

1972: Teachers College Inaugural A Grade Premiers

In many people's eyes Teachers College First Grade Team really should have won the 1971 premiership. They were by far the best performed team being undefeated during the season proper but fell when the big games came up and never even had the opportunity to play in the Grand Final. This was shattering for everyone but in particular Coach Jack Huxley.

The college sides had also played in First Grade Grand Finals in 1967, 1968 and 1969 but had never tasted the fruits of victory, so you can imagine the frustration that had developed within the club.

This disappointment was instrumental in keeping the 1972 squad motivated and meant that the vast majority of the squad returned to finish the job started in the previous years under Jack Huxley's three-year plan.

Why a three-year plan you ask? The answer is simple. As a Teachers College all of the players were budding educators, a majority of them doing Physical Education, and thus only at College for three years. Some did do an extended four-year course, but nearly all the players were only in Wollongong for the three years and then they would be off to all corners of NSW as teachers, thus Hux's three-year plan.

The Squad

Teachers College was blessed by the fact that they were a very strong club as far as playing personnel were concerned. All three grades were regular participants in end of season games and the players were all young, fit and keen which meant that depth was not a problem. This depth was exemplified by the fact that Teachers College were the club champions for a number of seasons.

The other overwhelming plus for the club was that all the players were of a similar age, shared life experiences together and were mates, no matter what grade you played.

There was also no doubt that the team had an abundance of talented players available. Peter Rowles and John Lambie played Tests for the Wallabies, Jon Sutherland and Steve Markham earned selection in NSW Country rep teams while Errol Carney, Paul May, Rob Pickard, Ralph Stevenson, Chris McCarthy, Garnet Pike, Brian Lawrence, Phil Williams and Phil Greenaway all pulled on the Illawarra jumper during the season.

Another star player was Peter Thompson who made a name for himself by playing for the Parramatta team that won the Sydney first grade Premiership while Brian McKay was forced to play second grade for most of the season but later played for Country and Western Australia against touring International sides.

The ability to score points was not an issue as the team provided the leading try scorer in the competition in Phil Greenaway (15 tries), one of the leading point scorers in first grade, Garnet Pike (89 points) and the leading point scorer in all grades, John Halpin (123 points). Add to this the try scoring efforts of the other winger in Brian Lawrence (10 tries) and you can see that the College side was full of attacking options.

While attacking running rugby was high on Hux's agenda so was defense and players were often reminded of their responsibilities in this area as they heard the often-repeated phrase "Tackle or get out" reverberate around the ground at Thursday training sessions.

The College sides were renowned for their fitness and skill level. This is a tribute to the youth of the sides and also some exceptional natural ability as they only trained on Thursdays from 1 pm to 3pm. After these sessions many of the players often ended up at the North Gong pub to cash their scholarship cheques and undo some of the good work done at training. Hux also took it on himself to check that no players were out after 6pm on Friday nights but many found ways to avoid his scrutiny and there were some sore heads on Saturdays.

The Coaches

The brains behind the outfit was the legendary coach Jack Huxley and what a brain it was. Hux was an intellectual who had a down to earth approach to life, especially sport. He was a larger than life figure who had the exceptional ability to get people to work together for a common goal. He was instrumental in getting everyone at the College involved in achieving the goal of winning the first-grade premiership. Bill McGrath, The principal of the College, was a willing partner in crime as were most of the staff. Guys such as Tom Penrose and Harry Fuller got the players fit at early morning circuits, Bill Mowbray looked after all the off-field issues while Noel Whitley and Bill Chapman coached the lower grade teams.

Jack was heavily involved with schoolboy Rugby League teams until he joined The Teachers College staff in 1968 but he was able to utilise his ability as an innovator and motivator to overcome his lack of knowledge of the finer points of rugby and College was a force in the Illawarra rugby scene.

Hux had served in New Guinea during World War 2 and it was there that many of the truisms that he expounded were formed. "Once a mate always a mate, ", "Don't bullshit your mate" and "Never drink before twelve o'clock " were ingrained into his charges . All were equal in his eyes, from internationals to reserves for Thirds, and he was always there to help and encourage and so developed a strong bond that everyone felt between coach and players.

Hux also called on two of his mates in Sam Davey and Brian 'Basha' Downes to assist on game day. Both of these guys were high school teachers who had also served in the war and were truly unique characters. Sam was the mastermind of the first Australian schoolboy Rugby League team to tour England in 1972 while Basha was a legendary athletics coach who was an imposing figure with a heart of gold. These men were inspiring and their mere presence was enough to encourage all the players to achieve to the highest standards,

especially when Sam was giving out the Best and Fairest points because if you won points you knew you had earned them.

The Season.

Game 1 Kiama at Teachers College Oval.

Score: Teachers College 56 Kiama 9

The first game of the season was expected to be a block buster when Teachers were pitted against the previous year's premiers in Kiama. Teachers were pretty much the same side as last year, but Kiama were really short of troops due to a variety of reasons.

In what turned out to be a rout the boys scored nine tries, five of them by speedy winger Phil Greenaway. The star of the match, however, was Brian McKay whose selective kicking always had the opposition on the back foot.

Scorers: Phil Greenaway 5 Tries, Paul May, Jon Sutherland, Rob Pickard and Darryl Honeysett Tries, Garnet Pike 2 Pen Goals and 5 Conversions

B Grade: Teachers College 36 Kiama 0

C Grade: Teachers College 14 Kiama 10

Game 2 University at Teachers College Oval.

Score: Teachers College 26 University 15

Scorers *No details available*

B Grade: Teachers College *No details available*

C Grade: Teachers College *No details available*

Game 3 Shoalhaven at Nowra

Score: Teachers College 31 Shoalhaven 10

Scorers *No details available*

Game 4 Port Kembla at Teachers College Oval

A Grade: Bye

B Grade: Teachers College 21 Port Kembla 10

C Grade: Teachers College 12 Windang 0

Game 5 ***Waratahs at Figtree Oval.***

Score: Teachers College 33 Waratahs 0

Scorers Nick Randall 2 tries, Steve Markham, John Lambie, Peter Sherlock, Rob Pickard
Tries, Garnet Pike 1 Pen Goal and 3 conversions. .

B Grade: Teachers College 45 Waratahs 4

C Grade: Teachers College 26 Waratahs 3

Game 6 ***Technical College at Saunders Oval.***

Score: Teachers College 36 Tech College 8

The game against Tech was a key one as the 'Galloping Reds' were on a bit of a roll. The Teachers side was forced to make a number of changes in the backs due to injuries to Sutherland, Markham and Lawrence. Their places were taken by Rob Pickard, Peter McQueen and Gregg Rowlands and the changes didn't have a negative effect on the team's performance as they won convincingly.

Scorers: Phil Greenaway 2 tries, Peter Rowles, Bob Lancaster, Ralph Stevenson Tries,
Garnet Pike 2 Pen Goals and 3 Conversions .

B Grade: Teachers College 24 Tech College 8

C Grade: Teachers College 3 Tech College 6

Game 7 ***Weerona at Teachers College Oval.***

Score: Teachers College 37 Weerona 0

Scorers: Phil Greenaway 2 Tries, Garnet Pike, Peter Rowles, Peter Thompson, Darryl
Honeysett Tries, Garnet Pike 2 conversions and Field Goal, Peter Rowles 3
Conversions.

B Grade: Teachers College 16 Weerona 10

C Grade: Teachers College 4 Weerona 17

Game 8 ***Vikings at Figtree Oval.***

Score: Teachers College 26 Vikings 7

This was to be the battle of the two top sides who were in good attacking form and it was expected to be a close fought encounter. Brian Lawrence was ruled out of the match and his place was taken by Rob Pickard, who was the Mr. Fixit of the team as he was good enough to play any position in the backline.

The first half lived up to the hype with Teachers leading 6 to 4 at the break but the second half was to be a bit one sided as the College crossed for three tries with Peter Rowles demonstrating his class with a try scoring double.

Darryl Honeysett also got his name on the score sheet by being on the spot to fall on the ball after a Vikings player dropped the ball in his in-goal area. I'm sure that as time goes on Darryl's effort will be lengthened to at least 50m.

While the points were being scored it was up front where the battle was won with Errol Carney dominating in the tight stuff.

Scorers: Peter Rowles 2 Tries, Darryl Honeysett, Phil Greenaway Tries, Garnet Pike 2 Pen Goals and 2 Conversions.

B Grade: Teachers College 11 Vikings 13

C Grade: Teachers College 12 Vikings 3

Game 9 Shamrocks at Nicholson Park

Score: Teachers College 19 Shamrocks 8

The score indicated the closeness of the contest but what needs to be considered was that the College were short handed with guys playing in rep games while 5 new players from B Grade were added to the team. Four tries were the result of good play with Darryl Honeysett showing why he was becoming a try scoring machine.

Scorers: Peter McQueen 2 Tries, Darryl Honeysett, Bob Lancaster Tries, Garnet Pike 1 Pen Goal

B Grade: Teachers College 11 Shamrocks 4

C Grade: Teachers College 3 Woonona 6

Game 10 Kiama at Jamberoo

Score: Teachers College 6 Kiama 6

The start of the second round saw the College boys' journey to Jamberoo to take on an improving Kiama team that was getting back to full strength, which included Gary Grey and Brian Weir when they were not on rep duty. Teachers College on the other hand lost Peter Rowles who was on tour to Noumea to do some coaching and play in an invitational team against France - a tough gig, and so was unavailable.

Kiama were on top early and looking good as they lead by six points into the second half.

Things took a turn for the worse when hooker Williams was forced from the with an injury.

Replacement Peter Malone was thrown into the fray and he was first to admit that he was not an experienced player in this crucial position,

Time was running out when against the odds 'Super' won a tight- head and Steve Markham crashed over. Up stepped Garnet Pike to secure the draw but unfortunately, he missed the conversion. Controversially the referee penalised the Kiama players for distracting the kicker and Garnet made no mistake with his second attempt and the team had escaped with a point and were still undefeated.

Scorers: Steve Markham Try, Garnet Pike 1 Conversion.

B Grade: Teachers College 6 Kiama 8

C Grade: Teachers College 24 Kiama 6

Game 11 University at University Oval

Score: Teachers College 15 University 7

University were an inconsistent team but when they were on task, they were a dangerous opponent. They started the match in a very positive manner and had two tries disallowed early in the game by the referee and tempers became a bit frayed.

College had Lambie and Williams out injured, and Bob Lancaster was replaced by Peter McQueen while Malone was still in the hooking position. The good news was that Peter Rowles was back from Noumea and he had a big influence on the game's outcome setting up Greenaway for his tries.

The game was in the balance with College leading by a point when a melee erupted and after peace was restored Uni player Rick Dixon was sent off for kicking an opponent. He was subsequently suspended for four weeks but his dismissal meant that Uni lost any real chance of causing a major upset.

Scorers: Phil Greenaway 2 Tries, Chris McCarthy Try, Garnet Pike 1 Pen Goal

B Grade: Teachers College 24 University 4

C Grade: Teachers College 30 University 4

Game 12 Forfeit by Shoalhaven who had withdrawn from the competition

Game 13 Port Kembla at King George V Oval

A Grade: Bye

B Grade: Teachers College Port Kembla

C Grade: Teachers College Windang

Rep Game **Combined High Schools First XV on Friday 21st July at College Oval**

Score: Teachers College 19 CHS 16

The Teachers College teams were short of game time when they were given the opportunity to play the CHS side in a trial game. A number of players were rested with Garnet Pike and Phil Greenaway not expected to play any more games this season due to head and leg injuries. Phil Williams and Paul May were also on the injured list but everyone else was on deck to take on the schoolboy stars. In a tight battle the College crossed for 4 tries with the pick being John Lambie's 50m effort.

Scorers: Brian Lawrence, Gregg Rowlands, John Lambie, Greg Heathcote Tries

Seconds Game: CHS 10 College 7

Scorers: Peter Galloway 1 Try, Mick Middleton 1 Pen Goal.

Game 14 **Waratahs at Teachers College Oval**

Score: Teachers College 38 Waratahs 3

Scorers: Brian Lawrence 2 Tries, Steve Markham, John Lambie, Chris Osland, Peter Rowles Tries and Peter Rowles 5 Conversions

B Grade: Teachers College 23 Waratahs 0

C Grade: Teachers College 16 Waratahs 6

Game 15 **Technical College at Teachers College Oval**

Score: Teachers College 24 Tech College 6

Tech College were a club on the way up as they looked to have all three grades play in the semis for the first time. Their top grade was coming fourth at this stage and were confident about beating the Teachers College boys from across the freeway.

It was to be a tough battle throughout the game as Tech's pack was their strength, but they couldn't match the pace in the Teachers backs. Garnet Pike was still injured, and Steve Markham was switched to the fullback position. The scores were tied at six all when Peter Rowles stamped his authority on the game with his brilliant switches of play bedazzling the opposition and setting up his supports in Sutherland and Osland. Rowles also showed some of quick-thinking ability as he dummied to ground the ball in his in-goal area only to run out to the 22-yard line and proceed to motor downfield, much Tech's amazement.

The opening try was scored by Honeysett while Osland chased a good kick from Peter McQueen to score a great try. Late in the match Brian Lawrence then showed his blistering speed to cross for two more tries to put Tech out of their misery.

Scorers: Brian Lawrence 2 Tries, Darryl Honeysett, Chris Osland Tries,
Peter Rowles 2 Pen Goals and 1 Conversion

B Grade: Teachers College 6 Tech College 24

C Grade: Teachers College 3 Tech College 0

Game 16 Weerona at Wisemans Park

The big news to hit the headlines before the game was that Peter Rowles had won selection in the Wallabies team to tour New Zealand. The downside to this was that Rowles would not be available for any more games for Teachers College. This didn't have a big effect on the game against Weerona who were struggling at this stage. Injuries were still a problem but in these circumstances the depth of the club became evident.

Score: Teachers College 64 Weerona 0

Scorers: Brian Lawrence 5 Tries, Peter McQueen 3 Tries, Tom Doolan 3 Tries, Errol Carney, Rob Pickard, Steve Markham, Chris Osland, Chris McCarthy Tries, Peter McQueen 4 conversions.

B Grade: Teachers College 60 Weerona 0

C Grade: Teachers College 13 Weerona 11

Game 17 Vikings at Teachers College Oval

Score: Teachers College 4 Vikings 7

Hux must have been pulling his hair out when the Inter Collegiate team arrived back in town after spending a few days enjoying the camaraderie of the other colleges. The upshot of this was a number of injuries including Jon Sutherland carrying a leg injury, Steve Markham being forced out with a mouth injury while captain, Ralph Stevenson, was to miss his first game in a long time.

Once again, the depth of the club was on show as Paul May and Rob Pickard became the new halves combination and Peter McQueen joined Chris Osland in the centres.

In windy conditions the game was a tight affair where neither side was able to exert any superiority and the only reward for the College boys was a try to Rob Pickard while Vikings secured 7 points through a try and a penalty. Chris McCarthy provided a highlight with a 70m kick, admittedly with the breeze behind but it was to no avail.

The result was in doubt even in the last minute as Peter McQueen missed a penalty attempt as time ran out. This in some ways was a bit of relief as the boys had tasted defeat for the first time in the season and this took off a bit of pressure.

Scorers: Rob Pickard 1 Try.

B Grade: Teachers College 10 Vikings 34

C Grade: Teachers College 0 Vikings 0

Game 18 Shamrocks at Teachers College Oval.

Score: Teachers College 32 Shamrocks 4

There was some good news on the injury front as Garnet Pike had overcome his injury to take his place at fullback and main kicker. The other big task that faced the club was securing the George Tipper Trophy as Club Championship. It was close at the top with Vikings being within striking distance but Teachers (241) were able to get across the line by a mere 5 points after wins in A and C Grade while Vikings (236) were second.

Scorers: John Lambie, Chris McCarthy, Rob Pickard, Gregg Rowland, Peter McQueen Tries, Garnet Pike 2 Pen Goals and 3 Conversions.

B Grade: Teachers College 6 Shamrocks 10

C Grade: Teachers College 20 Shamrocks 4

The Semis.

Minor Semi:

B Grade: Teachers College 9 Tech College 3

Scorers: Peter Galloway 1 Try, John Halpin 1 Goal and 1 Pen Goal.

Major Semi: Vikings at University Oval

A Grade: Teachers College 19 Vikings 10

The College side was getting some injured players back on deck with most of the regulars fit and eager to take on the Blues. Jon Sutherland was moved into the 5/8th role while John Lambie was in the second row so that Nick Randall could be a part of the team. It was always going to be a tough battle and Vikings took an early lead 7-3 but by the break a Lawrence try had evened up the score. As the second half went on Teachers gained the ascendancy and a Nick Randall try and another to Brian Lawrence, both of them converted by Garnet Pike, one from the sideline, saw the College home by 9 points.

Another good piece of news was that Phil Greenaway came on as a replacement after overcoming his injury and most of the pieces to the puzzle were in place for the boys to taste success at last.

Scorers: Brian Lawrence 2 Tries, Nick Randall 1 Try, Garnet Pike 1 Pen Goal and 2 Conversions.

C Grade: Teachers College 6 Vikings 10

Final:

B Grade: Teachers College 0 Shamrocks 25

The Squad:

Neil Richardson	Chris Gardiner	Phil Luscombe
Greg Heathcote	Neil Skillen	Owen Green
Peter Malone	Chris Byrne	Paul May
Peter Sherlock	Jim Downes	Peter Galloway
John Halpin	Harry Verbruggen	Tom Doolon
Peter McQueen	Steve Carroll	Brian Beasley

Coach: Bill Chapman

C Grade: Teachers College 6 Weerona 6

Teachers College advanced to the Grand Final as they were higher on the points table.

The Grand Final.

The A Grade Team:

(1) Errol Carney	(2) Phil Williams	(3) Ralph Stevenson (c)
(4) Darryl Honeysett	(5) John Lambie	
(6) Peter Thompson	(8) Chris McCarthy	(7) Nick Randall
	(9) Rob Pickard	
	(10) Jon Sutherland	
(12) Steve Markham		(13) Chris Osland
(11) Brian Lawrence		(14) Phil Greenaway
	(15) Garnet Pike	
(16) Paul May		

Score: Teachers College 21 Vikings 0

There was an air of excitement and anticipation mixed with a degree of apprehension as the Teachers College team took the field at Wollongong Showground. College was the favourite but Vikings, who had just scraped home against Kiama in the Final, had been the only team to defeat Teachers during the season. Also in some people's mind would have been that the

team had been in a similar position in other years but had always fallen at the last hurdle. Would history repeat itself or would Teachers College at last get their name on that elusive First Grade Trophy?

Hux had a full player list to select his team, except for Wallaby Rowles, and he had to make some tough calls. In the end he made Rob Pickard the halfback and Phil Greenaway came onto the wing after recovering from his injury. This was tough on Paul May but he showed his great club spirit and maturity in a difficult situation.

In what was a bit of an anti-climax the game was virtually over at the halftime break as College had taken an imposing 17 nil lead after running with the breeze.

The first points came after 17 minutes when Phil Greenaway finished off a great run by Chris McCarthy. Not long after Chris Osland made a break and Brian Lawrence was on the spot to score a great try which was converted by Pike. Pike was also successful with a penalty and Greenway then crossed for his second try and the game was as good as over.

The second half was a drawn-out affair with the Vikings boys getting very frustrated which resulted in a few flare-ups, some would suggest triggered by some words of wisdom coming from some players, but who really knows?

The only points in the half were scored when Rob Pickard took an intercept, passed to Steve Markham who set up Greenaway for his second try.

The final whistle sounded, and the relief was easy to see on all the faces and at last Hux's dream had been fulfilled.

Scorers: Phil Greenaway 2 Tries, Brian Lawrence Try,
Garnet Pike 1 Pen Goal and 1 Conversion.

C Grade: Teachers College 6 Vikings 10

Scorers: John Halpin 2 Pen Goals.

The Squad:

Owen Lowe	Terry Seymour (c)	Jon Ryan
Ross Sanders	Tom Wren	Ken Weymark
Andrew Middleton	Lex Houtman	Peter Geekie
Steve Bignall	Dave O'Neill	Peter Benzi
Graeme Readett	Neil Harbrow	Peter Adams
Brian Scott	Peter Reidy	Glenn Diggins
Ian Corby	Chris Cheeseman	

Coach: Noel Whiteley

Honors

Club Champions 1972

	<i>Place</i>	<i>Points For</i>	<i>Points Against</i>	<i>Points</i>	
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A Grade	First	410	80	25	Premiers
B Grade	Third	298	132	22	Finalists
C Grade	First	226	80	25	Grand Finalist