



1956 Round 1 Monday 2nd April Belmore Oval



Western Suburbs 29

def.

Canterbury-Bankstown 10



George BAIN
 Cliff SMAILLES
 Harry WELLS (c)
 Ian JOHNSTON
 Ernie HILLS
 Darcy HENRY
 Keith HOLMAN
 Don MEEHAN
 Kel O'SHEA
 Nev CHARLTON
 Mark PATCH
 Bede GOFF
 Ron WATSON

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

Fred DUNN
 Ernie GILLIGAN
 Cec COOPER
 Jim GARTNER
 Ray FREEBODY
 Col GEELAN (c)
 Johnny KELL
 Les McDERMOTT
 Albert PAUL
 Jack BOWMAN
 Kev O'CALLAGHAN
 Fred ANDERSON
 Jack WILLIAMS

Tries

Kel O'SHEA (2)
 Ernie HILLS
 Keith HOLMAN
 Ian JOHNSTON

Goals

George BAIN (7)

John KELL (5)

Match Description

Canterbury-Bankstown: Full-back: F Dunn; three-quarters: E Gilligan, C Cooper, J Gartner, R Freebody; five-eighth: C Geelan (c); half: J Kell; forwards: L McDermott, A Paul, B Bowman, J Williams, F Anderson, K O'Callaghan

Western Suburbs: Full-back: G Bain; three-quarters: C Smailles, H Wells (c), I Johnston, E Hills; five-eighth: D Henry; half: K Holman; forwards: D Meehan, K O'Shea, N Charlton, M Patch, B Goff, R Watson **Referee: D Lawler (The Sun 2nd April 1956)**

In other matches Western Suburbs easily defeated Canterbury-Bankstown 29-10 at Belmore Oval. Test second-rower Kel O'Shea scored the first two tries. Canterbury dropped four players after its defeat. They are Cec Cooper (centre), Ern Gilligan (winger), Les McDermott (lock) and Jack Williams (prop). **(The Daily Telegraph 3rd April 1956)**

Former Queensland second-row Rugby League forward Kel O'Shea was the dominant player in Western Suburbs 29-10 win over Canterbury-Bankstown yesterday. O'Shea was the inspired leader of the Wests' pack, which outplayed its opponents. His positional play was superb and he scored two fine tries. Wests forwards gave their all-star backline a good service of the ball. Canterbury backs, in the first half, forced Wests into many handling errors. But in the second half the strain told and Test five-eighth Darcy Henry repeatedly beat his Canterbury opponent, Col Geelan. Lock forward D Meehan, the other Western Suburbs importation from Queensland was on the slow side in the lock position. He was inclined to hang on to the ball too long. Ernie Hills, former Rugby Union international, impressed on the wing for Wests with limited chances. He ran hard and fast, scored an excellent try, and paved the way for one of O'Shea's tries. **(Sydney Morning Herald 3rd April 1956)**

Harry Wells is captaining Wests in the trials and is likely to be the skipper when the sides are graded for the season. Wells has settled down in the Western Suburbs territory and should be an inspiring leader for the club. He takes over as captain from his team-mate Keith Holman who had the job last year. Keith was not anxious to have the added responsibility this year. Like many players he believes he will do better without having to worry about the captaincy..... **New Play the Ball Rule:** "One opposing player may stand immediately opposite the tackled player. A player of each side, to be known as the acting half-back, may stand immediately behind his own player taking part in the playing the ball. All other players are on-side if they are more than three yards behind their own player who is taking part in the playing of the ball. The distance of three yards shall be measured from the rear foot of the player playing the ball to the foremost foot of any player on his own side." **(Rugby League News March 1956)**

Wests are expecting a big season from former Union international winger Ernie Hills. Hills certainly has the experienced men inside him with Keith Holman, Darcy Henry, Harry Wells and Ian Johnston to get the ball across to him. **(Rugby League News 2nd April 1956)**

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Notes: Wests had paid out £4000 to field a completely rebuilt team. Ian Johnston had played for Parramatta in 1954, Cliff Smailles for Souths in 1953 and Darcy Henry for Easts in 1952 but the two big gains were Harry Wells and Kel O'Shea. On paper, with Test half Keith Holman in dazzling form, this was a star-studded team. Kel O'Shea asserted his class early and was the dominant forward on the field. Ernie Hills, ex-Union, also made an impressive debut on the wing. Keith Holman voluntarily relinquished the captaincy to Harry Wells. Darcy Henry, Test five-eighth, was also dominant in a good start to the season.