

## Russell Worth

.... then joined the Waratah-Mayfield Club which over the decades has produced many fine rugby league players. He also excelled at Newcastle High School playing rugby league in weight restricted competitions as well as the University Shield. As a junior he played in the Newcastle District Presidents Cup knockout series taking out the under 17's title.

<h3>UNIVERSITY SHIELD FINAL</h3> <p><b>Two country sides, Orange and Newcastle High have qualified for the final of the University Shield.</b></p> <p>Nearly 100 High Schools competed this year which will be the 41st time out of 47 that a country school has won the Shield.</p> <p>In the semi-final Orange High beat Jannali High 35-20. Newcastle High beat Tamworth High 25-10, both clearcut victories.</p> <p>To get through the six rounds to date Orange has scored 134 points to 30, Newcastle 127-27.</p>	<p>So they are evenly matched on that basis and should provide a thrilling final at Redfern Oval next Saturday.</p> <p>There will be a play-off for third, also at Redfern next Saturday, between Jannali High and Tamworth High.</p> <p>Orange has beaten Dubbo 16-6, Bathurst 31-12, Richmond 32-6, Picton 17-4, and Jannali 35-2, with a total of 134 points for and 30 against.</p> <p>Newcastle High, winner of the University Shield 15 times in 45 years, has defeated Wallsend 36-4, Belmont 18-2, Newcastle Tech. High 24-2, Blakehurst 14-11, Tamworth 25-10, for a total of 117 points for and 27 against.</p>
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RLN August 12, 13 1967

Perhaps the highlight of Russell's junior rugby league career was being selected for the NSW Combined High Schools 8 Stone rugby league team which toured New Guinea in 1967. The teams from both nations had played a "Test Series" dating from 1965 at alternate venues. In the 1967 NSW team were future First Grade rugby league players, Russell Worth, Russell Fairfax, Mark Shulman and Warren Fisher. He played with the NSW CHS team again in 1968.



**NSW CHS 8 Stone Schools Rugby League Team Five Match Tour of New Guinea 1967**  
**Russell Fairfax** (Back Row 5<sup>th</sup> from Left), **Warren Fisher** (Back Row 8<sup>th</sup> from left and holding Brownbuilt Shield),  
**Mark Shulman** (Front Row 2<sup>nd</sup> from left), **Russell Worth** (Front Row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from Right)  
 Rugby League News 3 September 1967

After leaving school, Russell moved to Sydney as he was employed by the ANZ Bank and received his first posting at Merrylands in Sydney's western suburbs. Russell acknowledged in this interview that the Bank worked well for him, as over time he was able to move around Australia with the security of employment while playing rugby league.

Russell was living with his uncle at Canley Vale while working at Merrylands in 1970. He played with the Guildford Owls that year and soon caught the attention of the Parramatta Junior Rugby League selectors. He was selected in the Parramatta Jersey Flegg team which went on to defeat South Sydney 7-6 in the Cup Final. Russell was the Parramatta five-eighth in that match.

Saturday, June 20, 1970 — 12.15 p.m.  
 COPYRIGHT PRATTEN PARK  
**H. FLEGG CUP. FINAL**

<p><b>PARRAMATTA</b> (Blue and Gold) <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">7</span></p> <p>Fullback: 1—A. BUCKPITT</p> <p>Threequarters: 17—R. JAY—3, 19—D. CAIRNS</p> <p>Halves: 15—R. WORTH</p> <p>Forwards: 8—B. CONROY, 10—S. PERRIOTT, 12—R. GRIEF</p> <p>Reserves: T. Wilson (14), G. Konchar (2), J. Miller (16), G. Butt (18), J. Cooper (4).</p>	<p><b>SOUTH SYDNEY</b> (Red and Green) <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">6</span></p> <p>Fullback: 1—D. HARRIS</p> <p>Threequarters: 2—J. BARNES, 4—A. PARKER</p> <p>Halves: 6—P. HAYWARD</p> <p>Forwards: 8—S. HURWORTH, 10—R. HALL, 12—W. MOORE</p> <p>Reserves: B. Wall (14), R. Webb (15), G. Trimmer (16), R. Coljaro (17), S. Little (18), M. Penny (19), J. Millington (20).</p>
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Referee: G. HARTLEY.  
 Touch Judges: L. Green (Red), T. Arnold (Blue)

Parramatta Jersey Flegg Team 1970 - defeated South Sydney 7-6

Russell moved to the NSW Country town of Parkes in 1971 and played with the Parkes Rugby League team. In the Parkes team that year was former Balmain player Jim Bonus. Bonus arranged for Russell to trial with the Balmain Club at the start of the 1972 season. Balmain signed Russell to a performance contract where he would receive a substantive bonus if he played twelve First Grade games during the season.

Russell played two pre-season cup games for Balmain coming off the bench and then made his First Grade debut in round three against Parramatta. He played consecutive First Grade games up to round eleven when he was selected in Reserve Grade.

FIRST GRADE: COPYRIGHT SYDNEY SPORTS GROUND  
 Sunday, April 9, 1972 — 2.30 p.m.

<p><b>BALMAIN</b> (Black and Gold) Coach: LEO NOSWORTHY</p> <p>1—Dennis PRESTON</p> <p>2—Paul CROSS 3—Trevor RYAN 4—Geoff STARLING 5—Glen CAPELIN</p> <p>6—Tim MURPHY</p> <p>7—Russell WORTH</p> <p>8—John SPENCER (C) 9—Terry CROSS 10—Greg FRYER 11—Barry McTAGGART 12—Dick JEFFERY 13—Garry LEO</p>	<p><b>PARRAMATTA</b> (Blue and Gold) Coach: IAN WALSH</p> <p>Fullbacks: Phil JELLEY— 1</p> <p>Threequarters: Terry SCURFIELD— 2, Garry THOMAS— 3, Gary PETHYBRIDGE— 4, Bland LILES— 5</p> <p>Five-eighths: Graham LYE— 6</p> <p>Halves: John WILSON (C)— 7</p> <p>Forwards: Keith CAMPBELL— 8, John VINCENT— 9, Denis FITZGERALD— 10, Max WILLIAMSON— 11, John McMARTIN— 12, Bob O'REILLY— 13</p>
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Russell Worth's First Grade Debut Round Three, 9 April 1972

Three more appearances in First Grade from the bench in rounds fourteen, sixteen and twenty one took his yearly tally to eleven First Grade games. Russell only needed one more First Grade game to secure his bonus payment, which meant a lot to a nineteen year old.

However this never came and neither did Russell's bonus. It could be construed that the system had been worked by Balmain to avoid the additional payment but whatever the reason, it was clear to Russell that his future was not at Balmain.



Russell Worth at Balmain 1972

The Tigers finished towards the bottom of the competition table in 1972, so when an opportunity came up at Eastern Suburbs for the 1973 season, it was an easy decision for Russell to move across to the Roosters. Easts were a successful Club in 1972, finishing runners-up to Manly. In 1973 Russell was competing with Kevin Junee for the First Grade halfback position.

In 1973, a thirteen import rule applied to premierships teams which meant that there was a limited availability of positions available to imported players. Russell was one of the imports to Easts in 1973 and signed a contract with a \$2,000 sign on fee, which was good money at the time.

Kevin Junee had a good season and only missed two premierships games that year. Russell played half back in those games and played well enough behind a pack that was out of form. In the match against Wests, Russell was singled out for praise for his performance.

Russell Worth replacement half for the day, was given due praise — he was very busy.

RLN 12, 13 May 1973 Easts v Wests -Round Seven


NSWRFL 1973 ROUND 7					
Western Suburbs <b>MAGPIES</b>			Eastern Suburbs <b>ROOSTERS</b>		
34 – 25					
TEAMS					
Tony FORD	1	FB	1	Allan McKEAN	
Allan ASHMORE	2	W	2	Jim PORTER	
Stephen KNIGHT	3	C	3	John BRASS	
Robbie PARKER	4	C	4	Harry CAMERON	
Russell MULLINS	5	W	5	Bill MULLINS	
John HEYWARD	6	FE	6	John BALLESTY	
Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)	7	HB	20	Russell WORTH	
Neville SINCLAIR	8	L	8	Ron COOTE (c)	
John BAKER	9	2R	9	Laurie FREIER	
Barry BRYANT	10	2R	10	John ARMSTRONG	
John O'BRYAN	11	FR	11	Ian MACKAY	
Shane DAY	12	HK	12	Peter MOSCATT	
Russell JOHNSTONE	13	FR	13	Arthur BEETSON	
Nick MOROKO	24	B	26	Ken JONES	
Geoff FOSTER	31	B			
Don PARISH		HC		Tony PASKINS	

Russell Worth opposed to Tom Raudonikis – Round Seven, 6 May 1973 – Source: Rugby League Project

The following week, playing against Balmain, Russell injured his cartilage which ruled him out for the season. It was an untimely injury as he was showing good form in the absence of Kevin Junee but was unable to further his claims at Easts. He played nine games for Easts, two of which were in First Grade.

Given his lack of playing time, due to his injured knee, it was going to be difficult for Russell to retain one of Easts import spots for the 1974 season. Rugby league has a great network and it was through a friend of a friend that he got a break and joined Wests for the 1974 season.

Russell played in two pre-season Cup games and an AMCO Cup game at the start of the season and then played in Reserve Grade until round eight of the premiership. He made his First Grade debut with Wests in round ten against Penrith.

1974 Round 10 Sunday 2nd June Lidcombe Oval				
	<b>Penrith 26</b>	<b>def.</b>	<b>Western Suburbs 20</b>	
	Phil JELLEY	<i>Fullback</i>	Tony FORD	
	Wayne MOORE	<i>Wing</i>	John DORAHY	
	Glenn WEST	<i>Centre</i>	Stephen KNIGHT	
	Grahame MORAN	<i>Centre</i>	Robbie PARKER	
	Reg WALTON	<i>Wing</i>	Russell MULLINS	
	John WILSON	<i>Five-eighth</i>	Graeme O'GRADY	
	John KLEIN	<i>Half</i>	Russell WORTH	
	Peter LANGMACK	<i>Lock</i>	Warren SNODGRASS	
	Dennis TUTTY	<i>Second Row</i>	John ELFORD (c)	
	Bill ASHURST	<i>Second Row</i>	Geoff FOSTER	
	Tim SHEENS	<i>Front Row</i>	John O'BRYAN	
	Mike STEPHENSON (c)	<i>Hooker</i>	John PURCELL	
	Terry GEARY	<i>Front Row</i>	Steve RIGNEY	
	Jersey KOMOROWSKI	<i>Replacement</i>	Stephen SATTERLY	
	Gary HARVEY	<i>Replacement</i>		

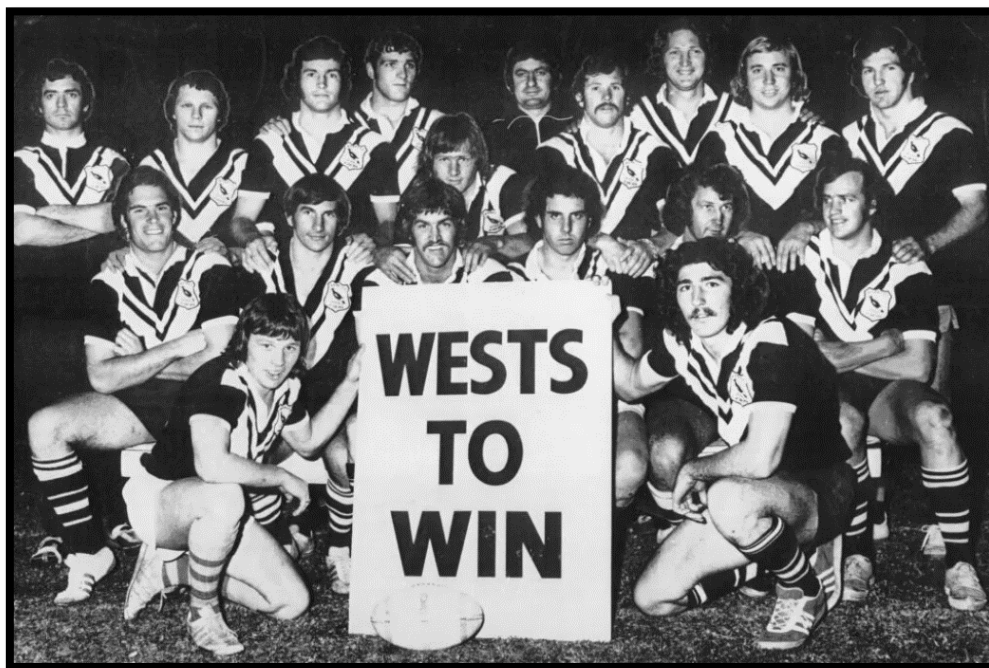
Russell Worth's First Grade Debut – Round Ten, 2 June 1974

This match was the start of an unbroken run in First Grade for Russell during 1974. He played every game including semi-final wins against Souths and Manly and then the preliminary final loss to

eventual premiers Eastern Suburbs. He played every game except one in the five-eighth position and worked well with Tom Raudonikis at halfback.

WESTERN SUBURBS		1974 Prelim. Final Saturday 14th September Cricket Ground		WESTERN SUBURBS	
Eastern Suburbs 25		def.	Western Suburbs 2		
Russell FAIRFAX	<i>Fullback</i>	John DORAHY			
Jim PORTER	<i>Wing</i>	Stephen SATTERLY			
John BRASS	<i>Centre</i>	Stephen KNIGHT			
Mark HARRIS	<i>Centre</i>	Robbie PARKER			
Bill MULLINS	<i>Wing</i>	Russell MULLINS			
John PEARD	<i>Five-eighth</i>	Russell WORTH			
John MAYES	<i>Half</i>	Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)			
Ron COOTE	<i>Lock</i>	Warren SNODGRASS			
Barry REILLY	<i>Second Row</i>	Mick LIUBINSKAS			
Laurie FREIER	<i>Second Row</i>	Geoff FOSTER			
Arthur BEETSON (c)	<i>Front Row</i>	Pat HUNDY			
Elwyn WALTERS	<i>Hooker</i>	John PURCELL			
Ken JONES	<i>Front Row</i>	Brian ISBESTER			
Ian MCKAY	<i>Replacement</i>	John ELFORD			
Greg BANDIERA	<i>Replacement</i>	Graeme O'GRADY			

Russell Worth Played in the Preliminary Final Loss to a Star Studded Eastern Suburbs Team



### Western Suburbs Rugby League Team 1974

**Back:** Shane Day, Graeme O'Grady, John Purcell, Geoff Foster, Tom Raudonikis (C), Don Parish (Coach), Robbie Parker, Warren Snodgrass, John Heyward, John Dorahy

**Sitting:** Stephen Knight, Steve Satterly, Russell Mullins, Pat Hundy, John Elford, Brian Isbester

**Front:** Russell Worth, Mick Liubinskas

The 1975 season started disastrously for Russell. In a trial match against Canterbury Bankstown he broke his ankle which required surgery to assist in the repair of the injury. Russell, in this interview, said that there was some irony in that it was Canterbury's doctor, the highly regarded Merv Cross, who did the surgery on his ankle.

It took some time for the ankle to repair and Russell's form in 1975 was not as it had been in previous seasons. He battled on playing a number of games in Under 23's and Reserve Grade before retiring from premiership football at the end of the season.

During his two seasons at Wests, Russell Worth played seventeen First Grade, fifteen Reserve Grade, two Under 23's, two Pre Season Cup games and one AMCO Cup game for a total of thirty seven games in all grades. He scored four tries and kicked three field goals for a total of fifteen points.

Surname	Forename	Year	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	U/23's	Pre-Season Cup	AMCO Cup	Tries	Goals	Field Goals	Total Points
Worth	Russell	1974	17					2			6
Worth	Russell	1974		8				1		1	4
Worth	Russell	1974				2					
Worth	Russell	1974					1				
Worth	Russell	1975		7				1		2	5
Worth	Russell	1975			2						
<b>Total</b>			<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>

Russell Worth's Playing Record at Wests

Russell was still only twenty three years of age at the start of the 1976 season. He indicated that he played a few games that year with the Cabramatta Rugby League Club which at that time played in the Parramatta Junior rugby League competition.

The following year he relocated to the northern City of Darwin and took up a player-coach position with the Darwin RSL team. That year Russell was selected for the Northern Territory Titans rugby league team which toured New Zealand and played in the Pacific Cup competition.

The Pacific Cup was played between teams from New Zealand Maori, Papua New Guinea, Western Australia, Victoria and Northern Territory. The New Zealand Maori won the Pacific Cup in 1977.



**Northern Territory Titans Rugby League Team 1977  
Pacific Cup Tournament – New Zealand**

**Back:** A Nicholson (Trainer), S Bower, N Caswell, A Byrne, S Edwards, J Lund,

**3<sup>rd</sup> Row:** B Downie, K Jurek, P Mitchell, T Salter, B Rodgers, A Harrison, R Jensen,

**2<sup>nd</sup> Row:** H Appo, R Walker, P Balch, G De La Cruz, B Allia, L Castillon,

**Front:** S Chylewski, R Balch, Russell Worth, A Williams (Coach), W Elliott (C), R Ackerman (Manager), K Ward

In 1978, Russell moved on to the City of Perth in Western Australia. He captain-coached the Willagee Bears Rugby League team. Willagee is a neighbouring suburb to Fremantle.

From Western Australia, Russell returned to NSW in 1979 and took up a captain-coach position with the North Tamworth Bears rugby league team. The Tamworth district has produced many fine rugby league players over the decades and North Tamworth was one of the foundation clubs originally playing under the banner of Tamworth Rebels since the foundation of the league in 1912.

North Tamworth hadn't won a premiership since 1953, so Russell Worth had a challenge ahead of him. His first year at North Tamworth focused on building up the team for a serious assault on the premiership. He was successful in this endeavour with the team taking out the Group 4 premiership in 1980.

Russell was not all about winning premierships as he was interested in the development of the younger players and seeing that they had an opportunity to go on and make something of their rugby league career. From this period he recommended two players to Wests. The first was Jim Leis who went down to Wests in 1980 and immediately made a mark on the game. The second was David Brooks. He was a few years younger than Jim Leis and Wests did not pick him up at the time. Brooks eventually went to Balmain in 1983 and gave great service to the Balmain Club, NSW Country and City teams as well as the NSW team.

Russell returned to Sydney in 1981 and had a couple of years out of the game. However in 1983 he linked up with Wests once more and coached the Presidents Cup team that year.



### **Western Suburbs DJRLFC – Presidents Cup Team 1983**

**4<sup>th</sup> Row:** R Hunter (Rep Selector), C Lucas (Trainer), P Carr (Selector)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Row:** R Fiscard, G Parker, M Cole, J Plummer, P Sheahan, G Pym, D Seymour, B Whitelaw (Manager)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Row:** C Parker (C), S Day, M Styles, G Deaker, G Voustinellos, T Gordon, J Hayes (Asst. Trainer)

**Front:** M Hodgson, J Usope, Russell Worth (Coach), J Bainou, C Young, J Higgins

**Absent:** A Samuels, G Fyvie, V Fish, S Whitby, P Duke, A Sinclair, J Nagle (Selector)

**Ball Boys:** S Whitelaw, S Ghosn

In 1984, Russell returned to North Tamworth to coach the team that he was so successful with in the 1979 and 1980 seasons. The team reached the Grand Final in 1984 but went down to the Gunnedah Bulldogs. It would be another sixteen years before North Tamworth would play a further Grand Final and not until 2005 until the Club won another First Grade premiership.

At the end of the 1984 season, Russell retired from all active involvement in rugby league. He was just on thirty two years of age and spent half of his life playing and coaching rugby league. These days he is settled in the Lake Macquarie district and enjoys catching up with former team mates from the various Clubs that he has played with or coached.