



1932 Semi Final Saturday 10th September Sports Ground



Western Suburbs 15 def.

Balmain 7

Frank McMILLAN *Fullback*
 Alan BRADY *Wing*
 Ray MORRIS *Centre*
 Cliff PEARCE *Centre*
 Alan RIDLEY *Wing*
 Jack McGLINN *Five-eighth*
 Les MEAD *Half*
 Frank SPONBERG *Lock*
 Charlie CORNWELL *Second Row*
 Bill RYAN *Second Row*
 Bill BROGAN (c) *Front Row*
 Bob LINDFIELD *Hooker*
 Cecil RHODES *Front Row*

Arthur TOBY
 J O'DOWD
 Charlie RICHARDS
 Charlie ROBERTS (c)
 Charlie MORRIS
 J STAPLETON
 George FRANKLAND
 Jim DUCKWORTH
 Mal FALLON
 Edmund BEAVER
 Michael PACE
 George BISHOP
 Stan SIMPSON

Tries
 Alan RIDLEY
 Bill BROGAN
 Les MEAD
 Cecil RHODES
 Bill RYAN

J O'DOWD

Goals Charlie ROBERTS (2)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: F McMillan; three-quarters: A Ridley, R Morris, C Pearce, A Brady; halves: L Mead, J McGlinn; forwards: F Sponberg, C Cornwell, W Ryan, C Rhodes, R Lindfield, W Brogan (capt)

Balmain: Full-back: A Toby; three-quarters: J O'Dowd, C Richards, C Roberts (capt), C Morris; halves: J Stapleton, G Frankland; forwards: M Fallon, E Beaver, M Pace, G Bishop, S Simpson **Referee: L Deane**

Magpies too mighty in mud for 'Mains -Teams looked like 26 editions of AL Jolson. Weight, speed, and determination told yesterday. The Magpies gave the Tigers the bird — rolled them in the mud — and next Saturday Western Suburbs and South Sydney will fight out the Rugby League final. Mud, mud everywhere, and tons of it to eat. The Sports Ground was just a sodden marsh when Wests and Balmain stepped forth to slide out the semi-final. Few expected Balmain to win, but the Tigers certainly gave the Westerners a shaking and might have taken home the bacon if they'd been more rugged and solid enough to take all that Cliff Pearce gave them in the second half, when Wests jammed every piece of coal into their boilers to pull the game out of the mud. Strange it is that though the Magpies crossed five times to win 15-7, they couldn't land a goal, with the bag of wind coated as it was with all the mud round the place. But the expected happened all the same, and went further to show what a really great player is Cliff Pearce. Starved for a touch of the ball in the opening 40 minutes, he ran riot in the second and mowed 'em down like locks in a barber's shop. Once the magnificent Cliff actually fought his way through the whole Balmain pack, crashed out into the open and actually made a try, only to see the ball dropped not 10 yards from the line. Pearce was to Western Suburbs what Paddy Maher had been to South Sydney the Saturday before, though he didn't scintillate like the son of the Celt, no doubt because of the heavy going and the necessity to watch his step as he went squelching through the grime. It rained, and it might have been an occasion for a competition in mud pie-making, yet despite the slush they gave the 6,715 spectators who had defied the elements something to watch. ... Both Toby and McMillan might have had glue on their hands the way they hung on to the pigskin, and the way most of them grabbed the passes would have put to shame many a team suffering from dropsy on a fine day. The Tigers played the South Sydney formation — five forwards and the extra five-eighth, but it was a futile move in view of the beef that Wests packed down in the scrum. Despite the damp, quite a number got hot under the collar, stoush seemed imminent at times, and the way George Bishop yelled to the ref. on occasions to raise a laugh from an undertaker in a land where nobody dies. Once George yelled — and was cautioned himself. Mud, feet that pounded into the water covered turf, a battle that left 26 gladiators dead tired — yet, it was worth watching if only for the brave battle that the near-Cinderellas put up against odds. Of course, Wests had the inimitable Cliff Pearce and that little Trojan, Les Mead, both doing something all the time, and doing it well. Without the pair, the Magpies might have been singing a different ballad today. The first try, that to Wests, came more from bad play by Frankland, who dropped the leather right on his own line, than by smart work by Wests. Johnno Rhodes happened to be there, just slid over. Men so coated with mud that they looked like Al Jolson. and might have been expected to warble 'Mammy' at any time — slid for yards, and in between times, the winners crossed for four more — Ryan, Ridley, Brogan and Mead in that order. **(The Truth 11th September 1932)**

Notes: This was a game played in atrocious condition with pools of water all over the field. Balmain played a five-man pack but the tactic didn't work. Morris was forced to come into lock after a leg strain. Mead seemed to relish the conditions but Pearce was the outstanding player on the field after the break and dominated the match. Wests Reserves had won a play-off for fourth against North Sydney 18-10 and played Easts in the semi on this day, losing 12-3, although Third Grade won 21-2 over Easts. Three teams in all three semi-finals was a fair indication of the strength of the club at this stage.