



1985 Round 16 Sunday 23rd June Sports Ground



Western Suburbs 20

drew with

Eastern Suburbs 20

Leo EPIFANIA
 John McARTHUR
 Gerald CELARC
 Wayne WIGHAM
 Gary PEARCE
 Gary WARNECKE
 Michael NEIL
 Mark HARRIGAN
 Geoff DILLON
 Craig CLARKE
 Lee CROOKS (c)
 Alan FALLAH
 Garry WEBSTER
 Mark KEEHAN
 Steve MULLEN
 Tom ROBBINS
 Geoff SUTTON

Fullback
Wing
Centre
Centre
Wing
Five-eighth
Half
Lock
Second Row
Second Row
Front Row
Hooker
Front Row
Replacement
Replacement
Replacement
Replacement

Todd RILEY
 Scott BENNETT
 Glen LEGGETT
 Ron GIBBS
 Dean BELL
 Gary WURTH
 Laurie SPINA
 Jim HARVEY
 Hugh McGAHAN (c)
 Steve HARDY
 Lindsay JOHNSTON
 Ernie GARLAND
 Brad TESSMANN

Tries

Leo EPIFANIA
 Garry WEBSTER
 Gary WARNECKE

Laurie SPINA
 Glen LEGGETT
 Ron GIBBS

Goals

Lee CROOKS (3)
 Leo EPIFANIA (1)

Todd RILEY (4)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: L Epifania; three-quarters: J McArthur, W Wigham, G Celarc, G Pearce; five-eighth: G Warnecke; half: M Neil; forwards: M Harrigan, C Clarke, G Dillon, L Crooks (c), A Fallah, G Webster

Eastern Suburbs: Full-back: T Riley; three-quarters: S Bennett, G Leggett, R Gibbs, D Bell; five-eighth: G Wurth; half: L Spina; forwards: J Harvey, H McGahan (c), S Hardy, L Johnston, E Garland, B Tessmann **Referee: B Barnes (Rugby League Week 27th June 1985)**

Eastern Suburbs escaped the chopping block in their Rugby League match at the Sports Ground yesterday, thanks to a referee's ruling that left the Western Suburbs' camp frothing. Wests' copper-haired halfback, Michael Neil grounded the ball over the Easts' goal-line four minutes from full-time for what should have been the winning try. Wests' players were adamant he forced the ball correctly, the crowd seemed just as convinced and even Easts' players said afterwards it was a fair try. But referee Brian Barnes did not think so, leaving the full-time scores locked in a 20-20 draw. "It was affair try", said Wests' coach Ken Gentle grimly. "We won the game." The moment of crisis for Eastern Suburbs came when they were under siege on their goal-line. After a touchline run, Wests' five-eighth Gary Warnecke tossed the ball infield to Neil, who gathered the bounce and appeared to make a copybook touchdown. The decision that over-ruled the try was cruel luck for Wests, not only because it appeared to be a blatant error but because the Magpies had made all the running in the game and deserved to win. "They should have won by 10 or 15 points," volunteered Easts' coach Arthur Beetson, who found nothing to enthuse over in the Roosters' graceless performance. ... Western Suburbs, the great survivalists of Sydney Rugby League, came back from an early 6-2 deficit to lead 14-8 at half-time and run to an 18-12 advantage before Easts levelled at 18-18 and again at 20-20. If the Magpies are heading for extinction in the competition, they show no signs of resignation. They played with blithe spirit and heaps of enthusiasm, controlled the play territorially for some 70 per cent of the game and unleashed some passing movements of grand final quality. Even the loss of their English skipper, Lee Crooks, who was removed on a stretcher with a badly gashed shin early in the second half, failed to discourage them. Neil had an outstanding game, blemished only by some poorly measured tactical kicks. His partner, Warnecke, had a strong game against his old club and the centres, Gerard Celarc and Wayne Wigham, got through a lot of work. But it was the Wests' pack that did the Magpies proud. The forwards knitted together with some fine, close-quarter driving that had Easts in full retreat. Second-rowers Craig Clarke and Geoff Dillon turned in eye-catchers and lock Mark Harrigan headed the tackle count with 34 – 21 in the second half. Prop Gary Webster tirelessly supported the ball carrier and his try in the 35th minute from a barging run set Wests alight. **(Sydney Morning Herald 24th June 1985)**

Notes: This was simply a match Wests should have won. Their greatly improved form with a re-shuffled team was rewarded with a win when Michael Neil scored a try with four minutes to go but inexplicably, referee Barry Barnes disallowed it and even the Easts' players disagreed with the decision. Gary Pearce, Geoff Dillon (up from U23's), and Gary Warnecke all had very strong games. Warhorse Mark Harrigan also topped the tackle count with 34. Lee Crooks was again Wests' best until he was forced off in the 49th minute with a badly cut shin.