



1948 Grand Final Saturday 18th September Sports Ground



Western Suburbs 8

def.

Balmain 5

Bill KEATO
 Col HUDSON
 Lindsay RODDA
 Eric BENNETT
 Jack LACKEY
 Frank STANMORE
 Neville HOGAN
 Peter McLEAN
 Kevin HANSEN
 Don MILTON
 Jack WALSH (c)
 William BROWN
 Bill HORDER

Fullback
Wing
Centre
Centre
Wing
Five-eighth
Half
Lock
Second Row
Second Row
Front Row
Hooker
Front Row

Dave PARKINSON
 Leo NOSWORTHY
 Tom BOURKE (c)
 George WILLIAMS
 Mitchell WALLACE
 Bill SNEDDON
 Des BRYAN
 Jack HAMPSTEAD
 Sid RYAN
 Pat MADDEN
 Jack SPENCER
 Bob CRANE
 Jim THOMSON

Tries Kevin HANSEN
 Col HUDSON

Tom BOURKE

Goals Bill KEATO (1)

Tom BOURKE (1)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: W Keato; three-quarters: C Hudson, L Rodda, E Bennett, J Lackey; five-eighth: F Stanmore; half: N Hogan; forwards: P McLean, D Milton, K Hansen, J Walsh (capt), W Brown, W Horder

Balmain: Full-back: D Parkinson; three-quarters: L Noseworthy, G Williams, T Bourke (capt), M Wallace; five-eighth: W Sneddon; half: D Bryan; forwards: J Hampstead, S Ryan, F Madden, J Thomson, R Crane, J Spencer **Referee: G Bishop (Rugby League News 25th September 1948)**

Western Suburbs won the 1948 Rugby League premierships yesterday, defeating Balmain in a close but decisive manner by 8 points to 5 in the grand final before a crowd of 29,122, on the Sydney Sports Ground. Balmain strenuously disputed Kevin Hansen's try - 20 minutes from the finish - which won the match and the premiership. Just before Hansen scored, Balmain were attacking strongly, and appeared to have the game won with, a lead of 5 to 3. They had effectively closed up the game, and were keeping the ball in the forwards. Wests, on the other hand, realising that the premiership was slipping slowly but surely away, started to hit the high spots in a concentrated attack in which the ball was thrown around in snappy penetrating moves. In an almost desperate attempt to break through the strong Balmain cordon of forwards and backs, packing closely together in defence, Eric Bennett, one of the veterans of the game, snapped up the ball near his 25 line. Bennett shot through a narrow opening, ran on to halfway, where he passed to Kevin Hansen, big, burly, fast young forward, and Hansen jumped into top gear like a fire-engine racing down a city street. The crowd rose in a mighty whoop as the big youngster neared the line with Balmain's speedy winger, L. Noseworthy, in pursuit. One yard from the line, Noseworthy brought Hansen to the ground, but Hansen crawled forward in a stumble across the line and then grounded the ball for a try. Half a dozen Balmain players objected as the referee George Bishop, a former Balmain player, awarded the try. Bishop tartly waved his hand at them. Keato kicked the goal, and Wests led 8-5. Later in the dressing-room, the Balmain players moaned and wailed at their fate. Even players who were not within 50 yards of the incident joined in a dirge against the referee's decision. Everybody in the Balmain room was satisfied, after the usual amenities had been dispensed, that Balmain had 'bombed' the premiership. Tom Bourke, their captain, was subdued however. He said he did not want to talk. He hung his head in disappointment. Then he said quietly: 'Hansen did not score that try. And we were winning until the incident happened. 'Hansen's explanation of the incident was then sought, and he made what appears to be a most amazing statement. He said he was over the line when he was tackled! Nobody on the ground would agree with that statement, and Truth asked him: 'Well why, then, did you crawl forward a yard or two after you were tackled before you grounded the ball? You did crawl forward, didn't you?' Hansen replied: 'Yes, I moved forward a yard, but it was my momentum that carried me forward!' Momentum? However, the referee ruled a try, and that ends the matter. All the squealing in the world will not alter the result of the game. Wests won, and won convincingly. They were consistently the better team, and it was this very incident that exposed a weakness in Balmain that was apparent right from the start of the game. And that weakness was that Balmain's team yesterday, no matter how great their past teams have been in finals, did not have the mental poise of a premiership team. The rucks were heated. Punches were exchanged. Elbows and legs spitefully shot out at times but still nothing apparently was bad enough to warrant stern action by the referee. Wests took the honours and took them well, and nobody made a greater contribution to their grand victory than Kevin Hansen and the captain Jack Walsh, who played his last game in Rugby League. Walsh said afterwards: 'Hansen is the greatest young forward I have ever played with, a commendation with which the crowd who saw Hansen play yesterday will entirely agree. (Truth 19th September 1948)

Notes: Wests became the Premiers with a controversial win. Ironically, considering the semi-final, Balmain bitterly disputed Kevin Hansen's try, saying he was grounded before the line and used a double movement to score. Hansen was adamant he had scored. It was a bitter, hard-fought forward clash; even Bill Keato had blood flowing freely. In the end Wests were the better team and deserved to win. They had been the best team all season. Jack Walsh, the grand war-horse, went out on a winning note, this being his last game. He had been a great champion.