



1986 Round 22 Sunday 3rd August Leichhardt Oval



Western Suburbs 36

def.

Balmain 6

Rod PETHYBRIDGE
 Allen GEELAN
 Wilfred WILLIAMS
 Trevor COGGER
 Paul SHEAHAN
 Michael NEIL
 Brett CLARK
 Ian SCHUBERT (c)
 John ELIAS
 John BILBIJA
 Lee CROOKS
 Alan FALLAH
 Garry WEBSTER
 Gerry BYRON
 Leo EPIFANIA
 Craig CLARKE
 Greg FALKNER

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

Garry JACK
 Russel GARTNER
 Ross CONLON
 Garry SCHOFIELD
 Scott GALE
 Tony MYLER
 Ron RYAN
 Gary BRIDGE
 Bruce McGUIRE
 Paul SIRONEN
 Steve ROACH
 Ben ELIAS (c)
 Paul McCABE
 Michael MARKETO
 Jamie DAVIDSON
 Michael CAMPBELL

Tries

Rod PETHYBRIDGE (2)
 Allen GEELAN (2)
 Brett CLARK (2)
 Paul SHEAHAN

Garry SCHOFIELD

Goals

Ian SCHUBERT (4)

Ross CONLON (1)

Match Description

Western Suburbs: Full-back: R Pethybridge; three-quarters: A Geelan, T Cogger, W Williams, P Sheahan; five-eighth: M Neil; half: B Clark; forwards: I Schubert (c), J Elias, J Bilbija, L Crooks, A Fallah, G Webster

Balmain: Full-back: G Jack; three-quarters: R Gartner, R Conlon, G Schofield; S Gale five-eighth: T Myler; half: R Ryan; forwards: G Bridge, B McGuire, P Sironen, S Roach, B Elias (c), P McCabe **Referee: G O'Donnell (The Daily Mirror 4th August 1986)**

Balmain coach Frank Stanton forecast changes to his embattled side after yesterday's unexpected 36-6 loss to Western Suburbs at Leichhardt Oval. The loss dented Balmain's final five ambitions and Stanton was at a loss to explain his side's alarming drop in form. He stopped short of admitting that the loss of captain and Australian lock Wayne Pearce was the root of the problem. "If I knew what the problem was, I'd be able to fix it, but at the moment we're just a week-in-week-out proposition," Stanton said. Stanton admitted that Balmain's task of reaching the final five was that much more difficult after the defeat, one which was the culmination of a dismal week for the Tigers. Balmain's stand-in captain and hooker, Benny Elias, was similarly lost for an explanation for his side's reversal in form after the previous week's courageous win against Cronulla. "Wayne Pearce wasn't there last week, but that should have been a motivator for us," Elias said. While Balmain were expected to use Pearce's absence as motivation, Wests' coach Steve Ghosn had a better tool to inspire his players. "The one thing I asked of them during the week was to play the game of their careers to get off the bottom of the table," Ghosn said. Balmain, for a team desperately trying to cling to a final-five spot, lacked any sense of enthusiasm or commitment in a frustrating afternoon. That frustration was typified by their Test prop Steve Roach, who was sent to the sin-bin for 10 minutes in the second half by referee Giles O'Donnell for spitting on hooker Alan Fallah. Wests' fortunes were considerably better, with winger Allen Geelan, fullback Rod Pethybridge and halfback Brett Clark scoring two tries each. Winger Paul Sheahan supplied the other. Ghosn described the win as a marvellous team effort, although Clark, Pethybridge and English prop Lee Crooks were all outstanding. Pethybridge's strong running devastated the tackle-shy Tigers, while Clark's elusive running and kicking left them confounded. Crooks displayed an uncanny ability to set up supports with well-timed short passes on the edge of the rucks. Unfortunately for Wests, Crooks will play only another two games for the club before returning to England... Crooks and Clark were instrumental in five of Wests' seven tries. It would be too much to say that Balmain are lost without Pearce, a point which coach Frank Stanton made after the match, but they were forced to switch Bridge from halfback to lock and promote Ron Ryan to half to cover for his loss. **(Sydney Morning Herald 4th August 1986)**

Notes: In a major upset, Wests outplayed Balmain all over the park for the entire match. Brett Clark, back at half, was outstanding, often setting the backs in motion. Rod Pethybridge was an incisive runner and Trevor Cogger made many long breaks. Lee Crooks was also a tower of strength.