

John Grey Tairaoa

Born: Otakou 16 September 1862. Died: Otago harbour 31 December 1907

Half-back

Represented N.Z. 1884. 9 matches

Points for N.Z. 21 (9 tries, 1 conversion)

Provincial record: Otago 1881,82,84 (Dunedin Club). Hawke's Bay 1887,88 (Hawke's Bay County Club)

Educated Otago Boys' High School, 1st XV 1882. Standing 5' 10" and weighing 12st 9lb, Tairaoa was the ideal build for what is now known as the first five-eighth position. He was the leading try scorer for the 1884 New Zealand team in Australia with nine tries in as many appearances.

Commenting on his play in the second encounter with New South Wales, a newspaper acclaimed him 'the hero of the day. His running, dodging and collaring fairly astonished both players and spectators who duly meted out their applause to this prince of footballers'.

Jack set a New Zealand record for a long jump of 20' 11 ½" and was second in the national championships of 1893. He represented Hawke's Bay at cricket 1891-99. His younger brother Dick, was a member of the 1888-89 N.Z. Native team and a cousin Tom Ellison represented N.Z. in 1893. A solicitor in practice in Hastings, Tairaoa died in a boating mishap on Otago Harbour.