



1986 Round 1 Sunday 9th March Lidcombe Oval



Penrith 26

Robbie ROBARDS
Ben GONZALES
Brad IZZARD
Col BENTLEY
David GREENE
Greg CLEMENTS
Greg ALEXANDER
Craig CONNOR
Craig IZZARD
Darryl BROHMAN
Lew ZIVANOVIC
Royce SIMMONS (c)
Matt GOODWIN
Warren FENTON
Gary HOWELL
Tony BUTTERFIELD
Brandon LEE

def.

Western Suburbs 18

Leo EPIFANIA
Allen GEELAN
Brett GALE
Wilfred WILLIAMS
Paul SHEAHAN
Michael NEIL
Brett CLARK
Allan BURNS
Craig CLARKE
Ian SCHUBERT (c)
Ian FREEMAN
Alan FALLAH
Bruce CLARK
Gary McFARLANE
John BILBIJA
Geoff SUTTON
Ian NADEN



Tries Greg CLEMENTS (2)
Greg ALEXANDER
Ben GONZALES

Allen GEELAN
Leo EPIFANIA
Craig CLARKE

Goals Greg ALEXANDER (5)

Leo EPIFANIA (3)

Match Description

Penrith: Full-back: R Robards; three-quarters: B Gonzales, B Izzard, C Bentley, D Greene; five-eighth: G Clements; half: G Alexander; forwards: C Connor, C Izzard, D Brohman, L Zivanovic, R Simmons (c), M Goodwin

Western Suburbs: Full-back: L Epifania; three-quarters: A Geelan, B Gale, W Williams, P Sheahan; five-eighth: M Neil; half: B Clark; forwards: A Burns, C Clarke, I Schubert (c), B Clark, A Fallah, I Freeman **Referee: G West (The Daily Mirror 10th March 1986)**

Penrith half-back Greg Alexander inspired his side to a 26-18 win over Western Suburbs at Lidcombe Oval yesterday in what for both clubs was a lacklustre opening to the 1986 Winfield premiership. Alexander set up two tries and scored one himself late in the second half of a match that was marred by poor handling and skills from both sides. Wests looked set to win after leading 18-8, but Alexander took control of the match in the last 10 minutes and made two breaks from the base of scrums which resulted in tries. He finished with a personal tally of 14 points and was the only difference between the sides. "Obviously we are pleased with the win, but there is still a long way to go," Penrith coach Tim Sheens said after the match. Penrith went to an early lead after a penalty goal to Alexander. Five-eighth Greg Clements then threw a series of dummy passes which took him through the heart of the Wests' defence to score next to the posts. Alexander's conversion made the score 8-0, one which belied the huge penalty count in their favour. Penrith were lucky to lead at this stage, as Wests had most of the play. Their persistence was rewarded when halfback Brett Clark put up a short kick which second-rower Craig Clarke gathered and scored. Hooker Alan Fallah set up the Magpies' second try for Allen Geelan with a well-timed pass soon after the break. With the conversion by Leo Epifania, Wests led 12-8 and looked set to win the match comfortably. This was reinforced when Epifania, who along with Brett Clark was one of the Magpies' best players, gathered an in-field bomb and scored. The conversion of his own try made the score 18-8, a lead which Wests should certainly not have surrendered. Coach Steve Ghosn said that he thought his players had done enough to win the match, but was disappointed that they failed to close the game up after leading until the final 10 minutes. ... There were several spiteful incidents during the match, one of which saw Geelan and Penrith's David Greene sent to the sin bin for 10 minutes shortly before the break. ... Replacement Brandon Lee, who played in France in the off-season, added some bite to the Penrith attack when he came on. Alexander took advantage of his good lead-up work and stepped past several tired Wests' defenders to score. **(Sydney Morning Herald 10th March 1986)**

Notes: Newcomers for Wests included Allan Burns from Norths, Wilfred Williams from Easts and John Bilbija, up from Merrylands. Paul Sheahan also debuted from the lower grades and had an excellent game. Wests led 18-8 with 10 minutes to go and had been on top for 70 minutes. A burst of Greg Alexander brilliance shattered their hopes of a first-up win. The match started with an all-in brawl in the first five minutes and Bruiser Clark and Ian Freeman dominated for most of the game. Allen Geelan, playing in a new position on the wing, started the season as he left off with another stint in the sin bin!