1984 Round 1 Sunday 25th March Redfern Oval

South Sydney 20 def. Western Suburbs 4

Marty GURR	***Fullback***	John McARTHUR
Ross HARRINGTON	***Wing***	Steve BROUGHTON
Michael POBJIE	***Centre***	Wayne SMITH
Terry MURPHY	***Centre***	Gerald CELARC
Ziggy NISZCZOT (c)	***Wing***	Mick PINKERTON
Neil BAKER	***Five-eighth***	Greg COX (c)
George LONGBOTTOM	***Half***	Trevor COGGER
John KAMBAS	***Lock***	Mark HARRIGAN
Michael CARBERRY	***Second Row***	Allen GEELAN
Tony RAMPLING	***Second Row***	Craig MADSEN
David BOYLE	***Front Row***	John COVENEY
Mario FENECH	***Hooker***	Pat ENGLISH
Les DAVIDSON	***Front Row***	Garry WEBSTER
Dean RAMPLING	***Replacement***	John COGGER
	Replacement	Ian FREEMAN
	Replacement	Michael DUKE

Tries	Ziggy NISZCZOT Ross HARRINGTON	
Goals	Neil BAKER (6)	Greg COX (2)

Match Description
Western Suburbs: Full-back: J McArthur; three-quarters: S Broughton, W Smith, G Celarc, M Pinkerton five-eighth: G Cox (c); half: T Cogger; forwards: M Harrigan, A Geelan, C Madsen, J Coveney, P English, G Webster
South Sydney: Full-back: M Gurr; three-quarters: R Harrington, M Pobjie, T Murphy, Z Niszczot; five-eighth: N Baker; half: G Longbottom; forwards: J Kambas, M Carberry, T Rampling, D Boyle, M Fenech, L Davidson **Referee: J Gocher (The Daily Mirror 26th March 1984)**

The 'battering ram Rabbitohs" from South Sydney will shake the life out of their rival packs of forwards in the Sydney rugby league premiership after yesterday's 20-4 win over a fired-up Wests at Redfern Oval. Souths' coach Ron Willey has a pack of forwards who will revel in mixing it with anyone this season. "They're a tough bunch of lads – the only thing they're lacking is a touch of skill and we're working on it," Willey said. And it's look out for the" hit-man" from Dubbo, Les Davidson, who is already shaping as one of the real finds of the season. The Souths' pack, led by Davidson, Tony Rampling, David Boyle and Michael Carberry, inspired the rampaging Rabbits in a fiery, often explosive opening round clash with a Wests' team who came out with all guns blazing. With hooker Mario Fenech in the thick of things, the Rabbitohs pack drove hard into the Wests' boys and Gary Webster, Mark Harrigan and Craig Madsen were there to respond. Tempers flared as referee John Gocher dished out cautions like pies and sauce from the canteen in the opening 20 minutes. Webster, sitting on two cautions, found himself in the sin-bin for 10 minutes after a dangerous tackle on Boyle. The 20-year-old Davidson, signed last year from Dubbo West Side, revelled in the heavy going. The 90kg, 185cm prop is the latest in a long line of Souths' tough men from the "lay-'em to rest" at Redfern gang. Just like Gary Stevens, John O'Neill, Bob McCarthy and Johnny Sattler, and more recently Charlie Firth, young Davidson hit and hit hard in an eye-catching first grade debut. Davidson pulled off several crashing tackles, including one bone-rattler on Magpie second-rower Craig Madsen. Big Lurch O'Neill was on hand to give the young fellow plenty of encouragement. "He certainly lets 'em know he's around," said O'Neill, the ex-tough guy prop. "And you haven't seen the best of him yet – he can improve on what you saw today." But Davidson wasn't the only player to catch the eye. Souths' 19-year-old winger Ross Harrington scored a try that only Test men Eric Grothe and Terry Fahey could have matched when he crashed through two defenders with only centimetres of room to move to score Souths' first try. Earlier, he had four Magpies in the aisle as he crashed his way upfield like a runaway truck. The boy from La Perouse can tackle too and saved two desperate situations with the ball-and-all defence. Two players Wests' coach Ken Gentles had plenty to do with at Canterbury last year also showed out. Wests' centre Gerald Celarc, whom Gentles brought with him from last year's reserve grade Bulldogs, made a very impressive first grade debut, along with lock Mark Harrigan and fullback John McArthur. Celarc, 23, showed dash and a willingness in defence that will cause his rivals plenty of anxiety this season. But the man who tore the hearts of Wests yesterday was five-eighth Neil Baker, who kicked six goals from seven attempts, continually found touch with long, raking kicks and slotted into the Souths' backline very well. Baker too is an ex-Gentle coached player and he made it difficult for his old coach sitting on the sideline. .. **(Daily Mirror 26th March 1984)**

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Notes: *Wests fielded a completely revamped team, particularly in the forwards. Mark Harrigan, John Coveney, Pat English and Gerald Celarc came from Canterbury-Bankstown; Allen Geelan and Garry Webster from Newtown and the exciting John McArthur from the Central Coast. The final score did not reflect the game at all which featured very heavy forward clashes. Down 14-4 at half-time, they outplayed Souths in the second half. Gerald Celarc had a very impressive debut while Trevor Cogger was clearly Wests' best.*