

Excerpt from the Wairarapa Times Age

Rippa time at children's world cup

By Elliot Parker



DASHER: Shayden Patterson, 10, of Masterton Primary School, representing Wales, charges St Patrick's School (Scotland).

Wairarapa schoolchildren got the day off on Wednesday to sprint down the touchline, cut inside a couple of defenders and dot down in the middle of the paddock - hopefully.

The Rippa Rugby World Cup Tournament at Memorial Park in Masterton was organised by police and attracted 16 primary school teams for competition.

Each school was assigned a country to represent. Kahutara School nailed the big one in being assigned New Zealand, while Lakeview School wasn't so lucky - representing the dreaded Aussies.

Rippa Rugby was originally organised by Constable Nathan Riwai-Couch six years ago and has taken off, with schools lining up for a spot.

Mr Riwai-Couch said he wanted to organise something that he knew kids would enjoy from the start.

"I thought to myself what would I want when I was 10 - a day off school and a bit of rugby.

"Luckily, the police came on board."

The event is designed by police to encourage youth participation in sport and healthy lifestyles.

Schoolchildren mimic World Cup-style rugby with a parade of the represented nations before getting stuck in to the action.

Mr Riwai-Couch said yesterday's event was like any other staged during the last six years.

"When play gets under way it's all go," he said.

Martinborough School, representing Samoa, eventually clinched the win, 10-8 in a close final against Solway School, which represented Romania.