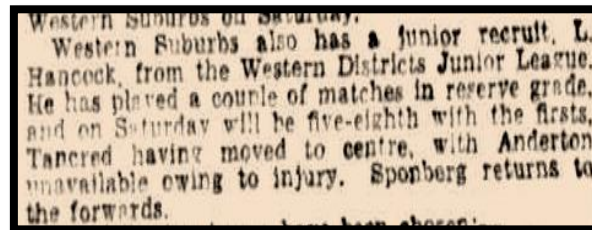


Les Handcock

..... made his only First Grade appearance in round twelve of the 1933 season. Stan Tancred had been playing five-eighth, but moved to the centres that day with Les taking his place. Wests had been struggling to win matches in 1933 and by round twelve the Club was starting to look towards the next season.

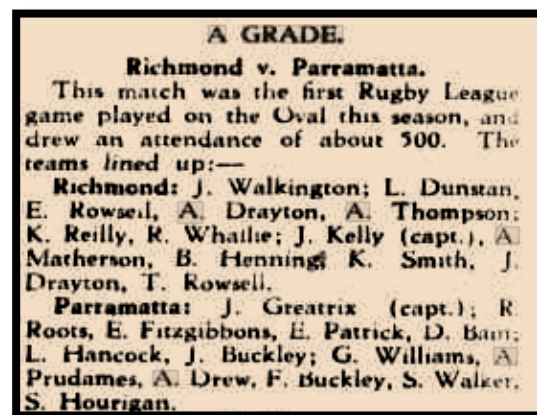


SMH 2 August 1933

Les had played a few lower grade games with Wests but there was not a lot known of his previous playing history.

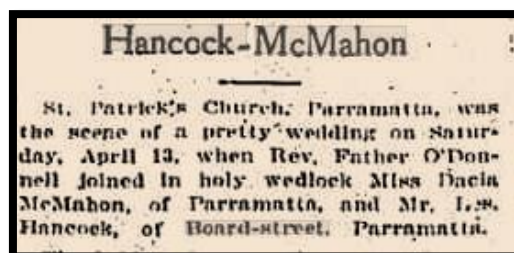
A search of local newspapers found that there was an L. Hancock playing for Parramatta United in 1934.

Given that most of the major centres along the western rail line had their own rugby league teams, and that players generally played in their own locality, it was highly likely that L. Handcock/Hancock lived at Parramatta.



Cumberland Argus 28 June 1934

A broader search of local newspapers produced a report from the Cumberland Argus on 25 April 1935 announcing the recent wedding of Mr Les Hancock of Board St Parramatta and Miss Dacia McMahon, also of Parramatta. A further search of Electoral Rolls from the early 1930's identified a Handcock family living in Broad Street Parramatta. The family had been living there since 1909.



Cumberland Argus 25 April 1935

NSW Births Deaths and Marriages recorded the marriage, with the grooms name being William L G Handcock. It was evident from this information that the surname of the Wests player was in fact Handcock. However it was also evident that the player's marriage registration forename was William (note: His birth registration forename was George), and the reference to L. Handcock was most likely a common name or at best a second name.

A family tree was found but there was some anomalies which eventually confirmed that Les Handcock had two birth registrations. The first was under the name of George W. Tuckwell, in 1906.

Tuckwell was his mother's maiden name and no father was recorded. His mother was married in 1909 to William James Handcock.

The second birth registration was in 1920 under the name of George W. Handcock, and this appeared to regularise his name with the Handcock surname. Apart from the use of the name Les, at the time of his marriage and as a common name, all subsequent official records for Les Handcock are under the name of William George Handcock, including his military record.

However, when he was playing with Wests in 1933, it appears that he was recorded as L. Handcock but there was some confusion with a player by the name of J. Hancock. Both of these names had the playing number 27 which would indicate that they were the same person. Geoff Ibbett, has researched the Member's list for 1933 and confirms that there was only an R Hancock and L. Handcock listed in 1933. R Hancock wore jersey number 40 in 1933.

In 1934, Ray Hancock took the field for Wests, wearing jersey number 11, however there was also a J. Hancock wearing jersey number 56. On some occasions these players were listed in the same team which confirms that Ray Hancock and J. Hancock were different players. Given the recording of J. Hancock in 1933 it was most likely that J. Hancock was in fact Les Handcock, at least in 1933.

A search was undertaken in Trove to determine whether Les Handcock was recorded elsewhere. This search revealed that Les Handcock played with Parramatta United A Grade on four occasions in 1934. The last of these appearances was on 30 June. The following week, on 7 July 1934, J. Hancock made his first of five appearances for Wests that year. Both R. Hancock and J. Hancock appear in the West's members list for 1934.

While there is some speculation that J Hancock was in fact Les Handcock in 1934, it is most likely that the player J. Hancock who appeared in 1934 was Jack Hancock, the younger brother of Ray Hancock. Jack Hancock was a junior representative player in the Southern Districts and it would have been logical for him to have been graded in 1934.

In 1935, there is a further recording of R. Hancock and J. Hancock, but interestingly these players were attributed with the same playing number 57, which indicates that this was the one player and there had been a recording error. Ray Hancock had played in the trials but did not play until later in the season, being listed in the Third Grade team. From this information it is evident that Les Handcock did not play with Wests in 1935.

Les Handcock enlisted with the AIF in April 1942 for service in the Second World War. He was posted to the Australian General Transport Company and served in various location within Australia before embarking for New Guinea in January 1944, and later on to Bougainville. Les suffered from a dermatological condition due to the tropical environment and was evacuated back to Australia in January 1945.



Les Handcock 1942

Les Handcock was living at Kings Cross, an inner Sydney suburb when he returned from the war. He died at Randwick, NSW in August 1982.