



1995 Round 3 Sunday 26th March Mt Smart



Auckland 46

def.

Western Suburbs 12

Phil BLAKE
Sean HOPPE
Dean BELL (c)
Tea ROPATI
Whetu TAEWA
Gene NGAMU
Greg ALEXANDER
Tony TUIMAVAVE
Tony TATUPU
Stephen KEARNEY
Hitro OKESENE
Duane MANN
Se'e SOLOMONA
Syd ERU
Martin MOANA
Manoa THOMPSON
Willie POCHING

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

Andrew LEEDS
Paul SMITH
Ken McGUINNESS
Brandon PEARSON
Darren WILLIS
Josh WHITE
Steve GEORGALLIS
Darren BURNS
Paul LANGMACK (c)
Glenn GRIEF
Brent STUART
Jim SERDARIS
Neil TIERNEY
Mark HORO
Grant TRINDALL
Damian DRISCOLL
Andrew WILLIS



Tries Phil BLAKE (4)
Tea ROPATI
Gene NGAMU
Stephen KEARNEY
Greg ALEXANDER

Ken McGUINNESS
Brandon PEARSON

Goals Gene NGAMU (7)

Andrew LEEDS (2)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: A Leeds; three-quarters: P Smith, K McGuinness, B Pearson, D Willis; five-eighth: J White; half: S Georgallis; forwards: D Burns, P Langmack (c), G Grief, B Stuart, J Serdaris, N Tierney

Auckland: Full-back: P Blake; three-quarters: S Hoppe, D Bell (c), T Ropati, W Taewa; five-eighth: G Ngamu; half: G Alexander; forwards: T Tumavave, T Tatupu, S Kearney, H Okesene, D Mann, S Solomona **Referee: D Manson (Daily Telegraph 27th March 1995)**

Warriors' fullback Phil Blake turned back the clock 12 years as Auckland opened their account in the Winfield Cup. The 30-year-old scored four tries to help the Warriors thrash Western Suburbs 46-12 at Ericsson Stadium yesterday, the new club's first win after losses to Brisbane and Illawarra. Blake was among a host of standout performers for the Warriors as he notched his seventh try in three matches, his best scoring start since the 1983 season when he was a half back at Manly "To have been part of this win and to get four tries is just terrific," said Blake. "We're off and running now. Losing is like winning, it can have a snowball effect, but we've got over that. We really needed this - for the players in the club and especially the fans." With tough matches against North Sydney and Manly to follow, the Warriors felt a loss yesterday could have led to an opening five game losing streak. But with the forwards, led superbly by Stephen Kearney, dominating their opponents, the skill of Greg Alexander, Gene Ngamu and Blake took over. Tea Ropati started the Auckland scoring with his stepping run which took him past fullback Andrew Leeds in the 6th minute. Auckland stormed to an 18-0 lead by the 29th minute but Wests replied with tries in the 31st and 33rd minutes. Blake played a part in both of those tries, too. He missed the tackle on Brandon Pearson to allow the centre to score the first, and then was unable to grab a bouncing ball near the touchline, enabling Ken McGuinness to score the second. "I thought we had blown a really attractive lead," said Auckland coach John Monie. "But we came back and the rugby league we play is good to watch and exciting. That is how the game should be played." Monie could rightly be proud of the style of football his team produced. With a pile of possession, they always looked to keep the ball alive and scored five second half tries after leading 18-12 at the break. A catalyst for a lot of their attacking work was replacement hooker Syd Eru, who had played a full game in reserve grade. Wests' coach Tommy Raudonikis described some of his side's performance as dreadful. "The travel didn't affect us - we just didn't dig in. Some of it was disgraceful," he said. **(Sydney Morning Herald 3rd April 1995)**

Notes: This was Auckland's first ever win but they were docked the two competition points after a blood rule replacement confusion and they used five replacements. Greg Alexander and Phil Blake were at their best, while ex-Wests Stephen Kearney was a tower of strength in the forwards. The centre combination of Pearson and McGuinness again played well but Tommy Raudonikis summed up the match in one word: "Disgraceful."