1972 Round 9 Saturday 13th May Cricket Ground

Western Suburbs 9   def.   St George 5

Tony FORD	*Fullback*	Graeme LANGLANDS (c)
Don ROGERS	*Wing*	Kevin MACFARLANE
Stephen KNIGHT	*Centre*	Ted GOODWIN
Wayne MERRY	*Centre*	Roy FERGUSON
Stephen SATTERLY	*Wing*	Geoff CARR
John HEYWARD	*Five-eighth*	Tony BRANSON
Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)	*Half*	Billy SMITH
John BAKER	*Lock*	Lindsay DRAKE
John ELFORD	*Second Row*	Barry BEATH
Barry BRYANT	*Second Row*	Peter FITZGERALD
John O'BRYAN	*Front Row*	Harry EDEN
Jim CROUCHER	*Hooker*	Col RASMUSSEN
John WALKER	*Front Row*	Brian NORTON

Tries	Wayne MERRY	Ted GOODWIN
Goals	Tony FORD (3)	Graeme LANGLANDS (1)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: A Ford; three-quarters: D Rogers, S Knight, W Merry, S Satterly; five-eighth: J Heyward; half: T Raudonikis (c); forwards: J Baker, B Bryant, J Elford, J O'Bryan, J Croucher, J Walker

St George: Full-back: G Langlands (c); three-quarters: K Macfarlane, Ted Goodwin, R Ferguson, G Carr; five-eighth: A Branson; half: W Smith; forwards: L Drake, B Beath, P Fitzgerald, B Norton, C Rasmussen, H Eden   **Referee: K Holman   (The Sun 13th May 1972)**

Western Suburbs yesterday recaptured glories of their Rugby League past with one of the game's best defensive displays in years. The young Wests' side won the hearts of a 20,000 Sydney Cricket Ground crowd when they upset competition leaders St George 9-5. It was League's greatest shock result of the 1972 season – and a win which earned Wests a standing ovation from SCG patrons. But Wests almost surrendered their win in a desperate final few seconds. After the bell, St George full-back Graeme Langlands soared high for a Billy Smith up-and-under positioned in just the right spot over Wests' line. Langlands got to the ball and dragged it to within a foot of the ground before a Wests' defender knocked it from his grasp. St George players protested keenly when referee Keith Holman disallowed Langlands a try. "I almost got it down, but not quite," Langlands said in the dressing-room later. It was a sensational ending to a sensational match. Langlands was quick to admit after the game that it would have been a sporting injustice if he had scored that final near miss and kicked the goal to win the match. "Wests deserved to win," he said. "We had all the ball, but they were a better side." After the game, Wests' players sat in the dressing-room puffing cigars to celebrate their win. They certainly had something to celebrate. Wests last victory at the Sydney Cricket Ground was back in 1963. In that year they defeated St George in two preliminary rounds and the semi-final – only to lose to the Saints 8-3 in the Grand Final. Wests won yesterday's game despite a staggering 22-6 scrum count against them. Their young hooker, Jim Croucher, was not up to the task of winning the ball away from his experienced rival, Col Rasmussen. As a result, Wests had to produce big-hearted defence. Under the guidance of coach Don Parish, watching nervously from the grandstand, they did just that. Indeed, they produced a defensive pattern which had a real touch of St George. It was a straight-line defence, and it drove St George to the edge of desperation. Wests strong defence and clever tactics, mapped out by coach Don Parish, won the game. Parish welcomed the strong wind whipping up the SCG and decided his team would make full use of it. He had powerful full-back Tony Ford driving the ball deep to the wings in the first half, forcing St George defenders to continually retreat. Ford kicked away from Langlands; usually to the left-winger Geoff Carr. Wests found Carr out of touch. Carr spilled several balls in the swirling, windy conditions. One such Ford kick found Carr too far forward in the ninth minute of play. The ball cleared Carr's outstretched hands and, before he could recover, Wests' centre Wayne Merry had raced past him and dived on it for a try. Ford's conversion, added to a goal in the second minute, put Wests ahead 7-0. After that it was stern, unrelenting defence from Wests all the way. …. At half-time, Wests toyed with the idea of replacing Croucher and bringing on experienced hooker Ken Stonestreet. Parish put it to his team and the players voted Croucher should stay on. … Driven on by little half-back Tom Raudonikis, Wests came through it magnificently. Some of the last-ditch tackling had to be seen to be believed. … Wests had 13 heroes, but leading the way was Raudonikis. Raudonikis mastered Billy Smith at the scrum-base. He was sharper and made many fine short breaks. Also making big impressions were centre Stephen Knight, second-rower John Elford, five-eighth John Heyward and full-back Tony Ford. … **(Sunday Telegraph 14th May 1972)**

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Notes: Wests pulled off the shock of the year by tackling St George into the Cricket Ground mud. Beaten 22-6 in the scrums, every player tackled like their lives depended on it, with Barry Bryant and John Elford leading a bustling pack. Tom Raudonikis played all over Billy Smith while the centres outpointed the St George pair which included ex-Wests player, Roy Ferguson. Although Merry's try was disputed, Wests thoroughly deserved this win. After the match, Tom Raudonikis and John O'Bryan were selected in City Firsts and Stephen Knight, John Elford and John Heyward in City Seconds; all warranted selections.