

Here Come The

Roosters.....



*The History of the
Woy Woy
RLFC*

Part One - "The Roosters are born"

The Woy Woy Roosters were formed through the insistence of a local Police Officer Constable Jenkins, who was not a big fan the fistic attributes of some lads near the Woy Woy Baths. Constable Jenkins suggested that it would be in their best interests to begin a football club, in doing so expending some energy, which may otherwise get them into more trouble.

It is hard to believe that one man could make such a lasting impression on the Woy Woy area that saw a club grow into one that would be considered one of the best in Country Rugby League, but he surely did.

When Constable Jenkins suggested this idea, a committee comprising Ned Hayes (Secretary), Alf Nash (President) and Peter Skekos (Treasurer) was formed and laid the foundations from which this mighty club would be formed.

Ned Hayes held the position of Secretary until the war, and was later elected Secretary in 1946. He would hold this position until 1950 and in doing so was made the first Life Member of the Woy Woy Rugby League Football Club.

Some players who were among the very first players for the club included Jock McClintock, Arthur Wilson, Harry Healey, Bill Thompson, Reg Stableton, Arthur Thompson, Mike McQuade and Tony Skekos. Alf Nash and Peter Skekos while being the clubs administration also figured in its early teams.

The original jumper was black with white 4 inch bands, however as this clashed with the Ourimbah club it was changed to Sky Blue with Gold 4 inch bands in 1930.



The gold bands were removed from the jumper in 1933, with sky blue remaining the clubs playing jumper until 1956.

Club official Tom McGuire instigated the further change of jumper, this time to the famous White with a red Vee, which is still worn with great pride by our modern day players.

***Pictured - The Woy Woy RLFC
Circa 1934***

In a far cry from the professional game of today, players in this era were paid 2/- to play football, with the club supplying jumpers. Players were responsible for the rest of their equipment and playing apparel.

Matches were played on Wednesdays and Sundays in 1929 through to 1932. Wednesday's matches were played against teams such as Taxi drivers, Fireman and Police, and were treated as more of a social event than a serious hit out.

On Sundays teams including Greenwich, Hornsby, Stanmore and Homebush Marist Brothers were invited up to play. In the event of cancellations, which did happen on a semi-regular basis, the players boarded Charlie Margins truck to Kariang to play against the Mt Penang Boys home.

If successful the side was treated to tea and sandwiches, however if the Boys Home were victorious they would be treated to a lavish feast. Needless to say losses occurred quite regularly at the Boys Home.

From 1933 Woy Woy played in the Erina Shire competition on Saturday afternoons and the Toohey's Challenge Cup on Sundays.

In the Challenge Cup teams were invited up from Sydney, with the team beating Woy Woy by the greatest number of points during the year returning to challenge for the Cup.

The Toohey's Challenge Cup was successfully run until 1937, when Woy Woy were disqualified for fielding two players from Homebush in a match against Hornsby. Subsequently Hornsby was also found to have played three unqualified players, therefore allowing Woy Woy to keep the Cup.

Woy Woy were to reform as Ettalong RLFC and won the 1938 and 1939 Woy Woy Shire Challenge Cup and the Toohey's Cup in 1939.

Players who figured in the clubs' teams during this period included Mick Hammond, Les Parkes, Ron Bailey, Max Tuxford, Tommy Winter, Harold Hagney, Jim Mitchell, Jack Scully, Bob Morsilla (Jackson) (snr) and Ted Whitfield. Jack Scully would later go on to be a highly regarded Secretary Manager of the thriving Ettalong Beach War Memorial Club.

Pictured - The Roosters 1946 'B' Grade Side at Graham Park Gosford. Notice the Palm Trees!



Bob Morsillo was to later donate a trophy in honour of his son who was killed in a motor vehicle accident in the 1970s. The Bob Morsillo trophy is still played for on a home and away basis by Central Coast First Grade sides.

After the war Woy Woy Railway station worker Max Ayres got together with Norm Wise, Alan Cross and Charlie Johnson to see if they could get a team started. The War had taken its toll of former players, therefore the club turned to Killcare SLSC Members Colin Gow, Bill Hanscombe and the Whiting brothers to help gradually reform the club in 1945 and 1946. Ed Reddy was elected as President of the club with Ned Hayes again assuming the role of Secretary from the incumbent Pat McNerney.

1947 saw Woy Woy enter the Central Coast Competition for the first time. Success for the club was not immediate, however the Club's B grade side made the Grand Final, but were defeated by Wyong 10 points to 9.

Some of the pioneering Woy Woy Players in 1946 were Jack Chanter, Bill Hanscombe, Ron Jones, Ray Papps, Bruce Fisher, Max Airs, Jack Campbell, Pop Terrill, Charlie Johnson, Colin Gow, Joe Gereghty, Aub Nash and Jack Riding.

The side was captained by Aub Nash and also included Chook Frazer, the brother of swimming immortal Dawn Frazer.

1948 proved to be another struggle, with the clubs C grade team being the only side to make the Grand Final, but were denied a Premiership again by Wyong, 10 points to 5. During the season the club faced Morrisset in an away match of the Premiership.

As Woy Woy emerged as winners, the crowd took offence to the efforts of the referee, who was ironically a former Woy Woy player. The locals pelted Woy Woy players and supporters with rocks. Max Ayres was the worst injury, unfortunately having his head split open. Many other suffered bruising while the club never returned to Morrisset again!!

The clubs first post war success came in 1949 with a "C" grade Premiership over Gosford (15-2). The Premiership side contained; Bill Ward, Lionel Sheely, Ken Jones, Charlie Couche, Alf Dowling, Gordon Coulter, Kevin Wilson, Bevan Hallinan, W. Costello and C.Hore.

1949 saw the clubs First Grade side make the Semi Finals for the first time, finishing second on the table and the end of the Premiership rounds. They could not go on with the job however, failing to make the Grand Final. This "C" grade Grand Final victory was the start of 4 consecutive titles for Woy Woy in this grade.



1950 saw the Club defeat Erina 3-0, Wyong 8-2 in 1951 and went on to win the 1952 Competition by defeating Erina 10-5.

Pictured - The Roosters 1951 'C' Grade Premiership winning team

Players who figured in the four consecutive titles included; Stan Rogerson, John Shoesmith, Benny Benson, Jimmy King, Barry Langford, Les Davis, George Garland, Dennis Coffey, Brian Bird, Peter Dann, Chica Holden, Nev and Brian Thorsby, and Brian Halderman. Harry Marsh was the successful coach.

The Woy Woy "B" Grade side also won the Premiership in 1952 defeating Ourimbah 13

points to 10, and did so without losing a match all season. This era set the standard for future Roosters teams, with the club fielding at least one team on Grand Final day right up until 1973.

The 1952 side contained outstanding players Darkie Whitton, Greg Terrill, Keith Piconi, Hooker John Reed and Halfback Bill Ward. Piconi was the first Australian Champion for the highly regarded Ocean Beach SLSC, winning the Beach Flags (or Musical Flags) at the 1948-49 Australian Championships at Bondi.

During this period Bill Ward was a great stalwart of the club, playing from 1947 through to 1952. He was acknowledged as a fine clubman and remained a long time Roosters supporter over the ensuing years.

1953 and 1954 were disappointing years for the club but success was only just around the corner.

The Ourimbah Magpies, at the time the most successful club on the Coast, defeated Woy Woy in both "B" Grade (7-0) and "C" Grade (12-9) 1953 Grand Finals.

In 1954 Woy Woy faced Gosford in the “B” Grade decider, however suffered a 31-0 drubbing at the hands of the Townies.

Woy Woy returned to the winning list in the 1955 “B” grade Grand Final, defeating The Entrance 21-7.

The Entrance was also the Clubs opponents in the “D” Grade Grand Final however the Tigers turned the tables on this occasion for a 13-7 victory. The First Grade side under the coaching of Ken Walker failed to make the Semi Finals.

1956 saw the most significant change in our clubs great history. Club official Tom McGuire instigated the change of the clubs playing strip from Sky Blue to White with a Red Vee. Johnny Hawke was appointed Captain/Coach, which resulted in a general lifting of the standard of play in all grades.

Hawke, a gifted five-eighth played for the powerful St George Dragons between 1949 and 1952, Captained the Dragons to their second Premiership, a memorable victory over South Sydney in 1949. Hawke was selected for NSW in 1948 while playing in Canberra, and was selected to tour with the 1948 Kangaroos before signing with the Dragons. His last Test match for Australia was in 1951, before leaving the Dragons for a Captain/Coach position in Kyogle. Sadly Johnny, suffering from Parkinson's disease, passed away in 1992 at age 66.

In 1956 the Woy Woy Committee and its supporters were very active, with the highlight of the season being a match against Western Suburbs. With gate takings amounting to a record 247 Pounds, the Roosters defeated the Magpies 21-9 in a boil over. The club also instigated major works on Woy Woy Oval, rebuilding sections of the ground to stop swamp water from flooding. They also erected an extension to the Grand Stand and installed new floodlights. During this time Jack Whipp was acknowledged for his assistance in getting sand stone to rebuild the Oval.

Unfortunately at the end of the Competition Woy Woy had nineteen players disqualified from the “A” and “B” grade sides and only fielded teams in the “C” and “D” grade Grand Finals, defeating The Entrance in both matches, 9-5 and 9-7 respectively.

Players who were part of the “D” grade Premiership winning team were;

E.White, J.Mudge, J. Scobell, R.Ebb, J.Cole, G.Thorsby, J.Maguire, A.Ryan, R.Wright, K.Plasto, J.Church, R. Maddocks, D.Gibbons, R Johnstone, J.Travers and G.Benson.

1957 saw the club once again fail to exert its authority on the First Grade Premiership, however were represented in the “B” Grade Grand Final against Gosford, with the Dennis Coffey Captained Roosters suffering a defeat by 14 points to 9.

Frank Lloyd was appointed First Grade Captain/Coach for the 1958 season, with the club placing high expectations on its senior squad, and while not making the Grand Final the side performed creditably. For the second consecutive season Woy Woy were defeated by the Gosford Townies in the “B” Grade decider 15-12.



Pictured - A Roosters Junior side from 1959

In yet another coaching change Rod Lennon was appointed Captain/Coach for the 1959 campaign. The nucleus of the First Grade squad was Five-Eighth Lennon, Cec Healey, Tom Austin, Joe Wilesmith, Harry Haywood, and "Bomber Hines. Hines was later to play with the Cronulla-Sutherland Club in the Sydney Competition.

Success for the Roosters on Grand Final day 1959 came by way of a "C" Grade victory over The Entrance (4-3) and a "D" Grade triumph over Gosford 5-3.

During the 1950s Woy Woy players and supporters had given their all, with often up to 6 busloads travelling to matches to give their vocal support. In the 13 years since the Central Coast Competition was instigated by Ray Maher, the Roosters had won many lower grade titles, however the elusive First Grade Shield remained out of the clubs reach.



Pictured - Woy Woy RLFC Circa 1940

*Pictured - Woy Woy "D" Grade
Premiership winning team of
1957*

