

Carl Ross

..... had the benefit of the tutelage of Eric Tweedale, the former Australian Rugby Union Test player as Coach at Parramatta. Eric retired from playing in 1957 but maintained an interest in the Parramatta Club at which he had a long association.

Interestingly, Eric Tweedale appears to have played Third Grade with Wests in 1941, before he embarked on his illustrious rugby union career.

E-TWEEDALE, the forward from Parramatta Union Club, is destined to go further than 3rd Grade, once he becomes accustomed to the League rules.

RLN 19 April 1941

For Carl, rugby league beckoned and as a twenty-year-old Lidcombe lad he naturally aligned with Wests, following his father who was a player and the foundation Secretary of the Lidcombe Rugby League Club in 1924 and who had a distinguished career in junior rugby league administration. Carl's uncle, Thomas "Pony" Redmond (Wests 1926) was also a Lidcombe player in the mid 1920's and early 1930's. Carl came across to play rugby league with Wests in 1960 and played ten Reserve Grade and nine Third Grade games that season.



Arthur J Ross (left) Secretary Southern Districts Rugby League with R Potts (President) and F Thorne (Captain) of the winning President's Cup team of 1934

Wests were going through a golden era and battled with St George for premiership honours over several seasons. Between 1958 and 1963 Wests were runners-up on four occasions, and Preliminary Finalists in the other two years. Wests were brim full of great players and unfortunately for Carl, who was a half-back, he was competing at a time when Wests had two of the all-time great half-backs in Keith Holman and Arthur Summons, and a Club stalwart in Don Malone. In 1960 Keith Holman held the mantle, missing only one match all season, with Don Malone filling in on the game that Holman missed.

It was a similar story for Carl in 1961. He played five Reserve Grade and ten Third Grade games that season. It was also the year that saw the emergence of Arthur Summons in the half-back position. He shared duties with Keith Holman and once again Don Malone filled in on the odd occasion.

Keith Holman retired in 1962, but Carl's road to First Grade was no easier. Arthur Summons became the Australian Test captain and Don Malone was still playing well. However, 1962 was a Test year and Arthur Summons had representative duties mid-year which enabled Carl to take up his opportunity to play First Grade. Carl made his First Grade debut in round eight against South Sydney.

Western Suburbs

Previous Game: Round 7 vs. Canterbury
Next Game: Round 9 vs. St George
Out: Don Parish (fullback), Arthur Summons (halfback), Kel O'Shea (second row)
In: Noel Trevena (fullback), Carl Ross (halfback), John Hayes (second row)

Round 8 - 1962 Season

Carl was not originally selected in the team but was one of three changes which included Noel Trevena and John Hayes coming into the side to replace Summons, Don Parish and Kel O'Shea. Arthur Summons was back in the team for round nine as Wests took on archrivals St George, but in round ten Carl was selected to take on North Sydney.

48 minutes each way. Time on for inquiries.
 COPYRIGHT SYDNEY CRICKET GROUND
 Saturday, June 23, 1962 — 3 p.m.

FIRST GRADE:	
WESTS	NORTHS
(Black and White) Coach: JACK FITZGERALD	(Red and Black) Coach: BOB SULLIVAN
1—Don PARISH	Full-backs: Brian CARLSON (C.)—1
2—Dave BARSLEY	Three-quarters: Denis BURKE—4
3—Fred NORDEN	Denis CUBIS—3
21—Gil MACDOUGALL	Paul CUNEO—16
5—Peter DIMOND	Eric SLADDEN—5
6—Don MALONE	Five-eighths: Dave HOLMAN—17
33—Carl ROSS	Halves: Ray LOVE—7
8—Kevin SMYTH	Forwards: John GUDGEON—8
4—Kel O'SHEA (C.)	John BROWN—9
9—John HAYES	John POLLARD—23
11—Dennis MEANEY	Ed MAY—10
12—Noel KELLY	Norm STRONG—13
26—Brian HENDERSON	Harold BLINKHORN—11

Round 10 - Wests v Norths at SCG 23 June 1962

Carl played a further First Grade game against Parramatta in round eleven before being replaced with the experienced Don Malone for two games pending Arthur Summons return to the top side. In addition to his three First Grade appearances in 1962, Carl played sixteen Reserve Grade games. 1963 was the last season that Carl Ross played with Wests. Don Malone became the preferred half-back that season with the occasional appearance by Arthur Summons in that position. During Carl's four seasons at Wests he played three First Grade, forty five Reserve Grade and twenty one Third Grade games. In another era, Carl would have been the first-choice half-back, but in the period that he played Wests were arguably the strongest, in terms of player talent, in their long history.

Carl joined the Guildford Rugby League Second Division Club in 1964. The NSWRL established a second division competition with the objective of elevating successful teams into the Sydney first division competition to help grow the game. This saw the Penrith and Cronulla-Sutherland Clubs being promoted to the top tier in 1967. Each second division team had feeder clubs from the local junior competition. In the case of Guildford, it drew playing strength from areas including Fairfield, Merrylands, Greystanes, and Lidcombe.

Carl at half-back was a key member of the Guildford team's success in reaching the final series of the competition. Carl played only the one season with Guildford but was recorded playing a match in early 1965 before retiring.

Guildford's star was its half back, Carl Ross. Keith Kermon, John Newman and Gordon Pellew also had good games. Carl Ross was named the E. L. Downes player of the month for first grade and John Flannagan won the reserve grade award.

The Biz 20 May 1964

Carl Ross, the half-back, is revelling in the tight play around the scrum base.

Broadcaster 4 August 1964

One to suffer was former English International Lewis Jones, playing with Wentworthville. He was well supported by Karl Ross at half back, who apart from having a good attacking game, gave good service from the scrum base. Jones had his hands full trying to keep Kevin Mowbray, Guildford five-eighth, under control. Mowbray had a very good game, making many breaks and gaining the initiative from Jones.

The Broadcaster 13 April 1965

While Carl hung up his boots in the mid 1960's, his passion for rugby league and the mighty Magpies did not diminish. During the 1980's he became active in the Western Suburbs rugby league players old boys' network which evolved into today's Pratten Park Magpies. Carl was there in the early days with Club stalwarts such as Bill Owens, John Thompson, and Ben Fisher to foster comradeship and the welfare of former on field playing mates.

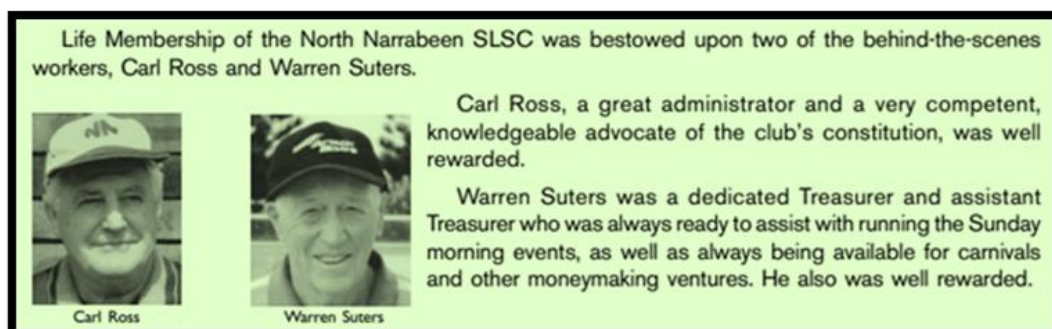
With the years passing by, the baton has now been handed over to some of the younger players to pick up from where the originals started, but Carl is as keen as ever to be at each reunion and get together where he can and judging by his exuberance will be there for many years to come.

By the 1970's Carl moved to the northern beaches area of Sydney and settled at Elanora Heights near Narrabeen. The northern beaches are well known for their surfing and beach lifestyle and Carl was soon involved with the surfing community at North Narrabeen.

Carl was not the first Wests player to have a connection with North Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Club. Roy Liston had a significant influence in promoting surf lifesaving at the North Narrabeen Club in the early 1920's and was subsequently made a Life Member. Also, Ken Sherwood and Tom Magnus were members in the late 1920's. Today there is quite a nest of former Magpies players that call the northern beaches home.

Carl received his Bronze Medallion at North Narrabeen in the 1971/72 season and maintained his involvement over the following years before taking on the Club Secretary position in the 1974/75 season. Being Club Secretary did not absolve members from lifesaving duties and on the evening of 9 April 1978, Carl and two other life savers from Narrabeen were involved in a difficult rescue at Warriewood, which was hampered by poor weather and light. The youngest of the three, Glen James, braved the surf with a torpedo buoy and manoeuvred three swimmers away from the rocks and surf line so they could eventually be picked up by a rescue craft. But for the action of the Narrabeen life savers, three lives could have been lost. Glen James received the Star of Courage and the Royal Humane Medal for Bravery.

Carl continued as Secretary until the end of the 1979/80 season but continued behind the scenes assisting in the organisation of events and acting as Master of Ceremonies. In 1988/89 the Club became an incorporated body, and a new position of Public Officer was created with Carl taking on that role in the 1992/93 season and retaining the position throughout the 1990's. In 2002/03 Carl Ross was awarded Life Membership of the North Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Club.



Source: The Beach Comes First

As of 2023 Carl Ross maintains an active interest in The North Narrabeen SLSC being one of his two great lifetime sporting loves.