

Nelson Williams

..... first came to prominence when he played for the Ashfield Juniors Rugby League Club in 1912. He was eighteen years old and the team was playing in the Western Suburbs Junior Rugby League, C Grade competition. Ashfield had a very good season. Apart from Nelson Williams, the team also included future Wests player William Weigand.

In the Western Suburbs Junior League C Grade competition, Ashfield Juniors defeated Newtown Federal by 21 to nil. Tennant (2), Williams, Wells, and Weigand scored tries, and Burton kicked three goals. This makes Ashfield's record for the season 110 points to nil in five matches.

The Sun 16 June 1912

Ashfield Juniors v. Stanmore Cambridge (at Riverston, N.S.).—Former's team: Full-back, Nicholls; three-quarters, Weigand, Lucas, Fraser, Sheather; halves, Dunleavy and Williams; forwards, Burton, Freshwater, Pettit, Hinwood, Wells, Clarke; reserves, Barnes and Martin.

The Sun 28 June 1912

In the Western Suburbs Junior League competition, C Grade, Ashfield Juniors defeated Stanmore Westworths by 15 points to nil. For the winners tries were secured by Sheather, Pettit, and Dunleavy, while goals were kicked by Fraser (2) and Williams. Up to date Ashfield Juniors have scored 125 points to nil in six matches.

The Sun 30 June 1912

In the team list published in the Sun newspaper on 5 July 1912, Nelson Williams was referred to as "Buns" Williams. This is consistent with a news report in 1918 when he was referred to as "Bungey" Williams (of Western Suburbs).

Ashfield Juniors v. Burwood Shamrocks, at Roselale, 2 p.m.—Former's team: Full-back, C. Nicholls; three-quarters, M. Sheather, W. Fraser, W. Lucas, W. Weigand; halves, "Buns," Williams, E. Dunleavy; forwards, W. Clarke, H. Hinwood, A. Wells, L. Pettit, J. Wall, W. Burton. Reserves: Freshwater, Barnes, Martin.

The Sun 5 July 1912

Further, a team list which appeared in the Sun newspaper on 11 August 1912, referred to Nelson Williams as "Nelse" Williams.

In the Western Suburbs Junior League C Grade competition, Ashfield defeated Enfield Federal by 11 points to nil. E. Dunleavy, A. Wells, and G. Tennant scored tries, and Nelse Williams kicked a goal.

The Sun 11 August 1912

In the Western Suburbs Junior League competition, C Grade, Ashfield Juniors defeated Newtown Federals by 13 points to 4. For the winners E. Dunleavy, W. Fraser, N. Williams, and W. Wiegand scored tries; while Fraser (2) and Dunleavy kicked goals.

Sun 18 August 1912

Ashfield Juniors met Burwood Shamrocks in the final of the Western Suburbs C Grade competition. What is of interest is that Nelson Williams was recorded in his regular half back position and referred to as "Williams."

However there was also another N. Williams recorded in this team, playing in the second row. It is quite likely that this player was Nelson's older brother, Norman Williams. It was the only time during the 1912 season that there were two Williams playing in the team. Norman Williams was two years older than Nelson and at twenty years of age may have been too old to have played in this team.

Ashfield Juniors v. Burwood Shamrock (final Western Suburbs Junior League C Grade, Pratten Park, 2 p.m.).
Former's team: Full-back, C. Nicholls; three-quarters, E. Dunleavy, W. Weigand, W. Fraser, A. Feltham; five-eighth, G. Tennant; half, Williams; forwards, W. Clarke, N. Williams, A. Wells, W. Lucas, J. Wall, L. Pettit; reserves, backs F. Sheather, H. Barnes, forwards A. Hinwood, A. Freshwater.

The Sun 30 August 1912

The other player of interest in this team is the lock forward, W. Clark(e). In December 1912, it appeared that the Ashfield players were celebrating their successful season at a football "smoke" concert held at the Ashfield Town Hall.

The Evening News newspaper reported that the beer had been flowing so freely early in the evening that the Police were called to clear the premises. However Nelson Williams, Norman Williams and the player Clark were not ready to go home and called into Charlie Tye's Ashfield Hotel looking for a drink.

The young men were clearly under the influence and Charlie Tye refused them entry to the hotel. However the Williams brothers and Clark remained outside, were singing and creating noise. When they tried to enter the hotel premises again, and were refused, it was alleged that Nelson Williams used "bad language" and Charlie Tye tried to physically remove the men.

The confrontation escalated into blows being delivered. Charlie Tye was assaulted and Charlie's stepson and another patron entered the fray before calm was restored. Claim and counter claim were made about the incident.

The matter ended up in the Local Court where the Williams brothers and Clark were fined for their part in the fracas. Interestingly, Nelson Williams was fined two pounds for his part in the assault but fined three pounds for the use of "bad language."

POLICE CALLED IN.

ROWDY SMOKE CONCERT.

FIGHT IN HOTEL AFTERWARDS.

At the Ashfield Police Court, Charles Tye, licensee of the Ashfield Hotel, proceeded against William Clark, Nelson Williams, and Norman Williams, for assaulting him on November 9, and also against Nelson Williams, for having used indecent language in the hotel. Nelson Williams also proceeded against William Greenham for assault.

Evidence for the prosecution showed that on the night in question, a football smoke concert was held at the Ashfield Town Hall, at which it was alleged the beer flowed so freely that at an early stage of the proceedings the police had to be sent for to clear the hall. Subsequently, Clark and the brothers Williams went to the hotel and asked for drinks, but as they were then under the influence they were refused. They then went out into the yard, where they were very noisy, and afterwards came back into the hotel passage, singing. Tye met them, and told them he did not want their noise there, and ordered them out of the hotel, when Nelson

Williams made use of bad language. He ordered him out of the hotel, and as he refused to go, Tye took him by the shoulder and tried to put him out of the side door. Clark and the other Williams then rushed Tye. Clark

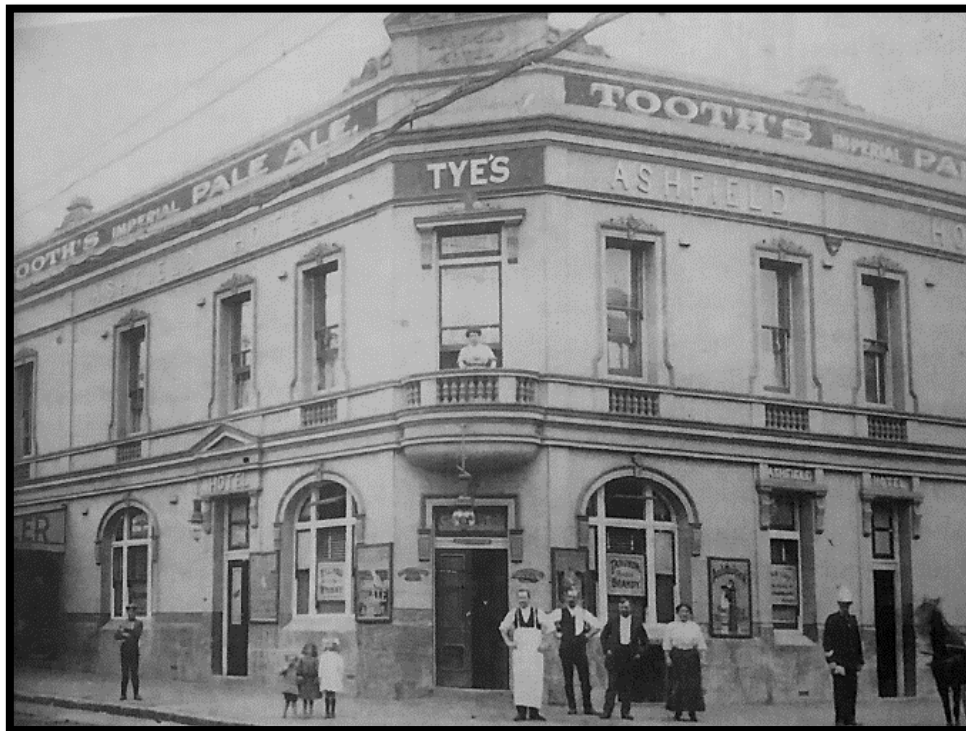
struck him on the eye, cutting it and knocking him down, and while he was down the three of them kicked him about the face.

Greenham who is Tye's stepson, and a man named Evans, then came to his assistance, and the three were put out. They however, attempted to come back, and both Greenham and Evans were struck in endeavoring to keep them out.

For the defence, it was stated that when the defendants attempted to come back into the hotel after having been in the yard Tye caught Nelson Williams by the throat and pushed him out into the street. He then made a hit at Williams, but overbalanced and fell. Greenham then rushed out and struck Williams over the eye with a tray he was carrying. They denied that Tye was knocked down or kicked, or that any language had been used by Nelson Williams.

Clark was fined £5 with 25s costs, in default three months. Nelson Williams £2 and 7s costs, in default one month for the assault, and £3 with 7s costs, for using the language; and Norman Williams £3 with £2 8s costs, in default two months. The case against Greenham was dismissed.

Evening News 7 December 1912



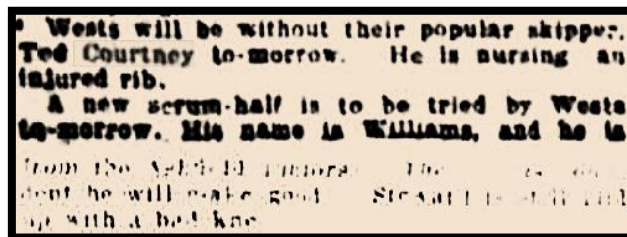
Tye's Hotel Ashfield

Source: Clouds of Dust, Buckets of Blood

No record has been found of Nelson Williams playing for Ashfield teams in 1913 or 1914. However this is probably due to the lack of reporting generally of junior rugby league games at the time. The only news report that has been found was when Nelson Williams was selected in the Wests First Grade team for the round ten match against Souths.

Ray Steward, the Wests half back from earlier in the season, was out of the team with an injured knee. His replacement J. Nicholson played in the half back position for the remainder of the season except the round ten match when he was unavailable and replaced by Nelson Williams.

The Evening News noted Nelson Williams selection. The copy is of poor quality but it records that, "a new scrum-half is to be tried by Wests tomorrow. His name is Williams, and he is from the Ashfield Juniors."



Evening News 24 July 1914

WESTERN SUBURBS		1914 Round 10 Saturday 25th July RAS Showground		WESTERN SUBURBS	
South Sydney 20		def.	Western Suburbs 3		
Howard HALLETT	<i>Fullback</i>	Harry CLARK			
George REYNOLDS	<i>Wing</i>	Charlie COLLIER			
Hash THOMPSON	<i>Centre</i>	Cecil FOORD			
Harold HORDER	<i>Centre</i>	Henry NAYLOR			
Arthur McCABE	<i>Wing</i>	Henry McILLMURRAY			
Ray NORMAN	<i>Five-eighth</i>	George GAGAN			
Arthur BUTLER (c)	<i>Half</i>	N WILLIAMS			
William SPENCE	<i>Lock</i>	Clarrie TYE			
Jim DAVIS	<i>Second Row</i>	Martin ANDERSEN			
Eddie HILLIARD	<i>Second Row</i>	Westley EASTERBROOK			
Roy ALMOND	<i>Front Row</i>	Fred LANE			
Harry BUTLER	<i>Hooker</i>	William JOASS (c)			
Owen McCARTHY	<i>Front Row</i>	Arthur GILLETT			
	<i>Reserve</i>	Hector LEE			

Nelson Williams First Grade Debut Round Ten 25 July 1914

This is the only game that Nelson Williams was recorded playing for Wests. In fact, no other record has been found of him playing any further rugby league.

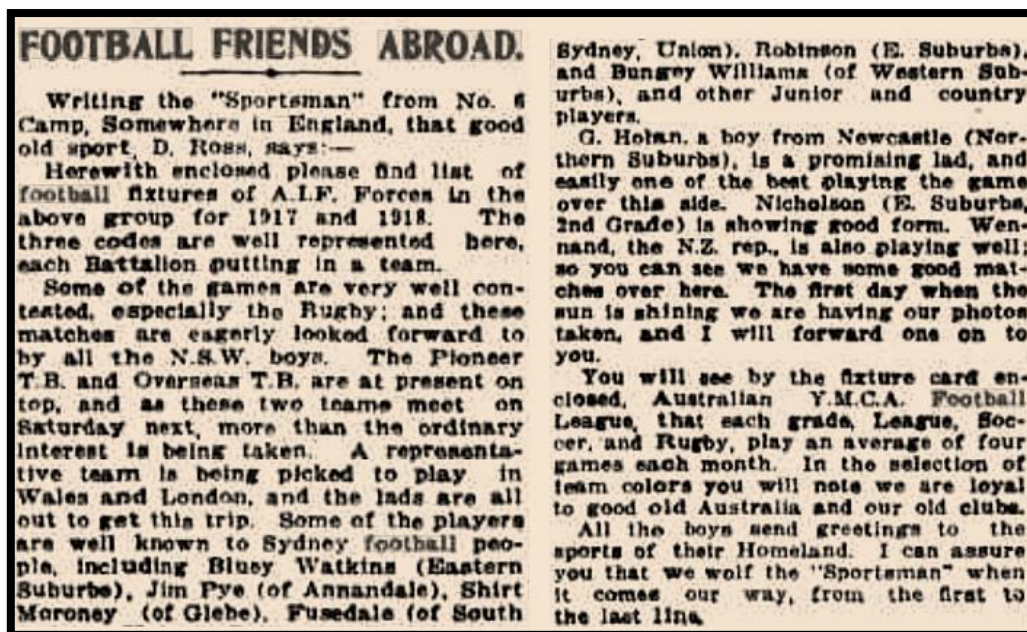
It is known that at some point Nelson relocated to the NSW city of Newcastle as he enlisted for service in the Great War at Newcastle in August 1916. He was initially posted to B Company, Newcastle depot Battalion at Broadmeadow (Newcastle).

In October 1916 he embarked with the 1st Pioneers Battalion for overseas duty, arriving at Plymouth England early in 1917. The trip across was not without incident as he "broke" ship at one of the ports on the journey, being absent without leave. He was awarded 24 hours detention and loss of 3 days' pay for his effort.

Nelson was only in England a few weeks when he was once again absent without leave. He was given 28 days in custody and loss of 38 days' pay.

Nelson remained in England for the remainder of 1917 without incident and then in February 1918 he was sent to France with the 1st Pioneers Battalion. He appeared to have been constructively occupied by playing football during 1917 and at the start of 1918. A news item appeared in the Sydney Sportsman in February 1918 which was written by a correspondent from England.

The news item described the sporting activities that were being conducted and played by Australian servicemen in England at that time. A number of prominent Australian rugby league players were mentioned including "Bungey" Williams (of Western Suburbs).



FOOTBALL FRIENDS ABROAD.

Writing the "Sportsman" from No. 6 Camp, Somewhere in England, that good old sport, D. Ross, says:—

Herewith enclosed please find list of football fixtures of A.I.F. Forces in the above group for 1917 and 1918. The three codes are well represented here, each Battalion putting in a team.

Some of the games are very well contested, especially the Rugby; and these matches are eagerly looked forward to by all the N.S.W. boys. The Pioneer T.B. and Overseas T.B. are at present on top, and as these two teams meet on Saturday next, more than the ordinary interest is being taken. A representative team is being picked to play in Wales and London, and the lads are all out to get this trip. Some of the players are well known to Sydney football people, including Bluey Watkins (Eastern Suburbs), Jim Pye (of Annandale), Shirt Moroney (of Glebe), Fusedala (of South

Sydney, Union), Robinson (E. Suburbs), and Bungey Williams (of Western Suburbs), and other Junior and country players.

G. Holan, a boy from Newcastle (Northern Suburbs), is a promising lad, and easily one of the best playing the game over this side. Nicholson (E. Suburbs, 2nd Grade) is showing good form. Wendland, the N.Z. rep., is also playing well; so you can see we have some good matches over here. The first day when the sun is shining we are having our photos taken, and I will forward one on to you.

You will see by the fixture card enclosed, Australian Y.M.C.A. Football League, that each grade, League, Soccer, and Rugby, play an average of four games each month. In the selection of team colors you will note we are loyal to good old Australia and our old clubs.

All the boys send greetings to the sports of their Homeland. I can assure you that we wolf the "Sportsman" when it comes our way, from the first to the last line.

Sydney Sportsman 23 February 1918

Nelson Williams was in France for only a matter of weeks when he was wounded by a gas shell. As a result he was transferred back to England and admitted to the 1st Eastern General Hospital at Cambridge.

After he recuperated Nelson was transferred to the Longbridge Deverill training camp in preparation for a return to France. In September 1918 he was absent without leave on two occasions. He lost 3 days' pay but rather than giving him further detention, the military authorities sent him back to France. He arrived in France on 16 September and survived the remainder of the war without incident.

The repatriation of servicemen was a long process and it wasn't until June 1919 that he embarked for Australia. He arrived in Sydney and was discharged from service in September 1919.

Nelson Williams lived the remainder of his life in the inner suburbs of Sydney and died at Leichhardt, NSW in January 1940 at 46 years of age. His memorial is at the Field of Mars Cemetery, Ryde, NSW – Portion Anglican, Section D 1358.