

## Viv Farnsworth

..... was an important catch for rugby league as he was a rugby union player on the rise. If union players had any doubts about playing the professional game, then those doubts would have been dispelled as a result of the games conducted between the Wallabies and Kangaroos towards the end of 1909.

Viv played in the third of these matches, and from the team list below it is evident that within a short time many of the Wallabies became names in rugby league. Paddy McCue came across to Wests for a season in 1919, and Chris McKivatt was appointed as Wests Coach in 1928.

Wallabies.—Full-back, E. Mandible; three-quarters, R. Gavin, J. Hickey, V. Farnsworth, and C. Russell; halves, W. Farnsworth and C. M'Kivat; forwards, P. M'Cue, J. T. Barnett, R. M'Intyre, K. Gavin, R. Craig, and P. Burge.  
Kangaroos.—Full-back, W. Whitfield; three-quarters, T. Anderson, A. Broomham, A. Hawkes, and A. Conlin; halves, D. Brown and E. Palfield; forwards, S. Pearce, E. Courtney, M. Frawley, A. Burdon, S. Carpenter, and J. Kendall.

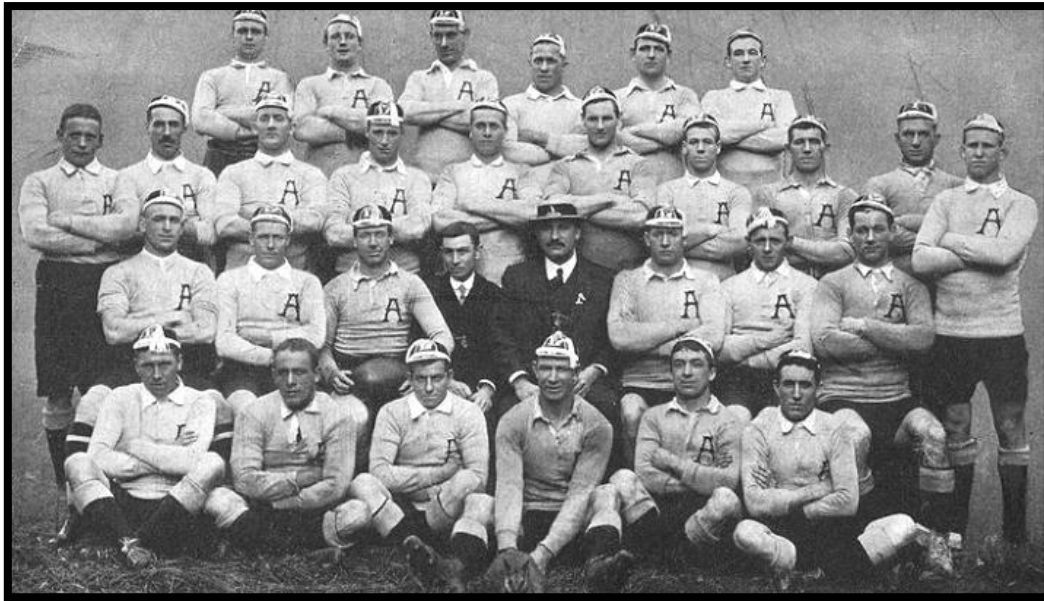
Wallabies v Kangaroos 19 September 1909 (Newcastle Morning Herald)

Viv made his First Grade rugby league debut with the Newtown club in 1910 and was a key player in their premiership win that year. His form was such that he was then selected for the NSW team and then made his rugby league international debut in 1910 with an Australasian team that played three Tests against a Great Britain touring team. The series was drawn as was the First Test. Viv Scored a try in the 13-13 draw.

Viv played with the Newtown Club from 1910 until 1912 and made thirty one First Grade appearances, scoring twenty two tries. Towards the end of 1912 Viv was selected to represent Australasia on the 1911-12 Kangaroo tour to Great Britain. Viv played all three Tests on tour and the Kangaroos won the Ashes on British soil, a feat that was not to be repeated for another five decades.

On the Kangaroo tour Viv formed a lethal halves combination with Herb Gilbert. His footwork, creative ball play and bruising defence made Viv a feared man for opposition players. On tour he scored 19 tries from 29 matches.

Viv, Farnsworth returned to England after the Kangaroo tour and joined the Oldham Club in 1912. He is Oldham player no 147. Oldham, known as the Roughyeds, are based in the Greater Manchester region of England and are one of the original twenty two clubs that formed the Northern Union in 1895. Viv Farnsworth remained with Oldham until 1917, making seventy eight appearances and scoring twenty seven tries during his time there. While he was at Oldham, the First World War broke out and Viv joined up to serve from England with a Lancashire Regiment.



### **Australasian Kangaroo Tour to Great Britain 1911-12**

**Back:** C Russell, C Savoury, T Berecny, E Courtney, W A Cann, W Noble

**Standing:** V Farnsworth, G Gillett, R Stuart, J Murray, P Burge, A R Francis, H Gilbert, C Sullivan, R Williams, S Darmody,

**Sitting:** D Frawley, A Broomham, C H McKivatt, J Quinlan (Man), C H ford (Man), P A McCue, H Hallett, R R Craig

**Front:** F Woodward, W Farnsworth, C Fraser, C McMurtrie, A Halloway, W Neill

When the war ended Viv returned to Australia and joined his former Club Newtown, and played the 1919 season there. With peace being celebrated around the world, rugby league joined in the celebrations and arranged a number of matches to celebrate, the return of representative rugby league as well as honoring the returned "Diggers."

An AIF team was selected to play Country Firsts in one of those matches and Viv Farnsworth appeared alongside a number of former and future Wests players including, Roy Farnsworth, Wes Easterbrook, James "Tony" Redmond, and Tedda Brooks.

**AIF:** Lionel Sheeley, Percy Upham, Viv Farnsworth, Roy Farnsworth, Cec Maunder, Alex Bolewski, Phil Regan, Jack Watkins, Tom Quinn, Wesley Easterbrook, James Redmond, Harold Hancock, Edward Brooks

In 1920, Viv came across to play with Wests, teaming up once more with Herb Gilbert at club and national level. Viv played five First Grade games with Wests and was selected to play for Australia against the touring Great Britain team. Viv played all three Tests but was injured in the Third Test, effectively bringing his representative career to an end. He played on with Wests in 1921 making six First Grade appearances, but retired from all football that year.

Viv Farnsworth died at Hurstville, NSW in April 1953 at the age of sixty four. In 2008 he was named in the list of Australia's 100 Greatest Players (1908-2007) which was commissioned to celebrate Rugby League's centenary year in Australia, and he is inductee no.10 in the National Rugby League Hall of Fame. Viv Farnsworth was the great uncle of Parramatta Eels player and CEO, Denis Fitzgerald.