



1974 Prelim. Final Saturday 14th September Cricket Ground



Eastern Suburbs 25

def.

Western Suburbs 2

Russell FAIRFAX
 Jim PORTER
 John BRASS
 Mark HARRIS
 Bill MULLINS
 John PEARD
 John MAYES
 Ron COOTE
 Barry REILLY
 Laurie FREIER
 Arthur BEETSON (c)
 Elwyn WALTERS
 Ken JONES
 Ian MCKAY
 Greg BANDIERA

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

John DORAHY
 Stephen SATTERLY
 Stephen KNIGHT
 Robbie PARKER
 Russell MULLINS
 Russell WORTH
 Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)
 Warren SNODGRASS
 Mick LIUBINSKAS
 Geoff FOSTER
 Pat HUNDY
 John PURCELL
 Brian ISBESTER
 John ELFORD
 Graeme O'GRADY



Tries Bill MULLINS (2)
 John BRASS
 Russell FAIRFAX
 John MAYES

Goals John BRASS (5) John DORAHY (1)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: J Dorahy; three-quarters: S Satterly, S Knight, R Parker, R Mullins; five-eighth: R Worth; half: T Raudonikis (c); forwards: W Snodgrass, G Foster, B Isbester, P Hundy, J Purcell, M Liubinskas

Eastern Suburbs: Full-back: R Fairfax; three-quarters: J Porter, J Brass, M Harris, W Mullins; five-eighth: J Peard; half: J Mayes; forwards: R Coote, B Reilly, L Freier, A Beetson (c), E Walters, K Jones **Referee: L Bruyeres (The Sun 16th September 1974)**

“Bye Bye Blackbird” said the big sign on the door of the Eastern Suburbs’ dressing-room – and that’s the way it was at Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday. The fairytale story of Tom “Terrific” Raudonikis and his Western Suburbs Magpies ended abruptly in a crushing defeat in the preliminary final. Easts were back on their pedestal as premiers favourites after their 25-2 mauling of the Magpies before 43,072 spectators. The Wests’ kids bowed out bravely; at least they made it as far as the Final – and that’s more than nine other clubs can say. So it’s an Easts-Canterbury grand final – and after the scintillating running of Easts’ three-quarter line and full-back Russell Fairfax yesterday, the Roosters deserve favouritism. Easts yesterday did a thorough job of pulling the Magpies’ tail – after a tight first half. And it was yet another controversial refereeing decision which gave Easts the spur for their victory. After the half-time hooter had sounded, referee Laurie Bruyeres disallowed an apparent try to Mark Harris after the big centre had leaped high to take a John Brass up-and-under. Harris appeared to get the ball down – but referee Bruyeres said “no.” At the time it was 3-2 with Easts struggling desperately to break away from Wests. The decision was a lucky one for Wests. But it meant bad luck as well, as the Roosters came out breathing fire in the second half. With more determination and purpose about their work they quickly grabbed the game by the throat. In 13 minutes, the final was as good as over. Wests’ “spark” John Dorahy had broken his thumb and Easts’ express-train winger Bill Mullins had rushed in for two tries to stretch the lead to 13-2. Wests’ fans waited in hope for the second half fightback which has come in every match recently – but it was not to be. Instead, they saw the Easts’ backline show beyond doubt that they are the classiest and best in Rugby League. The three-quarter line of Jim Porter, John Brass, Harris and Mullins, played superbly. And behind them at full-back Fairfax – his long hair gone crazy in the strong wind – had one of “magic” days. The gifted Fairfax had some unbelievable moments and fitted in like clockwork with the three-quarters. Spectators who stayed to the end will remember for a long time the 79th minute try in which a Brass kick, a freakish Fairfax pick-up and pass and a Porter dash brought a touchdown for Brass. When Easts use their backs as they did at times in yesterday’s second half, they are unstoppable. Wests contributed to their downfall with some butter-fingered handling in the second half. In the first half they had played tightly and well – and only a Fairfax try – again off a Brass kick – broke the defence. **(Sunday Telegraph 15th September 1974)**

Notes: The dream of a Grand Final was crushed by a powerful second half display by Easts. Their backline ran riot after being in front only 3-2 at half-time. John Dorahy had a try disallowed in the first half and Mark Harris, for Easts, controversially had a try disallowed right on half-time. The critical point for Wests was in the 48th minute when John Dorahy broke his hand and was replaced by Graeme O’Grady. The backline became very unsettled and couldn’t cope with the Easts’ attack. John Elford also came on for Brian Isbester, but by then it was a lost cause. After all the earlier injuries, it had been a remarkable effort to make the Final.