

## Noel Booth

.... was a regular First Grade player with Newcastle Western suburbs in 1927 and 1928. A news item from the Newcastle Sun in August 1927 noted; "Booth was Wests outstanding player. He caught splendidly and kicked with good judgement. Though he is not a fast mover, he runs hard, and is a difficult man to stop."

A report in the Sydney Morning Herald in April 1929 that recorded clearances issued to players to enable them to join new Clubs, noted that a clearance had been granted to "W" Booth subject to a clearance being given by his former Club, Newcastle.

**CLEARANCES GRANTED.**  
J. Kelly was granted a clearance from Parkes to North Sydney Club; J. West, South Coast to North Sydney; W. Brogan to Western Suburbs, subject to receipt of clearance from Wyalong League; W. Booth to Western Suburbs, subject to clearance from Newcastle; J. Dempsey, Newcastle to St. George; and

A further news item in the Gundagai Independent also on April 1929, noted that "M" Booth (Newcastle) and W Brogan had not yet received their clearances.

**Other players who have not yet received their clearance are W. Brogan (Wyalong) and M. Booth (Newcastle). Both players desire to play with Western Suburbs.**

The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported on 16 April 1929 that; "Booth is required to obtain a clearance from Newcastle and provide an affidavit re his residential status in Sydney before he can play with Wests."

There was an apparent concern regarding the eligibility of Noel Booth to be able to play with Wests in 1929. Notwithstanding, the officials at the time must have eventually been satisfied of his bone fides as he was permitted to play with Wests.

It is known that Clarence Henry Noel Booth married Gertrude Boland at Marrickville in 1929 and the couple were living at Campsie in Wests territory in 1930. Therefore his residential status would have entitled him to play with Wests at that time.

Noel Booth made his First Grade debut with Wests in 1929. His first game in the top grade was in round 12 against University when he was a late replacement for Frank McMillan. McMillan was still unavailable the following week and Noel appeared in the program for Wests match against North Sydney.

NORTH SYDNEY OVAL—3.15 p.m. Saturday, July 27, 1929	
FIRST GRADE	
WESTERN SUBURBS v. NORTH SYDNEY	
<b>Western Suburbs</b> Colors—Black and White	<b>North Sydney</b> Colors—Red and Black
FULL-BACK: 21—N. Booth	FULL-BACK: 39—W. Cavanagh
THREE-QUARTERS: 2—A. Brady J. Craig (Capt.)—14 4—K. Sherwood T. Redmond—16	THREE-QUARTERS: 38—W. Hagny K. Woods—9 15—C. Blundell A. Miller—54 31—J. Clayton (One to be omitted)
HALVES: 8—J. Thompson G. Mason—5	HALVES: 8—J. Montgomery L. Carroll—14
FORWARDS: 18—F. Matterson W. Carpenter—17 30—F. Spillane N. Matterson—37 12—R. Lindfield C. Rhodes—28	FORWARDS: 3—C. McQuarrie E. Storrier—21 18—W. Humphries J. Costa—4 19—N. I. Reynolds J. Courtney—10
Referee—W. FRY.	Touch Judges—R. Leonard and F. Delaney.

Round 13 1929 Wests v North Sydney

Noel played a total of four First Grade and eight Reserve Grade games for Wests in 1929. Wests had many very good fullbacks during the “reign” of Frank McMillan but all had limited opportunities to play fullback while Frank was fit and healthy. Noel Booth was very much in this situation.

Wests made one of its country visits to the town of Lithgow in June 1929. An article in the Lithgow Mercury provided commentary on the Wests players that would play against the local Lithgow representative team and it noted that Noel Booth would have been Wests regular First Grade fullback had it not been for Frank McMillan’s exceptional form.

Newcomers to Lithgow are Booth, Brady, Hey, and Carpenter. The former would undoubtedly have been the regular full-back but for the exceptional form displayed this season by Frank McMillan, the State representative.

Lithgow Mercury 21 June 1929

However in 1929, Noel was also developing a boxing career. He fought under the name of Al Booth and was recorded winning a ten round event against Jack Halliday at Bankstown. Halliday was from the South Coast and Booth trained at Newtown.

**BANKSTOWN BOXING**  
At the Bankstown Stadium last night, Tommy McLaughlin won from Billy Tyson on a foul in the third round of a ten-round bout.  
In the other main ten-rounder, Al Booth secured the decision over Jack Halliday on points.

Labor Daily 25 May 1929

June 14. A 10-rounder between Al Booth (South Coast), 9.0, and Young Halliday (Newtown), 9.0, was featured by hard punches. Halliday received terrific punish-

The Sun 25 May 1929

No other record has been found of Noel Booth boxing in 1929. It appears that he was focussed on developing his rugby league career which he did until 1931. In 1930, Noel played another First Grade game and a further eight games in the lower grades.

In 1931, Noel played only four lower grade games with Wests. It appears that he was once again developing his boxing career. It was reported that Noel was the middleweight champion from the Bathurst district but no record has been found to confirm that assertion. By season's end he was a significant drawcard on the boxing circuit. In October he fought Port Kembla's Taggie Whitelaw but lost that bout.

Harry Critcher is in great trim for his bout with Tiger Perrin. Harry met Chris Halliday on Thursday night at Newtown. Taggie Whitelaw upheld the Port's name on Saturday last by defeating Al. Booth, the middleweight champion from the Bathurst district, and he is to appear again at Newtown in two week's time.

South Coast Times 16 October 1931

Noel then had a rematch with Taggie Whitelaw and came out the victor. The fight with Whitelaw raised his profile and created interest in the newspapers of the time. At the time Noel Booth was training at Newtown with Art Kennedy and was living nearby at Erskineville.

**A**L BOOTH looked a good prospect beating Taggie Whitelaw last Saturday. He is with Art Kennedy at Newtown.

Arrow 13 November 1931

**A**L BOOTH is a middleweight likely to be bothering the big guns early next year. He is a nephew of old-timer Harry Mansfield, who came down from Cessnock to see the boy beat Taggie Whitelaw last week.

Arrow 20 November 1931

It was also revealed that Noel was the nephew of old time, pre-world war one, fighter Kelly "Harry" Mansfield who at one time was the heavy weight champion of Tasmania. It was claimed that Mansfield had won 147 fights and was once a sparring partner for Les Darcy. Mansfield was actually registered at birth as Herbert Albert Mansfield. He was an older brother of Noel's mother, Agnes May Mansfield.

Mansfield had travelled down from Cessnock in the Hunter Valley to be in the corner of Noel Booth for the second Whitelaw fight. However Mansfield was also in Sydney to promote boxing in Cessnock, which had recently refurbished the Wentworth venue.

He was able to attract a number of young boxers including his nephew, Noel Booth to travel up to the coalfields. Noel's first fight at Cessnock was against George Reed. A news report in the Cessnock Eagle on 13 November 1931 recorded that "Booth is a noted rugby league footballer. He plays with Western Suburbs First Grade team and is a wonderful fullback."

Likewise there was a further comment in the Cessnock Eagle on 8 January 1932 extolling Booth's prowess as a rugby league fullback with Western Suburbs.

Al. Booth, the Sydney boxer, who won his fight in Sydney last Saturday night, has been matched to fight George Reed at the Wentworth the pay after next. Booth, who is a whirlwind fighter, is sure to become a big boom in Cessnock. Reed has a decision over Bert Dargin, the Sydney colored heavyweight. Booth is a noted Rugby League footballer. He plays with Western Suburbs first grade team, and is a wonderful full-back.

Cessnock Eagle 13 November 1931

### At Wentworth Stadium Next Pay.

At the Wentworth Stadium, next pay Saturday morning, Al. Booth, of Sydney, will fight Robbie Burns, of Cessnock. Kelly Mansfield has signed Booth up for four fights here.

Al. is regarded as one of the best two-handed fighters in the State. He

is a first-grade footballer, and plays with Western Suburbs. Booth is said to be without a peer as a full-back.

Burns has been keeping himself in good nick, and will strip in the pink of condition for his contest with Booth. The Sydney scrapper is an aggressive boxer, and as Burns also likes to mix it, a bout productive of fantastic fireworks is assured.

8 January 1932 Cessnock Eagle

Unfortunately for Noel Booth, he was beaten in round two by Robbie Burns at Cessnock in January 1932. His career as a boxer was never the same with recordings of the occasional fight between 1932 and 1935. He also moved up in weight divisions going from middleweight to light heavyweight.

The early 1930's was the peak of the Great Depression and many men were without work. Sportsmen were not immune to the unemployment queues, and the dire situation that many faced caused them to travel around the countryside in search of a job.

The 1932 season was the last that Noel Booth played with Wests. He only played two Reserve Grade and one Third Grade game that year. It was evident that he was looking for employment as he, Bill Brogan and nine other Grade players made application for an advertised player/coach position with the Wagga Wagga Rugby League Club.

The Wagga Wagga Rugby League, after considering its financial position decided not to appoint any of the applicants and instead concentrate on a local competition. In 1932 the effects of the Great Depression were being felt, and unlike many other Clubs during the 1930's Wagga Wagga took a responsible position and decided not to operate outside its means.

The news item in the Wagga Wagga Express from 26 March 1932, gave a good insight into the players that applied for the position, including their age, weight, and the remuneration they were wanting to take on the player/coach role at Wagga Wagga. Importantly it also gives some detail on Noel Booth. It indicated that Noel could play either in the forwards or backs, he was 12 stone in weight, and he was 24 years of age.

Wagga Rugby League decided at the Executive meeting on Tuesday night to get right away from the commercial aspect which has marked the game in the country for so many years.

Applications had been received from eleven players for the position of coach for the coming season, and salaries asked varied considerably.

N. Booth (Western Suburbs), forward or back, 24 years, 12.0, £5 and keep.

W. H. Brogan (Western Suburbs), forward, 31 years, 13.0 (£10 and position at £5 per week, with keep.

In April 1934, the Cowra Rugby League Club was searching for a Coach, and the President of the Club indicated that he had been in contact with former Wests player Booth, who expressed willingness to come to Cowra to coach the local team. Noel Booth would accept four pounds per week and was to make a formal application. However, there was no further report on this matter.

A member of the Newcastle team prior to going to Western Suburbs, where he stripped for four seasons, a footballer named Booth had been recommended by Mr. F. Cahill. A centre, who coached a junior team in Newtown last year, Booth has not played for a season, but carries high recommendations. It is a week desired by him to come to Cowra. The President said that he had been in touch with Booth on the phone and he expressed his willingness to come to Cowra and will make formal application.

Cowra Free Press 5 April 1934

During Noel's four seasons with Wests he played five First Grade, twenty one Reserve Grade and two Third Grade matches. Clarence Henry Noel Booth died on 2 June 1978 at Lewisham, NSW.