



1997 Round 1 Saturday 8th March Campbelltown Stadium



Gold Coast 24

def.

Western Suburbs 16

Andrew KING
Henry SULUVALE
Graham MACKAY (c)
Jason NICOL
Shane RUSSELL
Scott ZAHRA
Chris ORR
Jeremy SCHLOSS
Brendan HURST
Tony DURHEIM
Damien DRISCOLL
Jamie GODDARD
Martin BELLA
Scott SATTLER
Darren ANDERSON
Wes PATTEN
Gavin WHITTAKER

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

Andrew LEEDS
Darren WILLIS
Ken McGUINNESS
Brandon PEARSON
Aseri LAING
Andrew WILLIS
Des HASLER
Paul LANGMACK (c)
Damian KENNEDY
Bill DUNN
James SMITH
Ciriaco MESCIA
Harvey HOWARD
Steve GEORGALLIS
Shane MILLARD
Shaun WALLISS
John SKANDALIS



Tries Shane RUSSELL (4)
Jamie GODDARD

Brandon PEARSON (2)
Andrew WILLIS

Goals Brendan HURST (1)
Graham MACKAY (1)

Andrew LEEDS (2)

Match Description

Gold Coast: Full-back: A King; three-quarters: H Suluvale, G Mackay (c), J Nicol, S Russell; five-eighth: S Zahra; half: C Orr; forwards: J Schloss, B Hurst, T Durheim, D Driscoll, J Goddard, M Bella

Western Suburbs: Full-back: A Leeds; three-quarters: D Willis, Ken McGuinness, B Pearson, A Laing; five-eighth: A Willis; half: D Hasler; forwards: P Langmack (c), B Dunn, D Kennedy, J Smith, C Mescia, H Howard **Referee: P Simpkins (Big League 8th March 1997)**

Soccer convert Shane Russell shut down the Western Suburbs Magpies with a stunning four try performance for Gold Coast at Campbelltown Sports Ground yesterday. Russell, a 23-year-old winger, covered himself in glory as the unfancied Chargers inflicted a 24-16 defeat on the 1996 finalists. He has only been playing rugby league for six years but showed extraordinary pace and anticipation to score two tries in each half. Unwanted by Balmain and Parramatta, Russell found a home on the Gold Coast and enjoyed a dream premiership debut yesterday. "I've never scored four tries in any game in my life, this is just incredible," Russell said. "I was in a very bad car accident when I was 13 and suffered major head injuries. Soccer seemed to be the safest sport for me to play and I was a central midfielder playing in the juniors up in Maroochydore, Queensland. I decided to have a go at league with Balmain, then I was very disappointed to be cut by Parramatta toward the end of the year last year. The Chargers gave me a chance and it certainly looks as though I have made the best decision of my life when I joined them." The Magpies went into battle yesterday is 1/6 favourites with the bookies against the side they had never lost to since 1988. By halftime it was clear that Wests had an almighty battle on their hands from a team brimming with enthusiasm and determination. Wests had their chances to chalk up a win in the last 20 minutes, but a disallowed try by centre Brandon Pearson in the 74th minute took the wind from their sails.. Centre Ken McGuinness steamed over between the posts but was recalled by referee Paul Simpkins who ruled the final pass from Andrew Willis to be forward. Russell did big damage on the scoreboard for the Coast but forwards Martin Bella, Jamie Goddard, Damian Driscoll, Jeremy Schloss and Brendan Hurst were the main heroes on the day. Second rower Tony Durheim also made a strong contribution, along with halves Chris Orr and a likely-looking five-eighth prospect, Scott Zahra. The Magpies looked hesitant in attack and were shaky in defence in a performance that had coach Tom Raudonikis breathing fire in the aftermath. "The boys are going to have a very hard week I can guarantee that," the coach said. "We were terrible and I have to make a decision on what to do with the team. A few of our blokes just didn't aim up and we have a week to correct it." In the other dressing room, Chargers' coach Phil Economidis was in a buoyant mood. "We came here around this time last year for a trial, we had no jumpers and hardly any of the boys knew each other's' names," Economidis said. "We out-enthused Wests in the first half today and they came back strongly but our forwards were just sensational." **(The Sunday Telegraph 9th March 1997)**

Notes: Wests were down 20-16 with minutes to go after coming back strongly following a lack-lustre performance, but a runaway 80m Gold Coast try put paid to their chances. A disallowed Pearson try in the 74th minute didn't help. Coach Raudonikis was very unhappy with the effort and promised to work the team hard during the week. Des Hasler wasn't outstanding in his debut, while James Smith and Shane Millard (ex-Roosters) and Shaun Walliss (ex-Souths) also had average games on debut.