

## Pat Thomas

..... stepped up in 1964 and was the regular halfback in Reserve Grade. Don Malone was the first choice halfback that year and hardly missed a game, but when he did Pat Thomas capably filled that role in the top team. He had his first opportunity when he was brought into the team to replace Don Malone in the third place playoff for the pre-season Craven Mild Cup.

SOUTH SYDNEY V WESTERN SUBURBS					
28 - 4					
TEAMS					
Darrel CHAPMAN (c)	1	FB	1	Don PARISH	
Michael CLEARY	2	W	2	Ken BRAY	
Arthur BRANIGHAN	3	C	3	Bob McGUINNESS	
Kevin LONGBOTTOM	4	C	4	Gill MacDOUGALL	
Eric ROBINSON	5	W	5	Jim BROPHY	
Mick FALLA	6	FE	6	Roger BUTTENSCHAW	
Neville HANNAH	7	HB	7	Pat THOMAS	
Ron COOTE	17	L	8	John ARMSTRONG	
John SATTLER	8	2R	9	Doug PAGE	
Bill OWEN	10	2R	10	Denis CULPAN	
Barry HARRIS	11	FR	11	Denis MEANEY	
Fred ANDERSON	12	HK	12	Ken OWENS	
John WILLMOTT	20	FR	13	John ROCHESTER	
Jock CAMPBELL	21	B			
Bernie PURCELL		HC		Jack FITZGERALD	

Play-Off Third Place Craven Mild Cup 1964

Pat had his next opportunity and made his First Grade debut when he replaced Don Malone in round fourteen of the 1964 season. Wests met Souths at Pratten park and reversed the the result from earlier in the year, taking out the match 12-7.

The game day analysis on the Wests Archive web site notes that;

*This was tremendous win by Wests. Continuing injuries had devastated the team and this was a real make-shift group of players. Rob McGuinness went to full-back to replace Ken Bray, who had been concussed three matches in a row. Don Malone was a late withdrawal and Pat Thomas, who had been picked on the wing, went to five-eighth to make his debut. Jim Gibson also made his debut on the wing, while 19-yearold John Armstrong went into the centres and scored the thrilling match-winning try. The game marked the return of Kevin Smyth back from a serious leg injury and he played solidly.*

The Sunday Mirror on 26 July reported;

*Noel Kelly, Wests' Captain, played a rugged match and kept his team going when the chips were down. Kelly was cautioned twice by referee Jack Bradley. Kelly said afterwards he was impressed with the form of the two young players in the team – John Armstrong at centre and Pat Thomas at half. "We had a good talk before we took the field and they knew what was expected of them. They played well under pressure," Kelly said.*

Don Malone once again started the 1965 season as the preferred halfback in First Grade. He played all of the pre-season Cup games including the Final loss to St George. Don also played as the First Grade halfback for the first three rounds of the competition.

However in round four, Pat Thomas replaced Don Malone and Pat retained his position in the First Grade team for the remainder of the year. The highlight for Pat in 1965 was being part of Wests State Cup victory over Parramatta. Wests defeated the Eels 16-14 to take the trophy.

<p>NEW SOUTH WALES RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE</p> <p><b>FINAL</b> of <b>STATE CHAMPIONSHIP</b></p> <p><i>Sunday, 5th September 1965</i></p> <p><b>CUMBERLAND OVAL</b></p> <p>OFFICIAL PROGRAMME <b>6d.</b></p> <p>HAROLD R. MATTHEWS, Secretary.</p>	<p>40 Minutes each way. Time off for injuries. CUMBERLAND OVAL COPYRIGHT SUNDAY, SEPT. 5, 1965 — 3.00 p.m.</p> <p><b>State Championship Final:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>PARRAMATTA</b> (Blue and Gold) Coach: KEN THORNETT</p> <p>1—Ken THORNETT (C.) 2—Arch BROWN 3—Ivor LINGARD 5—Barry RUSHWORTH 4—Ken FOORD</p> <p>(Two to be omitted) Five-eighths: 22—Kerry BURKE 7—Bob BUGDEN 38—Ernie GILLON</p> <p>8—Ron LYNCH 9—Brian HAMBLY 10—Dick THORNETT 3—Ted HEINRICH 11—Vic COLLINS 12—Bill RAYNER 13—Lindsay ARMOUR (One to be omitted)</p> <p>Referee: C. PEARCE</p> </td> <td style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>WESTS</b> (Black and White) Coach: KEN KEARNEY</p> <p>Fullbacks: Dave BARSLEY— 1 Threequarters: Dick PICKETT— 2 Graham BEVAN— 3 Rob McGUINNESS— 4 Roy FERGUSON—14 Gil McDOUGALL—16 John ARMSTRONG— 5 Halves: Denis PITTARD— 6 Pat THOMAS— 7 Forwards: Jim CODY— 8 Peter DIMOND— 9 Ron COSTELLO—10 Denis MEANEY—11 Noel THORNTON—12 John HAYES—13 Barry BRYANT—22</p> <p>Touch Judges: A. McGilvray (Red), W. Devine (Blue)</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>PARRAMATTA</b> (Blue and Gold) Coach: KEN THORNETT</p> <p>1—Ken THORNETT (C.) 2—Arch BROWN 3—Ivor LINGARD 5—Barry RUSHWORTH 4—Ken FOORD</p> <p>(Two to be omitted) Five-eighths: 22—Kerry BURKE 7—Bob BUGDEN 38—Ernie GILLON</p> <p>8—Ron LYNCH 9—Brian HAMBLY 10—Dick THORNETT 3—Ted HEINRICH 11—Vic COLLINS 12—Bill RAYNER 13—Lindsay ARMOUR (One to be omitted)</p> <p>Referee: C. PEARCE</p>	<p><b>WESTS</b> (Black and White) Coach: KEN KEARNEY</p> <p>Fullbacks: Dave BARSLEY— 1 Threequarters: Dick PICKETT— 2 Graham BEVAN— 3 Rob McGUINNESS— 4 Roy FERGUSON—14 Gil McDOUGALL—16 John ARMSTRONG— 5 Halves: Denis PITTARD— 6 Pat THOMAS— 7 Forwards: Jim CODY— 8 Peter DIMOND— 9 Ron COSTELLO—10 Denis MEANEY—11 Noel THORNTON—12 John HAYES—13 Barry BRYANT—22</p> <p>Touch Judges: A. McGilvray (Red), W. Devine (Blue)</p>
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1965 State Cup Championship Final Wests v Parramatta

In 1966 Pat Thomas arguably reached the pinnacle of his rugby league career. He was the only player that year that played every First Grade game. The season included eighteen competition rounds, a play-off final and four pre-season Cup games. Wests finished equal fourth with Newtown on the competition ladder but was defeated in a play-off for the semi-final series.

Pat once again came out strongly in 1967. He played in the four pre-season Cup games and then was the first choice halfback for the first eight rounds of the competition. After a couple of losses, Pat was replaced by Ross Goodman and Pat spent the remainder of the season playing in Reserve Grade.

During his time at Wests, Pat Thomas played forty three First Grade, thirty two Reserve Grade, thirteen Third Grade, nine Pre-Season and five Sate Cup games. In all grades he scored twelve tries and kicked six goals for a tally of forty eight points.

<p><b>FIRST GRADE:</b> Saturday, May 13, 1967 — 3.00 p.m. PRATTEN PARK COPYRIGHT</p>	
<p><b>WESTS</b> (Black and White) Coach: NOEL KELLY</p> <p>1—Don PARISH 2—Peter DIMOND 3—Bob McGUINNESS (C) 4—Roy FERGUSON 5—Dave BARSLEY 6—Dennis PITTARD 7—Pat THOMAS 8—Jim CODY 9—Barry BRYANT 10—John ARMSTRONG 11—Doug WALKADEN 12—Ken STONESTREET 13—John HAYES</p>	<p><b>EASTS</b> (Red, White and Blue) Coach: JACK GIBSON</p> <p>Fullbacks: Cliff BOYD— 1 Threequarters: Graeme STEVENS— 2 Peter DICKENSON— 3 Ron SADDLER— 4 Bruce STEWART— 5 Five-eighths: Jim MATTHEWS (C)— 6 Halves: Kevin JUNEE— 7 Forwards: Barry REILLY— 8 Kevin ASHLEY— 9 Louis NEUMANN—10 Ron PHEENEY—11 Ken OWENS—12 Sid WALSH—13</p>

Pat's final First Grade game for Wests

Pat left Wests in 1968 and joined the neighbouring Canterbury Bankstown Club. He played two First grade games towards the end of the season. There is no further record of Pat Thomas playing First Grade rugby league after that season.

Pat clearly had an impact on his playing mates. He was one of the smallest players in the Sydney competition but proved more than capable of enduring in the toughest conditions.

An article in the Sydney Morning Herald from 1987 and reported again on May 7, 2005, conveys an interesting story about Pat Thomas and his views on the smaller men that play the game. The story in part is recorded as follows;

*John 'Chow' Hayes, a second-rower with Western Suburbs, remembers going to City Tatts for a training session in August 1966.*

*The Magpies were involved in a mid-week play-off with Newtown for fourth place. In those days, Clubs became serious about fitness only on the eve of semi-finals, and City Tatts boasted an array of training aids not found on Club premises – like weights, medicine balls and scales. 'Chow', then a policeman, grabbed Magpies halfback Pat Thomas and plonked him on the scales.*

*"I swear he was nine stone and eight pounds (60.7 kilograms)," Hayes said of the diminutive Thomas, a public servant in the Tax Department. "He pleaded with me not to tell anyone."*

*Thomas recalls the surprise weigh-in but disputes the weight. "I might have been a tad under 10 stone," he said. "Who are you going to believe, a copper or a tax bloke? I'll agree on 10 stone."*

*Hayes who now manages the City Origin and Australian teams, said; "The only way he'd make 10 stone is if he stood on a bench and jumped on the scales."*

*But Thomas who played five seasons for Wests (1963-67) and one with Canterbury (1968) remembers being monstered just once. "Bob Heffernan from Easts knocked my three front teeth out at Pratten Park," he recalled. "He was a big second-rower and a copper. My mother was going to kill him."*

*She'd been looking after my teeth for years and this big bloke knocks them out. But that was the only time anyone did me any damage. I had Noel Kelly and Jim Cody as my minders."*

*Thomas argues today's full-time training has toughened the halves, and the video referee has diminished the role of protectors.*

*"The little blokes are bigger now and they cop it better," he said. "But I don't think that there are as many toughies as there were then. There weren't as many cameras."*

*The definition of toughness changed with coach Jack Gibson, who redefined it in terms of the number of tackles made and time spent off the turf. "It ain't much use being big unless you can play big," was one of Gibson's aphorisms.*

Pat Thomas still lives in the northern beaches area of Sydney and has kept in touch with former team mates. He attends the annual reunions of Western Suburbs players.