



1976 Round 7 Sunday 2nd May Lidcombe Oval



Western Suburbs 17

def.

South Sydney 13

Wayne SMITH
Don ROGERS
Ron GITEAU
Robbie PARKER
Russell MULLINS
Graeme O'GRADY
Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)
Les BOYD
Geoff FOSTER
Steve BLYTH
John DONNELLY
John PURCELL
Peter YOUNG
Jim MURPHY

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

Greg PURCELL
Terry FAHEY
John BERNE
Steve LITTLE
Bernie LOWTHER
Paul SAIT
Brian SMITH
Trevor REARDON
Gary STEVENS (c)
Glen PORTER
Herbie TIMMS
George PIGGINS
Bill ANNABEL

Tries Geoff FOSTER (2)
 Graeme O'GRADY

George PIGGINS
Bernie LOWTHER
Terry FAHEY

Goals Ron GITEAU (4)

Greg PURCELL (2)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: W Smith; three-quarters: D Rogers, R Giteau, R Parker, R Mullins; five-eighth: G O'Grady; half: T Raudonikis (c); forwards: L Boyd, G Foster, S Blyth, J Donnelly, J Purcell, P Young

South Sydney: Full-back: G Purcell; three-quarters: B Lowther, J Berne, S Little, T Fahey; five-eighth: P Sait; half: B Smith; forwards: T Reardon, G Stevens (c), G Porter, H Timms, G Piggins, W Annabel **Referee: G Cook (Rugby League Week 8th May 1976)**

Another controversial finish to a tension-packed Rugby League match could not take any of the credit from Western Suburbs' dramatic win over South Sydney at Lidcombe Oval yesterday. In a magnificent, gutsy effort typical of the match, Wests scored a converted try four minutes from the end to win 17-13 after Souths had scored a minute earlier to lead 13-12. There were claims that lanky Western Suburbs' winger Russell Mullins was off-side in the kick-off after Souths' try. The replay on ATN Channel 7 last night was inconclusive. It was touch-and-go. Wests were trailing 8-2 after nine minutes of the second half but forged to a 12-8 lead 15 minutes from the end and seemed safe. Souths, who had tackled themselves almost to a stand-still, were brought to life with a bustling run by George Piggins who simply refused to be put down. Piggins gained 25 priceless metres, the ball moved around, Souths for once clung to it, and big winger Terry Fahey, in a typical strong run, went through two tacklers to score. The record crowd of 17,425 went into a frenzy when Souths' full-back Greg Purcell calmly piloted the ball between the posts for Souths to lead 13-12. There were four minutes left when Tommy Raudonikis placed the ball to be kicked to the left but, in a planned move, it went to Russell Mullins, on the right. Mullins went up, could not take it cleanly and knocked it back to a teammate and Wests made a final bid for victory. On the sixth tackle the ball swung wide to big John Donnelly, previously knocked out twice in heavy tackles. He drew Sait and in-passed to Geoff Foster who plunged over for his second try. After the match Donnelly said he could not remember making the pass. When centre Ron Giteau converted, the crowd's roar was probably heard miles away. Children, allowed to sit on the bike track just inside the fence, crowded close to the sidelines and, when the siren sounded, engulfed the ground. The match was one of the best, and certainly the most exciting, I have seen in a long time. What a wonderful effort Souths produced to keep Wests to three tries. At a conservative estimate, Wests had the ball for 60 minutes of the match and Souths were only able to get within Wests' quarter-line on five or six occasions. With that little terrier Tommy Raudonikis mercilessly driving himself and his team, Wests mounted nerve-tingling pressure with their drives up the middle and a half a dozen classic "up and unders." Souths' defence was unbelievable. Time and time again they dragged Wests' players down a metre or so from their line as the crowd's roar rose to an ear-splitting level. It seemed they could not last, but they kept going, tackling and tackling in a super display of big-hearted football. ... Wests would have been unlucky to lose this epic match. Three times Mullins crossed but each time it was "no try." The second effort deserved a try. Mullins had out-paced and out-manoevred the defence to dive over, but lost the ball. Everyone had their champion yesterday, but mine was Tommy Raudonikis. His non-stop effort was an inspiration. Second-rower Geoff Foster played well and must surely be a frontline candidate for Sydney Firsts, following his two splendid tries and his strong work.... **(Sydney Morning Herald 3rd May 1976)**

Notes: In the most thrilling match of the season, Wests were able to win in the last three minutes with a hotly disputed Russell Mullins try. Replays showed it was touch and go whether he was off-side. Before a ground record crowd of 17,425, Tom Raudonikis worked his forwards relentlessly, but they couldn't crack the stout Souths' defence. Geoff Foster continued his outstanding form, while John Donnelly was very strong up-front. Wests would have been unlucky to lose since Russell Mullins was three times over the line for three 'no tries'.