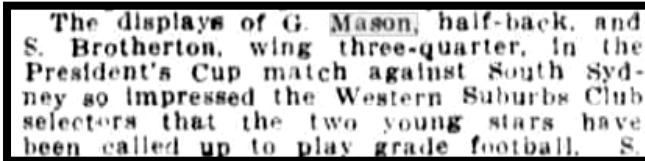


## George Mason

..... was graded with Wests from the President's Cup competition in 1926 and played Third Grade that year.



The displays of G. Mason, half-back, and S. Brotherton, wing three-quarter, in the President's Cup match against South Sydney so impressed the Western Suburbs Club selectors that the two young stars have been called up to play grade football. S.

The Sun 6 July 1926

In 1927 George started the season playing ten Reserve Grade games but his form impressed the Selectors and later in the year he made his First Grade debut and played in six First Grade matches.

An article in Rugby League News in August 1927 noted that; "Western Suburbs seem to have made a real find in George Mason, who has, temporarily at any rate, displaced Harry Owen, the State half, behind the Western pack. Harry Owen proved a hard working, consistent little half-back, but George seems to be the more inspired and the more startling. Both are good, and the contest for the position in future promises to be brimful of interest. Mason should go a good distance in the game."

George played in ten First Grade games in 1928, but had his season cut short. He was playing for Wests against St George at Earl Park when he was sent off with Harry Flower of St George for fighting. During the match three St George players were sent from the field, one of whom was Aubrey Kelly, the St George lock-forward who was accused of kicking Frank McMillan in the face.

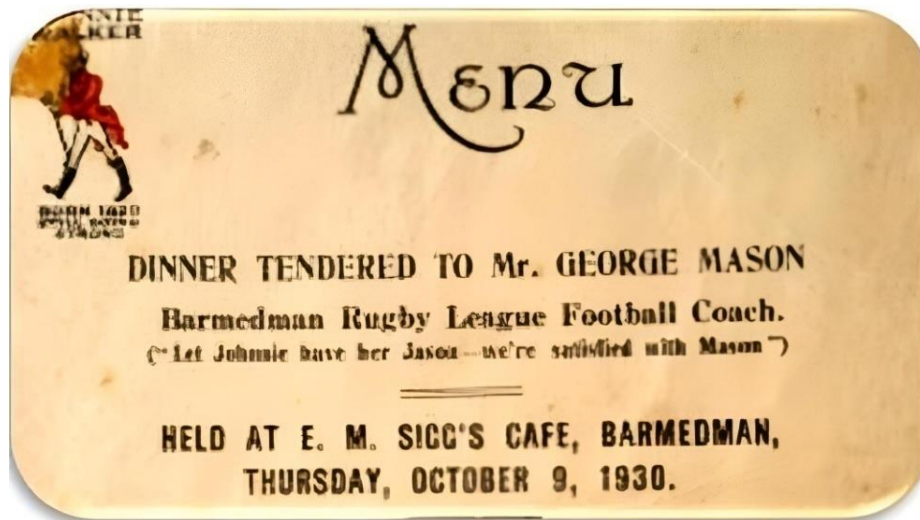
The referee told the judiciary that several players were in a ruck, when Flower and Mason stood up and exchanged several blows. Flower had previously been cautioned. Mason declared that he had gone to the assistance of a comrade who was tackled. He was struck by some opponent, but did not retaliate. Flower said he grabbed the Wests five-eighth by the neck of the jersey, when Mason struck him. He denied striking Mason.

Mr Fusedale (St George), a member of the judiciary, moved that Flower's suspension be reduced to one week, declaring that he knew, and others knew, that it was not Flower but some other player who struck Mason. For his part, George Mason received a three week suspension, while Harry Flower from St George received six weeks. It was a tough call on congenial George Mason, and the only blemish on a long and successful career.

George had one more season with Wests in 1929, and it was a successful one for George, with fifteen appearances in First Grade including a semi final against Souths, with just the one game in Reserve Grade. In his four seasons with Wests, George played thirty one First Grade and eleven Reserve grade games. He played some Third Grade games in 1926, but records are not available for that year and Grade.

In 1930 George Mason moved to the town of Barmedman in the central west of NSW where he played with and coached the Barmedman Rugby League team. He represented Barmedman in Maher Cup football over three seasons, playing twelve Maher Cup matches, winning seven with one draw and four losses. Barmedman had a golden run in 1930 and 1931, and much of this was due to the skills and leadership of George Mason. While at Barmedman, George Mason represented Group Nine and Combined Country.

At the end of the 1930 season the Barmedman Club arranged a dinner in honor of George Mason, with a somewhat Barmedman theme to the menu. References are made to other notable Barmedman players such as Jack "Tiger" Payne, Charlie Rothney and Bill Heron. A copy of the menu has been retained by Mr Wal Galvin and posted on the Maher Cup web site.



Source: Maher Cup Web Site

In 1933, George Mason was appointed as the player/coach of the Grafton Rugby League team, based on the NSW north coast. In announcing George's appointment, the Daily Examiner on 20 March 1933 noted that; "The Club has been fortunate in securing the services of George Mason as playing coach for the coming season. Every follower and supporter of the game knows of the ability of the half back, Mason. He learned his football with Western Suburbs and for the past two seasons coached and captained the successful Barmedman team, whose fame has spread far from their home battleground, the noted Group Nine."

During his time in Grafton George took an interest in developing the game of rugby league and refereed many schoolboy matches throughout the season.

George Mason moved to the NSW city of Newcastle in 1934. He initially resided in the Newcastle Western Suburbs district, before relocating to the Central Newcastle district just prior to the start of the competition. This generated a protest by the Western Suburbs (Newcastle) Club, which had to be sent to the NSWRL to resolve. It was subsequently determined that George was eligible to play for Central Newcastle.

George made an impact immediately with Central Newcastle. The team travelled to Sydney in April 1934, to play St George whom they beat 18-14 at Earl Park, St George's home ground. The Newcastle Herald on 2 April 1934 reported; "The outstanding back was George Mason, the new half back, who consistently cut holes in the opposition and worked the play among the forwards in an effort to keep the ball away from Gardiner, the St George Kangaroo."

In the middle of the 1935 season George Mason was transferred by his employer, NSW Railways, from Newcastle to Chullora Workshops in Sydney. The Canterbury Bankstown Club applied to Newcastle for a clearance which was subsequently refused. The matter went before the NSW Rugby League which determined that Mason could play with either Club.

George Mason indicated that he wanted to be released to Canterbury Bankstown and they were prepared to indemnify Mason for any potential breach of contract. However, Canterbury Bankstown

decided it would not pursue the matter and George Mason remained at Central Newcastle for the remainder of the 1935 season.



George Mason receives the ball - Central Newcastle v North Newcastle - Minor premierships replay 1935

George Mason's Central Newcastle Club met Newcastle North six times during the 1935 season. George was one of Central's key players leading them to take out the minor premierships against Norths. The finals though were a different proposition. In the final, Central had lost star player Wally Prigg and George Mason was injured after ten minutes leaving Central with twelve men.

Central lost the match but had the right to play a challenge final. For this match Central were once again without Prigg and Mason, and Norths won again, taking out the 1935 Newcastle premierships. A disappointing end to the season for both Central Newcastle and George Mason. However the highlight for George that season was his selection in the Country Second team that played City Seconds.

Canterbury Bankstown struggled in 1935, its first year in the Sydney premierships, but in 1936, the Club assembled a strong team under Coach Frank Burge. George Mason was one of the new recruits to Canterbury Bankstown, with George playing twelve First Grade games. He is Canterbury Bankstown player #41.

Canterbury went from easy beats in 1935 to making the semi finals in 1936, eventually going down to a very good Eastern Suburbs team. George Mason was one of Canterbury's best players in the semi final, but it was also his last match in top grade football as a player. He turned his hand to coaching and was appointed as Canterbury's First Grade Coach in 1937. George received praise for his coaching methods, but Canterbury's results were not as good as the previous season.

**I**N George Mason, Canterbury has a first-grade coach, who ranks equal to any in the game. Popular, but firm with players, his sound methods are now beginning to achieve results. There was no prouder man than George at the Sydney Cricket Ground last Saturday, when his charges filed off the field after having given a display averred by the critics to be one of the most thrilling witnessed for many a long day.

Labor Daily 6 May 1937

George Mason lived all of his life in the Bankstown district of Sydney, and died at Ferguson Lodge in February 1996.