



1976 Round 20 Sunday 8th August Leichhardt Oval



Balmain 13

Allan McMAHON
Mike FISH
Dennis BENDALL
Stephen KNIGHT
Jeff SHIELD
Les MARA
Greg COX
Neil PRINGLE
Dennis TUTTY
Steve FREWIN
Dennis MANTEIT (c)
Arthur MOUNTIER
Steve LAVERS
Steve SMITH
Bill CLOUGHESY

def.

Western Suburbs 12

John DORAHY
Trevor SCARR
Ron GITEAU
Robbie PARKER
Russell MULLINS
Graeme 'OGRADY
Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)
Les BOYD
Steve BLYTH
Jim MURPHY
John DONNELLY
John PURCELL
Peter YOUNG
Shane DAY



Tries

Les MARA (2)
Allan McMAHON

Russell MULLINS
Ron GITEAU

Goals

Greg COX (2)

Ron GITEAU (3)

Match Description

Balmain: Full-back: A McMahon; three-quarters: M Fish, D Bendall, S Knight, J Shield; five-eighth: L Mara; half: G Cox; forwards: N Pringle, D Tutty, S Frewin, D Manteit (c), A Mountier, S Lavers

Western Suburbs: Full-back: J Dorahy; three-quarters: T Scarr, R Giteau, R Parker, R Mullins; five-eighth: G O'Grady; half: T Raudonikis (c); forwards: L Boyd, J Murphy, S Blyth, J Donnelly, J Purcell, P Young **Referee: G Hartley (Rugby League Week 14th August 1976)**

Balmain Rugby League team, held together by sticking plaster and courage at Leichhardt Oval yesterday to storm into semi-final contention. Battling Balmain, with a mixture of Tiger cubs and experienced players, were apparently on the way out of the semi-final struggle when they trailed 8-12 until late in the second half. That old Tiger spirit, which ever flows in the youngster's veins, refused to quit and Balmain surged back, pounding the defence. A kick ahead and a high leap by Balmain lock Neil Pringle to regather the ball set the stage for the Tigers' match-winning try and a double controversy. When Pringle regathered, referee Greg Hartley signalled another six tackles, but Wests doubted that one of their players touched the ball before Pringle did. But the controversy did not end there. Balmain stormed the line and hooker Arthur Mountier made one lunge that ended with him close to the line and unable to ground the ball. Wests' players claimed Mountier was held up over the line and there should have been a 25 drop-out and not a play-the-ball. The first pass from the play-the-ball went to five-eighth Les Mara, who went to his left and then cut back to the right before diving over with Les Boyd and John Donnelly tangled together behind him. Cox kicked the goal to put Balmain ahead 13-12 and into equal fifth spot on the premiership table with Wests plummeting to seventh. Balmain supporters lived on a knife-edge for the final 12 minutes as their players gallantly battled to retain the lead. There was more tension as the siren sounded when Wests kicked ahead. But Balmain won the race to the ball and victory. It was not a happy Wests' dressing room as the players and officials disputed the two controversial rulings by Hartley – in awarding six more tackles and that Mountier should play the ball. From the press stand, it appeared that Pringle took the ball before a Wests' players touched it. The pictorial and television evidence in the Mountier incident is not conclusive. Wests' captain Tom Raudonikis had no doubt – he said Mountier was a foot over the line and held up. The match, despite the controversy, was tough and hard, with fine tries and gallant recoveries by both teams as they desperately battled for their semi-final life. Balmain took the field four days after beating Canterbury-Bankstown by a point in an Amco Cup semi-final in Brisbane. Some players were heavily bandaged around the knees and hands – the club trainers used 15 rolls of adhesive tape. One of the walking wounded, grafting second-rower Dennis Tutty, limped off after 20 minutes with a burst blood vessel in his calf. At half-time captain Dennis Manteit also went off with a damaged knee. It was 6-6 at half-time and Balmain took the field for the match-deciding second half with an increased mixture of Tiger cubs..... Mountier won the match for Balmain. He gave Wests' hookers John Purcell and Shane Day a terrible hiding and finished with figures of 14-4. He crushed Purcell 10-2 and after 15 minutes of the second half, a desperate Wests sent Day on..... **(Sydney Morning Herald 9th August 1976)**

Notes: This controversial match cost Wests their semi-final chance. Arthur Mountier won the scrums 14-4, often laying horizontally without penalty. Wests' Secretary, after the match, called him a cheat but the real complaint was with the refereeing of Greg Hartley. Apart from ignoring the blatant scrum penalties, he made a critical ruling which led to Les Mara's winning second try. All the Wests' players reckoned Mountier was held up over the line and it should have been a 25-drop-out. Instead, Hartley ruled he was in the field of play and Mara scored from the next pass. Ron Giteau also narrowly missed penalty goal and field goal attempts in the last four minutes. This was simply a match that Wests should have won.