

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: A Ford; three-quarters: R Pickett, B Glasgow, R Ferguson, D Rogers; five-eighth: T Raudonikis; half: J Maxwell; forwards: R Smith, J Baker, B Bryant, N Kelly (c), K Stonestreet, D Walkaden

Balmain: Full-back: R Smithies; three-quarters: P Cross, V Querin, T Parker, L Killeen; five-eighth: P Fardell; half; K Outten; forwards: P Provan (c), J Walsh, G Fryer, A Beetson, J Crawford, G Leo Referee: E Cook (The Sun 1st August 1969)

Shrewd tactics ordered by Jack "Duck" Walsh in a one-day coaching comeback set Wests on the path to victory over Balmain at Leichhardt yesterday. Walsh took over coaching of the side for the day when Magpie captain-coach Noel Kelly was too ill to attend the match. Walsh, former Souths and Wests' coach, nowadays is a masseur for the Magpies. But his knowledge was expected to prove handy yesterday and he talked to the side before the match and again at half-time. Walsh told Wests they were mad to keep kicking on fourth tackle and automatically losing possession. "Make Balmain tackle you the fourth time and with the best hooker in Sydney you're odds-on to get the ball back," said Walsh. "We've been winning scrum after scrum and kicking to give the ball away. Years ago Souths won by not kicking so you give it a go today," he added. After the match substitute skipper Ken Stonestreet praised Walsh's tactics and so did second-rower Barry Bryant who had a big game. In a game which was tighter than the 19-12 result the scrum domination of Stonestreet by 16-11 plus the minimum of kicking were important factors. Another which affected the decision was a pulled thigh muscle suffered by Len Killeen a minute after half-time. Killeen's injury was a good argument for the new English rule to allow replacements at any stage. Had Killeen been injured just before half-time another player could have gone out for the second half. As it was he had to hobble around the wing frustrated by seeing goalable penalties kicked to touch. For a long period in the second half when Balmain were storming the Magpie line, Killeen probably could have dropped a field goal had he been fit. As it was nobody even tried and Wests held on after desperate defence. .. Terry Parker, replaced at half-time with a back injury, is expected to be right by the weekend. ... Wests lost classy full-back Tony Ford with knee ligament trouble after he had been injured after seven minutes and again after 25 minutes. He then was replaced by Gary Weston who did not make a mistake under pressure. In a thrilling second half, after 9-all at half-time, Wests led 11-9 after 47 minutes, trailed 12-11 after 51 minutes and then led 14-12 from the 61st minute until the final seconds. Then Doug Walkaden intercepted to send Stonestreet galloping over between the posts in a fashion which would have done credit to his namesake, the original Nebo Road. Wests deserved their win by playing better football than the Tigers, with new five-eighth Tom Raudonikis proving a real spark in attack. He is a protégé of Kiwi Grahame Kennedy, who now is at Wagga and Kennedy was delighted to see his colt go so well against the joint leaders yesterday. Raudonikis went forward all the time and generally made some ground when in possession. Young half John Maxwell also went well as well as 20-year-old Rod Smith. ... Wests centres Barry Glasgow all day and Roy Ferguson in the last 10 minutes in particular were valuable units in the Magpie attack. The defeat was a blow to Balmain. (Sun 4th August 1969)

Notes: Noel Kelly was out with flu, replaced by John Hayes, making a rare First Grade appearance late in his career. Tony Ford was injured and replaced by Gary Weston, while Barry Bryant was against outstanding. Ken Stonestreet again gave a wealth of possession. The big news of the week was that Nev Hornery was granted a transfer even though he was back from an eight week suspension. The club had obviously had enough of the send-offs.

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