

## Dick Davis

..... clearly had talent as a fullback, but it was a tall order for him to play First Grade with Wests in the early 1930's. He first played rugby league with Wests in 1931, and while there was an opportunity for him to replace an injured Frank McMillan that year, he had to compete against Bill "Hoot" Ryan who ultimately went on to play for the NSW and Queensland State teams, and later in the season a very talented Clyde Cant who also made the transition from rugby union.

There were few records of Dick Davis playing in the 1930's, so it was necessary to build a profile on him to know more about his story. News reports confirmed that Dick Davis came across from rugby union and that he was a young player. Bill Ryan, who was another young player, and also played with Wests at the time, was born in 1911. Therefore it could be expected that Dick Davis would have been of a similar age. This was helpful in trying to resolve Dick Davis's true identity.

There was three men by the name of Richard Davis living in the Western Suburbs district between 1931 and 1933, however two of these were much older. The only person that fitted the profile of the Wests player was Richard Rowley Davis who lived in Llewellyn St Rhodes. Richard "Dick" Davis was born in December 1909, and was about 18 months older than Bill "Hoot" Ryan. Dick was 21 years old when he made his First Grade debut for Wests.

An article from the Arrow newspaper in January 1926 recorded Dick Davis taking a hat-trick on a cricket tour to Brisbane with the Berger (Paints) team. It noted that at the time he was playing in a Third Grade team and was the youngest member of the touring team. Dick would have just turned 16 years of age at the time. The Berger Paint factory was located at Rhodes in the suburb where Dick was living.

**Berger's had a happy time in Brisbane, and beat their Queensland agents, J. Campbell and Son, decisively, scoring 136 against 50 and 36. The wicket was far from good, which enabled T. L. Brett to shine. Ern Maxwell secured 11 wickets, and the tit-bit of the game was the hat-trick, performed by Dick Davis, one of the thirds, and the youngest member on the tour.**

Arrow 15 January 1926

The Rugby League News in 1931 noted; "among the new men in Reserve Grade is R. Davis, fullback, late of the rugby union, a very cool player." The Daily Telegraph newspaper also wrote a couple of articles about him in July 1931. It noted that; "young fullback, R. Davis gave his side much anxiety, but his showing was promising. He should develop with experience."

The Daily Telegraph also wrote under the heading "Worthy Colts", that; "both aspirants for First Grade fullback selection by Wests last night are worthy colts. W. Ryan, the former Junee and second row forward, is likely to spring several surprises before the season is over. R. Davis who held the fort against South Sydney, was formerly a rugby union fullback. He came over to the League game this year, and although he still carries union trade-marks, especially in kicking out on the full, he is rapidly catching up on the spirit of his new game. He will soon be running his backs into position."

Dick Davis played with Wests until 1933. That season he once more filled the First Grade full back position when Frank McMillan was on the 1933-34 Kangaroo tour. Dick immediately slotted in to the fullback role but in his second game that season, against University, he tore ligaments in his ankle which ended his season and most likely contributed to bringing his Grade football career to an end.

**DICK DAVIS**, who was generally expected to fill Frank McMillan's position, had the ligaments of his ankle badly torn in the match against University, and will probably not be able to take the field again this year. His absence, coupled with that of Frank Sponberg, made the task of beating Newtown a little too difficult.

RLN 5 August 1933

During his three years at Wests, Dick Davis played six First Grade, thirty Reserve Grade and three Third grade matches.

By 1935 Dick Davis was living at Annandale, but returned to Rhodes in 1937. He had a strong connection with the area and most likely worked at the Berger Paint factory located in that suburb. Later in his life, Dick Davis moved to the Central Coast of NSW, and according to records on [Ancestry.com.au](http://Ancestry.com.au), he died at Gosford, NSW in January 2000