

1962: Inaugural University Teams A and B Grades

The Wollongong College of the University of NSW had very humble beginnings with a dominance of engineering courses and courses that were connected to the heavy industry associated with the Steel Industry around Port Kembla. Buildings on campus were few and far between and facilities quite primitive. A much different picture to what we see today.

UNIVERSITY First XV 1962



(Players left to right) *Peter Wilson, John Fish, Bill Furney, Phil Weine, Paul Steibel, Arthur Clancy, Barry Campbell, Alan Ryan, Bernie Tilden, Dick Hardy, John Meehan, Lee McGovern, Neil Rodden, Axel Laudams, Dave Watts.*
Absent Roy Dixon and Pieter Tencate

The formation of the University College Rugby club came about in 1962 due to the foresight of Dick Hardy. Most people would be happy to have their name associated with the formation of one club, but Dick did it for three clubs which are still functioning fifty years on. Yes, Dick was also instrumental in getting Vikings Rugby Union Club and the University cricket clubs off the ground, a formidable achievement.

The main reason for establishing the new club was the betterment of the code in Illawarra and Dick was encouraged to do so by the Vikings club. He approached Roy Dixon from Wollongong Surf Rugby Club as well as Bill Furney and Phil Weine from Vikings and Dave Watts from Lysaghts. New players were needed to set the club on its way but it was just as important not to decimate the other clubs at the same time.

The Uni Rugby club was formed on the 7th March 1962 with Dick Hardy as president of a very well organised committee which included;

Mr. P.H. Weine – Secretary, Mr. D.H Watts – Asst Secretary, Mr. R.S Dixon – Treasurer, Mr. A. Laudams – asst Treasurer, Mr. P Tencate – Publicity Officer, Mr. B.J. Campbell – Coach, Messrs. Hardy, Dixon, Campbell – Selectors
Patrons were-
Professor C.A.M. Gray, (College Warden), Mr. F.M. Mathews, (Chief Engineer at AIS) .

The University boys trooped out in similar jumpers to the Uni of NSW except that they were gold rather than yellow and had black collars and cuffs.

The coaching situation changed during the season when Coach Campbell had to leave the district in April due to business commitments and Dick Hardy took over as captain coach

As you can see the organisation was set on a formal basis and the players were all part time students who worked in full time employment.

The club entered teams in the ‘A’ and ‘B’ grade competitions and the membership fee was set at ten shillings which was the equivalent of a dollar but to put it into perspective the average wage at this time for a student was not much more than twenty dollars.

Training facilities were nonexistent on campus and so training had to be held at the Wollongong Police Boys club at North Wollongong, very near to the North Gong Hotel.

This situation remained until halfway through the season when a training pitch was mowed at the Uni Campus after a hard day of slaving behind half a dozen mowers followed by the consumption of numerous cold bottles of beer. A bank of flood lights was obtained from the steelworks and thanks to Bill Upfold, a lecturer, they were set up and so training was moved to the field in June. Tackling practice was limited as the field was liberally sprinkled with lumps of coal which were left over from the train track that used to go through that section of the Uni but at least it was a start.

The Squads

The club was fortunate to have some experienced players and in combination with a strong club spirit this meant that the club started the year with a flourish and maintained it throughout the year. The players were a very harmonious group with no real distinction between the grades as they often had to move between the teams to make up the numbers.

The players were recruited from all over as there were only four hundred students but there was a group of players who transferred from other clubs to help in the buildup of the new club. Dick Hardy was joined in the first-grade squad by Roy Dixon, Alan Ryan, Pieter Tencate, Phil Weine, Bill Furney, Neil Rodden, Peter Wilson, John Fish, Jim Phillips, Dave Watts, Charlie Raisbeck, Arthur Clancy, Axel Laudams, Bobby Locke, Roger Windsor and Paul Stiebel.

The ‘B’ grade team consisted of Dick Dunstone, who was captain, B O’Neill, Mick Meehan, Kevin Smith, John Meehan, Brian Cartwright, J Williamson, Bob Heaton, Lee McGovern, Terry Gillmore, Bernie Tilden, Tom Stephenson, John Hynd, Jim Phillips, John Lammers, A Patterson, Keith Plastow, Ron Hazel, Brian Murray, Neville Smith, Col Oldman, Kevin Bolack, D Ross, J Mirabella, T Shruan, Stan Maginnis, J Foster, R Wynn, Alex Christlow and A. Patterson.

The Competition Setup

The comp consisted of seven teams in the 'A' grade – Vikings, Port Surf, Kiama, Central Banks (later to become Waratahs), Lysaghts, University and Corrimal Surf.

University was one of only two clubs that were able to field two teams, along with Kiama, and they were joined in the 'B' grade competition by North Wollongong Surf Club, Weerona and Teachers College. Weerona was a team made of trainees from the Steelworks who were housed in a residential College called, funnily enough, Weerona. The team consisted mainly of University students who even used the University grounds to train. Teachers College were the next-door neighbors and were also making their debut in the comp and a friendly rivalry was soon established between Uni and Teachers College that was to last for many seasons.

One of the obstacles faced by the club having two teams was that we were one of the only clubs to do so which required teams to travel to different venues, often many miles apart. An example of this situation can be seen as on the 16th June, 1962, Uni 'A' played Kiama at Kiama at 3:00pm while Uni 'B' was set to play Teachers College at Dalton Park, Fairy Meadow at 1:30pm, hardly an ideal situation to build a club.

The season opened with a series of trials over three weekends where teams were able to organise their teams and see what lay ahead for them. Uni were able to fill two teams and they performed creditably displaying a very positive attitude and great club spirit.

Round 1

The first round of the competition saw Uni take on Kiama at Dalton Park, which was a difficult ask. The Kiama forward pack laid the foundation for a good win, 24 to 6 but the boys were far from disgraced, but the result showed the reality of what needed to be done to be competitive. Dick Hardy was in good form with the boot, kicking two penalty goals, while the centre combination of Weine and Watts proved difficult to contain.

The 'B' graders also found the going tough when they took on North Wollongong Surf Club. The surf club boys were a mix of very good footballers and outright thugs. They were so ill disciplined that three players earned the ire of the ref and were sent for an early shower. This was to a trend that occurred throughout the season and no one looked forward to taking on the Surf club team.

In the end the Uni team put up a good performance but couldn't get across the line and lost 9 nil.

Round 2

The fact that there were byes in both of the grades lead to the situation where the teams that had the bye were encouraged to play a friendly game between themselves. In round 2 Uni 'A' took on North Gong Surf and won 28-14 in a tight affair that was far from friendly with Dave Watts suffering a collarbone injury after a North Gong second tackle. Scores were locked at 3 all at the break and Uni only got on top late in the game when they scored two tries.

Uni 'B' took on Weerona and recorded a tight 13-8 victory.

Round 3

The match played between Uni 'A' and the Combined Banks at McCabe Park was a fast open game which was belied by the score line. Uni were developing some great team work and this showed in a polished display. The final score of five nil was a result of a try to halfback Alan Ryan which was converted by Dick Hardy.

Uni 'B' was also successful with a solid nine points to three victory over the Teachers College side. The try scorers were Tom Stevenson and K Smith with Dick Dunstone kicking a penalty.

Round 4

The next assignment was to take on Port Kembla, which was no easy task, as their team included a State player in Hadja Palmer. The forward battles when he played were no place for the faint hearted and this was certainly the case in this game.

The windy conditions favored Port in the first half and they lead thirteen nil at the break. The momentum shifted in the second half as Dick Hardy showed his class by scoring all of Uni's fifteen points with a try, two dropped goals and two penalties. Uni was not helped by the sending off of Arthur Clancy after a disagreement with P Wilson from Port or the fact that Dave Watts scored a 'try' over the dead- ball line. In the end Port hung on to win, eighteen to fifteen.

The Uni 'B' team took on Kiama in their game and were convincing winners by seventeen to nil. The tries were scored by Kevin Smith, John Hynde and Tom Stevenson while Dick Dunstone kicked two conversions.

Round 5

The heavens opened and the game against Corrimal Surf was a rain-soaked affair. Arthur Clancy was again the best forward on the ground as the Uni pack laid the foundation for a close eight nil win. John Fish crossed for the only two tries of the game while Dick Hardy was able to convert one of these efforts. Dick was also sound in defense and tried to set up the backs in very tiring conditions. The Corrimal backs found the hard running of center Dave Watts very difficult to combat as he made numerous breaks that couldn't be finished off.

Round 6

The much-anticipated clash between the Uni and Vikings ended up being a one-sided victory to the Uni team by the tune of thirty to six. The Uni forwards were outweighed but made up for this by being very aggressive when tackling and securing the ball from rucks and mauls. Leading the charge were Arthur Clancy and Roy Dixon, who both scored tries, but they were not alone as the Vikings pack were completely out played on the day. The star performer in the backs was five-eight, Peter Wilson who was in total control of the game, crossing for a double of tries while Dave Watts and try scorer, Phil Weine, had a great tussle with opposing center Ron Delavere. At the back-Dick Hardy was his usual reliable self as well as kicking three conversions, two penalties and a drop goal.

In the 'B' grade fixture Uni had the unenviable task of overcoming a very good North Gong side and this proved to be beyond them going down by twenty-five to three with Uni's best player, Dick Dunstone, kicking a lone penalty.

Round 7

The Uni side completely overwhelmed the Lysaghts team by thirty-two points to six in their encounter at McCabe Park. Peter Wilson was again in great form scoring a hat trick of tries, while other tries were scored by Paul Stiebel, Roy Dixon, Dave Watts and Phil Weine. Dick Hardy was again on song with his goal kicking booting four conversions and a penalty.

A couple of new faces came on the scene with former Viking player, Terry George, being voted the best player on the ground and Charlie Raisberg, an Aussie Rules player doing well in the lineout.

In a big day for the club the 'B' grade team did the club proud with a solid win over Weerona. The boys scored tries to Terry Gilmore (three tries), Bernie Tilden (two tries), Brian Cartwright and Jim Phillips. Not to be out done Dick Dunstone also scored points with a penalty and two conversions in the twenty-eight to nil victory.

Round 8

The start of the second round saw the Uni journey down the highway to take on Kiama at the Kiama Showground, one of the most picturesque grounds in the country. It was to be no picnic as Kiama were still undefeated and presented a big challenge. In what was a terrific game the much lighter Uni players put on a great display of rugby but couldn't overcome the well drilled Kiama side. Dave Watts scored a great try and 'Deadly' Dick Hardy booted a penalty for the Uni's six points, but Kiama managed three tries in recording their seventeen points.

Round 9

With 'A' grade having the bye the 'B' grade team took on Kiama and did a better job than the 'A' grade the week before as they ran out winners twelve points to five. The team got out to an early lead scoring tries to Charlie Raisbank, Ian Phillips and Stan Mcginness but then had to battle hard to keep out the quick finishing Kiama side.

Round 10

Uni were in good form coming into the game against Combined Banks but put in a disjointed performance, particularly in the backs. Dick Hardy tried his best to spark the attack but there was a lot of passing and not enough straight running at times. The game was played at a fast pace with the forwards sharing possession as The Bank's scrum was dominate but Uni, through the efforts of Charlie Raisback, won a lot of ball from lineouts. Uni did manage to cross for four tries, two being scored by Bob Heaton who had his best game for a long time, which saw the Uni team victorious fifteen points to nine.

Round 11

The game against Port Kembla Surf turned into a rugged affair as the Port side gave away numerous penalties for undisciplined play which resulted in Brian Gray being sent off for his attempted tackle on Dick Hardy. Uni were also no shrinking violets with some over vigorous play of their own.

The result of the indiscretions from Port was that Dick Hardy kicked five penalties. In fact, Port scored two tries to Uni's solo effort by Jim Fish, playing on the right wing, but with Dick's contributions with the boot Uni won the game twenty points to nine.

Bob Heaton started on the wing but moved to five-eight to allow Peter Wilson to rest his injured thigh and had an excellent game.

The 'B' graders took on a weakened North Wollongong Surf team and acquitted themselves well only losing eleven points to six. Dick Dunstone was as reliable as ever kicking two penalties for all the teams' points.

Round 12

Details of the game between Uni and Corrimal Surf are a bit sketchy but when you consider that Corrimal were winless and Uni were entranced in the top 2 of the comp it would come as a bit of a surprise that the final score was only twelve points to eleven in Uni's favor.

The score was an indication of just how hard the Corrimal team played and it would be noted that the determined tackling of Roy Dixon was a major factor in the victory.

In the 'B' grade fixture Uni and Weerona fought out an eleven all draw. The try scorers were Bernie Tilden and Dick Dunstone, who also converted one of the tries and kicked a penalty.

Round 13

Uni's team for the match against Vikings was restructured due to a number of injuries to key personnel with among other changes Dick Dunstone thrust into the pivot's position where he did a commendable job.

The game started with a series of mistakes costing Vikings dearly as Dick Hardy had soon piloted three penalties over the posts. Things went from bad to worse for the Vikings as two tries were also scored through mistakes on their part while they squandered try scoring chances with poor passes and dropped ball.

The highlight of the contest was undoubtedly Uni's third try which saw forward Axel Laudrums make a break and when tackled get a pass to Dave Watts who combined with Alan Ryan to send Phil Weine over for an outstanding try.

The twenty nil score line in the end was a fair indication of Uni's dominance

The two neighbors in Uni and Teachers College clashed in the 'B' grade game which was marred by two serious injuries late in the game when a Uni player broke his leg and a Teachers College team member dislocated his kneecap. A bad end to a close game won by Uni nine points to eight. The points were scored by Pieter Tencate (try), Jim Phillips (try) and a penalty kicked by D Thomas.

Round 14

In the last game of the regular season Uni played Lysaghts and things were not going well in the first half as the scores were locked at five points all at the break. This was frustrating as the Uni forwards dominated the set pieces but the ball was turned over in tackles. Arthur Clancy was again the pick of the forwards. Whatever was said during the interval certainly had an effect as the team clicked into gear and scored an additional four tries. Dick Hardy was again Mr. Consistency as he converted all of the tries for the twenty-five to ten final score.

The try scorers for Uni Bobby Locke, with a double, Phil Weine, Dave Watts and Bernie Tilden.

Final Point Score Table

'A' Grade	<i>Played</i>	<i>Won</i>	<i>Draw</i>	<i>Loss</i>	<i>Bye</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Points</i>
Kiama	12	11		1	2	284	84	26
University	12	9		3	2	195	111	22
Vikings	12	8	1	3	2	228	131	21
Port Surf	12	6	1	5	2	151	93	17
Combined Banks	12	3		9	2	94	189	10
Lysaghts	12	3		9	2	115	276	10
Corrimal Surf	12	1		11	2	64	247	6
'B' Grade	<i>Played</i>	<i>Won</i>	<i>Draw</i>	<i>Loss</i>	<i>Bye</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Points</i>
North Gong Surf	12	12		0	3	370	62	30
University	12	6	1	5	3	113	142	19
Teachers College	12	5		6	3	138	166	16
Weerona	12	5	1	8	3	159	253	13
Kiama	12	3		9	3	125	272	12

Major Semi

The final point scores saw Uni finish in second place in both grades. This was a tremendous effort by all the players and the club was on a high going into the Major semis.

In 'A' grade Uni faced Kiama, who they had not beaten in the season but they were confident of a good showing..

The Kiama team was disappointed to lose their captain, Jim Miller, because of an injury and the state player was a big loss.

Uni also had to make some changes as Alan Ryan was getting married on the day and his place was taken by Terry Gilmoire while Bob Locke was selected to play five-eight due to an injury to Peter Wilson.

The game started with Kiama on top in the forwards and really dominating the lineouts and scrums. The only way that Uni got their hands on the ball was in tackles and Roy Dixon was instrumental in this department.

Kiama took a six nil lead to the break but Uni came out a very determined bunch in the second half. Dick Hardy kicked a penalty but a try to Kiama had them leading nine points to three. It was then that the game came to life with a converted try to Stan McGinness that meant that only a point separated the two teams. Try as hard as they might Uni couldn't bridge the gap and so Kiama moved to the Grand Final and Uni needed to play off in the final the following week.

The 'B' grade match saw Uni taking on the raging favorites in North Wollongong Surf who had remained undefeated. They were a classy outfit when they decided to concentrate on playing football and the going was always going to be tough for the Uni guys.

In a very one-sided affair the Surf club were too good and won forty-six nil. The only positive to come out of the game was that Uni got another chance the following week.

Final

After the close fought encounter with Kiama, Uni were very confident that they could beat Vikings who had defeated Port Kembla Surf in the minor semi-final. Indeed, Vikings had not been closer than twenty points in their previous games against Uni.

Roy Dixon was in great form coming into the match and was a key player in getting the ball for the speedy Uni backs to attack. He was ably supported by Bob Locke who was able to charge down a clearing kick and cross for a try that Dick Hardy converted. Not long afterwards Uni extended the lead when Dick kicked a penalty and held a eight points to three lead at the half time break but were going to be running into the breeze in the second half. Vikings scored a try to cut the margin to two points but with only a little time remaining Roy Dixon chased a Bob Locke kick to score what many thought would be the winning try, which was converted.

Things were going to plan with two minutes remaining with Uni having a seven-point advantage when a successful penalty goal to Vikings gave them an opportunity for a converted try to win the game. Indeed, they did scoring under the posts as the full time bell rang! The close loss was made a lot worse as Bobby Locke was over the line during the game but mistook the dead ball line for the try line and passed the ball in the in-goal area only to have it intercepted by a Vikings player. He only had to force the ball for a try. What a way to bow out!

The 'B' graders were also favorites going into their game against Weerona but injuries and unavailability in the higher grade had weakened their squad. Uni managed two tries to Alex Christlowe, one of which was converted by D Thomas but in the final wash-up the boys also bowed out in the final losing 16-8.

This was not the way the club wanted its debut season to finish but all things considered the Uni club demonstrated that they were going to be a force in the Illawarra Competition.

The effort was meritorious as we were plagued by injuries as well as marital commitments in the second half of the season. Three 'A' grade players, lock Bill Furney, was married and missed the last two rounds of the competition, Alan Ryan our half back missed the semi final and center Phil Weine would have missed the grand Final.

Vikings went on to win their first grand final 14-12 in a tough encounter with Kiama, which in hindsight was a great result for a club which had contributed much to the formation of the University club.

The Representative Scene

The Illawarra District selected teams to play in a number of fixtures during the season and University was well represented in these squads. Games were played against a visiting New Zealand side, The Bay of Plenty, ACT, Central West, a Barbarians team as well as playing in the Country week championships.

Uni players selected in these teams included Dick Hardy, Peter Wilson, Phil Weine, Dave Watts, Roy Dixon, Alan Ryan and Arthur Clancy.

Illawarra U/21 reps were Alan Ryan, A Cormack and Neil Rodden, while Stan Maginnis played in the u18 games against Queensland.

Apart from the local competition there was also the opportunity for players from Wollongong to play in the representative scene by gaining a spot in the Uni of NSW's team to contest the Inter-varsity championships. The Wollongong team met teams from the Kensington and Newcastle campuses in trials at Figtree Oval and won the game 14-10.

Seven Wollongong players achieved the honor of being selected in the combined team and went on to play in Armidale and win the "Kanamatsu Cup" for the champion Uni side, although Sydney and Queensland were ineligible to compete for this trophy. The magnificent seven were Dick Hardy, Dave Watts, Peter Wilson, Bill Furney, Roger Windsor, Neil Rodden and Pieter Tengate.

Dick Hardy went one step better as he was selected to play for Australian Universities but had to withdraw due to an injury.

Dick was also the leading point scorer in the Illawarra competition with 102 points after scoring one try, eighteen goals, eighteen penalties and three drop goals.

The initial year was a huge success and much credit needs to go to the people with foresight and ambition that set the process in motion. It was a shame that there was no fairy tale ending and University had to wait a bit longer to win that elusive premiership

Life Members

Dick Hardy – University (1962-63)

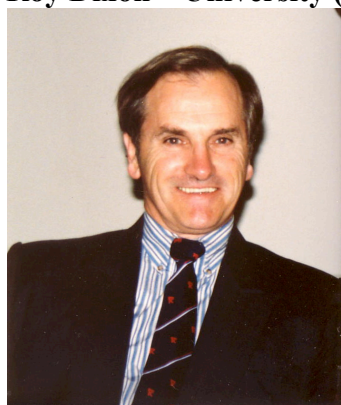


Dick Hardy has the honor of being the first person awarded life membership of the University Rugby club but the problem in writing this history of the club is in which section of the document you place his achievements. When you consider the fact that he was the prime mover of the club coming into being, the first president, the inaugural captain /coach and first grade player, first rugby club member to be awarded a University Blue from the University of NSW, an Illawarra representative and an Australian University player you will understand the dilemma.

Dick had started playing in the Illawarra as member of the Steelworks club in 1954 but after its disbandment he established Vikings Rugby Club and then in 1962 did the same thing for the University club. Dick was the first Illawarra Daily Mercury Rugby Union 'Player of the Year' in 1958 and was runner up on two other occasions.

Dick was an outstanding fullback who represented the district for eight consecutive seasons. He impressed with his positional play, safe handling and sound last line defence, but is best remembered for his kicking prowess as he topped the season point score on numerous occasions.

Roy Dixon – University (1962-73)



Roy, a light weight breakaway, was a foundation member of the University club after transferring from Wollongong Surf following discussions with Dick Hardy. Roy also represented Illawarra on many occasions and always impressed with his tigerish displays harassing opposition backlines. Roy retired at the end of the 1966 season and sat for his referee's examinations where he came through the ranks to attain first grade referee status.

Roy took on the job of coaching the third grade team in '65 and guided them to the Grand Final and also took over as president after John Bennett decided to step down in 1973.

He was awarded a Blue from the Uni of NSW after representing at Intervarsity and winning selection in the Australian Universities team in 1963.

Roy was elected to Life Membership of The Wollongong University Rugby Club in 1969 a fitting reward for all the time and effort he had put into the club.