

Teachers lock in doubt for RU showdown

Teachers-Uni have No 8 forward Paul Wright in doubt for next Saturday's Illawarra Rugby Union grand final at Dapto Showground.

Wright was forced from the field with a shoulder injury during Saturday's final against Goulburn at Vikings Rugby Field.

Teachers-Uni won the nail-biter 10-7 to make the grand final for the first time since 1973, when Teachers College took out the premiership.

They will play Vikings, who advanced straight to the grand final with their 16-4 win against Goulburn in the major semi-final.

Should Wright be unavailable for Saturday's premiership decider, Teachers-Uni coach John Patterson probably will name Frank Negro at breakaway and move team captain Noel Yates to the back of the scrum.

The obvious replacement for Wright would be John Searl, but the utility forward is in Wollongong Hospital with an infected leg, a legacy of last Sunday's minor semi-final against Kiama at Rugby Park, Shoalhaven.

Searl saw a doctor late last week and he advised that if the leg hadn't improved by Saturday afternoon, he should go to Wollongong Hospital.

He went up to the hospital and they admitted him.

Another probable change to the side which beat Goulburn will be in the inside centre position where Derek Davies (leg injury) should be fit to resume his place instead of Barry Lecornu.

Goulburn opened the scoring after only seven minutes and things looked grim for Teachers-Uni.

With breakaway Willie Watt prominent, Goulburn took the ball to close to the students line before winning the vital maul and spinning the ball out.

Fullback Greg Brims joined the backline on the burst, took the ball and scored. He missed the conversion attempt to leave the score at 4-0.

Teachers-Uni came back with a penalty goal to Steve Audsley to make it 4-3.

Audsley was again in the thick of the action leading up to Teachers-Uni a try in the 16th minute.

By TIM MULLINS

● Illawarra rugby union final results:

First Grade: TEACHERS-UNI 10 (B. Sewell try, S. Audsley 2 pen goals) d GOULBURN 7 (Greg Brims try, pen goal).

Second Grade: VIKINGS 12 d BOWRAL 10.

Third Grade: VIKINGS 15 d BOWRAL 6.

Just as Brims had done, he joined the backline, but chipped over the top when the defence came to him.

Winger Brad Sewell then confirmed his rating as one of the fastest finishers in the Illawarra competition by winning the race to the ball over the line to score.

Audsley added another penalty goal to make it 10-4 at halftime.

Soon into the second half Greg Brims landed a penalty to reduce the margin to 10-7, the final score.

It was a nail-biting second half, with Goulburn needing only a penalty goal to draw level at 10-all and advance to the grand final because of their higher competition standing.

Twice they had the opportunity to land that goal from relatively easy positions.

But first Greg Brims and then his brother Gary had shots without raising the flags and time just ran out for the Tablelanders.

After the game, Goulburn coach Ken Player put his team's loss down to poor goalkicking and a lack of tightness in the forwards.

He still maintains Goulburn were the better side beaten by a Teachers-Uni line-up totally committed to hard defence and bustling the opposition.

"Goalkicking cost us the game," he said, "And of course, we missed Vince Fester (hamstring injury) at five-eighth," Player said.

"Joe Fitzgibbon filled in well, but Vince is really a classy player and a lot sharper.

Vikings, minor premiers in all grades and club champions, will be represented in all three grand finals after yesterday's lower grade finals.

In second grade Vikings

beat Bowral 12-10, getting out of jail with a penalty goal in the last minute of the game.

They will play Goulburn in the grand final.

The Vikings third graders beat Bowral as well, but by a more convincing 15-6 scoreline.

They will meet Waratahs in the grand final.

● PICTURE: Teachers-Uni prop Roy Dunworth puts a bear-hug on Goulburn five eighth Joe Fitzgibbon during Saturday's Illawarra rugby union final at Vikings Rugby Field.



STEWART GETS FINAL

Jim Stewart has won the race to referee Saturday's Illawarra rugby union grand final at Dapto Showground on Saturday.

Stewart has been named for the first grade grand final between Teachers-Uni and Vikings, while Brian Carr has the reserve grade match and Dave Carruthers will handle the thirds.

At the referees' association annual dinner on Saturday night it was announced Allied Plant Services would sponsor the association for \$3000 for three years to further its education program.

And long-standing referee Kevin Malise was honored with the life member's trophy for his work for the association. —NICK HARTGERINK.