



and then“the penny dropped”

West records are pretty good, but as the 1999 season summary was being prepared, only the “little picture” was being looked at, and the “big picture” was overlooked. The “little picture” is the year being summarised...the “big picture” is the history of the club. It was very impressive to note that in 1998 West Under 20’s went through the competition undefeated, and in 1999, West Under 20’s were again Minor and Major Premiers. Then it was noted that the same person, **Dennis Duncan**, had coached these two sides – *and then ..“the penny dropped”*. I thought **“Dunco’s done a lot in his time at West”** – and he surely has!

Dennis Duncan was born and bred in West Wyalong. He was always a good rugby league player, and like a lot of country kids, he played Under 18’s well before he was 18 – that was just the way it was. In fact Dennis played Under 18’s for five, yes five years. Simple maths tells you that Dennis was playing Under 18’s when he was just 14. He was always a “hooker” when “hookers” had to “hook”. Indeed in 1966, Dennis won 3 Grand Finals with West Wyalong – on the one day! After Under 18’s had won, he stepped up and played off the bench in Reserve Grade, and when Reserve Grade had won, he stepped up and played off the bench in First Grade – and they won.

In 1966 Dennis represented Riverina Division in Under 18’s and in 1971 he represented Riverina Opens in the Country Divisional Championships. Dennis was also a member of the 1970 West Wyalong “Mallee Men” who defeated arch rivals, Temora, in the Grand Final. He played with West Wyalong until 1973, and came to

Newcastle in 1974. In that year, he played with West United 2nd Division with Col Pritchard, and in 1975 he started his grade career with West. Dennis played grade with West from 1975 to 1981. He played 120 grade games – with just 4 in First Grade. A great clubman was Dennis Duncan. He won 3rd Grade Premierships in 1976 and 1980 before retiring a season later. Was that the end of “Dunco”? Well....NO. He coached Third Grade in 1981, Under 20’s in 1998 and 1999 and Reserve Grade in 2000. He was Secretary of the Football Club from 2000 to 2005 (assisting Tony Price in 2004). Then in 2006 he joined the football club committee.....and as this is written (*July 2017*)... Dennis remains on the West committee ... and whose white ute is seen doing a lap of Harker Oval picking up the many protection pads after

home games?...yep, the ute belonging to Dennis Duncan. Everyone likes “Dunco” – he calls “a spade, a spade” and he is a “real doer” who gets in and “has a go”. So to the “Wily West Wyalong Warrior” we say - **a Mallee Man’s best friend is a Rosella.**

Photos : Dennis (player) – West Wyalong U 18’s v Tumut & Dennis (coach) West’s 1999 winning Under 20’s

