

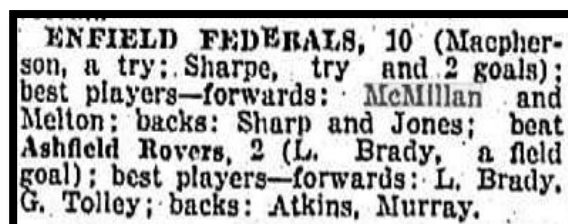
Donald McMillan

..... has had his surname recorded as McMillen on the odd occasion and in his first appearance in Rugby League News, he was recorded as W. McMillen. However the most consistent reporting of this player's name was R. McMillan. With that in mind a search was undertaken for people with the name of McMillan that lived in the Western Suburbs District. This search did not provide any direct link to an R McMillan of the right age living in the district circa 1931-32.

A broader search indicated that there was an extended McMillan family that had settled in the Burwood area in the 1800's and while descendants had moved around somewhat between then and the 1930's there was quite a number still living in Burwood and surrounding suburbs.

There was a record of a McMillan playing for Enfield Federals B Grade on 30 May 1931, the same year that R. McMillan was graded with Wests. Both R. McMillan and the McMillan that played for Enfield were forwards.

R. McMillan played fifteen Reserve Grade games for Wests in 1931, but did not play for Wests on 30 May as Club matches had been suspended for the City versus Country contest to be played on that day.



ENFIELD FEDERALS, 10 (Macpherson, a try; Sharpe, try and 2 goals); best players—forwards: McMillan and Melton; backs: Sharp and Jones; beat Ashfield Rovers, 2 (L. Brady, a field goal); best players—forwards: L. Brady, G. Tolley; backs: Atkins, Murray.

Match played 30 May 1931 - Referee 3 June 1931

It is noted that the three Enfield Federals players that went on to play with Wests in 1932, Lionel Frappell, Bill Knowles and John Cope were all A Grade players in 1931. It is therefore unlikely that R. McMillan was plucked out of Enfield Federals to play with Wests, but more likely that as he had a weekend free from Grade duties he turned out with his local Enfield Club to keep match fit. It may have been problematic from an age perspective as everything points to him being older than 21 when he played with the B Grade team, but for one appearance perhaps no one picked up on it at the time.

It is highly likely that R. McMillan lived at Enfield or a nearby suburb to have played with the local junior team, but no McMillan having a forename commencing with "R" and having the correct age profile lived in the Western Suburbs area. A further search found that the only person with the surname of McMillan that lived in the vicinity was Donald McMillan, a Bricklayer, who lived with his wife Aileen in Linthorne Avenue Enfield in 1930 and 1931. Donald was born in 1908 at Burwood, NSW, and married in 1929 also at Burwood.

Donald McMillan was from an extended family of Bricklayers and was a descendant of the McMillans that settled at Burwood in the 1800's. His father, brother, uncles and cousins were all engaged in this work. He had an uncle and cousin who were Bricklayers, also with the name of Donald and it may have been that he adopted a different forename such as 'Ronald' to distinguish himself among the others. Nothing has been found to confirm this but it is a possibility.

To add to the confusion, Donald McMillan was recorded living at his father's premises at Majors Bay Rd Concord in 1930, 1932 and 1934. It is unlikely that he resided there, but it may have been a base for the Bricklaying business as a number of the McMillans were in the near vicinity.

In 1931, 1932, 1934, Donald and Aileen McMillan were also recorded living at Thirroul on the NSW South Coast, but returned to the Western Suburbs in 1936 and 1937, living at Punchbowl Rd Belmore and then Maria St Enfield in those years. After the Second World War, the family returned to Thirroul on the NSW South Coast and later settled at Austinmer. It is quite probable that in the

1930's Donald McMillan moved between the suburb of Enfield and Thirroul on the South Coast as work ebbed and flowed.

Because this was such a large extended family with strong connections to the Burwood/Enfield area, a further search was undertaken of this family's tree to look at other possibilities. Donald McMillan had a first cousin by the name of Robert Owen McMillan who was born in 1907 at Burwood. This person was of interest due to his connection with the area and due to his age.

Robert Owen McMillan's family lived at Milton St Burwood up until the time of the First World War, but had moved to the inner Sydney suburb of Camperdown. In 1922 Robert's father dropped dead at Lidcombe Station. He was employed by the Railways Department at the Enfield Goods Yard, so this line of the family still had connection with the local area into the 1920's. Robert and Donald's grandmother died at Bethel Rest Home at Enfield in 1934, and of course Robert had uncles and a brother, Matthew, residing in the locality who he could have temporarily lived with.

The first public recording of Robert Owen McMillan was about him being arrested for vagrancy at Orange NSW. He was one of a group of six men including his brother Allan and a man by the name of Buttenshaw. The group was no doubt looking for work in the early days of the Great Depression, but this event takes him away from having a connection with the Western Suburbs and playing rugby league. The other thing to note is that the electoral rolls always indicated that Robert resided in the Balmain District. For these reasons Robert Owen McMillan has been excluded as the Wests player.

Another interesting connection arose during the search. Donald and Robert McMillan had another first cousin by the name of Leslie George de Carle who lived at Llewellyn St Rhodes. Les de Carle was Secretary of the Western Suburbs Junior Rugby League in 1942 and was a Referee in the Western Suburbs junior competition in 1941. He went on to become a graded Referee in the mid 1940's. Given all of the circumstances and with some caution, it is considered that Donald McMillan was the person that played for Wests in 1931 and 1932.

Donald McMillan played fifteen Reserve Grade games with Wests in 1931. He played in the Reserve Grade Final which was lost to St George and the following week was selected to represent Wests in the Inter-Club 440 Yards relay. However, he was replaced by Harold Rigby in the Final with Wests finishing in a credible second place. The relay events were a popular attraction as part of the Final series entertainment.

INTER-CLUB RELAY CHAMPIONSHIP			
440 YARDS			
Open to teams of four players, representing District Clubs, each player to run 110 yards. First prize, £8; second, £4; third, £2.			
The Final—Eastern Suburbs, Newtown, Western Suburbs and St. George.			
The following have been selected to represent their Clubs:—			
EASTERN SUBURBS:—		WESTERN SUBURBS:—	
M. Boyle	21	L. Midson	59
H. Byrne	24	F. Reece	35
R. Paillas	23	C. Morris	42
V. Webber	60	R. McMillan	32
NEWTOWN:—		ST. GEORGE:—	
J. Kessey	9	L. Brennan	46
F. Hockey	12	S. Lawes	29
R. Foster	55	D. Hey	22
W. Anderton	22	F. Gardiner	34
Reserves:		Reserves:	
P. Storch	21	H. Pierce	47
J. Boys	35	J. McCormack	13

Donald was about to start the season in Reserve Grade in 1932 however in round one, Bob Lindfield was injured and had to withdraw. Donald McMillan was called up for the match against Souths and performed well until just before half time when he broke his collar bone and had to leave the field. The match was quite physical and there was a number of injuries during the match. Wests were down 2-9 at half time but came back strong in the second half with a man down to pip Souths at the end.

EVERY one of the 15,555 spectators were held to the final bell ring by the closeness of the scores and the exciting situations following one another. Losing their hooker, R. McMillan, with a broken collarbone in the first half, when they led 9-2, the Westerners fought on to a sensational one-point victory—13-12.

Hoodoo On Hookers

R. Lindfield (Wests' hooker) did not play, owing to shoulder injury. R. McMillan (substitute), as stated, had his collarbone broken. Spillane then went to centre forward, but was injured, and taken off the field for a period. Wests eventually finished with a three pack against Souths' five, Green being brought out into the three-quarters.

Daily Telegraph 18 April 1932

Donald McMillan came back and played in a charity match with Wests First Grade team against Balmain on 14 May 1932, and then he played two more Reserve Grade games before ceasing to play in any further Grade teams. The playing time line fits quite comfortably with the residential situation of Donald McMillan. He ceased playing early in 1932 which coincides with a permanent move to Thirroul on the NSW South Coast.

Donald McMillan made the NSW South Coast his permanent home after the Second World war and died at Coledale NSW in May 1973. His memorial is at the Woronora Memorial Park, Sutherland, NSW, Flor Ct Rockery 3, 0061.