

Richard Casey

..... was one of a number of Cumberland rugby league players that came across to play with Wests in 1909 when the Cumberland Club folded.

Player Casey played six First Grade games with Cumberland and four First Grade games with Wests. The other players that came across to Wests from the Cumberland Club in 1909 included; Albert Abbott, Harold Bloomfield, Albert Halling, James Speirs, Claude Wallis and, Ted Bellamy.

When researching this player, it was evident that there was no F. Casey living in the District nor any F. Casey that would have been the right age to have played for Wests at this time.

It is likely that the player's correct initial for his forename was "R." as per the team lists that were recorded for the Cumberland Club in 1908. It is possible that the player had a nick name as many players did at that time and that nick name commenced with the letter "F.", which would explain the recording of his name as F. Casey in 1909.

The question then posed is, who was R. Casey?

There were two candidates that could be potentially considered to have played for Cumberland in 1908 and Wests in 1909. These were brothers, Richard and Robert William Casey who lived at Richmond Rd Flemington.

Both men were employed as stockmen or drovers and given the proximity of their residence, it is most likely that they were employed at the nearby abattoirs and saleyards. The Flemington abattoirs supplied the Sydney market with fresh meat and the saleyards saw a large throughput of livestock which required skilled men such as the Caseys' to move these animals around the site.

Available public records give no indication as to which of the two brothers played First Grade rugby league. However, an article in the Rugby League News from November 1964 indicates that it was "Dick" Richard Casey that was the First Grade rugby league player.

The annual reunion of past and present first grade footballers of Western Suburbs Rugby League Club will be held on Monday, December 7.

Any player who has appeared for Wests in a first grade game is invited to attend. In addition, former first grade representatives from other clubs will be invited. The players on this occasion are to be the guests of the Board of Directors of Western Suburbs Leagues Club.

Two real oldtimers certain to grace the gathering will be Dick Casey (Cumberland 1907 and Wests 1908 teams) and Jim Stack, first captain of Wests in 1908.

Rugby League News November 1964

To confirm the information in the Rugby League News, an assessment has been made given the ages of the brothers and the likelihood of them being at the right age to have played in the teams identified in the playing profile outlined above. Richard Casey was born in 1886 and his younger brother Robert William Casey was born in 1890.

The earliest recording of a player with the name of Casey in the district occurred in the team list for St. Anne's Homebush Rugby Union team in 1903, 1904, 1905 and 1906. In this team, at various times, were Claude Mc Fayden, Stan Abbott, and the Hearne brothers. Player Casey, Claude McFayden, and Stan Abbott went on to play with the Parramatta Rugby Union 2nd Grade team in 1907.

St Anne's Rugby Union team was playing in a "B" Grade competition and there was an upper age limit for players in this competition unless there was a special dispensation, such as occurred with one of the Hearne brothers.

Both Claude McFayden and Stan Abbott were born in 1887 and were of similar age to Richard Casey b. 1886. Richard Casey would have been 17 years old when he first played with St Anne's, while Robert Casey would have been only 13 years of age in 1903. It is therefore unlikely that Robert Casey was the player appearing in the St Anne's team lists.

Likewise, Robert Casey would have been 17 years old if he played with the Parramatta Rugby Union 2nd Grade team in 1907 and 18 years old when he made his First Grade rugby league debut with Cumberland in 1908.

To further emphasise the point, Robert Casey would have been two years younger than any other player that made their First Grade debut with Wests in the years 1908 and 1909. The player Casey was a forward and it would have been an exceptional player to have been playing at the top level for so long at such an early age. All available information confirms that Wests player #30 was Richard Casey.

Richard Casey lived most of his life in the Sydney suburb of Flemington. He died at Parramatta North in August 1978 at the age of 92. He is buried in the Rookwood Catholic Cemetery, Section M2, Row 11, Plot 2603.