



1985 Round 18 Sunday 7th July Lidcombe Oval



Western Suburbs 19

def.

St George 16



Leo EPIFANIA
 John McARTHUR
 Trevor COGGER
 Brett GALE
 Gerald CELARC
 Gary WARNECKE
 Michael NEIL
 Mark HARRIGAN
 Geoff DILLON
 Craig CLARKE
 Lee CROOKS (c)
 Alan FALLAH
 Terry LEABEATER

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

Glenn BURGESS
 Denis KINCHELA
 Chris JOHNS
 Michael BEATTIE
 Steve MORRIS
 Steve LINNANE
 Perry HADDOCK
 Graeme O'GRADY
 Graeme WYNN
 Billy NOKE
 Craig YOUNG (c)
 Tony TOWNSEND
 Robert STONE
 John FIFITA
 Alan NEIL
 Brian JOHNSON

Tries John McARTHUR
 Mark HARRIGAN
 Brett GALE

Tony TOWNSEND
 Chris JOHNS

Goals Lee CROOKS (3)
 Gary WARNECKE (1) Field Goal

Billy NOKE (4)

Match Description

St George: Full-back: G Burgess; three-quarters: D Kinchela, C Johns, M Beattie, S Morris; five-eighth: S Linnane; half: P Haddock; forwards: G O'Grady, G Wynn, B Noke, C Young (c), T Townsend, R Stone

Western Suburbs: Full-back: L Epifania; three-quarters: J McArthur, T Cogger, B Gale, G Celarc; five-eighth: G Warnecke; half: M Neil; forwards: M Harrigan, G Dillon, C Clarke, L Crooks (c), A Fallah, T Leabeater **Referee: K Roberts (The Daily Mirror 8th July 1985)**

Minutes after Western Suburbs coach Ken Gentle had experienced the greatest moment of his rugby league career, he was heading down the road to tell the club's greatest fan all about it. Harry Gentle, 83, the coach's dad and a Wests' stalwart since the 1910s, has been in Lidcombe Hospital for the last three weeks and did not see the drama and elation of his side's finest win in years. He missed the tense, nail-biting moments at Lidcombe Oval as Wests forced competition leader St George to retreat far enough for a Gary Warnecke field goal, which edged the home side ahead with three minutes to go. He missed the inspired Lee Crooks penalty goal, booted over from the half-way line in the last 60 seconds which gave Wests a 19-16 victory and caused almost 5000 fans to whoop with delight. Harry Gentle missed a great many other things from the three tries to two victory as he lay in his hospital bed. "My father's absence today is the only regret I have from this match," an emotional Gentle said after his lowly-rated Magpies had trounced a team with bigger names and a much greater reputation. ... It was a see-sawing match. In the first 30 minutes the lead changed six times before St George went to the break ahead 14-10 with each side having scored two tries. "I told the players we could do it," Gentle said. "I told them we had the talent to beat St George. And they did." Five minutes into the second half Wests were in front again after a try by hard-working lock Mark Harrigan and a Crooks' goal. But with 15 minutes of play remaining, Billy Noke kicked his fourth goal from five attempts and St George had not only drawn level but were looking positively menacing. Time and time again they roared at the Wests' line. Time and time again the Magpies showed the determination of a champion side. "It was always in the back of my mind that we had lost so many matches on the bell," Gentle said. "I sent out instructions for the players to work their way up the paddock for a field goal with five minutes to go. They carried out the instructions to the letter." In the closing minutes Gentle contemplated replacing some of the battle-weary Magpies. "But who could you take off?" he asked. "They made me so proud today." No player gave a poor performance for the Magpies. Epifania defused more bombs than a war-time weapons expert, Brett Gale and Trevor Cogger were always probing for defensive weaknesses, Warnecke and Michael Neil were at their inventive best and Geoff Dillon, Terry Leabeater and Alan Fallah tackled their way to exhaustion. **(Daily Telegraph 8th July 1985)**

Notes: Coach Ken Gentles said this was the most satisfying win of his career and no Magpies' fans were disagreeing. In the upset of the season, in a thrilling game where the lead changed hands six times, the Wests' pack tackled themselves to a standstill with the Crooks/Leabeater v Young/Stone clash a highlight. Lee Crooks was again outstanding with his last minute 50m goal a sealer, after a Gary Warnecke field goal with four minutes remaining. Alan Fallah also won three late scrums against the feed, unheard of in modern football. Leo Epifania, in one of his best games for Wests, was a rock at fullback.