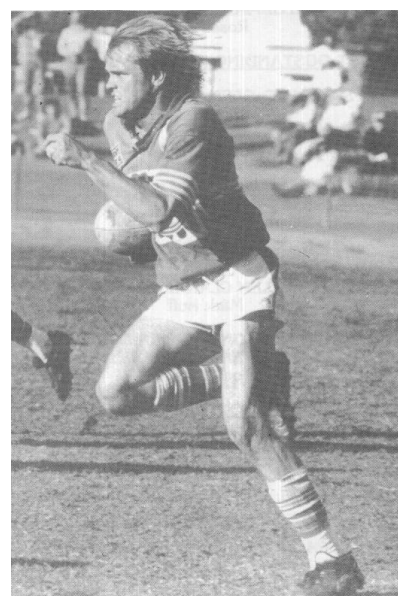


1996

Tony Price returned from the Balmain Tigers in 1996 to begin a 4 year term as First Grade Captain / Coach. His 4 years at the helm resulted in disappointment in 1996, and Premierships in 1997, 1998 and 1999..and a very “unfortunate” way in 1999 to end his playing career. Reserve Grade were coached by Craig Miller, who had outstanding success as a coach of Junior teams, and who was the coach of the winning 1995 Third Grade team. Craig Hubbard took over the coaching duties of the Third Grade side. First Grade lost only 4 games all year – but unfortunately one was the Grand Final. Craig Miller again tasted success in Reserve Grade, while Third Grade went down narrowly to South in the Grand Final. Reserve Grade defeated Kurri 20 – 6 in the Grand Final and the winning Reserve Grade side was 1.Les Smith (4 goals) 2. Mark Saunders (try) 3. Michael Blake 4. Luke Gibson 5. James Lovegrove (try) 6. Ben Porter 7. Dwayne Neilson 13. Justin Lobsey 12. Brendan McKell 11. Greg Price 10. Matt Thompson 9. Matt Marks (try) 8. Greg Ninness and 14. Andrew Taylor. New players in grade in 1996 included West Junior Greg Ninness, Anthony Pauling from Central, Frank Lawler from Maitland and Les Smith. The “Clubman of the Year” was awarded to Michael Reid, and the “Most Outstanding Players” in each grade were awarded to Tony Price (Firsts), Matt Thompson (Reserves) and Jon Wilson (Thirds). Brett Cullen and ex Kotara junior, Steve Storrie (*pictured*), were selected in the Country Firsts team. Storrie, for the 2nd consecutive year, was also selected to represent the NSW Residents Team. In a sad note, former President J. J. “Mo” Wilson (*1st Grade Coach 1951 and 1952, President WSRLFC 1947 to 1957*) passed away during the year. 1996 was a very good year, and West were again Club Champions, but the “priceless” years of 1997, 1998 and 1999 were just around the corner. (NB Page 2 of this summary refers to a very “unfortunate” incident that occurred after the Final when West beat Kurri 20 – 16 in extra time.)



<i>Pre Season</i>	<i>Opponent</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Opponent</i>	<i>Result</i>
Round 1	Toronto	Won 40 - 6	Kurri	8 all Draw
Round 2	Maitland	Won 30 - 8		
<i>Competition</i>	<i>Opponent</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Reserves</i>	<i>Thirds</i>
Round 1	Kurri	Won 30 - 6	Won 28 - 20	22 all Draw
Round 2	Cessnock	Won 36 - 18	Won 26 - 18	Won 52 - 18
Round 3	NN Bay	Won 52 - 22	Won 58 - 14	Won 50 - 18
Round 4	Toronto	Lost 20 - 6	Won 36 - 6	Won 40 - 10
Round 5	South	Won 16 - 14	Won 16 - 10	Won 28 - 20
Round 6	Central	Won 66 - 0	Won 64 - 4	Won 64 - 6
Round 7	Waratah	Won 60 - 0	Won 56 - 4	Won 34 - 10
Round 8	Lakes	Lost 20 - 6	Won 30 - 16	Won 20 - 2
Round 9	Maitland	Won 62 - 18	Won 50 - 12	Won 32 - 14
Round 10	Kurri	Won 21 - 10	Won 26 - 16	Lost 10 - 8
Round 11	Cessnock	Won 34 - 6	Won 38 - 10	Won 36 - 4
Round 12	NN Bay	Won 84 - 10	Won 60 - 8	Won 36 - 0
Round 13	Toronto	Won 36 - 8	Won 48 - 6	Won 12 - 7
Round 14	South	Won 28 - 10	Lost 11 - 10	Lost 32 - 4
Round 15	Central	Won 102 - 4	Won 76 - 0	Won 68 - 4
Round 16	Waratah	Won 66 - 4	Won 44 - 2	Won 72 - 10
Round 17	Lakes	Won 22 - 20	Won 14 - 10	Lost 22 - 20
Round 18	Maitland	Won 52 - 0	Won 36 - 4	Lost 18 - 16
Qualifying Semi				Kurri 8 West 4
Minor Semi Final				West 16 M'land 12
Major Semi Final	Lakes	Lost 24 - 23	West 12 Lakes 10	
Final	Kurri	Won 20 - 16		West 20 Kurri 10
GRAND FINAL	Lakes 16 def West 6		West 20 Kurri 6	South 8 West 0

Ugly Punch After Bell Breaks Jaw

Barry Toohey

Daily Telegraph

Tuesday August 27 1996

Newcastle Western Suburbs Rugby League hooker, Tony Hutton, was laid up in hospital yesterday, his jaw cracked in two places, wondering if his dreams of playing in the big time had been shattered.

Hutton was felled by a punch from a Kurri rival, after playing a leading role in West's 20 - 16 extra time win over the Bulldogs in the Newcastle Preliminary Final on Sunday.

The incident occurred several seconds after the extra time siren sounded when the two sides came together to shake hands.

The sickening sound of his jaw being breaking under the blow was heard by just about every player on the ground.

Police were investigating the incident and conducted interviews with a number of players, officials and spectators who saw the punch being thrown.

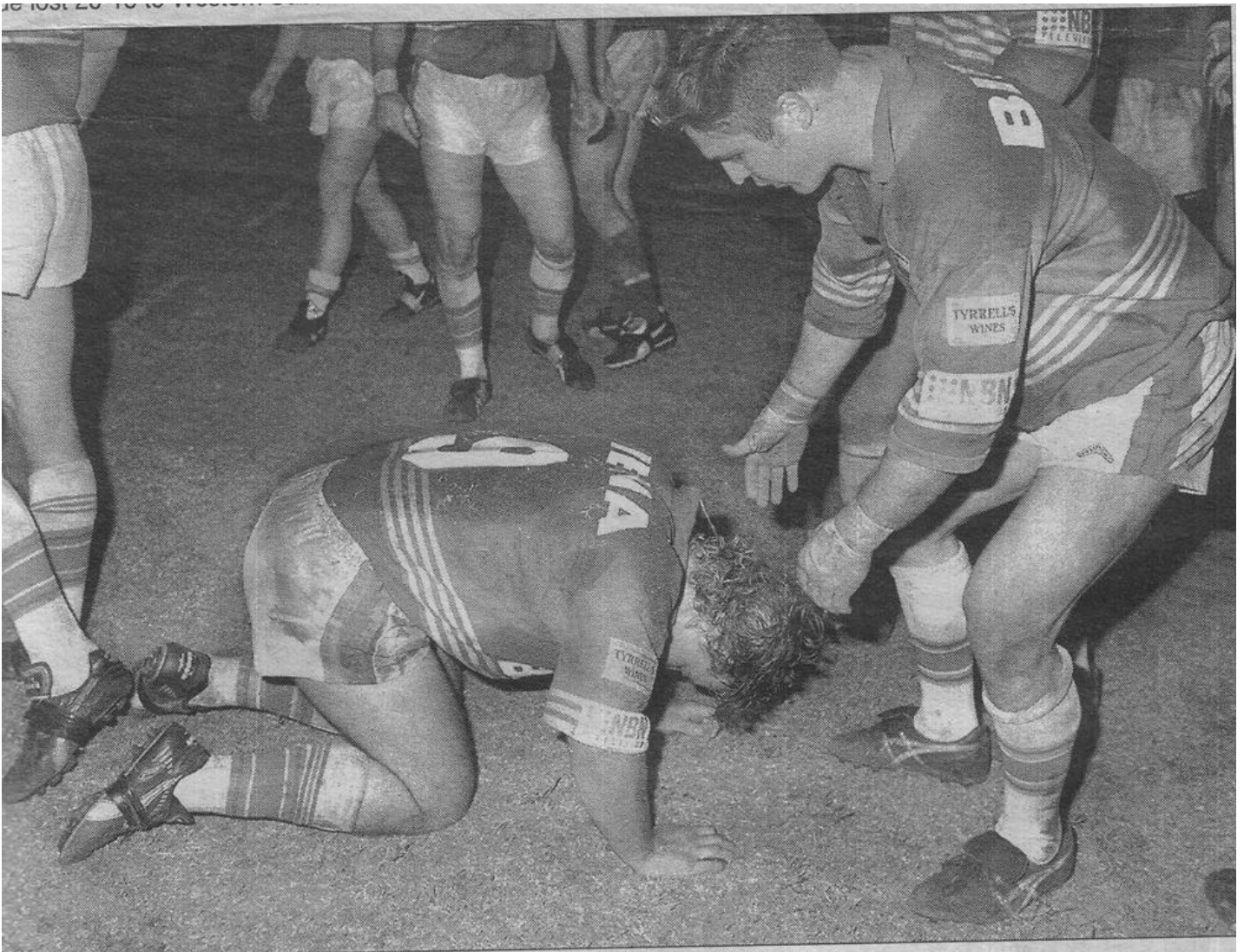
Hutton, who will now miss next Sunday's Newcastle Grand Final and the opportunity to impress talent scouts from the Sydney Tigers and Parramatta, is awaiting an operation to have his broken jaw wired.

He said yesterday from John Hunter Hospital he was still stunned by the incident.

"I went up to him after the game, and put my hand out to shake his, and the next thing I know I was on the ground with blood everywhere".

"Everyone around heard the cracking noise, and I knew from the blood that he had broken my jaw."

"I couldn't believe it - still can't."



A dazed West hooker Tony Hutton recovers on the ground after having his jaw broken by a post-match punch