

1915



1915: Rowing: Bill Phillips, J. Mattich, Percy Nash, T. Wilcock, Pte Sid Webb, L. Partridge, C. Perkins, Fred Grahame, W. Brown (Shakespeare), Stanley M. Walker, G. Mullally, E. (Percy) Nash (Capt), Alf Payne (Howe), Martin Manning, C. (Oscar) Shakespeare. Front Row: Dan (Larkin) Davies, F. Nash (Oscar), George Davies (Oscar), Fred Bell, H. Vigney. Above: C. Lyford, E. Ryan, J. Reid, from Howells.

The same 5 teams entered the 1915 Potter Shield competition, with West winning the Minor Premiership with 16 points, and North and South sharing 2nd place on 14 points. In the play off for the right to play West in the final, North defeated South 15 points to 8. In the First Grade Final, West defeated North by 16 points to 8 to claim their 2nd Potter Shield. The successful West team was O Mullally, C Perkins, F Grahame, D Davies, M Manning, E Howell, F Bell, C Shakespeare, R Nash (Capt), C Kentish, J Mattich, T Wilcock and L Partridge. Try scorers for West were M Manning and C Perkins, both 2 tries, with C Perkins kicking 2 goals. In a club first, West defeated North 13 points to 3 to win the Reserve Grade final, and hence won the "double" for the first time. The West Juniors again won the Atkinson and Hughes Cups for the third time, and thus became permanent holders of these fine trophies. Before the curtain came down on the 1915 season, West supporters were in for a great surprise in the appearance of that now famous "world wide" rugby league figure, Duncan Thompson, in the red and green colours. How did Duncan Thompson, a Queenslander, get to play for West at the end of the 1915 season? Well, the winners of the Potter Shield, i.e. West, were invited to play the winners of the Sydney competition, Balmain, at the conclusion of the 1915 season. The West No 7, Freddie Bell, was unavailable for the game, and an invitation was extended to Duncan Thompson (who earlier in the year had played for Queensland against New South Wales) to play for West. It is a fitting tribute to the Rosellas Club that this fine footballer, who went on to write league history in later years, should don the red and green colours of West. *(Did you ever own a pair of Duncan Thompson football boots?)* 1915 was a bumper year for West. Would 1916 be just as good? *(Pictured is the 1915 West team)*

Round	Opponent	Result
Final	11 September	West 16 def North 8
POINT SCORE	West 16 North 14 South 14 Central 8 East 6	
NO ROUND SCORES AVAILABLE		

1916

In 1916 North, South, West, East and Central again entered the Potter Shield Competition. At the end of the competition rounds, North were on top with 17 points, followed by West (16), South (5), East (4) and Central (2). Central took no further part in the competition after Round 5, and the last 2 rounds of the competition were abandoned. In the Potter Shield Final, West successfully defended their 1915 title by defeating North by 10 points to 8. The West team was - T Balks, C Perkins, F Grahame, D Davies (1 try, 2 goals), W Banks, F Bell, C Sheritt, L Partridge, E Nash (1 try), C Kentish, C Shakespeare, J Mattich and T Wilcox. There was no Reserve Grade competition played in 1916, but there was an end of season "Knock Out" competition between North, West and a Combined South / East team. In the 1916 "Knock Out" final North defeated South / East by 4 points to 2. The Grand Final clash against North provided some headaches in the West camp. "Laddo" Davies (see photo) was scheduled for an all day military training parade at Waratah. Despite all efforts by Secretary Ab Payne all seemed lost. However, with the aid of Coopers Taxis, Laddo was "picked up" (was he kidnapped?) from the rear ranks of the marching militia in the hills between Lambton and Waratah, and made the game with minutes to spare. North led 8 - 5 with little time remaining. From a scrum win Freddie Bell, sent the ball to Fred Grahame who passed the ball to the militia man, "Laddo" Davies. Laddo served the perfect dummy and scored under the posts just on the fulltime bell - West 10, North 8.....then everyone headed back to the pub, and Laddo headed back to the Army Barracks! A right royal victory party was held at Tiplady's Hall in Lambton later that evening! *"They were hard and tough and wiry....Mighty small but very keen....Those Western lads to win the comp....In the year nineteen sixteen!!"* 1916 was a bumper year for West. What would happen in 1917 and 1918?... and what's this about "Bolshevik" and "Lilywhite" competitions in 1919? - well that's next week's story.



Round	Opponent	Result
1 – 20 May	Central	Won 23 - 2
2 – 27 May	North	Lost 15 - 11
3 – 3 June	East	Won 27 - 10
4 – 10 June	South	Won 8 - 6
5 – 17 June	Bye	Bye
6 – 24 June	Central	West won on forfeit
7 - ??	North	Won 16 - 8
8 – 1 July	East	Won 11 - 2
9 – 8 July	South	Won 29 - 13
10 – 15 July	Bye	Bye
11 – 22 July	South	Won 11 - 8
12 – 29 July	North	Lost 11 - 9
13 – 5 August	East	Won 18 - 3
14		Round Abandoned
15		Round Abandoned
Final	19 August	West 10 def North 8
<i>Point Score</i>	North 17 West 16 South 5 East 4 Central 2 (W'drew Rd 2)	

1917

The Big Split

There was a major ruction in Rugby League in 1917, and the cause of the ruction was Dan "Laddo" Davies. After scoring the winning try in the 1916 Grand Final Laddo was noticed by the Sydney talent scouts, and so he left West to play for Glebe in the Sydney competition - a competition bound by the "Location" rule - e.g. to play for Glebe you had to reside in Glebe. However, Laddo was a little homesick, and this homesickness was alleviated when he stayed with relatives who lived in Annandale. On 12 May 1917, Glebe played Annandale and won by 26 points to 5 - Laddo kicking 1 goal and scoring a brilliant try.

Annandale fired in a protest on the "Residential Qualifications" rule, and Glebe was deducted the 2 points and Laddo was disqualified from playing Rugby League for Life - yes Life, a really harsh penalty. So Laddo returned to Newcastle a disqualified player. Newcastle League Officials tried to have the ban overturned - to no avail. Later, West were drawn to play North at Wickham Oval, and West would not play unless Laddo could play. North agreed to this and Laddo Davies again took the field in the "red and green". His appearance on the football field marked a violent struggle, and ultimate division of the League code that was not to end until 1920. West, North, South and Central formed a breakaway competition, called "The Bolsheviks" competition. Easts, and other parts of North and South formed another competition, called the "Lilywhites" competition. Thus 2 individual competitions were conducted in Newcastle in 1917. The Bolsheviks competition was hit hard, having to play at unenclosed grounds, where no entry charges could be made. West entered a team in the B Grade competition in 1917 and were Premiers. (See photo) The team was T Hetherington, J Ott, H Green, L Davies, S Mason, Joe Lake, Roy Mitchell, Les Lightfoot, Perc Gray, M Davies, J Ford, B Lonsdale, T Davies, G Heaney, Tom Anderson, F Hughes and Perc Brogden. Records are scarce in 1917 because the competition was very disorganised. 1917 was a year of chaos for Rugby league in Newcastle. What would 1918 bring? - well that's next week's story.



1918

What happened in 1918? - not sure really. In the book "Newcastle Rugby League, 1908 - 1949" it says that in 1917 and 1918 there was "no competition in First or Reserve Grade". In "The Saga of the Western Men" by Bob Power it says that "Two competitions were conducted through the years 1917 -1918." All that we do know is that all was resolved by 1920. So, in the absence of any definitive information, it would be wise to conclude that no competition was conducted in 1918, that some competitions were conducted in 1919, and that the "Super League" type battle was resolved by 1920. What would 1919 bring?

1919

From Eric Humphries book, there were 2 competitions in Newcastle in 1919. Firstly, there was the NORTHERN DISTRICT RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION, commonly called "The Bolsheviks", and there was the NSW RUGBY LEAGUE - NORTHERN BRANCH, commonly called "The Lilywhites". The Bolshevik competition consisted of 3 teams - North, West and Central / South. The Lilywhites competition consisted of 4 teams - North, South, East and Kurri. In the Bolsheviks Final, South / Central def West 7 - 2. The West team was T Hetherington, G Bell, D Davies, F Grahame, A Green, R Mitchell, T Davies, F Bell (Capt), H Partridge, C Kentish, C Shakespeare, R Boulden and P Gray. "Laddo" Davies was the sole points scorer for West, kicking just the 1 penalty goal. The Lilywhites Final was won by Easts who defeated North 11 - 9. Interestingly, at the conclusion of the finals a mini competition was run between North, South, West and Kurri, with West defeating South 11 -3 in the final. All representative players from 1919 were from the Lilywhites. The "rep" team played 6 games during the season, including successes against Ipswich and the Valleys Club in Brisbane. What would 1920 bring? - Would the League War be over?

The Bolsheviks Competition	
Round	Result
1 - 3 May	South 12 drew with North 12
2 - 10 May	South 5 drew with West 5
3 -17 May	North 11 def West 3
4 - 24 May	South 9 def North 6
5 - 31 May	North 14 def South 5
6 - 7 June	South 6 def West 3
7 - 9 June	North 13 def West 2
8 - 14 June	North 16 def South 5
9 - 21 June	West 15 def North 10
10 - 28 June	South 13 def West 5
11 -5 July	South 10 drew with North 10
12 - 12 July	West 21 def South 4
13 - 19 July	West 21 def North 17
14 - 26 July	South 23 def North 8
15 - 2 August	South 5 def West 0
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Final - 16 August	South 7 def West 2