



1977 Round 4 Sunday 9th April Leichhardt Oval



Balmain 14

Allan McMAHON
Mike FISH
Dennis BENDALL
Trevor RYAN (c)
Warren BOLAND
Stephen KNIGHT
Greg COX
Neil PRINGLE
Dave EDWARDS
Greg BANDIERA
Brian LOCKWOOD
Noel MAYBURY
Steve LAVERS

def.

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

Western Suburbs 3

Wayne SMITH
Trevor SCARR
Ron GITEAU
Gavin MILLER
Russell MULLINS
Ken HEY
Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)
Neville SINCLAIR
Steve BLYTH
Mick LIUBINSKAS
John DONNELLY
Shane DAY
Peter YOUNG
Geoff SMITH
Ken BOURKE



Tries Dennis BENDALL
Allan McMAHON

Steve BLYTH

Goals Greg COX (4)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: W Smith; three-quarters: T Scarr, G Miller, R Giteau, R Mullins; five-eighth: K Hey; half: T Raudonikis (c); forwards: N Sinclair, M Liubinskas, S Blyth, J Donnelly, S day, P Young

Balmain: Full-back: A McMahon; three-quarters: M Fish, T Ryan (c), D Bendall, W Boland; five-eighth: S Knight; half: G Cox ; forwards: N Pringle, D Edwards, G Bandiera, B Lockwood, N Maybury, S Lavers **Referee: J Gocher (Rugby League Week 16th April 1977)**

Western Suburbs paid dearly when they were hammered 14-3 by Balmain at Leichhardt Oval yesterday. Test half-back and club skipper Tom Raudonikis suffered a badly injured shoulder and was taken to hospital for X-rays for a possible break. The injury could cost the tough Raudonikis his berth in the early representative matches which begin in five weeks. And the club's rugged front-rower Peter Young was sent off by referee John Gocher to face a charge of using a dangerous head-high tackle. Wests were obviously incensed at Gocher's refereeing but refused to make any public comment. "I have nothing to say about the referee," Keith Holman, Wests' coach, said. But Gocher caned Wests with several decisions which had players on the field protesting. Early in the second half with Balmain leading 9-nil but battling the strong wind, Wests split the defence and were set to score. But Gocher blew a penalty for off-side by Gavin Miller although Miller looked to be positioned correctly for the pass from Mick Liubinskas. The score would have changed the complexion of the game but instead, a minute later, Balmain full-back Allan McMahon had scored between the posts. Then, midway through the half, Wests players protested two penalties and the eventual dismissal of Young from the field. Later, as Raudonikis lay injured on the field, he was kicked in the side by a Balmain rival running past but the incident went un-noticed. Despite all this, Wests simply didn't deserve to win the game on their display, one of the poorest of the season. Fourteen times in the first half players dropped the ball as Balmain, aided by the wind, crept to a 9-0 lead. Twice Wests had the Balmain line at their mercy only to fumble. And while Wests were bad, the Balmain side didn't perform all that much better. Coach Ron Willey admitted after the match he was happy to take home the two premiership points of victory with Balmain's performance. "Wests are always hard for us to beat and cause plenty of trouble," Willey said. Despite failing to impress greatly, Balmain led from the outset and were never headed as they grafted their way to victory. A couple of goals by half-back Greg Cox put Balmain ahead 4-0 before Dennis Bendall exploded across the ground to score the first of his team's two tries. Bendall was one of Balmain's best with lock Neil Pringle, whose running made him a constant danger man to Wests. Both teams made it a forward battle and in the second half Wests refused to take advantage of the wind by kicking. And it must be a worry to Holman that he has a team of 13 first grade players who can't come up with a kicker – goal or line – between them. Wests' only score came 12 minutes from the end. **(Sunday Mirror 10th April 1977)**

Notes: This was a disastrous match for Wests. They played very poorly, dropping the ball 14 times in the first half alone, and didn't use a strong breeze in the second half. Then prop Peter Young was sent off for a deliberate, dangerous head-high tackle and Wests continued to be caned by referee John Gocher, who disallowed a certain Gavin Miller try which may have turned the match. Even more disastrously, Tom Raudonikis was taken off with a serious shoulder injury which turned out to be torn ligaments, an injury that would keep him out for six weeks.