



1980 Minor Semi Sunday 14th September Cricket Ground



Western Suburbs 13

def.

St George 7

Wayne SMITH
John RIBOT
Ted GOODWIN
Ron GITEAU
Warren BOLAND (c)
Terry LAMB
Alan NEIL
Jim LEIS
John McLEOD
Bob COOPER
Bruce GIBBS
Alan LATHAM
Tom ARBER
John CROW

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

Brian JOHNSON
Brian JOHNSTON
Robert FINCH
Graham QUINN
Philip GRAHAM
Tony TRUDGETT
Steve MORRIS
Grahame BUCKLEY
John JANSEN
Graeme WYNN
Craig YOUNG (c)
John DOWLING
Robert STONE
Rod REDDY

Tries John RIBOT

Brian JOHNSON

Goals Ron GITEAU (5)

Graeme WYNN (2)

Match Description

St George: Full-back: B Johnson; three-quarters: B Johnston, G Quinn, R Finch, P Graham; five-eighth: T Trudgett; half: S Morris; forwards: G Buckley, G Wynn, J Jansen, C Young (c), J Dowling, R Stone

Western Suburbs: Full-back: W Smith; three-quarters: J Ribot, R Giteau, E Goodwin, W Boland (c); five-eighth: T Lamb; half: A Neil; forwards: J Leis, J McLeod, R Cooper, B Gibbs, A Latham, T Arber **Referee: J Danzey (The Sun 15th September 1980)**

Alan Latham, the hooker Western Suburbs signed as an afterthought, went walkabout at half-time at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday, but came back to play a hero's role for the Magpies. Latham, sick and dazed, staggered into the St George dressing room at half-time in yesterday's dour rugby league semi-final. Wests' President, Bill Carson, retrieved him and Latham went on to play an award-winning role in Wests' 13-7 triumph over Saints. The Latham drama added a touch of the fairytale to Wests' first win over Saints in an SCG match since 1963. The match, which finally exorcised Wests' three-year-old SCG "hoodoo" put the Magpies into next Saturday's final (against Easts) and relegated the premiers Saints to the also-rans. It was a triumph for coach Roy Masters, who convinced his team to be more adventurous, and had them backing up that policy with a swarming, umbrella-style defence. A bruising, but unspectacular, semi-final still managed to provide some moments of high drama. Wests' Alan Neil and St George's Craig Young stayed on the field in the first half thanks only to some benevolent refereeing by Jack Danzey. Neil's blatant high tackle on Graeme Wynn and a kicking incident involving Young would have earned both the long march in a lesser game. And there was drama aplenty surrounding young Latham. In the dressing room (Wests) at half-time he lay stretched out flat, with an oxygen mask over his face. "He was in a bad way," said Wests' secretary Ray Bernasconi later. "He was kicked in the head, and we doubted he would play the second half." But courage is obviously a Latham trademark. In the Group 10 grand final last year he battled through with a broken arm. And yesterday, despite the punishment he soaked up from Saints. Latham won the ball 11-9, and backed it up with 26 dogged tackles. After the match, Bernasconi revealed how Wests went to Bathurst to sign another hooker late last year, but settled instead on Latham. Yesterday he was a winner, and so were Wests. "I thought all along that if we beat Saints, we could go on with it and take out the title," declared skipper Warren Boland. "I still think so." It was one try all, with Ron Giteau's impressive round-the-corner kicking (five goals from seven shots) providing the difference. But it was only part of the story. Wests' swift-moving defence swallowed up almost everything Saints tried yesterday, and the better side won. Saints had their chance when Brian Johnson scored a dashing try, for a 7-4 lead, early in the second half. But a blind-side raid in the 56th minute brought a try for winger-of-the-year John Ribot, and Giteau's boot did the rest. **(Daily Telegraph 15th September 1980)**

Notes: In an error-ridden match, Alan Latham, replacing Jack Jeffries, became the hero of a very gutsy win. He played dazed throughout and also claimed Rod Reddy rubbed liniment in his eyes, temporarily blinding him. It was a very tough match with lots of cautions. Alan Neil was lucky to stay on the field. John McLeod dropped a simple pass with the line wide open and John Ribot had another blinder. The feature of the win was Wests' swarming defence.