

Ken Smith

Ken Smith was born in Ryde, and commenced his football career with the Burnside Schoolboys. He played Under 18's with Concord West (coached by Harry Wells) and in 1959 he was approached to play First Grade Rugby League in Eugowra. At Eugowra, Ian Walsh was the coach for the 1959 and 1960 seasons without any success...and the... John Hobby took over in 1962 with immediate success by taking out the Minor Premiership. 1963 was another excellent season, and Ken was chosen in the Group 11 team as five – eighth. In 1964 with John Hobby as Captain / Coach and Ken Smith as five eighth Eugowra won the Major titles. John Hobby joined West in 1966 (and won the Grand Final with a 31 – 7 win over Cessnock) whilst Ken Smith coached Eugowra. In 1967 Ken coached Coolah and in 1968 he joined John Hobby at West. At West Ken was so versatile that he played in the backs or the forwards. At West he also gained the nickname “Poppa” because of his resemblance to St George great “Poppa” Clay. In 1970 he had a great game on the wing in the John Raper coached team that defeated Maitland 21 – 14. He had a real winger's game and capped it off with a grand try. In 1971 Ken won the “Best and Fairest” trophy for Reserve Grade. His willingness to play in any grade in any position was an object lesson to all the footballers at West.



Ken's record with West reads

Games played – 133 (54 First, 48 Reserve, 31 Third)

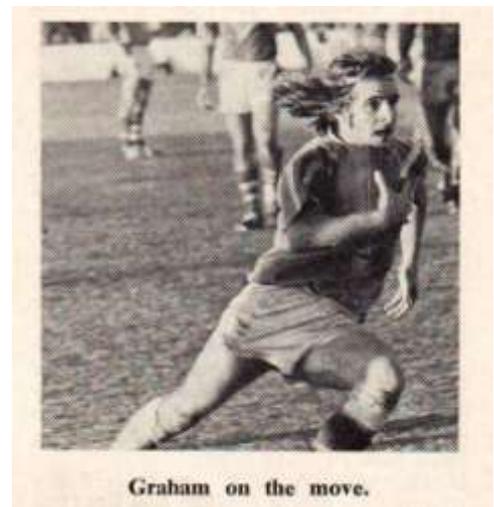
Coached by 3 Australian Captains – Harry Wells (Concord), Ian Walsh (Eugowra) and John Raper (West)

Years played – 1968 to 1974

Tries – 29 Goals – 8 Points - 132

Graham Morrissey

Graham was a twin, and attended Alstonville Primary School. He then enrolled at Woodlawn College at Lismore which had a reputation for Rugby League. In year 9 he was chosen in the First XIII – a wonderful achievement. Being young and small he played half back but his talent was obvious at his early age. In 1968 Graham won the coveted College Blue Ribbon trophy for representing Woodlawn College in Rugby League, Cricket and Athletics. In 1969 Graham played First Grade in Lismore for Marist Brothers Old Boys, and in 1969 he transferred to Newcastle with his employment. He joined West in 1969 and linked up with Bob Adamson and Peter Howlett as the “dynamic trio”. Graham stayed with West for three seasons, before his employment took him to Sydney. He was an excellent player, who played well above his weight. Graham was a member of the 1970 John Raper coached team that defeated Maitland 21 – 14 in the Grand Final.



Waka Mutu



Waka in action

Waka played Rugby Union at Kaitaia Primary School in New Zealand, and then attended Kaitaia Secondary College. At both these schools Waka excelled at Rugby Union. After school he gave up football for a couple of years, but then played for Tokoroa and was selected in the Maori Province team. He then transferred to Wellington where he met his flat mate Neil “Butch” Beri. Waka was aware that West had contracted Alby Wiggs and Neil Beri for the 1969 season, and he promised to look them up when he came to Australia on a working holiday.....and that’s how he came to play for West. Waka impressed in the trials, but it was difficult to gain a clearance so he missed most of the season. However, even at this stage Waka was a clubman. He coached a schoolboy side, and played 8 games with West thirds towards the end of the season. In 1970 Waka played 3rd Grade. He played 15 games, and was a star in the Grand Final win over Maitland. In 1971 he played Reserve Grade and again was a star in the Reserve Grade team that defeated Maitland in the Grand Final. Also in 1971 Waka played First Grade

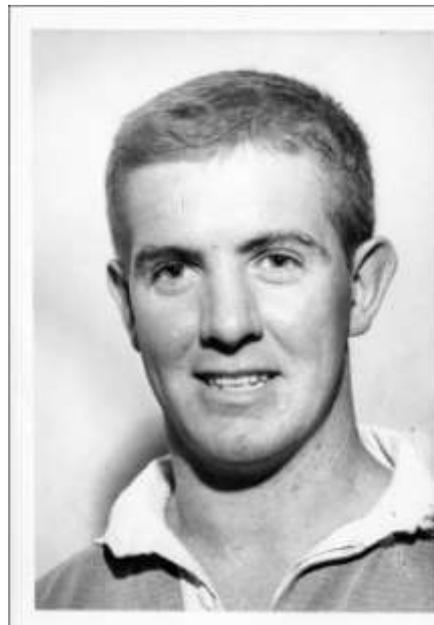
in the final against South. Although beaten West were well served by Waka in what was his 2nd First Grade game for the club. In 1972 Waka again played in the lower grades before returning home to New Zealand. Waka was a most popular person at West, having a flashing smile and an impish grin. He made such an impact in a short period of time. He is one of the most popular players ever to join the club – and all that from a player who played just 2 First Grade games. Waka Mutu – part of the West “red and green” fabric from the 1970’s!

Ken Davies

Ken Davies was born in New Lambton in 1941 and attended New Lambton Public School. He played all Junior Grades with West culminating in the Under 16’s, 18’s and 20’s. Ken was a member of the 1960 and 1961 West Under 20’s team that were Minor and Major Premiers – Major Premiers in games held at District Park (what a ground!). In 1962 he was awarded the trophy for the Best and Fairest Player in Reserve Grade. Ken played all grades with West until 1967 winning Major Premierships with teams coached by Cec Cavanagh, “Charger” Walls and Brian Stanbridge. A highlight for Ken occurred in 1965 when he played for a Brian Carlin coached West, against the “mighty” Norm Proven coached St George in a State Cup game held at Kogarah Oval (and I was there!).



With changed work commitments Ken played with the Macquarie Scorpions and then Denman and Muswellbrook in Group 21. Ken still resides in Muswellbrook, and is proud of his two grandsons, Zac and Liam Wilkinson, who now play with West Schoolboys. Ken was



awarded Life Membership of the Western Suburbs RLFC by virtue of the number of games played. Club records show that Ken played 100 games – however he played more than that. In the old “card” system that was established in 1951 by Nita Maloney, the only card reported “missing” thus far is Ken Davies. In the 1960’s 100 games entitled a player to Life membership, and thus Ken’s record was “made up” to total 100 games. Ken Davies – champion bloke, champion clubman. West were very lucky

indeed for the Davies brothers (Rob and Ken) to be born in New Lambton and wear the “Red and Green”.

Ron “Charger” Walls

Ron Walls was the son of Harry Walls who played with West in the 1930’s. Ron played juniors with West and he made his grade debut in 1949 when he played Reserve Grade with West on a Saturday and with Jesmond Jolly Boys on a Sunday. From 1949 until 1955 onwards he played mainly lower grades with West, and with Lambton and Wallsend in the 2nd Div competition. Although initially a 5/8 “Charger” as he was now known, came back to West in 1956 and became the First Grade hooker. “Charger” represented Newcastle against Great Britain in 1958. In 1960 “Charger” became Captain / Coach of West Reserves, and in 1961 this Reserve Grade side was successful in the Grand Final. In 1962 “Charger” again played First Grade to cover the loss of Allan Buman who was overseas on a working holiday. In 1963 “Charger” went as a paid player to Forster, and in 1964 he was appointed as the non playing First Grade coach, the last non playing First Grade coach for 40 years or more. The 1964 team was beaten in the Grand Final by South. In 1965 and 1966 “Charger” was Reserve Grade Captain / Coach, and they won Major Premierships both years. Indeed in 1966 West were Minor and Major Premiers in each grade – a feat that has only been accomplished once in Newcastle Rugby League. “Charger” called it quits after the 1966 season. Club records show that “Charger” played 165 games for West from 1951 to 1966 – and I guess you could add 20 or so on for the 1949 and 1950 seasons. You can’t give away the title of “Legend” easily, but it sits readily with “Charger” Walls. Simply, Ron “Charger” Walls – WEST LEGEND!



..... and what else did “Charger “ do in 1960?....well, in addition to being the Captain / Coach of West Reserve Grade he was also coach of the undefeated West U 13’s. What a clubman, what a legend!



Back: B. Dobson, J. Flanagan, A. Arnold, J. Sandgren, R. Walls (Coach), Keith Maddison, John McLaren
 Middle: K. Jukes, M. Fox, Gary Daly, Michael McEntyre
 Front: Allan Dagwell, John Shoebridge, Paul Anderson, Richie Blanch, R. McNeill
 UNDER 13 GRADE UNDEFEATED PREMIERS 1960

The players in the photo are

- Back : B Dobson, J Flanagan, A Arnold, J Sandgren, R Walls (Coach), Keith Maddison, John McLaren
- Middle : K Jukes, M Fox, Gary Daly, Michael McEntyre
- Front : Allan Dagwell, John Shoebridge, Paul Anderson, Richie Blanch, R McNeill

Photo supplied by Brian Daly

Barry Martin

Barry hails from Dorrigo and then moved to Lambton and he attended Hamilton Marist Brothers High School. He was first spotted as a talent when he played for West Under 16's in 1954 – about the time that Barry began a long association with his halfback mate Kevin “Wrinkles” Hodgson. 1959 was Barry’s first year in grade and he won the “Len Clarke” trophy for the Most Improved Player in the club. In 1960 he played both Firsts and Reserves, but in 1961 he played all First Grade, and was part of the Rex Elvin “drought breakers” – West won their first premiership for 39 years with a 10 – 9 win over Waratah. Barry continued to play with West for many seasons, and won several major premierships, including the 1966 Reserve Grade title in a “Charger” Walls coached team, and with “Wrinkles” at No 7 and Barry at No 6 it was no wonder that they won. Barry won Reserves again in 1967 and 1968 with “Wrinkles” as Captain / Coach. The 1968 side was undefeated and many regard it as the best Reserve Grade side ever. In 1969 Barry was in a successful Third Grade winning side. There are a few categories for those players aspiring to be a West “Legend” – one category is playing over 200 games. So we salute West Legend, Barry Martin, who played 210 games (51 First, 113 Reserve, 46 Thirds) and scored 37 tries and kicked 2 goals.



In 1963 Barry was coach of West 16 B's – a team that were Minor and Major Premiers. The Captain of the team was Richie Blanch, and, although the B team, the team contained many good players, including West's Player of the Century, Allan Dagwell, who went on to play 332 grade games for West, including 301 First Grade games. Richie Blanch and Klaus Jovanovic, both went on to play a few grade games for West, but many games for West 2nd Division sides. Pictures are 1963 West 16 B's, and Richie Blanch, Barry Martin and Klaus Jovanovic, in a photo taken 48 years later. By all reports a small celebration is planned in 2013, on the 50th Anniversary of the great win by the 1963 West 16 B's.

