

SCORE!

by Bronwen Wall

“Go, Tiana!”

Tiana tucks the ball under her arm and races up the field. It's three tackles down – there's only one more play left in this set. The other team is waiting for her. Where can she go? Two players try to grab her, but Tiana dodges between them. Suddenly, the field ahead is empty. Can she reach the goal line before they catch her? Run, Tiana, run!



Tiana has been playing rugby league for two years. She started in a school team with friends and enjoyed it so much that she wanted to play more often. Her dad helped her find a club team to join. Now she plays on the weekends as well.

MINIS AND MODS

Tiana plays in mixed teams of boys and girls. You can start playing rugby league at any age. Children under nine years old play in the Mini League, while those between nine and twelve play in the Mod League.

Players are taught the basic rules of rugby league in a fun and safe way. They learn how to pass, catch, and run with the ball. They also learn how to **tackle** so that they don't hurt themselves or other players.

THE RULES OF MINI LEAGUE

1. Each team can have between six and eight players on the field.
2. A game is played over three ten-minute sessions. There is a three-minute break between sessions. Players can swap out at each break.
3. Players score points by placing the ball over the other team's goal line to score a **try**.
4. Players on the defending team can tackle a player, but they can only do that if the player is holding the ball.
5. Once a player has been tackled, they get up and play the ball back (by rolling it back with their foot) to a team-mate behind them, and play carries on.
6. A team can only keep the ball for four tackles. Then they must give the ball to the other team.
7. After a team has scored a try, they get more points if they can kick a **conversion**.



Rugby league is a winter sport. Most games are played between April and September each year. There are Mini and Mod leagues in most places around the country. In 2016, over eight thousand boys and around eight hundred girls signed up to play.

Once she turns thirteen, Tiana will be able to play in competition games. At competition level, she will play in a girls-only team. Maybe one day, she'll be good enough to play for the Kiwi Ferns!

HOW FUN IS THAT?



TIANA

"I've learnt a lot about teamwork since I started playing league. It's a good way to make new friends."



NYLAH

"It feels awesome when you learn to catch the ball while you're running."



KEIRA-EL

"I can run fast, and it's really fun to zoom past the other players."

NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE

For many years, it was hard for women to get the chance to play rugby league. Men's rugby league started over a hundred years ago, but at that time, a lot of people didn't think women should play the game. They thought it was too rough.

Some women played with their brothers and cousins, but they weren't allowed to play in competitions. In New Zealand, women's rugby league teams only began to play games against each other in the late 1970s.

Today there are lots of women's teams around the country. Since 1995, teams have played each year in a women's national tournament. The best players from the tournament are chosen to play in the New Zealand women's rugby league team, the Kiwi Ferns.

The Kiwi Ferns playing Australia during the 2013 World Cup



The Kiwi Ferns celebrate their win in the 2008 World Cup

THE KIWI FERNS AND THE WORLD CUP

The Kiwi Ferns started in 1995. In 2000, the first Women's Rugby League World Cup tournament was held, and the Kiwi Ferns won. They won the next two tournaments as well, one in 2005 and one in 2008.

In 2013, the Women's Rugby League World Cup was made a regular event. It now takes place every four years. The Kiwi Ferns lost the 2013 World Cup final to Australia, but that just made them want to win the next one even more. The next tournament will be held in Australia in November 2017.

Tiana can hear the other players right behind her – she knows they’re getting closer. She pushes her legs to go faster, and just as she feels someone grabbing at her jersey, she dives for the line!



GLOSSARY

conversion: a way to gain more points by kicking the ball over the other team’s goal posts after scoring a try. In rugby league, a conversion is worth 2 points.*

tackle: holding on to a player to stop them getting to the goal line with the ball. Tackles must be safe. They must be under the arms, and they must not lift the player off the ground.

try: a way of scoring points by touching the ball on the ground (with a hand) behind the other team’s goal line. In rugby league, a try is worth 4 points.*

* Mini and Mod games are not played for competition points.

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Published 2017 by the Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.
www.education.govt.nz

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Enquiries should be made to the publisher.

ISBN 978 1 77669 054 1 (online)

Publishing Services: Lift Education E Tū
Editor: David Chadwick
Designer: Adam Pryor
Literacy Consultant: Melanie Winthrop
Consulting Editors: Hōne Apanui and Emeli Sione



SCHOOL JOURNAL LEVEL 2 AUGUST 2017

Curriculum learning areas	English Health and Physical Education Social Sciences
Reading year level	Year 4
Keywords	Kiwi Ferns, league, Mini League, Mod League, rugby league, rules, sport, teamwork, winter sports, Women's Rugby League World Cup