



1980 Round 7 Sunday 11th May Kogarah Oval



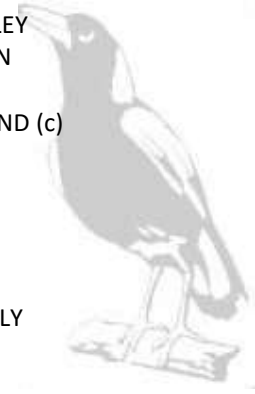
St George 22

Brian JOHNSON
 Mitch BRENNAN
 Graham QUINN
 Robert FINCH
 Shane McKELLAR
 Tony TRUDGETT
 Steve MORRIS
 Grahame BUCKLEY
 Graeme WYNN
 Rod REDDY
 Craig YOUNG (c)
 John DOWLING
 Robert STONE

def.

Western Suburbs 3

Wayne SMITH
 Wayne BUCKLEY
 Ted GOODWIN
 Ron GITEAU
 Warren BOLAND (c)
 Peter WALSH
 Alan NEIL
 Jim LEIS
 Paul MERLO
 Bob COOPER
 John DONNELLY
 Jack JEFFRIES
 Bruce GIBBS



Tries Graeme WYNN (2)
 Steve MORRIS
 Mitch BRENNAN

Paul MERLO

Goals Graeme WYNN (5)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: W Smith; three-quarters: W Buckley, E Goodwin, R Giteau, W Boland; five-eighth: P Walsh; half: A Neil; forwards: J Leis, P Merlo, R Cooper, J Donnelly, J Jeffries, B Gibbs

St George: Full-back: B Johnson; three-quarters: M Brennan, G Quinn, R Finch, S McKellar; five-eighth: T Trudgett; half: S Morris; forwards: G Buckley, G Wynn. R Reddy. C Young (c), J Dowling, R Stone **Referee: G Hartley (The Sun 12th May 1980)**

St George Rugby League team had 1980 premiers written all over their second-half display of power and speed which destroyed Western Suburbs 22-3 at Kogarah Oval yesterday. Lucky to trail only 2-3 at half-time, Saints unleashed a blistering second half that left Wests a badly-shaken and beaten team. Paul Merlo, the Wests' second-rower, was ordered off by the referee Greg Hartley 13 minutes from the end. Merlo was sent off on his third caution and will be charged with deliberately tackling a player not in possession of the ball. Both touch judges reported the incident from back play. "Absolutely the best side we have played," was the unstinting praise of Roy Masters, the Western Suburbs coach. "They are the premiers and they have the smell of the premiership again." Masters' assessment of Saints' performance was right. They were so good in the second half, using their power, speed and teamwork to score four tries in ramming on 20 points for a great win. Victory was earned in the first 20 minutes of the second half. Saints dominated possession and in this period were called on to make only four tackles. It was exactly 20 minutes into the second half before Wests won their first scrum of the half. But by then it was too late. Saints had taken a 9-3 lead, moved into top gear and left Wests struggling in their wake. "That 20 minutes killed us," Masters said. The match did not look at all secure for Saints in the first half. Wests scored a fine try when Bob Cooper, the tall second-rower, made a spirited run down the blind and Merlo backed up to plunge over. At least four times, Wests went so close to scoring again. Saints did not attack well in the first half. At times, they looked to be in slow motion, leaving the ball-carrier to go "one-out". Harry Bath, the St George coach, fixed that at half-time. He had the half-back Steve Morris trail behind the forwards, waiting for the break he knew would come. It took only five minutes. Craig Young, surely the best Rugby League prop in the world now, made a great break through the ruck, as he had in the first half. On the first occasion he was left stranded. Morris was there the next time and it was a try. Then Saints unleashed the full power of their play, ripping into the rucks, backing up, probing for the gaps. Graeme Wynn, Saints' 21-year-old second-rower, dominated the second half with wonderful running that left the Wests' defence stranded. He scored two tries, the first after Rod Reddy and Tony Trudgett did the lead-up work and the second after a magnificent 70-metre team effort just before full-time. The clash of the forwards was hectic and there were a couple of flare-ups, but none of those niggling running wars we have seen so often. Bath had the last word: "You can psyche a team up for 20 or 30 minutes but after that they are on their own." (Sydney Morning Herald 12th May 1980)

Notes: This was one of those games where the final score did not reflect the course of the match at all. Wests were completely dominant in the first half but only led 3-2 at half-time after a Merlo try, following a Bob Cooper blindside run. They bombed at least three other tries and it came back to bite them. They didn't have any possession for the first 20 minutes of the second half and never recovered. It also didn't help when Paul Merlo was sent off in the 68th minute. Three Wests' players, Donnelly, Gibbs and Cooper, all claimed they had been bitten..