



1979 Round 18 Sunday 22nd July Lidcombe Oval



St George 15

Brian JOHNSON
 Mitch BRENNAN
 Rod REDDY
 Robert FINCH
 Michael SORRIDINI
 Tony TRUDGETT
 Ken KEARNEY
 Graeme WYNN
 George GRANT
 Robert STONE
 Craig YOUNG (c)
 John DOWLING
 Bruce STARKEY
 Philip GRAHAM

def.

Western Suburbs 14

Wayne SMITH
 Buddy CAIN
 Don MOSELEY
 Ron BRODRICK
 Warren BOLAND
 Peter WALSH
 Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)
 Graeme O'GRADY
 Les BOYD
 Ray BROWN
 Terry LEABEATER
 Jack JEFFRIES
 Bruce GIBBS
 Alan NEIL



Tries

Michael SORRIDINI
 Ken KEARNEY

Peter WALSH
 Bruce GIBBS

Goals

George GRANT (4)
 Ken KEARNEY (1) Field Goal

Peter WALSH (4)

Match Description

St George: Full-back: B Johnson; three-quarters: M Brennan, R Reddy, R Finch, M Sorridini; five-eighth: T Trudgett; half: K Kearney; forwards: G Wynn, R Stone, G Grant, C Young (c), J Dowling, B Starkey

Western Suburbs: Full-back: W Smith; three-quarters: E Cain, D Moseley, R Brodrick, W Boland; five-eighth: P Walsh; half: T Raudonikis (c); forwards: G O'Grady, L Boyd, R Brown, T Leabeater, J Jeffries, B Gibbs **Referee: K Roberts (Rugby League Week 26th July 1979)**

A 76th-minute field goal by St George half Ken Kearney yesterday knocked controversial team Western Suburbs from the ropes to the canvas in rugby league's battle for the semi-finals. Wests' fans at Lidcombe couldn't believe it when Kearney sneaked over his goal for a 15-14 Saints victory. Seven days earlier, Canterbury's Garry Hughes had done exactly the same thing as Wests fell 17-16 at Belmore. Yesterday, Wests crashed to their sixth straight loss against a St George side which turned in a performance rated by coach Harry Bath as the "worst of the season." This morning Wests are out of the five – facing a month of pressure in which they must win their last four games against Newtown, Manly, Penrith and Norths to have a chance of making it to the semi-finals..... Yesterday coach Roy Masters must have felt like weeping as he saw his under-strength team's courageous challenge rebuffed at the end by St George. Unfortunately, I can't report how Masters reacted. Thirty-five minutes after the game, pressmen were still barred from the Wests' dressing room, unable to talk with coach or players. It followed last weekend's activities in which pressmen apparently were blamed for Wests' problems – and a "gag" subsequently applied to Wests' players. Lady Luck really deserted the Magpies yesterday. On the run of the game, they deserved at least one point from a draw with the competition favourites. Missing half a dozen players, including key men like John Dorahy and John Donnelly, Wests were inspired by a towering performance from Tommy Raudonikis. Raudonikis was truly a Captain Courageous yesterday. He had blood streaming from his head after a mighty display of courage football in which he made 27 tackles and led his side relentlessly to the edge of victory. But even Tommy's effort wasn't enough to break a losing sequence which stretches back to mid-June. Shabby defence and a hatful of handling mistakes added up to St George's performance yesterday. At half-time Harry Bath told his team: "You won't win if you keep playing like that." At the time Saints led 14-7 after a try by Michael Sorridini – in which there was a questionable pass – and one by Kearney off a brilliant break from Graham Wynn. Saints didn't improve after half-time, and Wests came right back at them. A brilliant solo try by five-eighth Peter Walsh which left Saints' mid-field defence in a real mess, trimmed the lead to 14-12 after 20 minutes. Then a scrum penalty against John Dowling saw Walsh kick his fourth goal for 14-all. Only then were Saints stung into action – and Kearney scrambled them out of trouble after a ruck near the posts. The performances of Raudonikis, and Saints' back-row men George Grant and Graham Wynn stood out clearly as the best features of a scrappy match. Not far behind were Wests' new young prop Terry Leabeater and Saints' five-eighth Tony Trudgett, who both played solidly. ... **(Daily Telegraph 23rd July 1979)**

Notes: For the second week in a row Wests were beaten by a late field goal. Coming off a mid-week Amco Cup Loss to Souths, it was a heart-breaking loss in a match that Wests should have won. It was universally considered that the Sorridini try was scored off a blatant forward pass and one of George Grant's penalty goals snuck in off an upright. Bruce Gibbs, back from suspension, had a powerful, bustling game but it was obvious that Wests were missing the still suspended Dorahy and Donnelly. In their stead, Tom Raudonikis stood up to give one of his best lion-hearted performances. Blood streaming from a head wound, he led charge after charge into the St George forwards. Terry Leabeater, on debut, also had a very strong game.