

John Purcell

..... was soon recognised by the Wests junior representative selectors. In 1967 he was selected to play with the Wests S G Ball Cup team. Wests performed well in the Cup competition and just missed out on the semi-finals after a first up loss to semi-finalists, Manly and a draw with eventual Cup winners Parramatta.

S. G. BALL CUP COMPETITION	
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1967 — 12.30 p.m. COPYRIGHT HENSON PARK	
WESTERN SUBURBS (Black and White)	
Fullback: J. Hardwick (1). Threequarters: B. Woolcock (2), S. Petersen (3), T. Searr (4), P. King (5). Halves: G. Dern (6), P. Woodward (7). Forwards: J. Crook (8), P. Tisdell (9), K. Flood (10), P. Flanagan (11), J. Purcell (12), P. Maloney (13). Re- serves: S. Cheney (14), C. Woods (15), B. Fisher (16), P. Goodwin (17).	

S. G. BALL CUP							
Club	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts
Cant.-B'town	4	4	—	—	79	14	8
Manly-W'gah	4	4	—	—	56	15	8
Parramatta	4	3	—	1	81	19	7
South Sydney	4	3	1	—	50	10	6
Western Suburbs	4	2	1	1	32	26	5
Cron.-S'land	4	2	2	—	55	25	4
Balmain	4	2	2	—	36	26	4
Penrith	4	1	3	—	30	50	2
Eastern Suburbs	4	1	3	—	26	40	2
St. George	4	1	3	—	16	41	2
North Sydney	4	—	4	—	16	123	—
Newtown	4	—	4	—	7	71	—

Wests S G Ball Cup team 1967

John left school at the end of 1967 and in 1968 he went across to the Enfield Federals Junior Rugby League Club and had three successful years there. During John's time with Enfield the team were premiers on each occasion.



Enfield Federals D Reserve Grade (U/16's) Premiers 1968

Back: J Smith (President), S D'Agostino, P King, G Malkior, G Brown, G Watts, P Goodwin, D McAndrew, L Kearns, J Sproule (Trainer)

Middle: Paul Woodward, J Rutley, R Taylor, P Tisdell (C), John Purcell (VC), G McPhee, B Goldberg

Front: G Dern, A Sproule

By 1970, John was once again being noticed by the Wests junior representative selectors. He was selected for the Wests Jersey Flegg Cup team and captained the side that year. Wests performed quite well but were defeated in the semi-final 2-7 by Parramatta which went on to take out the Jersey Flegg competition that year.

Members of that team that went on to play First Grade with Wests were, Peter Young (1975), Trevor Scarr (1975), Doug Lucas (1977), Terry Rose (1973), Paul Hurney (1979), and John Purcell (1974).

H. FLEGG MEMORIAL COMPETITION

COPYRIGHT PRATTEN PARK
SATURDAY, MAY 16, 1970 — 12.45 p.m.
WESTERN SUBURBS
(Black and White)

Fullback: C. Woods (1). Threequarters: S. Selwood (2), P. Hurney (3), D. Johanson (4), R. Gannon (5). Halves: T. Scarr (6), P. Woodward (7). Forwards: T. Rose (8), G. Thompson (9), S. Cheney (10), Peter Young (11), J. Purcell (12), G. Hawes (13). Reserves: A. Enright (14), P. Capper (15), N. Newton (16), P. Newman (17), R. Goggan (18), G. Malkior (19), D. Lucas (20), R. Munroe (21), R. O'Connor (22).

FLEGG MEMORIAL CUP

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Souths	4	4	—	—	135	21	8
Parramatta	4	4	—	—	99	29	8
Canterbury	4	3	1	—	133	35	6
Wests	4	3	1	—	72	24	6
Newtown	4	3	1	—	49	52	6
St. George	4	2	2	—	79	31	4
Manly	4	2	2	—	58	45	4
Balmain	4	1	3	—	34	67	2
Penrith	4	1	3	—	42	75	2
Cronulla	4	1	3	—	38	75	2
Norths	4	—	4	—	9	146	—
Easts	4	—	4	—	20	168	—

Wests Jersey Flegg Cup Team 1970

FLEGG MEMORIAL CUP

COPYRIGHT PRATTEN PARK
SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1970 — 12.30 p.m.
PARRAMATTA 7
(Blue and Gold)

Fullback: A. Buckpitt (1). Threequarters: R. Jay (17), G. Stokes (3), J. Cooper (4), P. Garnet-Carey (5). Halves: R. Worth (15), N. Parke (7). Forwards: B. Conroy (8), M. Linder (9), S. Perriott (10), P. Farrell (11), R. Grief (12), G. Ernst (13). Reserves: T. Wilson (14), G. Konchar (2), J. Miller (16), G. Butt (18), D. Cairns (19).

WESTERN SUBURBS

 2
(Black and White)

Fullback: C. Woods (1). Threequarters: R. Gannon (5), P. Capper (15), M. Nimmo (14), D. Johanson (4). Halves: T. Scarr (6), P. Burgess (7). Forwards: T. Rose (8), G. Thompson (9), S. Cheney (10), P. Young (11), J. Purcell (12), J. Hawes (13). Reserves: N. Newton (16), P. Newman (17), D. Lucas (20), R. O'Connor (18), G. Malkior (19), R. Munroe (21), P. Hurney (3).

Jersey Flegg Cup semi-final 1970



Western Suburbs DRLFC Jersey Flegg Cup Team 1970

Back: D Clare (Sec), W Kean (Selector), A Enwright, R Monroe, P Young, W Brown (Coach), G Thompson, G Hawes, J Murphy (Manager), C Johanson (Selector),

Middle: T Rose, R Gannon, R O'Connor, J Purcell (C), D Johanson, P Burgess, Newton, S Cheney,

Front: P Capper, G Malkior, P Newman, P Woodward, S Brown (Ball Boy), T Scarr, D Lucas, C Woods, S Sellwood,

Absent: J Begnell (Treas), P Hurney, H Burns (Pres)

John returned to Enfield Federals after his Jersey Flegg duties had been completed and was once again part of Enfield's premiership team in 1970.



Enfield Federals C Grade Premiers 1970

Back: Ray Hill, Bill Kean (Manager), Player, Ken Flood, G Malkior, B Montgomery (Coach), Jimmy Stewart, John Churchyard, T Brennan (Assistant Trainer),

Middle: John Purcell, T Ervin, P Robson, D Bastin, Dennis Byrnes, Player

Front: R Taylor, J Buchanan, Michael McQuade (Ball Boy), W Hill, J Arthur, David Milthorpe (Ball Boy), Don Hennessy

At eighteen years of age John had a great future in rugby league, and that commenced with Wests in 1971. He was graded with Wests Third Grade and made his debut in round three against Penrith.

THIRD GRADE—6.00 p.m. WESTERN SUBURBS (Black and White) Coach: GARRY RUSSELL	THIRD GRADE—6.00 p.m. PENRITH (Brown and White) Coach: TOM WILSON
Fullback: 27—A. FORD	Fullbacks: 1—R. WALTON
Threequarters: 28—R. GANNON 30—M. ALCHIN	Threequarters: 2—R. MICHAELS 4—T. WILSON (C)
Halves: 32—G. ROSE	Halves: 6—Z. OLEJARNIK
Forwards: 34—T. ROSE 36—S. WALSH 38—J. PURCELL	Forwards: 8—D. WINNACOTT 10—D. COFFEY 12—R. GOODSSELL
Reserves: J. Tolley, C. Withers, P. Buchanan, B. Douglas, D. Orr.	Reserves: S. Snell, J. Ryan, J. Dillon, B. Fornari, P. Gwynne, J. Roberts, G. Lords.
G. CLARE—29 D. BASTIN—31 B. WINNEY (C)—33 J. SHERIDAN—35 R. MAY—37 I. McDONALD—39	R. CARRIGE—3 G. NELSON—5 P. RYAN—7 G. IVES—9 B. DELANEY—11 D. GOLDMAN—13

John Purcell's first game with Wests Round Three 1971

John played nine Third Grade games in 1971 but his season was cut short when he broke his collar bone. During his career he broke his collar bone on four occasions.

John came back strong in 1972 and played eighteen games in Third Grade. There was plenty of competition for the Wests First Grade hooking position. Ken Stonestreet was in his final year with Wests and Jim Croucher and Peter Handcock had their opportunities in the First Grade team.

In 1973, John played eighteen games with the under 23's team. This was the first year of the under 23's competition which replaced the former Third Grade format. John was showing leadership skills and was selected as captain of Wests under 23's team.

While Ken Stonestreet had retired, former Souths and Illawarra player, Shane Day had come across to Wests and slotted into the First Grade hooking role. Jim Croucher was also in the mix for a First Grade position but more importantly, John Purcell was called on to play four Reserve Grade games that season, which was a sign of things to come.

John Purcell was working for the NSW Housing Commission in 1973 and played in the Public Service rugby league competition which was run at Sydney's Domain during lunch hours. He was then selected for the NSW Public Service team that played against the Queensland Public Service in the annual match for the Nicklin Shield. John played in the second row in this game which was played as a curtain raiser to the NSW v Queensland match at Lang Park.

In the interview with Tony Lewis, John conveyed an interesting story from this period. He was playing fullback for the Housing Commission on the Friday when he "busted" his finger. John hadn't told Wests about playing this game so needed to resolve the problem himself. With the aid of Wests trainer Doug Lucas, a pair of sharp scissors, and a lot of pain, the problem was fixed. John ran out with Wests on the weekend and no one was the wiser.

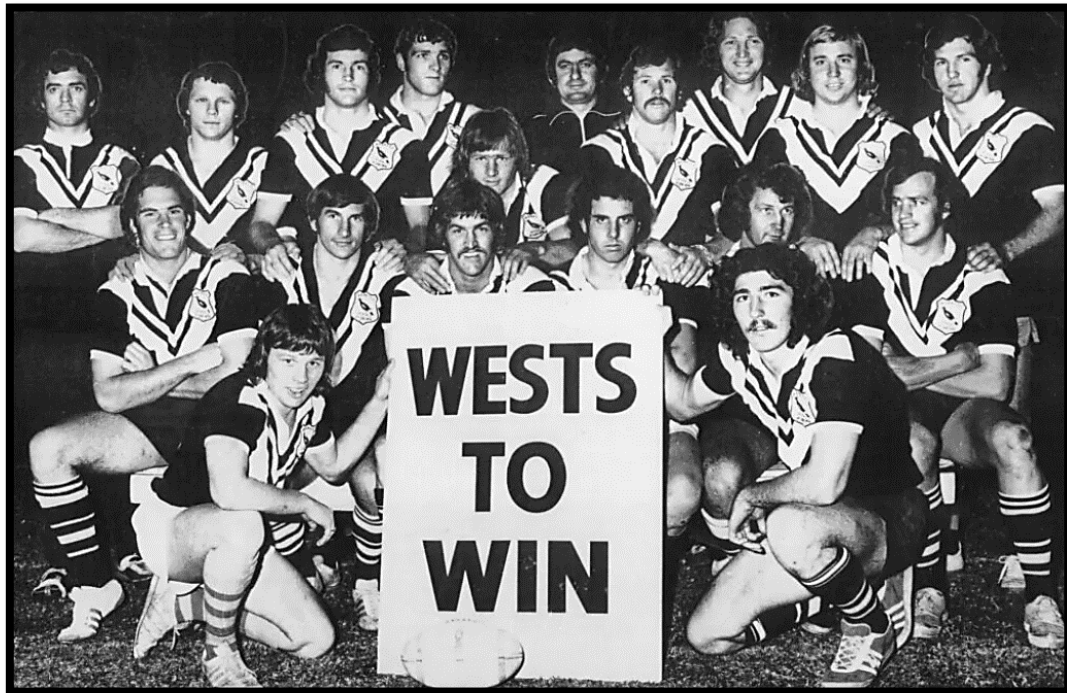
John's breakout year was 1974. Shane Day and John Purcell emerged as Wests two top hookers. Shane played in the number twelve jersey during the pre-season games but pulled out of the round one premiership game with injured ribs. This gave John Purcell the opportunity to make his First Grade debut, and there was no doubt that he was ready to make the step up. West had a field day in defeating Balmain 62-5.

WESTERN SUBURBS		1974 Round 1 Sunday 31st March Lidcombe Oval		WESTERN SUBURBS	
Western Suburbs 62		def.	Balmain 5		
Tony FORD	<i>Fullback</i>	Mark LEVY			
Robbie PARKER	<i>Wing</i>	Glen CAPELIN			
Stephen KNIGHT	<i>Centre</i>	Geoff STARLING			
Dave OLIVERI	<i>Centre</i>	Ray BLACK			
Russell MULLINS	<i>Wing</i>	Merv MUGGLETON			
John HEYWARD	<i>Five-eighth</i>	Tim MURPHY			
Tom RAUDONIKIS (c)	<i>Half</i>	Dennis CARTER			
Warren SNODGRASS	<i>Lock</i>	John SPENCER (c)			
Geoff FOSTER	<i>Second Row</i>	Ron PALMER			
John ELFORD	<i>Second Row</i>	Alan BURKE			
Jim MURPHY	<i>Front Row</i>	Denis MANTEIT			
John PURCELL	<i>Hooker</i>	Peter BOULTON			
John O'BRYAN	<i>Front Row</i>	Bruce DOUST			
Steve RIGNEY	<i>Replacement</i>				

John Purcell's First Grade Debut – Round One 1974

John went back to Reserve Grade but was called on when Shane Day had a season ending shoulder injury in round four of the premiership competition. John took his opportunity and played every

remaining game in First Grade in 1974 including the finals series. There was a good mix of experienced players and young talented players in the 1974 team that had every confidence of success.





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

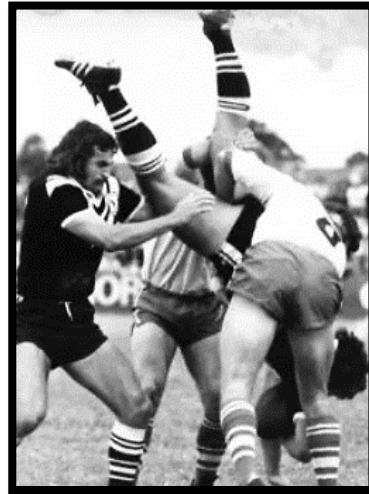
Front: Russell Worth, Mick Liubinskas

Wests had wins over Souths and Manly in the preliminary minor semi-final and minor semi-final respectively but came up against a hot Eastern Suburbs team in the preliminary final. After a tight first half, Easts eventually wore down the Magpies to take out the match and ultimately the 1974 premiership.

1974 Prelim. Final Saturday 14th September Cricket Ground				
	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		

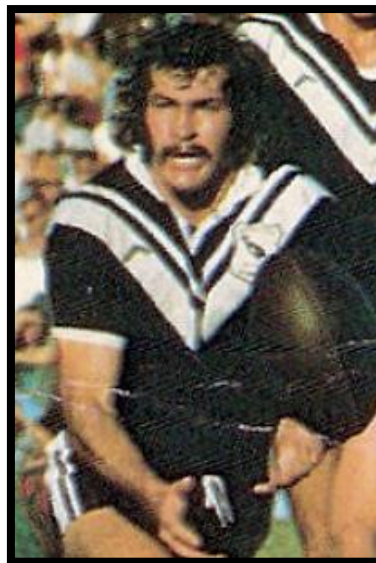
Wests came up against a very good Easts team in the 1974 Preliminary Final. Wests were down 2-3 at half time.

John has good memories of the 1974 season and his First Grade jersey holds pride of place in his rugby league memorabilia.



John Purcell (left) in action

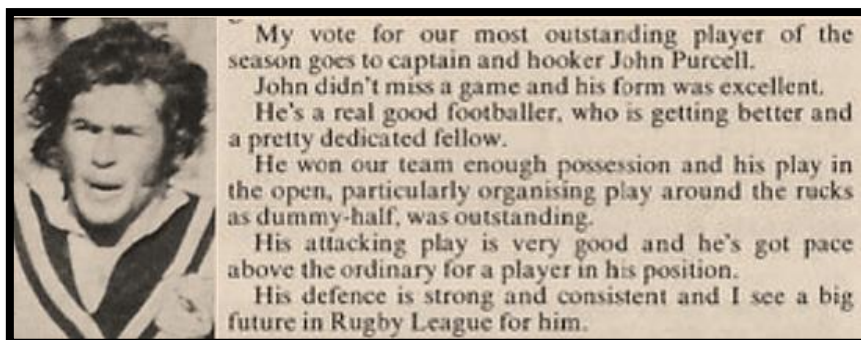
In 1975, Shane Day had recovered from the injury he received the year before and was the preferred First Grade hooker for most of the season. John played off the bench for two pre-season Cup games and several First Grade games throughout the year. In the second last round of the premiership competition, Shane Day suffered a knee injury and John once more stepped up to give Wests good service for the remainder of the year including the semi-final play-off against Parramatta.



John Purcell 1975

While John no doubt would have wanted to play more First Grade games in 1975, he did have a good year with the Reserve Grade team. He captained the Reserves that year and in an interview with Fred Nelson the Reserve Grade Coach, he was given a glowing report.

Fred summed up John's contribution to the team in the news article below and saw a great future for him in seasons to come.



Interview with Fred Nelson – Wests Reserve Grade Coach 1975

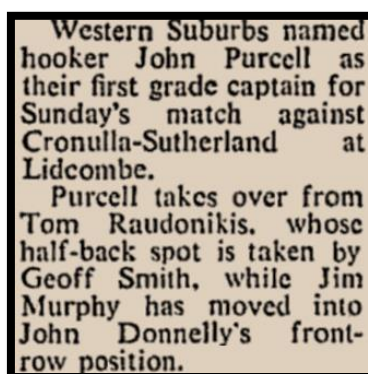
In the 1976 pre-season competition, Shane Day played in the hooker position for Wests. However by round one of the premiership competition John Purcell became the preferred First Grade hooker.

In the round six match against St George John burst through an attempted tackle by the great Graeme Langlands to score "the simplest of tries." Langlands who had an illustrious career was quoted as saying; "that did it! I said to myself, what am I doing here." Wests went on to win the game 23-13 and Langlands was true to his word, he promptly retired from playing the game of rugby league.



Round Six 1976 - Wests v St George at Lidcombe Oval

In round eleven of the 1976 season John Purcell had the honour of captaining the Wests First Grade team for the first time.



Round Eleven 1976 – Wests v Cronulla at Lidcombe Oval

WESTERN SUBURBS		1976 Round 11 Sunday 30th May Lidcombe Oval		WESTERN SUBURBS	
Western Suburbs 23		def.	Cronulla-Sutherland 10		
Wayne SMITH	<i>Fullback</i>	Warren FISHER			
Don ROGERS	<i>Wing</i>	Barry ANDREWS			
Ron GITEAU	<i>Centre</i>	Greg MULLANE			
Robbie PARKER	<i>Centre</i>	Martin RAFTERY			
Russell MULLINS	<i>Wing</i>	Tony GRAHAM			
Graeme O'GRADY	<i>Five-eighth</i>	Roger MILLWARD (c)			
Geoff SMITH	<i>Half</i>	Fred DENNEHY			
Les BOYD	<i>Lock</i>	John DYKES			
Steve BLYTH	<i>Second Row</i>	Eric ARCHER			
Geoff FOSTER	<i>Second Row</i>	Steve KNEEN			
Jim MURPHY	<i>Front Row</i>	Greg ALLEN			
John PURCELL (c)	<i>Hooker</i>	John McMARTIN			
Peter YOUNG	<i>Front Row</i>	Peter RYAN			
Steve RIGNEY	<i>Replacement</i>	Rick THACKERAY			
	<i>Replacement</i>	Glenn STOLZENHEIM			

Round Eleven 1976 – Wests v Cronulla at Lidcombe Oval

The Wests Archive web site has recorded the following summary from this match;

“Wests were without Raudonikis and Donnelly, who were in Brisbane for a State match but the half replacement Geoff Smith had a blinder, scoring a great individual try. Led by captain, John Purcell, the Wests’ forwards dominated all day to allow the backs to have a field day. Questions were raised again as to why Les Boyd was not in a representative team after another devastating display. Wests moved into second place after this win.

Source: westsarchives.com.au



Western Suburbs DRLFC 1976

Back: Bob Rowland-Smith (Conditioner), Wayne Smith, Peter Young, John Elford, John Donnelly, Don Parish (Coach)

Middle: Les Boyd, Tom Raudonikis (C), Geoff Foster, Don Rogers

Front: Graeme O’Grady, John Purcell, Ron Giteau, Robbie Parker

Absent: Russell Mullins

John maintained his position in Wests First Grade team up to and including the round twenty match against Balmain. The match was full of controversy with Balmain taking the win 13-12 after a disputed try late in the second half. However the greatest contention was the scrummaging of Balmain's hooker, Arthur Mountier. Notes from the Wests Archive provide an account of this match.

"This controversial match cost Wests their semi-final chance. Arthur Mountier won the scrums 14-4, often laying horizontally without penalty. Wests' Secretary, after the match, called him a cheat but the real complaint was with the refereeing of Greg Hartley. Apart from ignoring the blatant scrum penalties, he made a critical ruling which led to Les Mara's winning second try. All the Wests' players reckoned Mountier was held up over the line and it should have been a 25-drop-out. Instead, Hartley ruled he was in the field of play and Mara scored from the next pass. Ron Giteau also narrowly missed penalty goal and field goal attempts in the last four minutes. This was simply a match that Wests should have won."

Source: westsarchives.com.au

After this match, Shane Day regained the First Grade hooking position and played the last two premiership games.

The 1977 season started well for John Purcell with him playing in all three pre-season Cup games. However it was Shane Day that was selected to play First Grade in the premiership competition which he did up until round twenty. It was always going to be difficult to dislodge Shane Day from the First Grade team in 1977 as he captained the team on eleven occasions.

Wests didn't perform all that well in the premiership rounds, but the focus towards the end of the season was winning the AMCO Cup competition. John Purcell played from the bench in the first two rounds of the AMCO Cup as well as the quarter final against St George. However, bad luck struck Shane Day and his season ended at round twenty with him missing the last two competition games and the finals series of the AMCO Cup due to a persistent virus.

This gave John Purcell the opportunity to play in the AMCO Cup semi-final and final. Wests went into the AMCO Cup final as under dogs but came away with a famous 6-5 win against a very strong Eastern Suburbs side.



1977 AMCO Cup

Wests had a late withdrawal when hooker Shane Day was ruled out. His place has been taken by experienced John Purcell.
Day tried hard to make the team, but a virus left him feeling limp and weak.
Purcell, a fairly good winner of the ball, is an exceptionally good forward in general play.

Shane Day out, John Purcell in!



Winner's Plaque AMCO Cup 1977

In 1978, the battle continued between John Purcell and Shane Day for the First Grade hooking position. But at the beginning of the season it was unlikely that anybody would have thought that neither of them would be with Wests in 1979.

John Purcell started the season in fine form and played well up until round five of the premierships competition. Wests were defeated 14-24 by Balmain in this game after coming off a tough mid-week AMCO Cup match. John played nine First Grade premierships games in 1978 and this was the only losing side he was in during the season.

It seemed to be a tough call when Shane Day replaced him in First Grade the following week. Wests Archives noted; *"John Purcell lost the scrums 13-7 but his general play was again strong, keeping experienced Shane Day in Reserves."* That was not to be the case. John came back strongly towards the later end of the competition rounds but missed out on playing in the 1978 finals series.

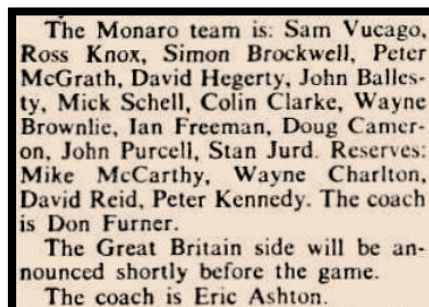
There was a new opportunity for John Purcell at the end of the 1978 season when Shane Day announced his retirement. This theoretically made him the number one hooker at Wests. In the interview with Tony Lewis, John indicated that he had asked Wests for \$10,000 for the 1979 season but was initially offered \$7,000,

Meanwhile, Wests were negotiating to sign up St George hooker, Jack Jeffries but at that stage, St George were reluctant to release Jeffries. As a back-up Wests signed up Country hooker Ray Brown. John Purcell further negotiated with Wests and thought that he had reached an agreement. However, St George subsequently released Jack Jeffries, and Wests signed him up. Wests therefore had two contracted hookers with John Purcell unsigned.

Seeing the writing on the wall, John was offered a captain-coach position with Yass Magpies for the 1979 season and took up the opportunity. Country football was a lot different to what John had been accustomed to and he acknowledges that, *"it was not the best decision that I have ever made."*

Yass had a very limited talent pool and finished outside the top five that season. After one big loss, John decided to extend training. While he and a couple of players were putting in some extra work, the other players were heading to the pub.

John was also selected to represent the Monaro Division that year against the touring Great Britain team. The Monaro team had some talented players in its ranks and gave the Great Britain team a contest.



The Monaro team is: Sam Vucago, Ross Knox, Simon Brockwell, Peter McGrath, David Hegerty, John Ballesly, Mick Schell, Colin Clarke, Wayne Brownlie, Ian Freeman, Doug Cameron, John Purcell, Stan Jurd. Reserves: Mike McCarthy, Wayne Charlton, David Reid, Peter Kennedy. The coach is Don Furner.
The Great Britain side will be announced shortly before the game.
The coach is Eric Ashton.

Monaro Team v Great Britain 1979

In a recent interview with John, he indicated that he was not overly enthusiastic about playing in this match. Travelling to the other side of Canberra for training in winter fog for a match payment of \$10 and travelling money that never arrived was disappointing. After the match, Monaro officials took his jersey and shorts and wanted his socks as well!

LIONS TOUR 1979					
MONARO		7-21		LIONS	
TEAMS					
Sam VUCAGO	1	FB	1	Keith MUMBY	
Ross KNOX	2	W	2	Steve EVANS	
Simon BROCKWELL	3	C	3	Peter GLYNN	
Peter McGRATH	4	C	4	John WOODS	
David HEGARTY	5	W	5	Mike SMITH	
John BALLESTY (c)	6	FE	6	John HOLMES	
Mick SCHELL	7	HB	7	Gary STEPHENS	
Stan JURD	8	FR	8	Jim MILLS	
John PURCELL	9	HK	9	Graham LIPROT	
Doug CAMERON	10	FR	10	Charlie STONE	
Ian FREEMAN	11	2R	11	Brian LOCKWOOD (c)	
Wayne BROWNLIE	12	2R	12	Mick ADAMS	
Colin CLARKE	13	L	13	Steve NORTON	
Mike McARTHUR	14	B			
David REID	15	B			
Don FURNER		HC		Eric ASHTON	



Monaro v Great Britain 8 July 1979 at Queanbeyan

Mick Schell, Doug Cameron, John Purcell and Mike McCarthy

After a long season at Yass, John decided to retire. He had the whole of the 1980 season away from football but at the start of 1981 he was missing football and his mates and so played a few trial games with Wests. John was selected in the First Grade team for the final pre-season Cup game against Penrith and performed well.

WESTS v PENRITH	
Lidcombe Oval, Friday, 13th March	
FIRST GRADE STARTS 8.00 PM	
35 minutes each way. Time off for injury.	
Coch: Roy Masters	Coch: Len Stecker
Fullback: *GARRY DOWLING — 1	1 — GRAEME JENNINGS
Threequarters: *JOHN RIBOT — 2	2 — KEN WOLFFE
BRIAN WALDEN — 3	3 — RAY KEAR
MARK BEAVEN — 4	4 — GLENN WEST
IAN SCHUBERT — 5	5 — CRAIG McMAHON
Halves: *PETER ROWLES — 6	6 — WARREN FENTON
*TERRY LAMB — 7	7 — MICK KELLY
Forwards: GREG COX — 8	8 — STEVE MARTIN
*CRAIG PURCELL — 9	9 — LEW ZIVANOVIC
BOB COOPER — 10	10 — TIM SHEENS (C)
(C) *JOHN DONNELLY — 11	11 — RICHARD QUINN
JOHN PURCELL — 12	12 — ROYCE SIMMONS*
PAUL MERLO — 13	13 — DARYL BROHMAN

Round Three Pre Season Cup Match - Wests v Penrith 13 March 1981

When the teams were announced for the first premierships game of the season John was listed as a reserve for Reserve Grade. He was offered a \$1,000 sign on fee and \$600 a win if playing First Grade. However, Ryde-Eastwood were interested in bringing John across to play in the Metropolitan Cup competition and offered him a \$3,500 sign on plus match fees. It was a good offer and so John played out the 1981 season with the Ryde-Eastwood club.

At the end of the season and at the age of twenty nine, John decided to finally retire from playing. He had played eight seasons with Wests plus the pre-season Cup game in 1981. During his time with Wests, John played fifty nine First Grade, sixty Reserve Grade, twenty seven Third Grade, eighteen Under 23's, eight Pre Season Cup, and eight AMCO Cup games for a total of one hundred and eighty games in all grades. John scored twenty six tries in all grades for a tally of seventy eight points.

Surname	Forename	Year	1 st Grade	2 nd Grade	3 rd Grade	U/23's	Pre-Season Cup	AMCO Cup	Tries	Goals	Total Points
Purcell	John	1971			9				2		6
Purcell	John	1972			18				6		18
Purcell	John	1973		4							
Purcell	John	1973				18			3		9
Purcell	John	1974	23						1		3
Purcell	John	1974		3					1		3
Purcell	John	1974						1			
Purcell	John	1975	4						1		3
Purcell	John	1975		21					3		9
Purcell	John	1975					2				
Purcell	John	1976	19						4		12
Purcell	John	1976		1							
Purcell	John	1976						1			
Purcell	John	1977	4								
Purcell	John	1977		21					2		6
Purcell	John	1977					3				
Purcell	John	1977						5			
Purcell	John	1978	9						1		3
Purcell	John	1978		10					1		3
Purcell	John	1978					2		1		3
Purcell	John	1978						1			
Purcell	John	1981					1				
Total			59	60	27	18	8	8	26		78

John Purcell's Playing Record at Wests

In the interview with Tony Lewis, John was asked who was his biggest influence in rugby league. John was quite candid and attributed that to his father, Jack Purcell. He said that Jack would keep stats about how many scrums he won, tackles made and missed, and how many penalties he gave away in the scrums. Jack would always compare his game with that of Shane Day who was John's greatest adversary for the First Grade hooking position over many seasons.

John commented that his father was a great help to him in his rugby league career but also had a special mention for Ken "Nebo" Stonestreet who was John's coach in 1973.

When recently contacted for this latest interview, John was down at the local park with his grandchildren, no doubt providing his own influence and support to the latest generation of Purcells.

John is a member of Pratten Park Magpies, and when not with family, he enjoys catching up with former team mates when he can.