1998 Round 8 Friday 1st May Olympic Park

Melbourne 54   def.   Western Suburbs 16

Melbourne	Position	Western Suburbs
Robbie ROSS	*Fullback*	Brett WARTON
Craig SMITH	*Wing*	Darren WILLIS
Paul BELL	*Centre*	Ken McGUINNESS
John CARLAW	*Centre*	Kevin McGUINNESS
Marcus BAI	*Wing*	Aseri LAING
Scott HILL	*Five-eighth*	Paul LANGMACK (c)
Brett KIMMORLEY	*Half*	Ron JONES
Tawera NIKAU	*Lock*	Scott COXON
Robbie KEARNS	*Second Row*	Damian KENNEDY
Ben ROARTY	*Second Row*	Jason KEOUGH
Rodney HOWE	*Front Row*	John SKANDALIS
Richard SWAIN	*Hooker*	Ciriaco MESCIA
Glenn LAZARUS (c)	*Front Row*	Nick EDWARDS
Tony MARTIN	*Replacement*	Dayle BONNER
Danny WILLIAMS	*Replacement*	Lincoln RAUDONIKIS
Paul MARQUET	*Replacement*	Ben MacDOUGALL
Russell BAWDEN	*Replacement*	Adrian RAINEY

	Melbourne	Western Suburbs
Tries	Robbie ROSS (2)	Kevin McGUINNESS
	Russell BAWDEN	Brett WARTON
	Robbie KEARNS	Damian KENNEDY
	Ben ROARTY	
	Scott HILL	
	Paul MARQUET	
	John CARLAW	
	Danny WILLIAMS	
Goals	Craig SMITH (9)	Brett WARTON (2)

Match Description
Melbourne: Full-back: R Ross; three-quarters: C Smith, P Bell, J Carlaw, M Bai; five-eighth: S Hill; half: B Kimmorley; forwards: T Nikau, R Kearns, B Roarty, R Howe, R Swain, G Lazarus (c),
Western Suburbs: Full-back: B Warton; three-quarters: D Willis, Ken McGuinness, Kevin McGuinness, A Laing; five-eighth: P Langmack (c); half: S Coxon, J Keough, D Kennedy, J Skandalis, C Mescia, N Edwards   **Referee: E Ward   (Big League 1st May 1998)**

Five weeks ago, Wests' captain Paul Langmack said he was unimpressed with the Melbourne Storm despite their 10-point victory at Campbelltown. Last night, Langmack, who had been troubled by a back injury, was a late inclusion for the Magpies and so was forced to eat his words at Olympic Park. And what a feast it was. If Langmack remained unconvinced about the Storm after last night's 54-16 thrashing in Melbourne, it could only be because he conceded that his own team was in deep trouble, perhaps the National Rugby League's worst-kept secret. The scoreline was something you might expect when a team that has won six of seven games this season meets the side that has won just once. Yet skepticism about the Storm's achievements remain, largely because those seven games were the first in the new franchise's history. In almost every aspect of last night's performance, Melbourne executed the sort of professional hit expected when competition leaders meet the cellar-dwellers. Physically, the Storm forwards, led by the inspirational Glenn Lazarus, manhandled the Wests' line that consistently buckled under pressure, while their ball handling and kicking game was far superior. … The third minute try to Magpie centre Kevin McGuinness was almost cruel because it created expectations of a tight context, hopes that lasted only seven minutes more before the Storm opened the floodgates. … Twice the Magpies flubbed the kickoff, while the epidemic of missed tackles and fumbled ball even spread to some of the Magpies few good players. Fullback Brett Wharton, one of West's hardest workers, ended with his head in his hands after failing to make a regulation gather behind the tryline, only to see Robbie Ross touch down. Completely outplayed for the last 35 minutes of the first half, Wests exerted a little more pressure in the second period and a try to Damian Kennedy in the opening minutes gave them a lifeline to respectability after they trailed 24-4 at the break. … "Some of their defence was kid stuff," Wests' coach Tommy Raudonikis said. … On Wests' form he has a lot more than the media to worry about. "At times, some of the blokes thought they (Storm players) had funnel-web spiders on them," Langmack said, referring to Wests' feeble tackling. Not a Storm player was bitten. **(Sydney Morning Herald 2nd May 1998)**

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Notes: Paul Langmack came back at five-eighth, still suffering from a back problem, but it made little difference, as the forwards couldn't handle the power of the Storm pack, led by Glenn Lazarus and Rodney Howe. The team played better in the second half but the long injury list was making it difficult to field a full first-grade team.