



1978 Round 7 Sunday 7th May Lidcombe Oval



Western Suburbs 13

def.

Manly-Warringah 7

John DORAHY
 Don MOSELEY
 Wayne SMITH
 Ron GITEAU
 Buddy CAIN
 Graeme O'GRADY
 Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)
 Les BOYD
 Geoff FOSTER
 Trevor REARDON
 John DONNELLY
 Shane DAY
 Bruce GIBBS
 Steve BLYTH

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

Graham EADIE
 Tom MOONEY
 Ray BRANIGHAN
 Russell GARTNER
 Stephen KNIGHT
 Alan THOMPSON
 John GIBBS
 Terry RANDALL (c)
 Ray HIGGS
 Bruce WALKER
 John HARVEY
 John GRAY
 Ian THOMSON
 Greg CROSS
 Simon BOOTH

Tries Bruce GIBBS

Ian THOMSON

Goals John DORAHY (5)

Graham EADIE (2)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: J Dorahy; three-quarters: D Moseley, R Giteau, W Smith, E Cain; five-eighth: G O'Grady; half: T Raudonikis (c); forwards: L Boyd, G Foster, T Reardon, J Donnelly, S Day, B Gibbs

Manly-Warringah: Full-back: G Eadie; three-quarters: T Mooney, R Branighan, R Gartner, S Knight; five-eighth: A Thompson; half: J Gibbs; forwards: T Randall (c), R Higgs, B Walker, J Harvey, J Gray, I Thomson **Referee: D Braybrook (Rugby League Week 13th May 1978)**

In a battle of the Rugby League heavyweights, Western Suburbs went 15 rounds with Manly-Warringah at Lidcombe Oval yesterday and staggered away with a 13-7 points decision. Muhammad Ali would have been delighted. The 10,931 spectators witnessed some of the best uppercuts and right hooks seen in Sydney since the "Old Barn" boxing stadium closed down. Feeling has obviously festered since the "ill-tempered "bout" in Melbourne in March when Manly gained a 12-5 points win against Wests. Just as obviously, someone forgot to read out the Marquis of Queensbury Rules yesterday. Consequently, when the first major exchange erupted after 30 seconds, it was a case of anything goes. Everyone, it seemed, wanted to be in the act. Could it have been the television cameras? Referee Dennis Braybrook had great trouble separating the clinches but finally restored order, cautioned Manly captain Terry Randall and Wests' prop John Donnelly and awarded a penalty to Manly. Not three minutes later it was on again. Braybrook, displaying extraordinary restraint, again cautioned Randall and Donnelly but this time awarded a penalty to Wests. In spite of such subtle forms of thuggery as treading on hands, elbowing eyes and kneeing ribs, Rugby League did manage to creep into the proceedings after a while. Wests, having gone into the match without five-eighth Peter Rowles, switched lock Graeme O'Grady to pivot and brought Les Boyd into the pack. O'Grady was outstanding in attack and defence, over-shadowing even his captain, Tom Raudonikis, who had slightly the better of his clash with Manly's John Gibbs. Referee Braybrook issued eight cautions – six to Wests players – and in the 58th minute sent off winger Steve Knight after a tackle on Wests' centre Wayne Smith. Knight will appear before the judiciary committee tonight charged by Braybrook with using a "dangerous head-high tackle." Wests showed no effects of their hard 16-10 Amco Cup loss to Eastern Suburbs on Wednesday night. Coach Roy Masters explained that, on the advice of former Canterbury-Bankstown coach Mal Clift, he let the players rest on Thursday night and trained only Friday night. Manly were disappointing, although second-rower Ray Higgs and prop Ian Thomson were pillars of strength against the big Wests' pack. The Seas Eagles showed plenty of spirit to fight back from 13-4 to score a try seven minutes from the end with only 12 men on the field. It might be coincidence, but Manly's only losses this year have been to Wests and Canterbury, who each played an Amco Cup match the previous Wednesday night. Is it also coincidence that Wests and Canterbury both have big, strong, robust packs with dominating front-rowers? "That is probably the hardest Rugby League match I've seen," Wests' coach Roy Masters said later. The fisticuffs were not confined to the pitch. One Manly supporter had some demolition work done on his nose as the crowd was leaving the ground. Mr Bob Abbott, chairman of the League's promotions committee, and a member of the League executive, said on seeing the match on television last night: "I think it is fairly obvious that the League will discuss these flare-ups at our executive meeting tomorrow night. These incidents don't present the game in the image that it ought to be shown." (Sydney Morning Herald 8th May 1978)

Notes: In what became known as the "Battle of Lidcombe" the Wests' forwards tore into Manly. John Donnelly set the scene with punches flying at Terry Randall in the first few minutes and a 'get square' by Randall, both of which led to all-in brawls. All-up, there were eight cautions and Stephen Knight was sent off for a head-high tackle on Wayne Smith. In the meantime, Wests, backing up from a mid-week Amco Cup loss to Easts, took control, with Graeme O'Grady having an outstanding match behind a winning pack. Don Moseley also had his best game so far for Wests.