

Jack Kingston

.... had an extensive career in Country rugby league as a player and coach. He represented Australia and NSW on many occasions, with the highlight being his selection on the 1928-29 Kangaroo Tour.

He scored eighteen tries on the Tour, the most tries by a forward. On his return to Australia he crossed for 4 tries in the Kangaroos' 42 - 19 win over 'The Rest'. Jack played Maher Cup football and continued to represent NSW until 1934.

In 1935, he decided to try his luck in Sydney with Wests. The Club had just taken out the 1934 premiership and Jack appeared to be a great recruit to replace some of the players that had retired or had to go across and play with Canterbury Bankstown due to the residential qualification rules in place at that time.

Jack played three of the first four games of the 1935 season, all in First Grade, but the critics were questioning his form and suggesting that he could be dropped to Reserve Grade. It is unclear whether Jack had in fact lost form or was not playing to his usual standard as he had desires to move back to Country football where he would be paid well for his services. There were rumours at the time the central west Parkes Rugby League Club was making overtures to Jack, but it would be necessary for him to orchestrate a release from Wests.

Round five of the competition was a bye for Wests, and it was also the opportunity for Jack to announce that he had signed to play with Werris Creek on the northern tablelands. Wests were clearly unhappy as they had established a rule that they would not grant a release to players once they had been graded at the start of the season.



Labor Daily 13 May 1935



Easts v Wests May 1935 - Truth 5 May 1935



East v Wests 1935 – Jack Kingston (far left), grasps Viv Thicknesse with Jack Beaton (No. 12) receiving the ball

Jack protested against Wests refusal to release him and so the matter went before the General Committee of the NSW Rugby League for a determination. Wests was adamant about their position but did not have the support of the majority of the Committee. Jack was granted a release and was free to play for Werris Creek. The Maitland Mercury provided a summary of the issues considered.

PLAYER PROTESTS

The case of J. Kingston was discussed at length by the general committee of the New South Wales Rugby League last night.

In previous seasons Kingston had played in the southern districts of the State, but this year he went to Sydney and played competition matches with Western Suburbs. Then he secured a position at Werris Creek, but Western Suburbs refused him a clearance, that club having a rule that no player who had been graded after trial matches would be given a clearance.

Kingston, in a letter to the League, protested against the Western Suburbs Club's action. He stated that he had been put off the work on which he had been engaged when a resident of the western suburbs, and that, before going to the country, he had consulted Western Suburbs selectors, who had advised him to accept a position in the country rather than stay and be dropped to reserve grade. It would be impossible for him to stay in Sydney, he added, as football provided his livelihood.

The Werris Creek Club also wrote protesting against the Western Suburbs action, and pointing out that Kingston had been engaged at Werris Creek as a coach with a retainer of £6 a week, plus board and residence. The club was compelled to pay the amount, but was denied Kingston's services.

Mr. F. Benning (University) moved that the clearance be granted, and said he would move similarly in any other case that came up under the Western Suburbs Club's rule. Football was Kingston's living, and he was entitled to sell his wares. Clubs had had trouble with the player, but if he was not good enough to play first grade in Sydney it was a "dog in the manager" attitude not to allow him a clearance.

The Western Suburbs delegate, Mr. J. White, pointed out that before the last trial players were warned that if graded they would not be given clearances.

Mr. F. Dolanoy (Referees' Association), who inquired whether Kingston had already taken part in matches at Werris Creek, moved that the player be given a clearance provided he had not played in cup or competition matches.

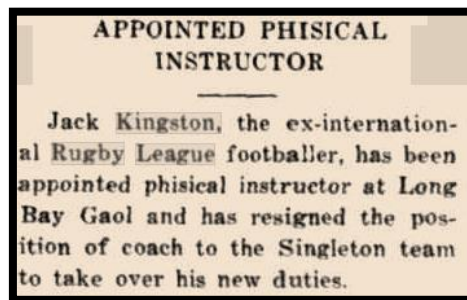
This was carried by a large majority.

Jack's argument was that he came to Sydney early in 1935, had employment but had since been put out of work. The context was that this was at the time of the Great Depression when work was difficult to find and unemployment was very high. For most rugby league players in Sydney there was minimal recompense for playing the game.

Players, however, could make a reasonable living by going to Country centres and taking up player/coach positions. There was no doubt some sympathy for Jack Kingston, and therefore the majority of the Committee members supported his appeal.

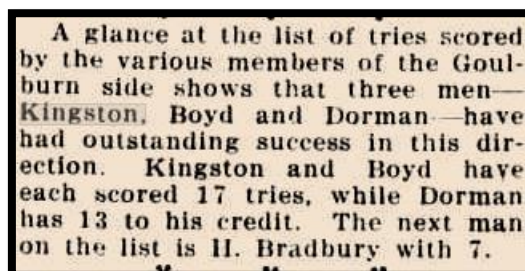
Over the years it became evident that Jack was also opportunistic. At various times he was either contracted or made commitments to Clubs at Wellington, Dubbo, Armidale, and Singleton but moved on or did not arrive to meet these commitments. It appeared that when a better offer came up Jack was ready to accept that and disregard previous arrangements.

Nevertheless Jack Kingston was in great demand and after two seasons with Werris Creek he also had a season with the Singleton, Quirindi, and Goulburn Clubs, finally retiring in 1939. During his year with Singleton Jack resigned his coaching position and took up a role as Physical Instructor at Long Bay Gaol in Sydney. This didn't last very long and he soon found his way back to Singleton



Burrowa News 25 June 1937

Jack Kingston was a talented and tough football player. In his last season playing with Goulburn he was not sitting back and directing traffic. He was the equal top try scorer for Goulburn with seventeen tries by the end of the year.



Goulburn Evening Penny Post 5 August 1938

Jack Kingston lived the later part of his life at Nambucca Heads on the NSW north coast, where he managed the Victoria Hotel. He retained his interest in rugby league and was reported as being the Chairman of Group 2 (Southern Division) in 1950.

Jack died at Nambucca Heads in January 1957 at the relatively young age of 49. He is buried at Nambucca Heads Cemetery, Row H, Plot 15.