



1974 Round 1 Sunday 31st March Lidcombe Oval



Western Suburbs 62

def.

Balmain 5

Tony FORD
 Robbie PARKER
 Stephen KNIGHT
 Dave OLIVERI
 Russell MULLINS
 John HEYWARD
 Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)
 Warren SNODGRASS
 Geoff FOSTER
 John ELFORD
 Jim MURPHY
 John PURCELL
 John O'BRYAN
 Steve RIGNEY

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

Mark LEVY
 Glen CAPELIN
 Geoff STARLING
 Ray BLACK
 Merv MUGGLETON
 Tim MURPHY
 Dennis CARTER
 John SPENCER (c)
 Ron PALMER
 Alan BURKE
 Denis MANTEIT
 Peter BOULTON
 Bruce DOUST



Tries

Robbie PARKER (2)
 John HEYWARD (2)
 Geoff FOSTER (2)
 Tom RAUDONIKIS
 Tony FORD
 Stephen KNIGHT
 Russell MULLINS
 Jim MURPHY
 Dave OLIVERI
 Steve RIGNEY
 Warren SNODGRASS

Glen CAPELIN

Goals Tony FORD (10)

Mark LEVY (1)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: A Ford; three-quarters: R Parker, S Knight, D Oliveri, R Mullins; five-eighth: J Heyward; half: T Raudonikis (c); forwards: W Snodgrass, J Elford, G Foster, J Murphy, J Purcell, J O'Bryan

Balmain: Full-back: M Levy; three-quarters: G Capelin, R Black, G Starling, M Muggleton; five-eighth: T Murphy; half: D Carter; forwards: J Spencer (c), R Palmer, A Burke, D Manteit, P Boulton, B Doust **Referee: G Cook (Rugby League Week 4th April 1974)**

Far better teams than injury-stricken Balmain would have folded before the onslaught of Western Suburbs, who tossed the ball about in bewildering fashion. You couldn't help feeling sorry for the toothless "Tigers", as Wests poured through the gaps to score at more than a point a minute in the second half at Lidcombe Oval, winning 62-5. They played throughout the second half with 12 men – and one of them, half-back Dennis Carter, was a virtual passenger with injured ribs. Tommy Raudonikis did the prompting as the Wests' forwards ran like backs and cracked Balmain's paper-thin defence almost as they liked. Prop forward Jim Murphy, who retired at half-time with a sprained ankle, turned in a display which wouldn't have been disowned by the mighty Arthur Beetson. Not once did Murphy fail to send a team-mate through a gap when cornered and whenever the Balmain defence hung off waiting for him to pass, he galloped through the opening. Some powerful tackling softened up Balmain in the early stages and it was one-way traffic after Steve Knight plunged across to score the first try, after 15 minutes. This opened the floodgates and Russell Mullins, John Heyward and Raudonikis went in for tries within 10 minutes. But the score of 21-0 at the break didn't give a clue to the massacre which lay ahead. **(The Sun 1st April 1974)**

Western Suburbs opened their 1974 Rugby League premiership campaign with a club record 62-5 win over a battered Balmain lineup at Lidcombe Oval yesterday. Officials could not recall a bigger win by Wests. They said the club's previous best was a 55-12 win over Canterbury-Bankstown in 1972, also in the season's opening round. ... Balmain played throughout the second half with only 12 men, after five of their players were injured. The rule permit only two replacements. **(Sydney Morning Herald 1st April 1973)**

Notes: In an incredible first match, Wests scored 14 tries in a runaway win, although Balmain were weakened by five injuries. Jim Murphy was dominant in the first half as the Wests' forwards softened up Balmain. He retired at half-time with a sprained ankle, replaced by Steve Rigney. New players for Wests were Dave Oliveri and Warren Snodgrass from Newtown, while John Elford made his much awaited return after missing a season with an arm injury. John Purcell also was a late replacement for Shane Day who had bruised ribs. Ominously for Tony Ford, new recruit John Dorahy returned in Reserve Grade, after five weeks off with a broken thumb.