



1985 Round 17 Sunday 30th June Lidcombe Oval



Balmain 16

Ron RYAN
 John DAVIDSON
 Paul BEAVEN
 Garry SCHOFIELD
 Jamie DAVIDSON
 Gary BRIDGE (c)
 Scott GALE
 Kevin HARDWICK
 John OWENS
 David BROOKS
 Kerry HEMSLEY
 Neil WHITTAKER
 Paul CLARKE
 Michael MARKETO

def.

Western Suburbs 10

Leo EPIFANIA
 John McARTHUR
 Trevor COGGER
 Wayne WIGHAM
 Gerald CELARC
 Gary WARNECKE
 Michael NEIL
 Mark HARRIGAN
 Geoff DILLON
 Craig CLARKE
 Terry LEABEATER (c)
 Alan FALLAH
 Garry WEBSTER
 Greg DUVAL
 Ian SCHUBERT
 Troy McGREGOR



Tries Garry SCHOFIELD
 John DAVIDSON
 David BROOKS

Gerald CELARC
 Trevor COGGER

Goals Garry SCHOFIELD (2)

Geoff DILLON (1)

Match Description

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

Balmain: Full-back: R Ryan; three-quarters: J Davidson, P Beaven, G Schofield, J Davidson; five-eighth: G Bridge (c); half: S Gale; forwards: K Hardwick, J Owens, D Brooks, K Hemsley, N Whittaker, P Clarke **Referee: G McCallum (The Daily Mirror 1st July 1985)**

A flurry of fists cost Western Suburbs a draw in the tight 16-10 loss to a weakened Balmain side at Lidcombe Oval yesterday. With the scores locked at 10-all five minutes from the finish, Wests' replacement forward Ian Schubert traded a series of blows with Balmain winger John Davidson. Referee Greg McCallum ruled Schubert the aggressor on a touch judge's report, penalising Wests, and Balmain went onto the attack. Two play-the-balls later, the Tigers were in for a winning try, with second-rower David Brooks charging 20 metres in a super solo burst to snatch the game from the Magpies. "The Balmain player threw the first punch and the penalty should have gone our way," a disappointed Wests' coach Ken Gentle said later. "That penalty cost us dearly and had it gone our way, it could have been a different story." A draw would have been the fairest result in this close encounter, with the battling Magpies matching it with Balmain from start to finish. Balmain, without their six best players, did it tough against an enthusiastic Wests' side, spurred on by a good crowd of more than 6,000. But the Tigers came out of the game with another valuable two points to regain momentum after last Sunday's disastrous loss to Cronulla. Wests applied all the pressure early in the match, before Balmain came up with the opening try after half an hour. Smart second-rower John Owens burst through the defence and slipped a neat pass inside to slippery English import Gary Schofield, who scored after an effortless 30-metre burst. Wests struck back moments later, with winger Gerald Celarc scoring the try of the match after four players had handled inside Balmain's quarter. The Tigers went to 10-4 midway through the second half, with winger Davidson scoring after a break from five-eighth Gary Bridge. But Wests set the scene for a thrilling finish when they levelled the scores at 10-all, 11 minutes from full-time, with centre Trevor Cogger leaping high to snatch a bomb. The Magpies had their chances in the vital last 10 minutes, before Brooks burst through several exhausted tacklers for the telling try. "We were happy with the win in view of the circumstances," said Tigers' coach Frank Stanton, who was also displeased with referee McCallum. "When you lose your six best players, that has to affect the side, as it did with us today." Best player on the field was Balmain second-rower John Owens, making the most of the absence of the Tigers' stars on duty in New Zealand. Still only 23, Owens is in his sixth year with the Tigers but has had only a handful of first grade games to his credit in that time. Yesterday, he picked up his second award in the top grade in the past four matches and has proved an outstanding replacement for the Tigers. Wests sadly missed the generalship of English import Lee Crooks and missed several easy shots at goal but made plenty of headway through livewire halves Michael Neil and Gary Warnecke. "We did enough to win but things didn't go our way at vital stages," Magpie coach Ken Gentle lamented. **(Daily Mirror 1st July 1985)**

Notes: Most pundits agreed that a draw would have been a fair result but a continuation of the bad luck of recent games meant another loss. At 10-all with five minutes to go, Balmain were awarded a penalty after a fight in which a Balmain player threw the first punch. Balmain used the penalty to score a late winning try. Geoff Dillon, in his second First Grade game, was again outstanding. Trevor Cogger also came back into good form. Gary Webster, after a strong game, unfortunately tore an achilles tendon.