



# 1985 Round 20 Monday 22nd July Cricket Ground



## Western Suburbs 12

drew with

## Canberra 12

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

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

Ron GITEAU (c)  
 Phil CAREY  
 Craig BELLAMY  
 Chris KINNA  
 Brad WILLIAMS  
 Michael BLAKE  
 Ivan HENJAK  
 Dean LANCE  
 Brett ATKINS  
 Paul ELLIOTT  
 Grant ELLIS  
 Jay HOFFMAN  
 David GRANT  
 Sam BACKO  
 Bill WALKER  
 Kevin BEARDMORE

**Tries** Michael NEIL  
 John McARTHUR

Phil CAREY  
 Brett ATKINS

**Goals** Lee CROOKS (2)

Ron GITEAU (2)

### Match Description

**Canberra:** Full-back: R Giteau (c); three-quarters: P Carey, C Bellamy, C Kinna, B Williams; five-eighth: M Blake; half; I Henjak; forwards: D Lance, B Atkins, P Elliott, G Ellis, J Hoffman, D Grant

**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, C Clarke, G Dillon, L Crooks (c), A Fallah, T Leabeater **Referee: G Annesley (Rugby League Week 25th July 1985)**

Big Sam Backo, the hapless Canberra forward who cost his team a win over Western Suburbs at the SCG last night with a fumble late in the game, may not have been the toast of his team-mates, but he certainly was the pin-up of one TAB punter. Backo's unfortunate slip-up – he dropped the ball over his own line and Wests' half-back Michael Neil charged through to score a try which allowed Wests to snatch a thrilling 12-all draw – enabled one lucky investor to scoop the pool on FootyTab. The winning dividend of \$88,122 was the fourth highest ever for Pick-The-Score, a TAB official said last night. "We'll be trying to track the winner down tomorrow," he said. Dejected Canberra coach Don Furner last night refused to pin the blame for the loss of the two competition points on Backo, who only played the final 23 minutes of the match. "No-one feels worse than Sam," Furner said. "Things like that happen in football." Last night the Raiders seemed to be sailing smoothly toward a win when they led 12-6 with only three minutes to go. But Backo's failure to grab the ball cleanly when it was kicked through by Wests' centre Trevor Cogger ended the Raiders' hopes of victory. With the ball dribbling away from Backo's feet, Magpies' half Neil scampered through and dived on it for a try. English Test forward Lee Crooks did the rest, landing a simple conversion to level the score. Although both clubs considered their teams deserved to win for various reasons, a draw seemed a fitting result. Neither team produced enough stylish attack or tight defence to deserve to win the game. At times the Raiders made some inexcusable errors, while Wests lacked penetration in attack for the entire second half. Furner said the draw was just another frustrating result for the team. Adding to Furner's burden was a neck injury to classy hooker Jay Hoffman. Wests were not only delighted with their performance in front of a huge television audience, but jubilant at the prospect of playing Parramatta at Belmore Sports Ground on national TV on Saturday. **(Daily Telegraph 23rd July 1985)**

..... The teams were locked 6-6 at half-time. Only two fine individual efforts had enlivened the game to that point. Wests scored first after only nine minutes when winger John McArthur made a spectacular break to beat two defenders in a 30m dash to touch down. McArthur had handled earlier in the movement and made the defence look commonplace with his neat footwork. Former Manly second-rower Brett Atkins levelled the scores for Canberra with an equally impressive break 10 minutes later. Atkin's try was a great solo effort. He raced 50m and beat two Wests' players, then stepped around fullback Leo Epifania. Atkins was one of the few Canberra players to worry the defence. He made another fine run nine minutes before half-time but lacked support after beating the defence. **(Sydney Morning Herald 23rd July 1985)**

**Notes:** Wests' luck finally changed with a lucky last minute try to Michael Neil off a dropped ball. Leabeater (39), Fallah and Harrigan (35 tackles) each led a very hard-working forward pack. Craig Clarke and Geoff Dillon showed a strong developing second row partnership. In an unusual Monday night SCG game under lights, Leo Epifania defused bombs all night in a continuation of his excellent form. John McArthur's try was one of Wests' best of the season.