John Sheridan

..... quickly adapted to the game of rugby league and was part of the Yanco High School team that won the University Shield in 1970. The Shield success was a very good achievement for a relatively small country school, as it was competing against 146 other high schools for the coveted trophy.

 The spectacular performance of Yanco Agricultural High School in winning the University Shield against a record number of 147 teams.
It was again an all-Country final, Yanco beating Tamworth High School, 13-5.

Yanco defeated the favored Tamworth High School team, 13-5 to be crowned University Shield champions for 1970. Two players that received special mention from the Final were Yanco's Col Withers and John Sheridan, both who ended up at Wests in 1971.



Match Summary University Shield Final 1973 -RLN 22, 23 August 1970

John Sheridan played fourteen Reserve Grade and nine Third Grade games with Wests in 1971. In interviewing him recently he recalled that he was "Rookie of the Year" in 1971, and for his efforts he received \$100, a can of Berger Paint and a jacket with the Wests emblem.

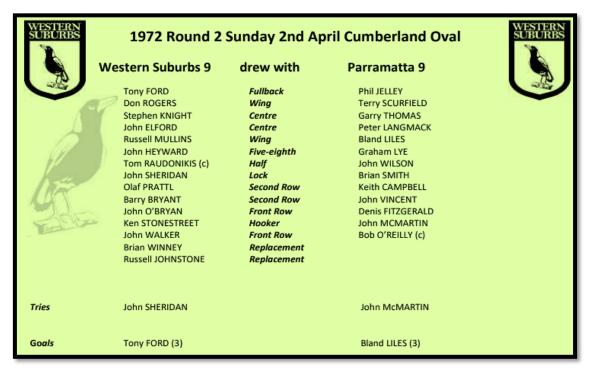
The following season was a break out year for John Sheridan. He started the year playing three out of the four Wills Cup games that West contested and was on the bench for the other game.

He then made his First Grade debut in round two of the competition against Parramatta at Cumberland Oval. The match ended in a 9-9 draw after Wests made a comeback from an early onslaught by Parramatta. Crucially, John scored Wests try which salvaged the game. The Sun newspaper on 3 April gave an account of the match and a summary from that report and notes from the game have been reproduced below.

"Wests did well to come back and it was mainly due to captain Tommy Raudonikis, whose inventive thinking put Wests on the attack time and time again. Wests seem likely to be without their young five eighth John Heywood for some time with shoulder and knee damage. Brian Winney, Heywood's replacement, was not far behind Raudonikis and young second-rower John Sheridan was responsible for a good deal of work in both defence and attack."

"This very willing contest was played in very muddy, greasy conditions. It was a tense match throughout, with the scores 7-all at halftime. Tom Raudonikis had a big game and was moved to five-eighth when John Heyward damaged his shoulder and ankle and was replaced by Brian Winney. John Sheridan was not in the original team but definitely played and scored a good try. Parramatta half, John Wilson, had a chance to win the match but dropped the greasy ball over the line."

Source: westsarchives.com.au



Team List and Scorers Round 2, 1970 Wests v Parramatta

John, still under 20 years of age, played a further five First Grade games in 1972 as well as seventeen Reserve Grade games. The experience gained would appear to have set him up for growth in his rugby league career. John started the 1973 season but due to the illness of his father he had to return to Hillston to take on farming duties. This turn of events ended his rugby league playing days in Sydney.

During his time at Wests, John played seven First Grade, forty Reserve Grade, nine Third Grade, three U/23's and six Pre Season Cup games.

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Sheridan	John	1971		14																
Sheridan	John	1971			9												3			9
Sheridan	John	1972	6												,		1			3
Sheridan	John	1972		17													1			3
Sheridan	John	1972					4													
Sheridan	John	1973	1																	
Sheridan	John	1973		9																
Sheridan	John	1973														3	1			3
Sheridan	John	1973					2													
			7	40	9	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	0	0	18

John moved back to Hillston but didn't lose his desire to play rugby league. He joined the Hillston Bluebirds in 1973 and played and coached throughout the 1970's and into the 1980's with only a brief break when he shot himself through the foot.

He had several premiership successes with Hillston. The last being a 27-19 win over Rankin Springs when he coached Hillston to the 1980 premiership.



1980 Group 17 Grand Final

John also coached the Group 17 Under 18's team during the 1980's. One of the players under his charge was a very young Laurie Daly. John noted that you could see something very special in Laurie at a very early age. Of course he went on and had some great achievements in rugby league.

About a decade ago John, along with his wife Jenny became involved in a community initiative called Waste Not, Want Not. It is an active enterprise, mostly running itself as farmers are keen to donate their left over produce rather than see it go to waste. Sometimes the food needs to be collected from the field but often farmers themselves arrange for produce to be sent direct to Foodbank.



Volunteers at Work - Waste Not Want Not

Most of those helping on the day were from the Hillston Men's Shed with Joy and Jenny, Steve, Principal of Hillston Central School, Lou Revelant, the Foodbank Produce Manager based at Griffith and John Sheridan, who is a member of the committee which oversees the running of WNWN in Hillston.

These days John is semi-retired from farming but keeps very much involved with community life in Hillston. He is quite proud of his grandson who was recently selected in the NSW Country rugby union team.