

1971: Teachers College

'C' Grade Premiers

The Squad

All the players in the team were under twenty- two years of age and were students, as at this stage you had to be attending Teachers College to play for the club. This created a special bond between all the guys, not only in third grade but throughout the club. The only exception to this rule was Peter Geekie who was a lecturer at the College. The majority of players were studying Physical Education and as a result fitness was one of the strengths of the team while there were also talented athletes in the mix who might not have had a rugby background but soon caught onto the intricacies of the game. The fitness component was also helped along by Tom Penrose, who ran extra sessions in the mornings, and Brian 'Basha' Downes, a local legend in High School athletics, who looked after the game day side of things.

Club training was only held once a week, on Thursdays from 1pm to 3pm and this was programmed into the timetable. Thursdays was also pay day so that many of the lads made their way down to the North Gong Hotel to cash their scholarship cheques straight after training.

The players who represented the club in most of the 'C' Grade games included:

Jim Booth, Col Byrne, Peter Bosley, Glenn Diggins, Jim Doyle, Paul Francis, Bernie Gillies, Chris Girvan, Owen Green, Alan Griffiths, Paul Hanson, Peter Geekie, Lex Houtman, Steve Long, Andrew Middleton, John Peady, Mick Quinn, Graham Readett, Peter Reidy, Neil Richardson, Gregg Rowland, Jon Ryan, Henry Verbruggen, Darryl Honeysett.

Many of these names can be found in higher grades over the coming seasons indicating how strong the club was in this era.

The Staff

As was the case with players most of the people who managed and coached the teams were on the Lecturing staff at the College. Their involvement was vital in keeping the club functioning for although the students formed the committee sometimes older, wiser heads were needed.

The two guys that made sure that all the off field details were handled were Bill Mowbray, who later was Lord Mayor of Wollongong, and Ken Davies who were keen to get involved as they saw the value that the club brought to the College. They were responsible for ensuring all the jumpers and socks were ordered and team sheets signed off etc.

It was a much simpler world back then as the players paid for their own jumpers and kept them for the duration of their college career. Some even washed them!

Mick Hatton , a lecturer who had played for the mighty Randwick Rugby Club, was always on hand at training to add his words of wisdom and even strapped on the boots occasionally to help out in the holidays, when often it was all hands on deck to get enough bodies on the field.

The Coach - Noel Whiteley

The brains behind the Third-Grade outfit was another PE lecturer in Noel Whiteley who had come from a rugby league background having played first grade in Dubbo when he taught there but soon developed an appreciation for the great game of rugby.

Noel had gone to Sydney Teachers College where he played in the mid-week rugby competition with Keith McLellan in the premier side of 1949. Keith was instrumental in getting the Teachers College involved in rugby and when Noel began lecturing in 1964 Keith soon persuaded Noel to come on board.

Noel 's enthusiasm made him a coach that people enjoyed playing under and he was able to guide some of the lower grade teams into finals and Grand finals but was always the bridesmaid until 1971.

Noel gave coaching away not long afterwards but continued to show an interest in the games and was always willing to give a hand when required.

Noel retired from lecturing and moved to the North Coast and was enjoying retirement until a freak accident, where he fell and hit his head, resulted in his untimely death. A sad end for a great bloke.

The Competition.

Rugby in Illawarra had expanded quickly and in 1971 there were ten clubs in the competition and nearly all of them fielded three teams. The exception was Port Kembla Surf who had teams in first and second grade but used Windang Surf club as their third-grade team.

In many cases the 'C' grade teams from most of the clubs were selected on Saturday mornings and included anyone who turned up on the day with a pair of boots. Some of these players would have been quite talented and others would have been blokes roped in from the pub on Friday night "to come and have a run."

Teachers College always struggled to field teams during the holidays and Practice Teaching periods and it was not unusual to see rep players, even Wallabies, doubling up to help on the day. This exemplifies just how strong the bond was between all the players and it was a real strength of the club.

Results:

The 'C' grade team of '71 was a strong one and were very consistent throughout the season. They played attacking rugby but also defended doggedly as is seen by the fact that they only conceded 48 points in 18 games. During the year they suffered two narrow losses and had a draw with Vikings and won the rest of their matches. Most of the games were very tight affairs with the only blowout being against Shoalhaven.

Going into the semis most people thought that the Teachers College side were the favorites to win the title.

Round 1

'C' Grade:	Teachers College 9	v	Technical College 0
'B' Grade:	Teachers College 22	v	Technical College 8
'A' Grade:	Teachers College 22	v	Technical College 9

Round 2

'C' Grade:	Teachers College 9	v	Waratahs 3
'B' Grade:	Teachers College 22	v	Waratahs 0
'A' Grade:	Teachers College 22	v	Waratahs 14

Round 3

'C' Grade:	Teachers College 3	v	Shamrocks 0
'B' Grade:	Teachers College 19	v	Shamrocks 3
'A' Grade:	Teachers College 24	v	Shamrocks 6

Round 4

'C' Grade:	Teachers College 77	v	Shoalhaven 0
'B' Grade:	Teachers College 19	v	Shoalhaven 0
'A' Grade:	Teachers College 25	v	Shoalhaven 6

Round 5

'C' Grade:	Teachers College 3	v	University 5
'B' Grade:	Teachers College 3	v	University 3
'A' Grade:	Teachers College 8	v	University 0

Round 6

'C' Grade:	Teachers College 8	v	Vikings 8
'B' Grade:	Teachers College 11	v	Vikings 23
'A' Grade:	Teachers College 17	v	Vikings 12

Round 7

'C' Grade:	Teachers College 35	v	Kiama 0
'B' Grade:	Teachers College 0	v	Kiama 13
'A' Grade:	Teachers College 14	v	Kiama 13

Round 8

'C' Grade:	Teachers College	6	v	Windang	9
'B' Grade:	Teachers College		v	No Game	
'A' Grade:	Teachers College	22	v	Port Kembla Surf	0

Round 9

'C' Grade:	Teachers College	11	v	Weerona	8
'B' Grade:	Teachers College	40	v	Weerona	3
'A' Grade:	Teachers College	25	v	Weerona	21

Round 10

'C' Grade:	Teachers College	21	v	Technical College	3
'B' Grade:	Teachers College	20	v	Technical College	3
'A' Grade:	Teachers College	22	v	Technical College	9

Round 11

'C' Grade:	Teachers College	13	v	Waratahs	0
'B' Grade:	Teachers College	40	v	Waratahs	3
'A' Grade:	Teachers College	13	v	Waratahs	5

Round 12

'C' Grade:	Teachers College	12	v	Shamrocks	6
'B' Grade:	Teachers College	19	v	Shamrocks	0
'A' Grade:	Teachers College	27	v	Shamrocks	8

Round 13

'C' Grade:	Teachers College	6	v	Shoalhaven	0
'B' Grade:	Teachers College	6	v	Shoalhaven	3
'A' Grade:	Teachers College	17	v	Shoalhaven	0

Round 14

'C' Grade:	Teachers College	27	v	University	0
'B' Grade:	Teachers College	38	v	University	0
'A' Grade:	Teachers College	23	v	University	6

Round 15

'C' Grade:	Teachers College	20	v	Vikings	0
'B' Grade:	Teachers College	19	v	Vikings	6
'A' Grade:	Teachers College	8	v	Vikings	3

Round 16

'C' Grade:	Teachers College	11	v	Kiama	0
'B' Grade:	Teachers College	12	v	Kiama	6
'A' Grade:	Teachers College	11	v	Kiama	9

Round 17

'C' Grade: Teachers College 12 v Windang 3

Round 18

'C' Grade: Teachers College 16 v Weerona 3

'B' Grade: Teachers College 47 v Weerona 3

'A' Grade: Teachers College 33 v Weerona 3

<i>Final Pints Table</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Total</i>
Teachers College	253	48	31
Vikings	181	87	28
Weerona	213	111	22
Shoalhaven	127	97	21
Technical College	143	133	21
Windang	142	80	20
Waratahs	63	154	12
University	66	204	10
Shamrocks	80	207	9
Kiama	74	228	4

Major Semi Final

All three of the Teachers club played in the Major semi finals held at University Oval and it was to be mixed day for the College boys with First Grade losing its first game of the season when beaten by Kiama 3-20 and second grade also tasting defeat against Vikings (6-11).

It was up to the 'C' graders to fly the flag for the club. The two best teams in the competition, Teachers and Vikings, faced off and the result was always going to be tight. The two teams had earlier played a draw but Teachers had triumphed in rd 15 by twenty points so they were confident that they could do the job.

The squad for the semis included some players from the higher grades in Peter McQueen, Chris Osland and Malcolm Murray who were all to play influential roles in the games. The Teachers boys were able to score two tries, one each to Pete Reidy and Darryl Honeysett. Chris 'Cowboy' Osland converted one of these efforts and the boys were through to the Grand Final as Vikings were only able to get 3 points on the board. A great performance!

The Grand Final.

Grand Final day saw two Teachers sides taking part. Unfortunately, first grade bowed out in the Final beaten 11-12 by Vikings.

So out onto Wollongong Showground trooped the Teachers College 'C' grade side to take on Viking once again. The College side that day included the following players:

Bill Jardine, Paul Hanson, Owen Green, Darryl Honeysett , Col Byrne, Lex Houtman, Peter Geekie, Mick Quinn , Peter Reidy , Bernie Gillies , Malcolm Murray, Chris Osland, Peter McQueen, Gregg Rowlands, Graham Readett, Jim Doyle, Neil Richardson and Chris Girvan.

Once again it was to be a nail-biting affair with neither team giving an inch. It was up to Bill Jardine to get across the line to score the only try of the game. This was backed up by a penalty goal to Peter McQueen to give the College boys their six points. It was from there that the tenacity of the boys shone through as they refused to let Vikings in for a try. The full-time whistle blew, and the boys were worthy winners 6 - 3.

The day ended poorly for the club with the 'B' grade side losing 8-15 to Vikings but nothing could wipe the smile off the faces of Noel and all of the boys who were the first players at College to take out the 'C' grade premiership.

Individual Awards for 1971

'C' Grade Best and Fairest.

Darryl Honeysett - 16 points

Peter Reidy -13 Points

Lex Houtman -13 points

Owen Green - 9 Points.

Leading Point scorer in 'C' Grade

John Peady - 4 penalty and 16 conversions - Total 44 points.

The '71 team actually started a trend which saw College always in the semis or there about and won two more premierships in '74 and '76.

A frustrating fact is that University has never won the third-grade premiership but has come close on a number of occasions. Maybe this could be one of the challenges for the next generation of players?