



INTERESTING INFORMATION

- The British and Irish Lions are a combined rugby team made up of the best players from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- Although officially established in 1910, Lions sides have been visiting the Southern Hemisphere since 1888 when the first team toured Australia and New Zealand.
- Formerly known as the British Isles, the team was nicknamed the Lions in the interwar period after the emblem on the players' jersey and lapel badges. The team visits Australia, New Zealand and South Africa on a rotational basis. The tours are hugely popular, with Lions fans travelling in their thousands to follow the fortunes of their team.
- This will mark the 12th tour to New Zealand by the Lions and the second rugby tour to New Zealand in the professional era. The Lions last toured New Zealand in 2005.
- Out of a total of 38 Tests played between New Zealand and the Lions, New Zealand has won 29 to the Lions' six with three drawn. The Lions' only series victory in New Zealand was in 1971 when the tourists prevailed 2-1, with one drawn Test.
- The British and Irish Lions team will be coached by Wales Rugby coach and New Zealander, Warren Gatland.
- The Lions tour is conservatively expected to generate more than \$250 million to the New Zealand economy.

RUGBY POINTS OF INTEREST

- Bill Rowlands played prop for Wairarapa Bush against the Lions in 1966, 1971, 1977 and 1983. Rowlands, a son-in-law of George Nepia, captained in the 1977 encounter.
- Irish midfield back Mike Gibson toured New Zealand with the 1966, 1971 and 1977 Lions' teams, during which time he played 45 matches, scored 16 tries and 80 points. In between time he played in all seven matches played by the 1975 Irish side, scoring a further seven points.
- Colin Meads has played against the Lions a record 14 times including 11 Test matches: three in 1959, four in 1966 and four in 1971. His three provincial matches were for King Country-Counties in 1959, and for Wanganui-King Country in 1966 and 1971. He was captain for the four Tests in 1971 and for the three provincial games. From these 14 matches he was on the winning side on eight occasions with five losses and a draw.
- The best provincial performances against the Lions have been recorded by Auckland with six victories and a draw, Otago with five victories and a draw, and Canterbury with four victories.

