disagree	51	44.3	44.3	85.2
	Strongly Disagree	17	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Wages of players should be on a par with those of soccer players

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	.9	.9	.9
	Strongly Agree	17	14.8	14.8	15.7
	Agree	19	16.5	16.5	32.2
	Uncertain	23	20.0	20.0	52.2
	Disagree	43	37.4	37.4	89.6
	Strongly Disagree	12	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

The financial investment in the game will result in big transfer fees like in soccer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	9	7.8	7.8	7.8
	Agree	45	39.1	39.1	47.0
	Uncertain	28	24.3	24.3	71.3
	Disagree	27	23.5	23.5	94.8
	Strongly Disagree	6	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

How do you rate the game in terms of value for money?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	1.7	1.7	1.7
	Excellent	45	39.1	39.1	40.9
	Good	49	42.6	42.6	83.5
	OK	15	13.0	13.0	96.5
	Poor	3	2.6	2.6	99.1
	Very Poor	1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

How is the price of an adult ticket in terms of value for money?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	3	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Too high	13	11.3	11.3	13.9
	Reasonable	99	86.1	86.1	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

What is a reasonable price?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	27	23.5	23.5	23.5
	Under £5	3	2.6	2.6	26.1
	£5	21	18.3	18.3	44.3
	£6-£7	43	37.4	37.4	81.7
	£8-£9	10	8.7	8.7	90.4
	£10	11	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league will loose its identity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Strongly Agree	9	7.8	7.8	11.3
	Agree	24	20.9	20.9	32.2
	Uncertain	23	20.0	20.0	52.2
	Disagree	42	36.5	36.5	88.7
	Strongly Disagree	12	10.4	10.4	99.1
	33.00	1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Its important the roots of the game are not forgotten

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Strongly Agree	53	46.1	46.1	49.6
	Agree	48	41.7	41.7	91.3
	Uncertain	6	5.2	5.2	96.5
	Disagree	1	.9	.9	97.4
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league is in danger of becoming like american football

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Strongly Agree	21	18.3	18.3	21.7
	Agree	34	29.6	29.6	51.3
	Uncertain	18	15.7	15.7	67.0
	Disagree	34	29.6	29.6	96.5
	Strongly Disagree	4	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Certain clubs will have to merge inorder to survive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Strongly Agree	15	13.0	13.0	16.5
	Agree	51	44.3	44.3	60.9
	Uncertain	23	20.0	20.0	80.9
	Disagree	16	13.9	13.9	94.8
	Strongly Disagree	6	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

The restructuring will stop Wigan's dominance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	5	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Strongly Agree	15	13.0	13.0	17.4
	Agree	56	48.7	48.7	66.1
	Uncertain	20	17.4	17.4	83.5
	Disagree	16	13.9	13.9	97.4
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

The game will no longer survive as a professional sport after the money has been withdrawn

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Strongly Agree	3	2.6	2.6	6.1
	Agree	11	9.6	9.6	15.7
	Uncertain	36	31.3	31.3	47.0
	Disagree	42	36.5	36.5	83.5
	Strongly Disagree	19	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

League and union will eventually merge

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	4	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Strongly Agree	4	3.5	3.5	7.0
	Agree	16	13.9	13.9	20.9
	Uncertain	23	20.0	20.0	40.9
	Disagree	26	22.6	22.6	63.5
	Strongly Disagree	42	36.5	36.5	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

What are your hopes for the future of rugby league?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	11	9.6	9.6	9.6
	Game to expand	21	18.3	18.3	27.8
	Clubs run as a business	44	38.3	38.3	66.1
	Become a National sport	2	1.7	1.7	67.8
	High Profile	9	7.8	7.8	75.7
	Expand Nationally	8	7.0	7.0	82.6
	Compete with football	7	6.1	6.1	88.7
	Better facilities	3	2.6	2.6	91.3
	More professional	4	3.5	3.5	94.8
		2	1.7	1.7	96.5
		2	1.7	1.7	98.3
		1	.9	.9	99.1
		1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

How were you first introduced to the game?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	11	9.6	9.6	9.6
	School	7	6.1	6.1	15.7
	TV	4	3.5	3.5	19.1
	Family/Friends	79	68.7	68.7	87.8
	Played	8	7.0	7.0	94.8
	Live near the ground	5	4.3	4.3	99.1
	6.00	1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

How long have you been attending rugby league games?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	1.7	1.7	1.7
	1 Season	3	2.6	2.6	4.3
	2-5 Seasons	11	9.6	9.6	13.9
	5010 Seasons	17	14.8	14.8	28.7
	10-15 Seasons	10	8.7	8.7	37.4
	15-20 Seasons	10	8.7	8.7	46.1
	over 20 Seasons	62	53.9	53.9	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Is your club in Super League or not?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	.9	.9	.9
	Super League	37	32.2	32.2	33.0
	Non Super League	77	67.0	67.0	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

How old are you?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	1.7	1.7	1.7
	Under 20	7	6.1	6.1	7.8
	20-30	29	25.2	25.2	33.0
	30-40	22	19.1	19.1	52.2
	40-50	25	21.7	21.7	73.9
	50-60	17	14.8	14.8	88.7
	Over 60	13	11.3	11.3	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Are you male or female?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	.9	.9	.9
	Male	92	80.0	80.0	80.9
	Female	22	19.1	19.1	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

What is your marital status?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	.9	.9	.9
	Single	46	40.0	40.0	40.9
	Married	62	53.9	53.9	94.8
	Divorced	6	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Club - Post Super League Questionnaire Results

Which framework for Rugby League would you prefer?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Leave in its present framework	8	47.1	50.0	50.0
	Revert to two divisions but continue to play in summer	8	47.1	50.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Could Rugby League have survived without the injection of capital?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	35.3	37.5	37.5
	No	10	58.8	62.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Has the money been fairly distributed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	7	41.2	43.8	43.8
	No	9	52.9	56.3	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Do you think the game will be successful in establishing itself in non traditional areas?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	9	52.9	56.3	56.3
	No	5	29.4	31.3	87.5
	3.00	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Is it fair to fast track teams in non traditional areas and give them greater help to develop?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	8	47.1	50.0	50.0
	No	8	47.1	50.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Is it important for teams from Spain, Italy, Ireland etc. are involved to make it a true European League?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	10	58.8	62.5	62.5
	No	6	35.3	37.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Is fast tracking a good idea and the only way the game can expand?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	64.7	68.8	68.8
	No	5	29.4	31.3	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

The new structure and playing in summer has brought increased media coverage and publicity?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Agree	6	35.3	37.5	50.0
	Uncertain	4	23.5	25.0	75.0
	Disagree	4	23.5	25.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Increased Tv coverage of games has encouraged more people to attend games?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	37.5
	Disagree	10	58.8	62.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Pre match entertainment has helped to encourage increased support?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Uncertain	6	35.3	37.5	62.5
	Disagree	6	35.3	37.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

The first summer season has been a success in attracting big crowds

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	6	35.3	37.5	37.5
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	50.0
	Disagree	8	47.1	50.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

New rule changes have been beneficial in making the game quicker and more exciting for fans

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	8	47.1	50.0	50.0
	Agree	6	35.3	37.5	87.5
	Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

The hard grounds have caused more injuries

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	6	35.3	37.5	37.5
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	50.0
	Disagree	4	23.5	25.0	75.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	23.5	25.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
			5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Summer rugby has made the game faster and more attractive for spectators

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	7	41.2	43.8	43.8
	Agree	9	52.9	56.3	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

League will become the leading summer sport in the country

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Uncertain	12	70.6	75.0	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

There are too many alternatives to watching rugby in summer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Uncertain	4	23.5	25.0	50.0
	Disagree	8	47.1	50.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

The game is too commercialised with increased emphasis on money and less on winning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	6	35.3	37.5	37.5
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	50.0
	Disagree	6	35.3	37.5	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Rugby League is becoming like American football full of razzmatazz

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	25.0
	Disagree	12	70.6	75.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

The investment in the game will result in bigger transfer fees similar to those in soccer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Uncertain	6	35.3	37.5	62.5
	Disagree	6	35.3	37.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Players are now in a position to command any figure they want

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Uncertain	8	47.1	50.0	75.0
	Disagree	4	23.5	25.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

The wages of rugby league players should now be on a par with those of professional soccer players

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	25.0
	Disagree	4	23.5	25.0	50.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	47.1	50.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Do you think the introduction of a salary cap will prevent clubs spending more on wages than they can afford?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	16	94.1	100.0	100.0
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

What implications will the introduction of a salary cap have on clubs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Reward	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Financial control/realistic budget	12	70.6	75.0	87.5
	Cant buy players they want	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Clubs not in the super league have found it difficult to survive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Agree	5	29.4	31.3	56.3
	Uncertain	4	23.5	25.0	81.3
	Disagree	3	17.6	18.8	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Framing the Future requirements have been hard to implement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Agree	8	47.1	50.0	62.5
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	75.0
	Disagree	4	23.5	25.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

A larger number of teams are needed in each division as more games will bring more income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	8	47.1	50.0	50.0
	Agree	4	23.5	25.0	75.0
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	87.5
	Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

A reversal back to two divisions would provide the most economically stable environment for clubs and the league

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Agree	4	23.5	25.0	50.0
	Disagree	8	47.1	50.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

There will eventually only be one 'Super League' with the remainder of the clubs acting as feeder clubs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Uncertain	4	23.5	25.0	50.0
	Disagree	8	47.1	50.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

The professionalization of union will result in the loss of many good league players

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Agree	8	47.1	50.0	75.0
	Disagree	4	23.5	25.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

There will be two rugby codes, union played in the winter and league played in the summer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	35.3	37.5	37.5
	Agree	8	47.1	50.0	87.5
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Eventually rugby union will become the dominant code

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Agree	6	35.3	37.5	50.0
	Uncertain	6	35.3	37.5	87.5
	Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Rugby league and union will eventually merge into one code

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Agree	2	11.8	12.5	25.0
	Uncertain	8	47.1	50.0	75.0
	Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

The BSkyB deal was instigated in order to eventually merge the codes and pose an opposition to football

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Agree	4	23.5	25.0	37.5
	Uncertain	6	35.3	37.5	75.0
	Disagree	4	23.5	25.0	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Rugby league is in fear of loosing its identity and community values if small clubs are allowed to go under

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Agree	4	23.5	25.0	50.0
	Disagree	6	35.3	37.5	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Clubs will have to merge to ensure their survival

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	29.4	31.3	31.3
	Agree	7	41.2	43.8	75.0
	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	87.5
	Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Rugby League will now flourish and continue to, even if in five years time the Murdoch money is no longer available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	5	29.4	31.3	31.3
	Uncertain	6	35.3	37.5	68.8
	Disagree	3	17.6	18.8	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Rugby league will become as popular and as rich as soccer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Uncertain	2	11.8	12.5	12.5
	Disagree	8	47.1	50.0	62.5
	Strongly Disagree	6	35.3	37.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Eventually there will be one professional league

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	6	35.3	37.5	37.5
	Uncertain	4	23.5	25.0	62.5
	Disagree	6	35.3	37.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Clubs, the rugby league want to succeed are getting too much help whilst traditional smaller clubs have been shunned

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	23.5	25.0	25.0
	Uncertain	4	23.5	25.0	50.0
	Disagree	6	35.3	37.5	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

The rugby league is only concerned with big city teams

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	35.3	37.5	37.5
	Uncertain	1	5.9	6.3	43.8
	Disagree	7	41.2	43.8	87.5
	Strongly Disagree	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

More money should be utilised to improve the game at grass roots and amateur level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	35.3	37.5	37.5
	Agree	10	58.8	62.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
		1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

What do you think the future holds for the game of rugby league?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	6.3	6.3
	Very uncertain	6	35.3	37.5	43.8
	Prosperous	3	17.6	18.8	62.5
	Exciting if properly structured	6	35.3	37.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
	No response	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Town residing in

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	6.3	6.3
	Super League	10	58.8	62.5	68.8
	Non Super League	5	29.4	31.3	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
	No response	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	6.3	6.3
	Security officer	2	11.8	12.5	18.8
	Coach	11	64.7	68.8	87.5
	Chief Executive	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
	No response	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Marital status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	6.3	6.3
	Single	2	11.8	12.5	18.8
	Married	13	76.5	81.3	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
	No response	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

POSITION

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	6.3	6.3
	Security officer	2	11.8	12.5	18.8
	Coach	11	64.7	68.8	87.5
	Chief Executive	2	11.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
	No response	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Number of years involved in rugby league?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	5.9	6.3	6.3
	15-20	4	23.5	25.0	31.3
	Over 20	11	64.7	68.8	100.0
	Total	16	94.1	100.0	
	No response	1	5.9		
Total		17	100.0		

Players - Post Super League Questionnaire Results

Which framework for rugby league do you prefer?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Leave rugby league in its present framework	40	65.6	65.6	65.6
Revert back to winter but still have three divisions	2	3.3	3.3	68.9
Return to two divisions but continue to play in summer	15	24.6	24.6	93.4
Revert to the pre Super League structure	2	3.3	3.3	96.7
Other	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Could rugby league have survived without the injection of capital?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	24	39.3	39.3	39.3
	No	37	60.7	60.7	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Has the money been fairly distributed amongst the clubs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	17	27.9	27.9	27.9
	No	43	70.5	70.5	98.4
	No response	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Will the game be successful in establishing itself in non traditional rugby league areas?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Yes	38	62.3	62.3	63.9
	No	21	34.4	34.4	98.4
	No response	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Is it fair to fast track and give greater help to teams in non traditional rugby league areas?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	35	57.4	57.4	57.4
	No	25	41.0	41.0	98.4
	No response	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Is it important teams from Spain, Italy and Ireland etc. are included to make the it a truly European league?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	39	63.9	63.9	63.9
	No	22	36.1	36.1	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Is fast tracking teams into the super league a good idea and the only way forward if rugby league is to expand?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	33	54.1	54.1	54.1
	No	28	45.9	45.9	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

The new stucture and playing in summer has brought increased media coverage and publicity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	12	19.7	19.7	19.7
	Agree	37	60.7	60.7	80.3
	Uncertain	10	16.4	16.4	96.7
	Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

The increased Tv coverage of games has encouraged more people to attend games

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	13	21.3	21.3	21.3
	Agree	12	19.7	19.7	41.0
	Uncertain	21	34.4	34.4	75.4
	Disagree	10	16.4	16.4	91.8
	Strongly Disagree	5	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Pre match entertainment has helped to encourage increased support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	11	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Agree	23	37.7	37.7	55.7
	Uncertain	16	26.2	26.2	82.0
	Disagree	11	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

The first summer season has been a success in attracting big crowds

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	9.8	9.8	9.8
	Agree	18	29.5	29.5	39.3
	Uncertain	21	34.4	34.4	73.8
	Disagree	14	23.0	23.0	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

New rule changes have made the game quicker and so more exciting for fans

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	17	27.9	27.9	27.9
	Agree	32	52.5	52.5	80.3
	Uncertain	7	11.5	11.5	91.8
	Disagree	4	6.6	6.6	98.4
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

The hard grounds have caused more injuries

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	6.6	6.6	6.6
	Agree	20	32.8	32.8	39.3
	Uncertain	19	31.1	31.1	70.5
	Disagree	16	26.2	26.2	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Summer rugby has made the game faster and more attractive for spectators

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	20	32.8	32.8	32.8
	Agree	34	55.7	55.7	88.5
	Uncertain	5	8.2	8.2	96.7
	Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

It has been more physically demanding playing in summer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	17	27.9	27.9	27.9
	Agree	32	52.5	52.5	80.3
	Uncertain	10	16.4	16.4	96.7
	Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

There are too many alternatives to watching rugby in summer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	8.2	8.2	8.2
	Disagree	10	16.4	16.4	24.6
	Uncertain	22	36.1	36.1	60.7
	Disagree	20	32.8	32.8	93.4
	Strongly Disagree	3	4.9	4.9	98.4
	No response	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

The game is becoming too commercialised with increased emphasis on money and less on winning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Agree	12	19.7	19.7	23.0
	Uncertain	9	14.8	14.8	37.7
	Disagree	33	54.1	54.1	91.8
	Strongly Disagree	5	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

There is greater pressure on you to perform well, week in and week out

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	6.6	6.6	6.6
	Agree	34	55.7	55.7	62.3
	Uncertain	14	23.0	23.0	85.2
	Disagree	9	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league is becoming like american football full of razzmatazz

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	17	27.9	27.9	27.9
	Uncertain	14	23.0	23.0	50.8
	Disagree	28	45.9	45.9	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Due to the amount of money in the game, players are now in a position to command any figure they want

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Agree	10	16.4	16.4	18.0
	Uncertain	10	16.4	16.4	34.4
	Disagree	31	50.8	50.8	85.2
	Strongly Disagree	9	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

The investment will result in bigger transfer fees

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	8.2	8.2	8.2
	Agree	20	32.8	32.8	41.0
	Uncertain	11	18.0	18.0	59.0
	Disagree	18	29.5	29.5	88.5
	Strongly Disagree	7	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Have you been financially better off under the new system?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	27	44.3	44.3	44.3
	No	34	55.7	55.7	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Will the introduction of the salary cap prevent clubs spending more on players wages than they can afford?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	47	77.0	77.0	77.0
	No	13	21.3	21.3	98.4
	No response	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

The professionalization of union will result in the loss of many good league players

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	8.2	8.2	8.2
	Agree	26	42.6	42.6	50.8
	Uncertain	17	27.9	27.9	78.7
	Dislike	10	16.4	16.4	95.1
	Strongly Dislike	3	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

There will be two codes, union played in the winter and league played in the summer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	8	13.1	13.1	13.1
	Agree	37	60.7	60.7	73.8
	Uncertain	11	18.0	18.0	91.8
	Disagree	3	4.9	4.9	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Rugby Union will become the dominant code

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Agree	12	19.7	19.7	23.0
	Uncertain	21	34.4	34.4	57.4
	Disagree	21	34.4	34.4	91.8
	Strongly Disagree	5	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league and union will eventually merge into one code

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agee	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Agree	12	19.7	19.7	23.0
	Uncertain	21	34.4	34.4	57.4
	Dislike	16	26.2	26.2	83.6
	Strongly Dislike	10	16.4	16.4	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

The BSkyB deal was instigated in order to eventually merge the codes and pose an opposition to football

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4	6.6	6.6	6.6
	Agree	11	18.0	18.0	24.6
	Uncertain	29	47.5	47.5	72.1
	Dislike	13	21.3	21.3	93.4
	Strongly Dislike	4	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league is in fear of loosing its identity and community values if small clubs are allowed to go under

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	8	13.1	13.1	13.1
	Agree	22	36.1	36.1	49.2
	Uncertain	16	26.2	26.2	75.4
	Disagree	14	23.0	23.0	98.4
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Clubs will have to merge in order to survive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	7	11.5	11.5	11.5
	Agree	33	54.1	54.1	65.6
	Uncertain	10	16.4	16.4	82.0
	Disagree	7	11.5	11.5	93.4
	Strongly Disagree	4	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league will now flourish even if in five years time the Murdoch money is no longer available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	8.2	8.2	8.2
	Agree	17	27.9	27.9	36.1
	Uncertain	30	49.2	49.2	85.2
	Disagree	7	11.5	11.5	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league will become as popular and as rich as soccer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Agree	7	11.5	11.5	13.1
	Uncertain	13	21.3	21.3	34.4
	Disagree	32	52.5	52.5	86.9
	Strongly Disagree	8	13.1	13.1	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Eventually there will be one professional league

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Agree	17	27.9	27.9	31.1
	Uncertain	25	41.0	41.0	72.1
	Disagree	14	23.0	23.0	95.1
	Strongly Disagree	3	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Clubs the Rugby League want to succeed are getting too much help whilst traditional smaller clubs are being shunned

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	9	14.8	14.8	14.8
	Agree	28	45.9	45.9	60.7
	Uncertain	14	23.0	23.0	83.6
	Disagree	9	14.8	14.8	98.4
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

The Rugby League is only concerned with big city teams

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	8.2	8.2	8.2
	Agree	26	42.6	42.6	50.8
	Uncertain	17	27.9	27.9	78.7
	Disagree	8	13.1	13.1	91.8
	Strongly Disagree	4	6.6	6.6	98.4
	No response	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

More money should be utilised to improve the game at grass roots and amateur levels

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	24	39.3	39.3	39.3
	Agree	27	44.3	44.3	83.6
	Uncertain	8	13.1	13.1	96.7
	Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

What do you think the future holds for the game of Rugby League?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response	10	16.4	16.4	16.4
Bright Future	15	24.6	24.6	41.0
Uncertain Future	18	29.5	29.5	70.5
Australia will be better than England	5	8.2	8.2	78.7
Unless marketing improves it will be a disgrace	2	3.3	3.3	82.0
More Aussies in the game will decrease interest	6	9.8	9.8	91.8
No Rugby League after Murdoch	4	6.6	6.6	98.4
Get better and expand	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Would you class yourself as a full time professional?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Yes	31	50.8	50.8	52.5
	No	29	47.5	47.5	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

If part time what else are you currently doing?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	25	41.0	41.0	41.0
	Studying full time	6	9.8	9.8	50.8
	Studying part time	8	13.1	13.1	63.9
	Working full time	17	27.9	27.9	91.8
	Working part time	4	6.6	6.6	98.4
	Other	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Is your club in the Super League?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Yes	26	42.6	42.6	44.3
	No	34	55.7	55.7	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Supporters - Post Super League Questionnaire Results

Which framework for rugby league would you prefer?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Leaving rugby league in its present framework	38	38.0	38.0	38.0
Revert back to winter but continue with three divisions	17	17.0	17.0	55.0
Return to two divisions but continue to play in summer	17	17.0	17.0	72.0
Revert back to the pre Super League structure	14	14.0	14.0	86.0
Other	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Do you feel that Rugby League could have survived without the injection of capital?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	65	65.0	65.0	65.0
	No	35	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Has the money been fairly distributed amongst the clubs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	No	93	93.0	93.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Will the game be successful in establishing itself in non traditional Rugby League areas?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	21	21.0	21.0	21.0
	No	79	79.0	79.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Is it fair to fast track teams in non traditional areas because expansion is important?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	28.0	28.0	28.0
	No	72	72.0	72.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Is it important for teams from Spain, Italy and Ireland etc. are involved to make it a true European Super League?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	28.0	28.0	28.0
	No	72	72.0	72.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Is fast tracking teams into the Super League the only way for Rugby League to expand?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	21	21.0	21.0	21.0
	No	79	79.0	79.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The new structure and playing in summer has brought increased media coverage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	34	34.0	34.0	34.0
	Uncertain	24	24.0	24.0	58.0
	Disagree	28	28.0	28.0	86.0
	Strongly Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The increased Tv coverage of games has encouraged more people to attend

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Uncertain	24	24.0	24.0	31.0
	Disagree	48	48.0	48.0	79.0
	Strongly Disagree	21	21.0	21.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Pre match entertainment has helped to encourage increased support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Agree	14	14.0	14.0	17.0
	Uncertain	24	24.0	24.0	41.0
	Disagree	38	38.0	38.0	79.0
	Strongly Disagree	21	21.0	21.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Stadium, changing and eating facilities have improved at grounds

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Agree	17	17.0	17.0	24.0
	Uncertain	17	17.0	17.0	41.0
	Disagree	38	38.0	38.0	79.0
	Strongly Disagree	21	21.0	21.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

New rule changes have been beneficial in making the game quicker and more exciting

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Agree	38	38.0	38.0	48.0
	Uncertain	17	17.0	17.0	65.0
	Disagree	31	31.0	31.0	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The first summer season has been a success in attracting big crowds

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Uncertain	38	38.0	38.0	52.0
	Disagree	38	38.0	38.0	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Summer rugby has made the game faster and more attractive for spectators

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Agree	38	38.0	38.0	41.0
	Uncertain	14	14.0	14.0	55.0
	Disagree	35	35.0	35.0	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

League will become the leading summer sport in the country

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Uncertain	38	38.0	38.0	42.0
	Disagree	24	24.0	24.0	66.0
	Strongly Disagree	34	34.0	34.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

There are too many alternatives to watching rugby in summer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	34	34.0	34.0	34.0
	Agree	45	45.0	45.0	79.0
	Uncertain	7	7.0	7.0	86.0
	Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The game is becoming too commercialised with increased emphasis on money and less on winning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	27	27.0	27.0	27.0
	Agree	52	52.0	52.0	79.0
	Uncertain	7	7.0	7.0	86.0
	Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The introduction of a salary cap is a good idea to prevent clubs spending more on wages than they can afford

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	34	34.0	34.0	34.0
	Agree	58	58.0	58.0	92.0
	Uncertain	4	4.0	4.0	96.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Rugby League is becoming more like american football, full of razzmatazz

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Agree	44	44.0	44.0	51.0
	Uncertain	14	14.0	14.0	65.0
	Disagree	35	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Due to the amount of money in the game, players are now in a position to command any figure they want

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	21	21.0	21.0	21.0
	Agree	34	34.0	34.0	55.0
	Uncertain	24	24.0	24.0	79.0
	Disagree	21	21.0	21.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The recent investment in the game will result in bigger transfer fees similar to those in soccer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
	Agree	38	38.0	38.0	55.0
	Uncertain	14	14.0	14.0	69.0
	Disagree	31	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How do you rate attending a Rugby League game in terms of value for money?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	38	38.0	38.0	38.0
	Good	38	38.0	38.0	76.0
	OK	20	20.0	20.0	96.0
	Poor	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The professionalisation of union will result in the loss of many good league players

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Agree	31	31.0	31.0	41.0
	Uncertain	21	21.0	21.0	62.0
	Disagree	38	38.0	38.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

There will be two rugby codes, union played in the winter and league played in the summer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Agree	49	49.0	49.0	63.0
	Uncertain	37	37.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Eventually rugby union will become the dominant code

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
	Agree	34	34.0	34.0	51.0
	Uncertain	14	14.0	14.0	65.0
	Disagree	21	21.0	21.0	86.0
	Strongly Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league and union will eventually merge into one code

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Agree	10	10.0	10.0	17.0
	Uncertain	35	35.0	35.0	52.0
	Disagree	20	20.0	20.0	72.0
	Strongly Disagree	28	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The BSkyB deal was instigated in order to eventually merge the codes and pose an opposition to football

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
	Agree	24	24.0	24.0	41.0
	Uncertain	31	31.0	31.0	72.0
	Disagree	21	21.0	21.0	93.0
	Strongly Disagree	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league is in fear of loosing its identity and community values if small clubs are allowed to go under

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	38	38.0	38.0	38.0
	Agree	48	48.0	48.0	86.0
	Uncertain	7	7.0	7.0	93.0
	Disagree	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Clubs will have to merge to ensure their survival

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Agree	24	24.0	24.0	34.0
	Uncertain	38	38.0	38.0	72.0
	Disagree	21	21.0	21.0	93.0
	Strongly Disagree	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league will now flourish and continue to, even if in five years time the Murdoch money is no longer available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Agree	24	24.0	24.0	27.0
	Uncertain	41	41.0	41.0	68.0
	Disagree	22	22.0	22.0	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Rugby league will become as popular and as rich as soccer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Uncertain	21	21.0	21.0	21.0
	Disagree	44	44.0	44.0	65.0
	Strongly Disagree	35	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Eventually there will be one professional league

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Agree	17	17.0	17.0	27.0
	Uncertain	38	38.0	38.0	65.0
	Disagree	31	31.0	31.0	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Clubs the Rugby League want to suceed are getting help whilst traditional smaller clubs have been shunned

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	65	65.0	65.0	65.0
	Agree	31	31.0	31.0	96.0
	Uncertain	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The Rugby League is only concerned with big city teams

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Agree	38	38.0	38.0	83.0
	Uncertain	10	10.0	10.0	93.0
	Disagree	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

More money should be utilised to improve the game at grass roots and amateur levels

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	69	69.0	69.0	69.0
	Agree	28	28.0	28.0	97.0
	Uncertain	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What do you think the future holds for the game of rugby league?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
Game to expand	7	7.0	7.0	14.0
Clubs run as businesses	7	7.0	7.0	21.0
High profile	7	7.0	7.0	28.0
Survival	21	21.0	21.0	49.0
National recognition	41	41.0	41.0	90.0
Compete with football	7	7.0	7.0	97.0
More professional	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What is your marital status?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Married	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Which team do you support?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Super League	38	38.0	38.0	38.0
	Non Super League	62	62.0	62.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How long have you been attending rugby league games?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5-10 Seasons	13	13.0	13.0	13.0
	10-15 Seasons	26	26.0	26.0	39.0
	15-20 Seasons	13	13.0	13.0	52.0
	Over 20 Seasons	48	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Which activity will you attend throughout the first winter season in which Professional rugby league will not be played

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
	Amateur rugby league	59	59.0	59.0	76.0
	Other	24	24.0	24.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	