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The ball eludes the groping hands of the players in this tussle in Saturday's rugby union match between RMC and Norths. Norths won 13-3.

Power and heart of Wests
decide half way premiers

LIONS TAKE CUP AND LEAD

In a game which lacked finesse but which was full of heart and power Western Districts beat RMC at Manuka yesterday by the slender margin of 12 points to 11.

West's victory not only gave them a two point lead over RMC on the competition ladder but it also gave them the Willis trophy to hold until next season.

The game also showed the real merit of this 1972 Cordie combination which led the Lions until 10 minutes from the end.

RMC met a full strength Lions side yesterday, a different story to when they recorded their first round 20-7 win over a much depleted side.

While West had the measure of the cadets in the forwards in the later stages of the game it should not be overlooked that their two stars, Paddy Ryan and Don Muirhead suffered injuries which took the sting out of them.

Ryan was limping from early in the first half with an ankle injury while Muirhead got his in rather dubious fashion early in the second half.

The Cordie backs never flowed and representative winger Greg Leary was starved of chances.

The thrust of Steve Thornton at outside centre was sadly missed by the Corps XV as was the goal kicking of Joff Johnson.

STUARTS' STRONG GAME

West's forwards were again powerfully led by the constructive Stuart Macdougall with Tom Gruzaz also having a very good game at number eight.

John Weatherstone was back to his best and he was aided by the failure of the cadets to grass him on occasions when they had him covered.

West suffered an early setback, losing Garry Thomas after 16 minutes when he fell heavily on

his suspect shoulder.

Thomas took the field despite reports that he would not be playing and when he left Gary O'Hare came on to the wing with Richard Gow moving in to outside centre.

Both the fullbacks, Bob Brown for RMC and David Steele were responsible for some brilliant handling with Brown being the safer and more consistent.

Steele had a mixed game and it was his error which let Lou Gardiner in for the Cordies' second try right on halftime and it was his brilliant try late in the game which gave his side victory.

Steele's main fault is his objection to being fairly tackled and the sooner he grows out of this rather childish petulance the sooner his natural abundance of talent will mature.

While West scored only one try, opportunities for more went begging.

Time and again Hearley and Weatherstone spun the ball out smartly to give the Lions an overlap but the outside backs either ducked back inside or hung on too long.

West had an early break when Jim Smith kicked an easy goal from right in front in the first minute.

There was real purpose in West's game in the first quarter of an hour but then the Cordies started to match them.

The cadets gathered in their first points a few minutes before halftime when a sudden switch of

play saw Leary toe the ball down the wing but unable to gather an awkward bounce.

Steve Garner had followed Leary through and dived on the ball over the West line for four good points.

From the kickoff West was awarded a penalty just outside the RMC 25 yard line and a penalty goal at this stage would probably have seen them go into the second half with a 6-4 lead.

CHANCE FOR LEAD LOST

For some unaccountable reason West took a tap penalty, an abortive one at that and the chance to jump into the lead was lost.

Worse was to follow for West when Steele attempted to clear on his own line only to see his kick charged down for Gardiner to fall on the ball and score. At halftime RMC 8 West 3.

The second half started with a series of tough rucks studied with indiscriminate use of the boot, incidents which went unnoticed by the referee.

From one such ruck Muirhead rose very slowly from the ground and from there on it was only sheer guts which kept him going.

About the same time John MacNamara was injured and was replaced by Charlie Jones at breakaway.



Weatherstone broke through and turned the ball back into Gruzaz who almost rolled over the cadets' line.

MIX UP OVER TRY

There was a dramatic incident at this stage when the referee awarded West a try after a smart dash down the touchline.

It was some moment before the referee noticed the touch judge had his flag up signalling a step into touch a yard short of the corner post.

Play was fierce and with the half less than twenty minutes old skippers Ryan and Macdougall were called out and spoken to by the referee, no doubt with a request that they ask their players to use a little more restraint in the rough stuff.

At 21 minutes West got to within two points of the Cordies when Smith landed his second penalty.

Then the game swung the Cordies' way again and the red and black line swung into action at last only to see winger Hay knock on with the try line wide open.

A West infringement in a lineout two minutes later enabled Ross to put one over from 35 yards out to make the score 11-6 RMC's way.

MOVE OF THE GAME

At 32 minutes the best move of the game developed with the whole West side storming into attack but it broke down on the flank.

A tap penalty by West saw the ball swung back across field and Steele came through at top speed to score a good try near the post. Smith's conversion put the Lions in front 12-11 and this was the score when the fulltime bell rang.



• Wests captain Stuart Macdougall receives the Willis Cup for the first round premiership and congratulations from a W. D. and H. O. Wills representative and from Miss Rugby, 1972, Miss Penny Willis.

A tremendously exciting game of rugby which whetted the appetite for later in the season when these two powerful sides must surely meet again at least once in the finals.

The most interesting result in the other games, played on Saturday, was the 7 all draw between Ainslie and Norths.

NORTHS HAVE PROBLEMS

Norths, with two losses and a draw from their last three games, have real problems with both Royals and East now right behind them in the fight for fourth place on the ladder.

Ainslie, scenting their first points of the season, lifted their game in the second half and broke up everything Norths attempted.

Royals had a good 35-9 win over Goulburn and next Saturday meet Norths at Northbourne Oval in a game which should tell us Norths' chances.

East beat Cooma 38-19 while Queanbeyan scrambled home 7-6 against ANU.

Victory nothing

• Contd from back page.

The victory in Queensland seems to have meant nothing to the NSW Country selectors.

Of the forward pack who held the northern, Muirhead and Ryan from RMC surely deserved a trot. Indeed, in the past few games Muirhead has matured magnificently as a footballer. The awe in which he now is held in ACT rugby can be gauged by the cruel and unrelenting attention Wests paid to him in yesterday's Willis Cup game.

As to Paddy Ryan, he was carrying an injury yesterday, plus the extra burden of the leadership. He did not have a fine game, except for a few very good covering tackles.

But the Country selectors know what he can do. The argument has been to date that he could not do his thing, which is counter attack, in big company. Surely his game against Queensland, when he scored two tries, proves he can.

And, of the Wests pack yesterday, Macdougall is not the only player there worthy of Country selection. He should be in the NSW side to play Queensland, just as Tom Gruzaz and Charlie Lubans should at least have rated a spot in the Country reserves.



• RMC's powerful representative forward Don Muirhead received some very close attention from Wests' pack in yesterday's Willis Cup final for the first round premiership. But though trapped and battered about on the bottom of several wild rucks, Muirhead (in the dark jersey) stayed with it till the game's end.

R.M.C. TRIUMPHS

21-12

OVER NORTHS

By MICHAEL FOSTER

It could be said that Norths were unlucky to lose an enthralling rugby match 12-21 to RMC on Saturday in the 15th series of the ACTRU competition, but it would not be altogether correct.

Norths, as is their habit, gave RMC the downhill run in the first half but obviously had not expected to be trailing 0-15 at half-time. Nor did they expect RMC to close its shattered ranks and withhold the Norths second-half assault which gradually petered out and indeed allowed RMC a final try and conversion.

In other games the competition leaders, Wests, again struck bother with

ANU but won 15-10, Queanbeyan played a better game than has been usual recently in spite of resting its three representatives and eliminated Royals from contention, 12-6, Easts defeated Ainslie 24-9 to get within two points of a place in the four, and Goulburn defeated Cooma 16-6.

The Norths-RMC game ebbed and flowed and was marked by some exceptionally good rucking and strummaging, some fine running by backs and some tries which added spice to the concoction.

But not to be overlooked were the tactical errors evident. RMC fullback Bob Brown for instance was wrongly positioned only once during the game but several times failed to find touch when trying too much for distance and, although playing a well co-ordinated game, the cadets showed a period of total panic which allowed Norths in twice for tries and also often left a lone attacker to fend for himself.

Norths were lacking in their failure to sustain the pressure when the cadets were in disarray, and to use wisely the excess of ball which they were given. Indeed the classical example of a wrong judgment was the move which led to Steve Garner's interception and Chris Jones' try for RMC as the game closed. Norths, already knowing that the cadets were blotting out their favoured return of the ball to the forwards and with four backs poised to attack a very thin RMC defence, tried yet again to turn it back, the cadet five-eighth intercepted and put Jones across under the bar.

Defence in panic

But the game was far better than the errors. Norths scored a classical pushover try after walking the RMC pack back 15 yards to the tryline for Terry Payne to pick up and pivot over, which he should never have been permitted to do, and scored another from an orthodox but very fine back move by Power after the Norths battering pace threw the defence into total panic.

Joff Johnson opened the scoring for RMC with a penalty, then Hodge scored a try from a ruck break by Muirhead and Johnson converted. Brown kicked a very good field goal and Johnson another penalty to have RMC 15-0 at the half.

Norths dominated play from the resumption and Power scored a try from an exceptionally well-won ruck and sharp back play. Payne scored his try as the Norths pack walked RMC back and then Cuthel scored when he was given good ruck ball and danced through an unaware opposition. His kicking was well off though and Norths were down 12-15.

Then RMC recovered and closed the game up until Jones' try and Johnson's conversion put RMC out of reach.

Mr A. J. Duffy was the referee.

Details and ladder. —
Page 12.

Brilliant play gives RMC
victory—and a final spot

CANBERRA **NEWS**
FOOTBALL LIFTOUT

RUGBY
UNION

CORDIES WEAR LIONS' SKINS

On Saturday at Manuka Oval 15 rather toothless Lions were thrown to a bunch of Cordies who scruffed them as though they were tame pussy cats.

This might be a bit hard on some of the Lions like 'Moose' Milewski — who seemed to take part in every attack and tackle — John Weatherstone, Brian James, and perhaps Stuart Macdougall and Charlie Lubans.

Nevertheless, the RMC boys ran rampant over the Lions all day and never really allowed the Westies into the game. The Cadets won 19-8.

The Cordies played their usual running game but on Saturday their forwards joined in with some magnificent short passing bursts.

In fact their second try after half-time, scored by skipper Paddy Ryan, came about after at least a dozen players handled without blemish.

The only tactical error I thought RMC made was not to close the game up more when they had established a commanding 16-0 lead midway through the second half.

RMC was assisted along the road to victory by the loose cover defence of Wests. At times, with the play wide to the flanks, there was just not one West player moving across to cover.

In close Milewski and Weatherstone did a power of tackling and Milewski was always with the ball.

The RMC halfback, Alan MacMurrin, played better than I have seen him play before and Joff Johnson also did a good job at pivot, to which position he moved after the withdrawal of Steve Garner, hit by the 'Pu.

Centre Steve Thornton made some good breaks but I thought a little more ruggedness after he made the break could have brought him a couple of tries.

IMPECCABLE GAME BY FULLBACK

Bob Brown at fullback had another almost impeccable game. He was cool under pressure and never out of position.

The first Cordie try, scored by Geoff Hay, really belonged to Brown, who came into the attack and slashed the West defence to ribbons.

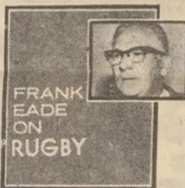
The Cordie forwards outplayed the West eight and were always on hand backing up for the unexpected pass, something the Westies failed to do.

I thought the best forward for the College was second-rower Peter Tey, who revelled in his work. It was also good to see Paddy Ryan regaining his brilliance.

The West centres, Terry Covington and Garry Thomas, turned in poor games but they should be much better for the run after a long lay-off with injuries.

Weatherstone at times seemed to be playing an almost lone hand for West and when his backs could not do the job he tried to turn the ball back into the forwards.

The only flaw in this play was that there was never a West forward on hand to take his pass.



FRANK
EADE
ON
RUGBY

Weatherstone, in desperation, started to go it alone and one such move brought West's first try from a five yard scrum when the Junior Wallaby ran wide and scored in the corner.

WESTS' LATE BID TO SAVE MATCH

At this stage of the game, 20 minutes into the second half, Wests lifted their game and looked like getting back into it — but the effort died.

West suffered an early setback when fullback David Steele withdrew after having 14 stitches inserted in a hand gashed at work.

His replacement Kees Veraar, after two years out of first grade following a leg fracture, was not up to the task and was himself injured early in the opening half.

He was replaced by Gary Davis, who had already played a full game in the reserves.

The way West drove into the first ruck looked as though the Lions had been fed raw meat for breakfast, but they did not keep up the pressure.

At seven minutes the Corps drew applause from all sections of the large crowd with a tremendous passing burst by the forwards.

After 15 minutes old rivals Charlie Lubans and Don Muirhead clashed, with others joining in. This was the only flare-up in the game.

FIRST SCORE FROM NEAT FIELD GOAL

The first score came after 28 minutes when RMC won a tight head scrum five yards out for MacMurrin to snap the ball back to Johnson for a neat field goal.

A couple of minutes later Weatherstone took a tap penalty ten yards out from the West line but Thomas hesitated. The ball went to ground, there was a West breach and Johnson put over the easiest of penalties.

A Thornton break followed but he was felled two yards short when a little more drive might just have got him there.

I thought Wests were a little unfortunate not to score just before halftime when referee Mr Jim Smith awarded them a penalty near the touch-line following an RMC breach.

Macdougall got the ball with a clear run to the line before the whistle went to halt play.

RMC went into the break with a handy lead of six points to nil.

Four minutes into the second half RMC swung the ball out to fullback Brown to make his nicely timed entry and send Hay in for his try. Johnson's conversion attempt was on line all the way, giving RMC a 12-0 lead.

This was one time when West's cover did come across but two defenders got in each other's way.

RYAN'S BID HELD ON THE LINE

At 12 minutes the RMC forwards made another concerted attack but Ryan was held up on the line.

Then came the superb Cordie try which almost every member of the team handled for Ryan to score wide out.

Weatherstone's try was scored in the 20th min-



ute and shortly after he again broke through to send Gruzus within inches of the line.

West's fullback Gary Davis was having a torrid time with awkward bouncing balls and rushing Cordies.

At 32 minutes Steve Hodge snapped a field goal to advance the score to 19-4.

Just into injury time West scored a try with the type of rugby which could have won them this game.

Milewski picked up a loose ball, passed to Weatherstone and the ball flew along the West line with lightning like passes for the first time in the match.

Thomas rejoined the movement to get the final pass and score, to make the final tally 19-8 in RMC's favour.

It was a well-deserved Cordie win, and it takes them straight into the grand final in two weeks time. West will meet Norths next Saturday in the preliminary final at Phillip Oval.



• Here's an RMC player demonstrating what the running, handling game of the cadets is all about, to the rue of the Westie attempting the tackle. Wests tried and tried but just couldn't put their own version of the game together. Now, the Northies are waiting in the wings to play them in the final next Saturday at Phillip.

Greens show a flag

It has always been my contention that while club supporters alone cannot win matches, they can certainly help their team along the road to victory with the right sort of support from the sidelines.

This was in evidence at the first semi-final at Phillip last week where the Northies took over a section of the stand en masse.

The Galloping Greens did it again on Saturday when a large contingent gathered together on the far side of the ground, complete with that raucous trumpet which always seems to appear about finals time.

Suddenly, just before the main game started, a large long "Norths to win" banner appeared along the oval fence, right where I thought we might have seen an RMC or Wests' banner.

Hard work

NAPIER (NZ). — Australian coach Bob Templeton had the Wallabies hard at training today following their one point loss to Hawke's Bay on Saturday.

Australia lost to Hawke's Bay 14-15 when the Wallaby wonder boy Russell Fairfax had a day in the horrors. He missed an easy conversion on the full-time bell which would have given Australia the game.

But it was not Fairfax alone who played badly. The whole team did, only showing some cohesion in the closing stages.

FREE TICKETS FOR FOOTY GRAND FINALS

The Canberra News is giving away 10 free tickets to each of this year's local Aussie rules, rugby union and rugby league grand finals.

An entry coupon for the rugby union and league grand finals appears at right, while a coupon for the rules grand final will appear next week.

The competition for the league and union tickets closes at midday on Wednesday, September 8.

The first 10 letters from rugby union fans opened after the competition closes each will win a free ticket to the union grand final, while the first 10 letters from rugby league fans each will win a free ticket to the Group Eight grand final.

You only can win a free ticket to one of the grand finals, so please mark in the box provided which game you wish to see.

Employees of Federal Capital Press, Pty Ltd, associated companies, and other newspapers, or their families, are ineligible.

An entry coupon offering free tickets to the Aussie rules grand final will appear in the Canberra News on Wednesday, September 8.



ENTRY FORM		
<p>I would like a free ticket to the rugby league to the rugby union grand final.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>		
NAME		
ADDRESS		
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<p>Post this form to GRAND FINAL, P.O. Box 443, Canberra City, A.C.T., or leave it at The Canberra Times/Canberra News front office, corner of Mott and Cooyong Streets, Canberra.</p>		