

Bob Lindfield

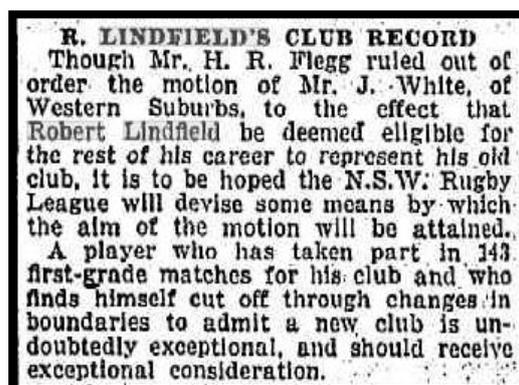
..... came to Sydney in 1923, trialled with Wests and was selected in the Reserve Grade team, before making his First Grade debut in round six of the competition. He played four First Grade games and a City Cup game in his inaugural year with Wests. In his second year with Wests he did not play in First Grade, and there was few reports on his progress. That was due in part to the fact that the First Grade hooker spot, Bob's preferred position, was occupied by Clarrie Prentice, captain of the First Grade team.

Clarrie Prentice retired at the end of 1924, but Eddie Stapleton who became captain that year, also played in the hooker position. Bob played six First Grade games that year but all were in the second row. An unusual selection occurred in August 1925 when Bob Lindfield was selected as the Country hooker to play Metropolitan. Bob would not have normally been eligible for County as he was now a City based player. The selection was applauded in the press as it was seen that Bob Lindfield's presence would give the Country side more opportunity to win a fair share of possession. The irony was that Bob could not gain selection as a hooker at Wests that year.

However, in 1926 Bob Lindfield had his chance. He played in fourteen of the sixteen First Grade games and became the regular First Grade hooker. It was the start of a great run for Bob. He played in Wests First Grade team from 1926 until 1934. During that period he played one hundred and twenty seven First Grade games and only the one Reserve Grade game. Had it not been for the entry of Canterbury Bankstown into the competition in 1935, and the residential rule that required Bob to play for the new Club, Bob would most likely have extended his run in First Grade with Wests for another season or two. Between 1926 and 1928 Bob was selected to play in Metropolitan and NSW representative teams. He was discussed as a possible contender for representative football in his later career but never got the call.

Bob epitomised the rise of Wests from the early 1920's when the Club had to rebuild after the entry of St George into the competition in 1921. As Wests became stronger through the mid 1920's so did Bob Lindfield's game. When West's had its golden era from 1929 until 1934, Bob was there every step of the way. During this period he played in ten of the twelve finals matches, missing only the semi final and final in 1930, but was there for the grand final challenge and Wests first premiership.

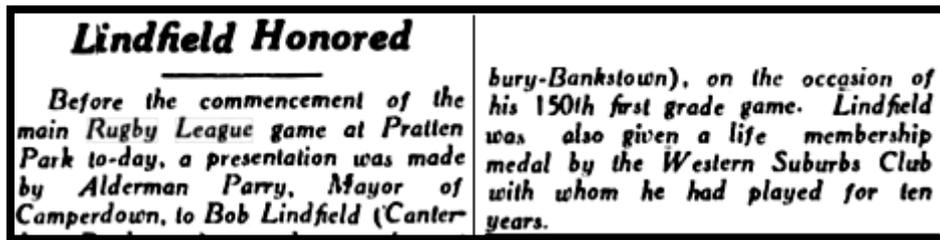
His last game for Wests was in the 1934 final when Wests won its second premiership. One view might be that it was a perfect way to end a long career with the one Club, but the reality was that Bob Lindfield was forced out of Wests due to rules established by the NSWRL relating to residential qualification. The rule was quite inflexible, and applied without exception. Wests Secretary, Jim White, tried to have the rule reviewed by way of a motion put before the NSWRL, but the motion was ruled out of order and Bob Lindfield had no option but to leave Wests and join the new Canterbury Bankstown Club.



Referee 21 June 1934

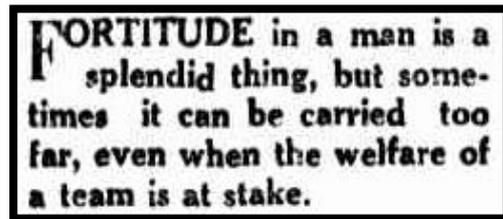
At age 34, Bob Lindfield turned out for the Canterbury Bankstown team in their very first match in the Sydney rugby league competition. It was a tough year for Canterbury and Bob Lindfield, as the new Club was often subject to big losses. Nevertheless, Bob stuck to his task and completed twelve

of the sixteen First Grade games played that year. At Pratten Park before the start of a match between Wests and Canterbury in 1935, Bob Lindfield was honoured for his 150th First Grade game, and was awarded Life Membership of the Western Suburbs District Rugby League Football Club.



The Sun 25 June 1935

Bob played First Grade with Canterbury in the first four rounds of 1936, but was severely injured in a game against Newtown. He played one more game and then announced his retirement from grade football at the age of 35. In response to Bob Lindfield's injury, The Sun newspaper on 28 April 1936 lead with the following headline.



The Sun 28 April 1936

The circumstances were that: "Bob caught a 'hard knock' on the mouth during the first half, and two teeth were knocked out. After a few minutes, Bob was back in the play and it was really remarkable that he could keep on winning the ball in the scrums." The NSW Rugby League Dentist took Bob to his surgery after the match and discovered that three other teeth were almost out of the gums, and so were removed. The League's Doctor then ordered X-Rays for fears that Lindfield had a broken jaw. Fortunately the jaw was not broken.

The Labor Daily on 3 June 1936 commented in response to the announcement of Bob Lindfield's retirement that; "Lindfield has been the greatest club hooker in Sydney in the past six or seven years, and his repeated omission from representative teams has been one of the mysteries of rugby league."

In August 1936, it was reported in the Labor Daily that the Canterbury Bankstown Club was staging a testimonial for Bob Lindfield "the doyen" of hookers at Belmore Oval. The program included an early game between Canterbury and Wests Reserve Grade teams, with an interlude of a goal kicking competition and an athletics display, which would be followed by a match between the Canterbury First Grade team and a composite team from South Sydney, St George and Western Suburbs.

The news article noted that; "Bob was hooking with all of his customary skill early in the season, but owing to the nature of an injury, decided to retire permanently." The Labor Daily encouraged that; "All admirers of this sterling footballer, sportsman and good scout, should rally to the Club's effort to give him a fitting testimonial."

Bob Lindfield did put on his playing gear for a match between past Wests and Easts players as a testimonial for Frank McMillan in 1937, but his football activities during the 1940's was in the administration area with the Canterbury Club.

In the early 1950's Bob Lindfield returned to his home town of Orange and took up farming as an Orchardist. Bob lived in Orange for the remainder of his life and died there in September 1959. He is buried at the Orange General Cemetery, Orange, NSW, Plot Roman Catholic - Old Section H, No. 91.