

My name is Russell and I am from the UK. I have been playing for Temuka rugby club during the 2009 rugby season. Now the season has drawn to a close the President of the club asked me if I would like to write a few paragraphs about my experience with the club on there web site so potential players can read and have sum sort of idea what to expect, which I am more than happy to do so.

When you arrive you will be well looked after by the club. Your get picked up from the airport and taken back to Temuka. You will be given somewhere to stay and they will find you a job, all you have to do is turn up and play rugby!

You have two grades of rugby Senior A and Senior B and they play in the South Canterbury Union and made up of eight teams. Senior A play a good standard of rugby and if I had to make a comparison I would have say the top team's in the league would be of National 3 North and South standard and the lower teams would be of London 1 and 2 or where I come from the South West of England South West 1 and 2.

There is a fairly large gap between the two ends of the rugby league and is split between three town teams in Timaru and five country teams in the rest of South Canterbury, they are as follows.

Town:	Harlequins
	Old Boys
	Celtic
Country:	Temuka
	Waimate
	Pleasant Point
	Mackenzie
	Geraldine

What I found unexpected when I started playing for Temuka was the long standing history between the clubs in the league. Not like back home where teams get relegated and promoted each year the same teams in NZ play each other every year. What I enjoyed about this was you would play against teams who would have a long playing history against each other. An example would be when Temuka and Geraldine played this season for the Collogan's cup; this is only played between these two teams. Temuka won the cup this year and the history of the cup goes back over 50 years. There is other opportunity to win various cups throughout the season against other clubs which gives the games a little bit more edge. Also with the long standing history you get good camaraderie between the clubs and players and the watching spectators!

The rugby season last for four months with an option of playing for a further two months for the South Canterbury rugby squad if selected. This is the next level up from club rugby. If selected you will be paid for match appearances and training session's, more than likely get the chance to travel. Temuka currently have two players selected for South Canterbury squad with a strong running centre in Tristan Johnson and a skilful 1st five (we call them fly half's back home!) in Richard Preston.

I would just like to add that I have really enjoyed my season living and playing for Temuka. The place has a friendly and relaxed atmosphere with a good community spirit and a good base to see the rest of the country during your stay. I hope I have shed some light on what South Canterbury rugby is all about.