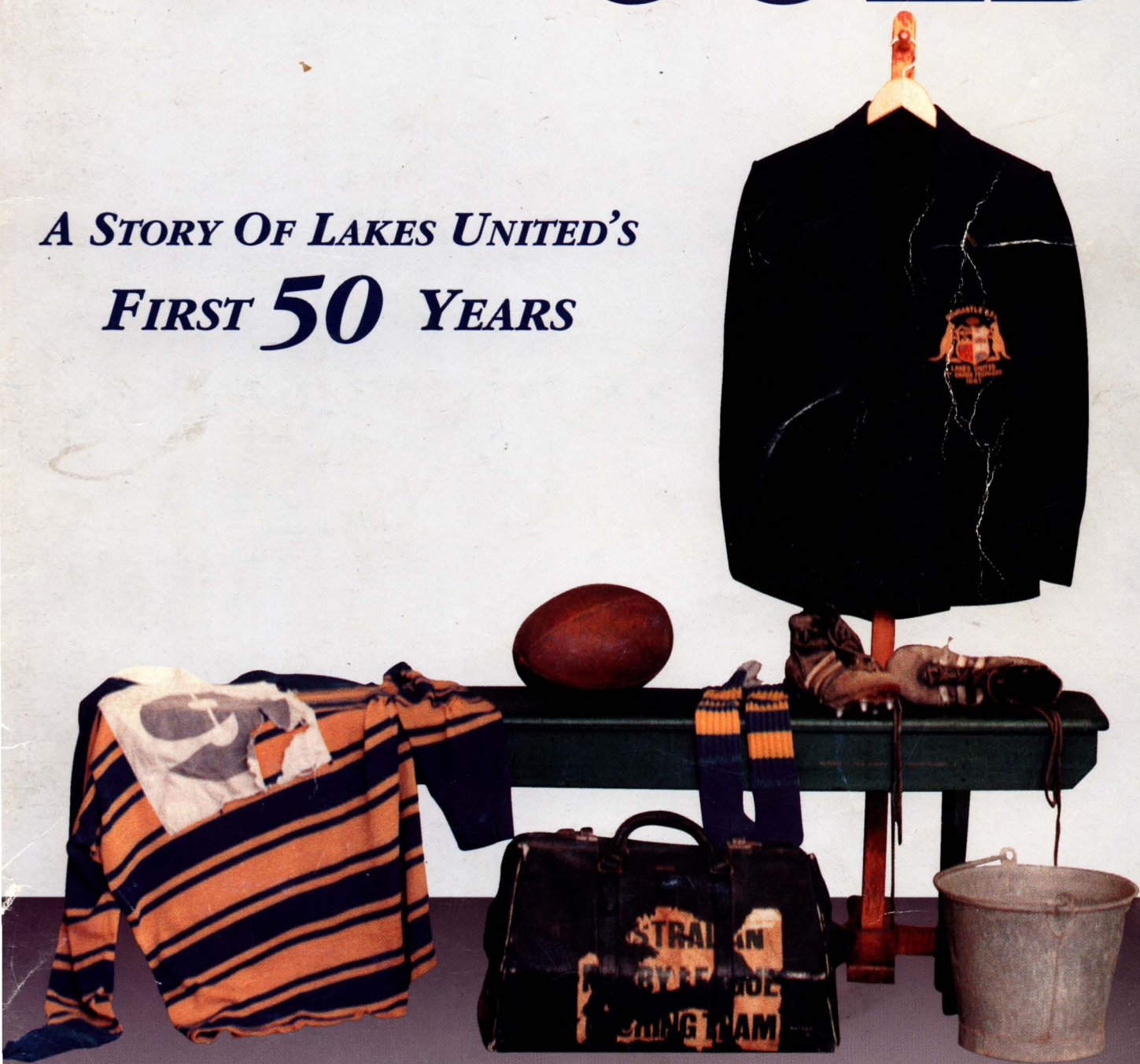


# True BLUE *and* GOLD

A STORY OF LAKES UNITED'S  
FIRST 50 YEARS



by Stephen Brown

# True **BLUE** *and* **GOLD**

**A STORY OF LAKES UNITED'S FIRST FIFTY YEARS**

*by*  
*Stephen Brown*

**Limited Edition 1997**

Book No. **327** of 500

*Published by*  
Belmont Sportsman's Club Co-operative Limited

*Printed by*  
Neader's Print Services

National Library of Australia Number and ISBN 0 646 28910 1

*Front Cover Photography*  
Stuart Gaut

*To Helen, Dana and Alexandra,  
Thanks for being patient.*

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Every endeavour has been made to ensure "True BLUE *and* GOLD" is a factual account of the first 50 years of Lakes United Rugby League Football Club.

Reference material for this book has come from a number of sources.

To the former players and supporters who gave their time for interviews thank you for your patience and assistance. In addition pertinent staff members of the Belmont Sportsman's Club, the Newcastle Regional Public Library, The Newcastle Herald and the Newcastle Rugby League who's time and effort was greatly appreciated.

Also thank you to Bruce Thomas, his outstanding accumulation of NRL statistics since 1969 proved to be an invaluable source of reference.

Special thanks to Chris Paul for his contribution to "The Lifeblood Of The Club" and for the encouragement he extended to myself over the past three years.

Finally to Grahame "Dean" Buckley who's association with rugby league in the Belmont area dates back to 1936. Without Dean's enthusiasm and recollection of early events an accurate account would of been almost impossible. Thank you very much Dean.

# FOREWORD

*A number of years ago Churchill, Gasnier, Raper and Fulton were named as the "Immortals" of Rugby League. Personal sentiment indicated that the likes of Paul, Thomson, Craig and Hincks would not have been out of place had they been selected by the eminent panel of judges. Such is my feeling for this Lakes United Club of ours - an outstanding club with an outstanding record, full of outstanding personalities.*

*Fifty years of existence is a special cause for celebration. During our celebrations we will remember those magnificent premierships-winning teams, starting with the efforts of the 1947 "Fishermen". We remember seasons when success was hard to come by, which made the grind of training on a cold winter's night all the more difficult. Remember also the exceptional efforts of our committees, including our ladies committees, and our team officials.*

*Throughout the fifty years lifetime friendships have been forged. No better example of camaraderie exists than that of our '74-75' premierships team, their biennial re-unions being an occasion to catch up with former team mates, to make those tackles, score those tries and win those scrums all over again. The untiring encouragement of our supporters is also remembered. Many of our current band of supporters will be able to reminisce about a half-century of continuous involvement.*

*Lakes United Junior RLFC hold a special place in our history, as well as the sub-junior and schoolboy organisations. Our sphere of influence extends to other subsidiary bodies, even to the formative days of rugby league in the Central Coast and Toronto areas.*

*In reflecting on our history to date, consideration should also be given to the future of Lakes United. Those currently responsible for the affairs of our club (including our juniors and subsidiary clubs) must set goals towards future development. Resources in this day and age are not always easy to come by, so plenty of hard work lies ahead.*

*An excellent example of the success that can be achieved by hard work is Stephen Brown's compilation and publishing of "True Blue and Gold". This history of Lakes United will be very much sought after. I feel extremely privileged that Stephen has asked me to make this contribution.*

*Best wishes for the next fifty years and beyond!!*

**Chris Paul**

# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Foreword .....	v
PART I 50 Years : A Chronology .....	1
PART II A Gallery Of Great Players .....	34
PART III Seven To Remember .....	38
PART IV The Men And Women Who Made Lakes Great .....	51
PART V Field Generals .....	53
PART VI The Lifeblood Of The Club .....	59
PART VII How They Finished .....	64
PART VIII The Business End Of The Season .....	66
PART IX The Coaches .....	70
PART X The Officials .....	72
PART XI A Short Walk From The Long Paddock .....	74
PART XII The Essentials .....	77
PART XIII Life Members .....	79
PART XIV For The Record .....	81
PART XV Did You Know? .....	86

# 50 Years: A Chronology

Think of where you were... and what you were doing... when Scoular's men defied the critics to triumph in the 1947 grand final at New Lambton Oval.

Or when referee Spohr awarded only two penalties in the entire 1968 grand final between Lakes United and South Newcastle.

Or when Lakes won all three grades in the last series of the 1979 premiership to tie club championship honours with Cessnock.

Maybe you can remember where you were. Probably you can't. You know it's all back there, through a treasury of personalities and events, weaving its way forward with momentum that begun in 1945.

The history of Lakes United is

# PART I

a swarm of interaction, on and off the field of play. Untangling the club's first 50 years has its limits. What to say? Whom to single out? Whom to cheer, jeer, mourn and salute?

Newcastle people love their rugby league. They take the seasons and tumble them around in their minds and talk about the players and matches and the development off the field. A radio talk show, the local pub, the back fence—the medium or venue doesn't matter. Every one has his or her version of how it went: Perkins midfield kick is returned by Fisher who makes a slashing run up the middle before being tackled; Burgess, from dummy half, makes a ten yard gain; Brock, also from dummy half, makes a further eight yards; Gardiner barges for the line but is pushed back; fifth tackle; Shiels fires a pass out to Gailey who fades left then slips an inside pass to Burgess steaming up the middle. He's stopped just short of the line; last tackle; Thomson goes to dummy half, sends a short pass to Gailey, who quickly unloads to Proudlock who races over to score untouched. Seconds later the bell rings. *Ad infintum.*

Is it presumptuous to select the "high spots" of Lakes United's first 50 years? Just remember it is not such a distant relative of what you're likely to hear at, say, a regular meeting of the "Table of Knowledge" in the Belmont Sportsman's Club on some cold, clear Monday in July.

---

# THE EARLY YEARS

---

While I was learning to play rugby league in the mid 1960's I often wondered how our sport began in the area and how it developed to become a part of our lives today. During this same period the best player in Belmont was Allan Thomson who was just starting to make a name for himself. For me to appreciate that Thomson had been the best of his era and one of Lakes United's best ever I had to know about the great players and teams from previous seasons going all the way back to the early years.

The story of Lakes United Rugby League Football Club goes back to the late 1920's and early 1930's when several unsuccessful attempts were made to start rugby league in the Belmont and Swansea areas. All attempts failed due mainly to a lack of committed players and the fact that soccer was the dominant code around the lake at the time.

'Chock' Orman, secretary of the sailing club, and Les Wells formed a side in 1936 consisting of young men, many of whom were soccer players coerced by their mates into giving rugby league a chance. Fred Dodds took on the coaching role. Although this team lasted only one season, the seeds were sown for the future of the code in Belmont.

In 1939 another attempt was made and this time it was greeted with success, all be it minor. The first teams formed were Under 16's and an All Age team comprising mainly of young men under the age of 20.

Mick Shields (ex Sydney Western Suburbs who toured New Zealand with Australia in 1935) had moved into the area and soon took an interest in the young Belmont players. It was not long before he became coach of these early teams. Shields was primarily responsible for organizing schoolboy football comprising of teams from Belmont, Charlestown, Pelican and Swansea. Dean Buckley, Bill "Rube" Iles, Keith Larsen, Sandy Pearce and Artie Payne helped coach these young lads, many of whom later became Lakes players. Unfortunately the war intervened making it difficult to continue organizing schoolboy football.

In 1940 a number of good juniors from Belmont including Dean Buckley, Ken Donne, "Rube" Iles, Keith Larsen, Barry Melville, Les "Bokom" Phillips, Rob Richards and George Sanderson travelled into Lambton to play for Western Suburbs (the Belmont area was part of their boundary). These players were later followed by the likes of Ramsay Buckley, Max Foster, Albert Paul and Tom Pitman all of whom helped strengthen the Lambton club considerably.

To help stimulate interest in the area the Belmont Challenge Shield was contested in 1944. The format involved six NRL sides playing a combined Belmont/West team. The club with the greatest winning margin over the Belmont/West combination would take the shield. Cessnock proved to be the superior club.

1945 saw Belmont enter a young side in the Newcastle A Grade Junior competition. Under the coaching of Fred Dodds

## First Grade Sunday June 25th June 1944

Belmont /West		vs	South	
1	O. SCREEN		14	McCARTER
2	ISLES		15	PARKER
3	MADDISON		17	LAWSON
4	BROWN		21	ROSS
5	BUCKLEY		19	ALSBURY
6	SUTHERLAND		16	KAY
7	T. SCREEN		20	PERRETT
8	ANDERSON		29	BOLEWSKI
9	MADDISON		11	SADIER
10	RODGERS		13	HUME
11	CROZIER		26	STARKS
12	ANDERSON		22	WALKER
13	MARKER		5	PARKER

Referee: F. Wilkinson

this team played good football throughout the season; defeating North in the grand final. Team members included Russell Naughton, Bruce Brotherton, Russell Beard, "Rube" Iles, Merv Neal, Dean Buckley (captain), Neville Crocket, Alex Dick, Max Foster, Jimmy Thompson, Allan Brotherton, Gerald Crozier, Albert Paul, Bob Marker, Jim Marker and Max Burrell. The feeling in the area was that it was time to seek a higher level of rugby league for the local players.

In September 1945 Belmont Rugby League Football Club applied for a first grade district in the NRL competition. This comprehensive application was prepared by the Hon. Sec. Bill Dart.

The NRL deferred the application until 1946. At the conclusion of the 1946 season the NRL created a fifth semi-final spot in reserve grade to gauge the strength of the Belmont club. Belmont fared extremely well defeating Western Suburbs 15-3 and Kurri 28-5 before losing 23-4 to a Central Newcastle side that included future internationals Clive Churchill and Bob Lulham. These performances further illustrated the Belmont area's depth considering three of its best forwards (Pitman, Sanderson and Thomson) were playing for Western Suburbs that year.

Finally in September 1946 the application was granted on a trial basis leaving Belmont six months to structure a new club and prepare two sides.

The inaugural meeting was held at the Charlestown Institute. At this meeting Dean Buckley proposed to change the name of the club to Lakes United, the motion was seconded by Don Mansfield and successfully adopted. Lakes United was chosen because the clubs vast boundary encompassed a large part of Lake Macquarie.

So by late 1946 Belmont rugby league supporters said goodbye to Sunday 2nd Division football involving trips to Raymond Terrace, Dora Creek, Morisset etc and readied themselves for the greater challenge of the NRL competitions under the banner of Lakes United Rugby League Football Club.



**Belmont All Age Team 1939**

Photo: Howard Harris

*Back: Syd Pitman, Les Phillips, Bob Richards, Rube Iles, Dean Buckley, Edgar Buckley (Snr), Aub Parkinson, Frank -, Keith Larson, Alex Dick, Jack Watson, Chock Orman.*

*Seated Middle: Jack Fitzgerald, Dr. Neil Gordon, Claude Street.*

*Front: Max Burrell, Arch Black, Don Mansfield, Syd Lucas, Alf Lucas, George Sanderson.*

## Application by Belmont Rugby League Club for a 1st Grade District

We the representatives of the Belmont Rugby Club are here today to state a case for the granting of a 1st Grade District in the Lake Macquarie District, with the headquarters at Belmont.

The growth of the District has been rapid and will go ahead now with leaps and bounds and with players returning from the Services, to strengthen our existing Clubs, we feel the time is ripe for the League to grant us a 1st Grade District in this area.

### BOUNDARY

The boundary we are asking for starts at the Lake Macquarie boundary on the Pacific Highway at Highfield, thence a line drawn on Map to coast enclosing Kahibah, then along coast to the Entrance, from the Entrance to and including Wyong, along Pacific Highway to Ourimbah and Gosford.

A Line taken then from Wyong to Cockle Creek to enclose Wye. Morisset, Dora Creek, Awaba, Fassifern, Toronto and Teralba.

From Cockle Creek a line back to the starting point.

The Boundary to be known as the Lake Macquarie District and to include all towns and players inside the stated boundary lines (See marked map (red) enclosing boundary.)

### POPULATION

The population roughly in this Area is 40,000. Belmont as the head is the most densely populated having 6,000 within a 4 mile radius 12,000,- a 7 mile radius 17,000 - a 12 mile radius over 30,000.

From the above figures we feel that a 1st Grade District could function.

### TRANSPORT

Quick Bus Time Tables operate on Saturday and could handle any of our gates.

During the past Season buses handled crowds to League and Soccer. With through Buses to Newcastle and extra Buses now the War is over, transport would be sufficient.

With petrol restrictions lifted car traffic would be heavier.

A Train Service from Newcastle brings passengers in time for the early game and returns after the same.

We feel that with gates of £35 to £60 last Season at Belmont, transport will be better next year.

### GROUND ACCOMMODATION

We have an up-to-date ground with a grand stand to accommodate 350 and G.S. enclosure 150 - Total 500. Ticket Office at main gates and Grand Stand. Brick and sewered lavatories. Two dressing rooms under grand stand with showers and electric light for night training.

Has 300ft. of seating around Oval which is well fenced.

The ground has a Hill which would accommodate 1,000. Ground could hold 10,000 with room for car parking. Has up-to-date scoreboard.

Controlling body will be aloud to provide lighting for night training.

The ground was shared on alternate week-ends with the Soccer.

Probable application next season by that Code for a priority of dates, on the grounds of the Senior body, if secured will be a set-back for League on the ground. Soccer has a big hold in the District and we can't afford to give anything away. Belmont has 2 open grounds for Juniors.

### CLUB ORGANISATION

Belmont has been an established League Club for about 7 years, having grown from a small Junior Club to a Club in 1939 - with more than 50% of their players in West 1st and Reserve Teams and have since been each year, well represented in both of these teams, Belmont players have also gained Representative honours with Newcastle.

Last Season (1943-44) Belmont organised a 1st. Grade Challenge Competition in which 6 Teams took part, the Final being won by Cessnock. This helped to give the Code a big boost in the District, over £50 was raised and given to Patriotic Bodies.

Belmont 3rd. Grade last Saturday won the Final and today play in the Grand Final. Belmont's under 20, narrowly missed a place in the semi-finals being beaten by West, who they had previously beaten. Our under 18 Team improved into a very strong combination in the 2nd round. Our School Boys of which there are 2 teams are learning the game under Mr. Sam Williams (who was Wests Sec. last season) and will be entered in the competitions next season.

Among matches played by Belmont this season was against the Army who won 12-11. (The Army twice beat Central during season). Led West 1st Grade 13-5 at half-time - lost 2 players after half-time and were beaten 30-22. Three weeks ago played South Reserves and won 26-16. South a week later played in the Finals. Belmont Club therefore has some performance of merit behind it when it asks for a 1st. Grade boundary.

The Club has a wonderful working Committee with Mr. Wall Bell (well known with Central Club) as its President, Mr Bell also coaches the Juniors and Mr. Fred Dodds, old Eastern Suburbs 5/8, has coached the 3rd. Grade to victory.

The Club has its Coaches, Team Managers, Baggage Men, Ambulance Men, Ball Boys and Rubbers, which us up-to-date as any 1st. Grade organised Club.

**W. Dart**  
Hon. Secretary

*The original application to join the Newcastle Rugby League.*



**Belmont All Age Team 1939**

Photo: Howard Harris

*Back: Syd Pitman, Les Phillips, Bob Richards, Rube Iles, Dean Buckley, Edgar Buckley (Snr), Aub Parkinson, Frank -, Keith Larson, Alex Dick, Jack Watson, Chock Orman.*

*Seated Middle: Jack Fitzgerald, Dr. Neil Gordon, Claude Street.*

*Front: Max Burrell, Arch Black, Don Mansfield, Syd Lucas, Alf Lucas, George Sanderson.*

## Application by Belmont Rugby League Club for a 1st Grade District

We the representatives of the Belmont Rugby Club are here today to state a case for the granting of a 1st Grade District in the Lake Macquarie District, with the headquarters at Belmont.

The growth of the District has been rapid and will go ahead now with leaps and bounds and with players returning from the Services, to strengthen our existing Clubs, we feel the time is ripe for the League to grant us a 1st Grade District in this area.

### BOUNDARY

The boundary we are asking for starts at the Lake Macquarie boundary on the Pacific Highway at Highfield, thence a line drawn on Map to coast enclosing Kahibah, then along coast to the Entrance, from the Entrance to and including Wyong, along Pacific Highway to Ourimbah and Gosford.

A Line taken then from Wyong to Cockle Creek to enclose Wyee, Morisset, Dora Creek, Awaba, Fassifern, Toronto and Teralba.

From Cockle Creek a line back to the starting point.

The Boundary to be known as the Lake Macquarie District and to include all towns and players inside the stated boundary lines (See marked map (red) enclosing boundary.)

### POPULATION

The population roughly in this Area is 40,000. Belmont as the head is the most densely populated having 6,000 within a 4 mile radius 12,000, - a 7 mile radius 17,000 - a 12 mile radius over 30,000.

From the above figures we feel that a 1st Grade District could function.

### TRANSPORT

Quick Bus Time Tables operate on Saturday and could handle any of our gates.

During the past Season buses handled crowds to League and Soccer. With through Buses to Newcastle and extra Buses now the War is over, transport would be sufficient.

With petrol restrictions lifted car traffic would be heavier.

A Train Service from Newcastle brings passengers in time for the early game and returns after the same.

We feel that with gates of £35 to £60 last Season at Belmont, transport will be better next year.

### GROUND ACCOMMODATION

We have an up-to-date ground with a grand stand to accommodate 350 and G.S. enclosure 150 - Total 500. Ticket Office at main gates and Grand Stand. Brick and sewered lavatories. Two dressing rooms under grand stand with showers and electric light for night training.

Has 300ft. of seating around Oval which is well fenced.

The ground has a Hill which would accommodate 1,000. Ground could hold 10,000 with room for car parking. Has up-to-date scoreboard.

Controlling body will be aloud to provide lighting for night training.

The ground was shared on alternate week-ends with the Soccer.

Probable application next season by that Code for a priority of dates, on the grounds of the Senior body, if secured will be a set-back for League on the ground. Soccer has a big hold in the District and we can't afford to give anything away. Belmont has 2 open grounds for Juniors.

### CLUB ORGANISATION

Belmont has been an established League Club for about 7 years, having grown from a small Junior Club to a Club in 1939 - with more than 50% of their players in West 1st and Reserve Teams and have since been each year, well represented in both of these teams, Belmont players have also gained Representative honours with Newcastle.

Last Season (1943-44) Belmont organised a 1st. Grade Challenge Competition in which 6 Teams took part, the Final being won by Cessnock. This helped to give the Code a big boost in the District, over £50 was raised and given to Patriotic Bodies.

Belmont 3rd. Grade last Saturday won the Final and today play in the Grand Final. Belmont's under 20, narrowly missed a place in the semi-finals being beaten by West, who they had previously beaten. Our under 18 Team improved into a very strong combination in the 2nd round. Our School Boys of which there are 2 teams are learning the game under Mr. Sam Williams (who was Wests Sec. last season) and will be entered in the competitions next season.

Among matches played by Belmont this season was against the Army who won 12-11. (The Army twice beat Central during season). Led West 1st Grade 13-5 at half-time - lost 2 players after half-time and were beaten 30-22. Three weeks ago played South Reserves and won 26-16. South a week later played in the Finals. Belmont Club therefore has some performance of merit behind it when it asks for a 1st. Grade boundary.

The Club has a wonderful working Committee with Mr. Wall Bell (well known with Central Club) as its President, Mr Bell also coaches the Juniors and Mr. Fred Dodds, old Eastern Suburbs 5/8, has coached the 3rd. Grade to victory.

The Club has its Coaches, Team Managers, Baggage Men, Ambulance Men, Ball Boys and Rubbers, which us up-to-date as any 1st. Grade organised Club.

**W. Dart**  
Hon. Secretary

## THE FIRST YEAR

Upon the granting of Lakes United's boundary club officials made every endeavour to field a team capable of holding its own with the best teams in Newcastle. The nucleus of a good team was already there but the squad needed strengthening, especially in the backs. Bill "Berg" Prosper and Charlie Derkene went searching for a suitable captain/coach. Both these men were retired so had time to scout the country. After failing

Eight days later, against South, the effort was improved; South winning 11-10. The next week, at Belmont, Lakes and Kurri gave supporters an entertaining game to watch. The final whistle sounded with the score in Lakes favour 30 to 25. The final trial indicated the Fishermen (as Lakes were known in those days) would be a danger to the more experienced teams in the competition. Lakes beat Central 9-8 at District Park (April 6).

Saturday April 19, 1947 saw the commencement of Lakes



**Lakes United Executive and Reserve Grade 1947**

*Back (left): Peter Johnston (president), Jack Fitzgerald (manager), Dean Buckley (assistant secretary), Charlie Dixon (secretary)*

*Third (left): Max Walton, William Johnston, Ted Mateer, Clancy Preston, A. I. Morris, Tom Foster.*

*Second (left): Billy Smyth, Ken McKimm, Noel Sharpe, George Wilson, Bob Marker, Ces De Sylva, George Forward.*

*Front (left): Jim Marker, Alec Frewin, Ross Paul, J. Schofield, "Scotty" Campbell.*

to secure the services of Roy "Torchy" Hasson (a Canterbury halfback who played for NSW in 1947) prominent Lithgow halfback Jim Scoular was signed. Scoular had previous Sydney experience with Newtown and North Sydney. Ron Golden, Tom Keating and George Davies were notable gains from the Sydney area whilst Trevor Smythe and big Don "Donna" McKinnon transferred to Lakes from other Newcastle clubs. The boys from the Central Coast were added, the Sharpes, the Prestons, the Morris brothers and Alec Frewin. Later in the year Alan Ward also figured prominently in the senior side. These players along with the local talent already available were now ready to enter the NRL competitions.

The early form wasn't encouraging. First grade lost 25-0 at Maitland on Saturday, March 15 whilst the reserves fared slightly better losing 8-0 in the early match.

United's first season. Following a first series bye the first opponents at Belmont Oval were Cessnock. The Goanna's team included young five-eight Frank Stanmore, who was soon to star for Sydney club Western Suburbs and represent Australia including the 1952 Kangaroo Tour. The match resulted in a 28-14 (half time: 5-12) win for Lakes. Don McKinnon was the first scorer in first grade with a goal and Ron Golden touched down for the clubs initial first grade try. Reserve grade were narrowly beaten 7-6 in the early game. Winger Max Walton had the honour of kicking the clubs first ever goal in the earlier fixture.

Lakes started the season in fine style winning the first five matches, not tasting defeat until May 24 at Kurri (17-7). Coach Scoular made a delayed start to his career with Lakes (due to injury), not making his debut until May 10 at No 1 Sportsground in a 8-6 win over Northern Suburbs. For the remainder of 1947

**FIRST GRADE**

<b>Lakes</b>	vs	<b>Cessnock</b>
Bert SHARPE		Lal BARNARD
Tom KEATING		Athol WALTERS
Ron GOLDEN		Col McCALLUM
Max FOSTER		Norm PARKINSON
Clancy PRESTON		Geodie MAHER
George DAVIES		Frank STANMORE
Alec FREWIN		Clem KENNEDY
Trevor SMYTHE		Archie METCALFE
Don McKINNON		Tom NORLEY
Albert PAUL		Bob ALEXANDER
Ramsay BUCKLEY		Bob HARDEN
Bobby MARKER		Ces BARNARD
Allan BROTHERTON		Jim CADDIS

**Referee:** George "Sarge" Hamilton

**RESERVE GRADE**

<b>Lakes</b>	vs	<b>Cessnock</b>
Max WALTON		Bernie KEMPE
Jack PARKER		Sparrow HARTLEY
Tom PRESTON		Noel KNIPE
Billy SMYTH		Bazil PRESTON
Bruce BROTHERTON		Jack KEMBREY
Ken McKIMM		Danny INGLE
Gordon FITZGIBBONS		Kevin BENSON
Ernie RICHARDSON		A McDONALD
Stan MANSFIELD		P O'CONNOR
Tom FOSTER		Jack NEWTON
A MORRIS		D GALL
LEAN		B McKENZIE
George FORWOOD		Geoff WALTERS

**Reserves**

Chum McMULLEN  
Jim HAYES

**Referee:** Barney Mercer

**Linesmen:** Alf "Dolf" Clarke, George Montgomery

**Saturday April 19, 1947**

*How the sides lined up for Lakes United's initial competition matches.*

Scoular's leadership, individual play and ability to extract the very best from his team enabled them to finish equal minor premiers; ironically with Western Suburbs. A play-off was necessary to decide the premiership because of a 18-7 (2-7) win over the Rosellas in the last series. Lakes won 14-12 in a match that could of been lost on the bell when West winger Ross Snushall broke clear but was stopped only yards short of the line. West had run away to a 12-2 lead. The score could have been worse for Lakes had fullback Bert Sharpe not made brilliant try saving tackles on Kev Hahn and Bo Anderson. Lakes played better in the second half with Scoular doing most



**Lakes vs South at No 1 Sportsground 1947**

of the damage. Ward scored out wide after the bounce of the ball had beaten West fullback Ian Johnson. Lakes came back to even the play-off at 12 all and then with only minutes remaining McKinnon landed a penalty goal to win the match. West were forced to make positional changes early in the game when half Mick Freeman sustained concussion in a heavy tackle from Max Foster.

The following Saturday Lakes lost the first semi-final 16-4 (12-4) to Northern Suburbs at New Lambton Oval. Having the right of reply these two sides met again in the grand final on Saturday September 20 again at New Lambton Oval. Lakes exacted revenge by winning 13-0 (see Seven To Remember).

Thus Lakes United in their first year of competition were able to take out the major and minor premierships. This achievement spoke volumes for the organisational ability of the committee and the team spirit and ability of the players. Five men played the full season of 19 games: Brotherton, G. Davies, Golden, McKinnon and Sharpe. Buckley played 18 games. Leading point scorer was McKinnon with 6 tries and 64 goals (146 points). Paul was the leading try scorer with 11. Past judges argue the 1947 competition was the hardest ever conducted in Newcastle. There were eleven players who became internationals, six played state football, fourteen represented Country and sixteen made Newcastle teams. Obviously the standard was very high. Foster, Golden and Scoular were the first Lakes men to represent Newcastle at senior level. The year 1947 also witnessed the birth of another league association that would, for the next 20 years, earn a controversial place in Lakes United's history. The Central Coast Rugby League Association, led by Ray Maher (president 1948 to 1959) fought for group status and deeply resented Lakes hold over its players. Maher had the full support of the Central Coast clubs who likewise resented their players being called up to play for the Fishermen, often against their will.

**SEASON NUMBER ONE IN DETAIL**

Date	Opposition	Venue	Result
April 19	Cessnock	Belmont Sportsground	won 28-14 (5-12)
April 26	Central	New Lambton Oval	won 7-4 (5-4)
May 3	Waratah	Newcastle Sportsground	won 14-13 (7-7)
May 10	North	Newcastle Sportsground	won 8-6 (8-0)
May 17	Maitland	Belmont Sportsground	won 17-0 (2-0)
May 24	Kurri	Newcastle Sportsground	lost 7-17 (2-7)
June 14	South	Newcastle Sportsground	won 24-16 (4-13)
June 21	West	New Lambton Oval	lost 10-25 (10-10)
July 5	Cessnock	Cessnock Sportsground	won 38-5 (20-2)
July 12	Central	Newcastle Sportsground	won 37-5 (5-2)
July 19	Waratah	Belmont Sportsground	won 21-14 (14-2)
July 26	North	Newcastle Sportsground	lost 9-12 (7-2)
August 2	Maitland	Maitland Sportsground	won 39-3 (13-0)
August 9	Kurri	Kurri Kurri Ground	won 22-8 (13-5)
August 16	South	Newcastle Sportsground	won 16-14 (8-5)
August 23	West	Newcastle Sportsground	won 18-7 (2-7)
August 30	West	Newcastle Sportsground	won 14-12 (7-12) play-off
September 6	North	New Lambton Oval	lost 4-16 (4-12) semi-final
September 20	North	New Lambton Oval	won 13-0 (7-0) grand final

## 1948 THE LETDOWN

1948 was a major disappointment after the euphoric '47 season. Both grades missed the semi-finals. The season started well enough when Lakes defeated the 1947 Sydney premiers Balmain 21-13. Lakes also won the Spicer Cup by inflicting Narrabri's first home defeat for three years winning 19-7. Ipswich (Qld) made Scoular an attractive offer to coach but fortunately for Lakes he decided to stay in Belmont. Lakes, however, did lose the services of 20 year old Albert Paul who had accepted an offer to join Newtown. Lakes opened the season with a weakened team owing to representative commitments by Bert Sharpe, Foster and Scoular. The replacement players did well defeating the strong Kurri Kurri side 17-9. Wins however were hard to come by. A 21-9 loss to Central early in August virtually ended the seniors season. The Fishermen were now seven points adrift of fourth place. North (21) led the competition followed by South (19), Kurri (18), Central (18), West (17), Lakes (11), Waratah (11), Maitland (3) and Cessnock (2). Reserve grade did not perform well either so 1948 will always be remembered as a letdown after such a memorable year previously.

1948 saw the emergence of Russell Naughton as a first grade player. Jim Scoular represented Newcastle, Country and NSW this year. Ron Golden was a member of the Newcastle side that went down 10-9 to New Zealand. Bert Sharpe and Max Foster played for Country Seconds.

## 1949 MISSED CHANCES

1949 turned out to be quite an unusual year. The first grade side, led for the third term by Scoular, early season form gave supporters renewed hope. The addition of Tom "Whimpy"

Pitman from Newtown strengthened the pack considerably. Even a strike by the local referees did not hinder the Fisherman's form. Paul returned from Newtown only to have his jaw broken after five games thus missing the rest of the season. Among newcomers to the club were George Duffy (South Coast), Ted Toole and Kevin Hawkins (both Oberon).

The Newcastle Referee's Association announced that referees would not be available until the league granted its compromise demand for an all-round increase of 4/6 in fees. Old referees came out of retirement to help out in some matches whilst others were controlled by men with very little experience in this aspect of rugby league. Most referees were moderately equipped, but linesmen appeared in a mixture of "civvy" clothes. Handkerchiefs were used as flags in one match. Before each game, officials of the league and clubs asked players to assist the referees by endeavouring to observe the rules.

With three series remaining the table looked favourable for Scoulars men:

Lakes United .....	21
Central Newcastle.....	20
South Newcastle .....	18
Northern Suburbs .....	15
Kurri Kurri .....	15
Waratah-Mayfield .....	12
Cessnock .....	10
Western Suburbs .....	8
Maitland.....	1

Lakes opponents in the lead up to the semi-finals were Waratah, Cessnock and Maitland so they looked a good bet for the minor premiership. Cessnock inflicted a decisive 22-12 (12-5) win over Lakes at Belmont to throw open the premiership race. The outcome was not a surprise to those who had watched the steady improvement of the young Goannas in recent weeks. Lakes drew level at 12 all but Cessnock rallied in the final stages. Lakes also lost 20-10 (10-7) to Maitland. These results

meant Lakes would finish in second place and play Kurri Kurri in the first semi-final at No 1 Sportsground. The Bulldogs won a close tussle 12-5 (2-2).

So after showing much promise the club was left with no honours to show for its efforts.

Noel Sharpe had the unique distinction of playing for two clubs in the one season. Apart from helping Lakes to many victories with his accurate goalkicking Sharpe also captain/coached Ourimbah in the Central Coast competition. Tom Pitman and Ramsay Buckley played in the Country side that defeated Queensland at Wollongong. Ted Toole was a Newcastle representative for the match with Queensland.



1949 Lakes in action at No 1 Sportsground

## 1950 JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT

Allan Quinlivan succeeded Scoular as coach in 1950. Quinlivan had played 11 seasons with South Sydney and the last three seasons with Eastern Suburbs. His representative career included playing half and five-eighth for NSW.

The decade started poorly for Lakes with both grades again failing to make the semi-finals.

Lakes suffered very badly through injuries in 1950. In late April against Central the reserve grade took the field with only ten men. This was eventually increased to the full complement thanks to Allan Brotherton and Trevor Smythe (neither of whom were playing this season) helping out.

On June 17 Alan Welch kicked a penalty goal as the final bell rang to give North a 8-6 (2-6) win over Lakes at the Sportsground. The loss left the Seagulls with a meagre chance of gaining a place in the final four. Eight matches were still to be played though four were against the top sides.

Cessnock .....	16
Kurri Kurri .....	16
Northern Suburbs .....	14
Central Newcastle .....	13
Maitland .....	10
South Newcastle .....	10
Lakes United .....	10
Waratah-Mayfield .....	6
Western Suburbs .....	5

Two weeks later Lakes suffered a 21-15 loss at the hands of Cessnock to virtually put them out of the semi-final race. North were now four points clear in fourth place.

Lakes staged a remarkable come back over the next three weeks including a great 17-14 win over Kurri and a favourable 6-3 result in the mud at New Lambton Oval (West).

On August 19 (the weekend after the bye) Maitland eliminated Lakes 19-13 before a crowd of 6000 who paid £450 at the gate.

The representative scene provided Lakes with a higher profile. Ramsay Buckley and Jim Scoular gained selection in the Newcastle side that played the touring Englishmen (lost 21-10). Fullback Russell Naughton was chosen in the Country Firsts team for the annual clash with City. After a shaky start to the season Naughton had played himself into the team with several sound performances for the Coalfield and Newcastle teams.

Lakes did have a noteworthy victory in 1950. Having the bye in the local competition Lakes played Balmain and ran out the winner by 28-23. Lakes president Charlie Farmer presented silver cake dishes to Buckley, Naughton and Scoular for their representative efforts during the season.

In 1950 Lakes were not too popular with the Central Coast Rugby League who criticised their attitude towards the Central Coast. "Since the NRL and Lakes had given the CCRL autonomy to conduct district football they had no right to summon their officials to a special meeting at Belmont." said past president Mr EJ Reddy. "The attitude of the club is high handed" exclaimed Mr Reddy. The CCRL executive were discussing a letter from Lakes requesting themselves and the six

club delegates to a meeting to produce the registration books of qualified players. The letter added that if it were ignored the matter will be dealt with by the NRL.

The president of the CCRL Mr RG Maher said Lakes United was "holding a gun to our heads but is empowered to do so."

Ten days previous in response to a similar request CCRL officials refused to attend but asked Lakes officials to come to Gosford to make their investigations.

## 1951 THE EMERGENCE OF PAUL

A young 23 year old player with considerable potential took over the first grade reins for the next three years. His name was Albert Edgar Paul. "Butch" had immediate success with first grade making the final. Leo Hurley was imported from Wollongong to fill the hooking role, moving Arthur Forbes to prop. Lakes were fortunate to have two top class rakes. Forbes was hooker for Norths 1948 premiership side. New young candidates for senior positions included Eric Power, Ivan Wolfe and Ron Ekert (wingers), Arthur Holley and Arthur Power (halfbacks), John Chipchase (second row) and Barry Moses (front row).

With five series left Lakes were well in line for a semi-final berth. At that stage the competition table stood as follows:

Kurri Kurri .....	18
Northern Suburbs.....	18
Lakes United .....	16
Maitland .....	16
Central Newcastle.....	13
South Newcastle .....	12
Waratah-Mayfield .....	12
Cessnock .....	11
Western Suburbs .....	4

The Seagulls made certain their position by winning 23-10 (4-2) at Kurri two weeks later. Gus Gray gave one of the most outstanding displays of lock forward play seen in Newcastle for years. Soon after North beat Lakes 17-11 in what was virtually a play-off for the minor premiership. Lakes went into this match with seven wins and one draw behind them. Lakes went into the second semi-final against Kurri still confident of victory after also winning the first round encounter 18-16. Kurri dominated the scrums but not the score, Lakes winning 20-7 (2-2). Right winger Ivan Wolfe, who got special leave from an army camp, was a match winner along with Ernie Richardson who's tricky running cut holes in the Bulldogs defence.

Lakes and Maitland played one of the most consistently brilliant finals ever seen in Newcastle. In a thrilling match Maitland scored a try after the bell to defeat Lakes 20-18 (see Seven To Remember).

1951 was a remarkable year for the Naughton brothers. Not only was Russell the first grade custodian but his two brothers, Dallas and Leo, were constantly selected in the same position for the earlier games.

Albert Paul played against the visiting Frenchmen on May 26. A crowd of 21,503 saw the tourists win 12-8.

## 1952 THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL

1952 was a tremendous year for Lakes United. The seniors made the grand final and our first home grown international was produced. After the near miss of the previous year Lakes were feeling confident about the coming season. Officials were worried when Russell Naughton left the district but were all smiles when Barry Willis (Gosford) showed good form at fullback. A very fine five-eight in Alan Staunton was also lost to St George. This talented player was later to represent NSW Country and came close to wearing the "green and gold".

Kurri Kurri and Lakes continued their rivalry, one of the best games of the season was played before a large crowd at Kurri. Lakes 25-18 (12-11) victory was outstanding considering Kurri Kurri were next door to a certainty when playing at home. By late June Lakes were competition leaders courtesy of a 28-16 (13-7) victory over West. Kurri and South also lost leaving Lakes alone at the top. With three matches remaining Waratah held a one point lead over Lakes. Waratah virtually wrapped up the minor premiership by defeating Lakes 13-9 (10-2) in front of a record crowd. The Waratah forwards outplayed Lakes pack and quickly ran up 10 points. Lakes qualified for the second semi-final against Kurri. Leading 9-2 at half-time Lakes extended their lead to 18-2 before Kurri took advantage of several defensive lapses to score 10 points. This stirred Lakes into action and they quickly put the issue beyond doubt to win 28-12. The final was another good result for the Seagulls defeating Central Newcastle 21-13 (14-6). Quick thinking by Ernie Richardson resulted in a try six minutes before time sealing the match. Central had fought back to within three points before the Lakes lock swooped on a loose ball, threw a long pass to Jim Marker then on to Bill Smyth who outstripped the defence in a 30 yard dash to score under the posts.

GRAND FINAL - No 1 Sportsground		Saturday, September 13
<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>Waratah Mayfield</b>
Barry WILLIS		Darcy RUSSELL (c)
Eric POWER		Billy BUNT
Billy SMYTH		Bary DUNSTAN
Harold GRAY		Fred SMITH
Kevin HAWKINS		Darrell DAVEY
Noel SHARPE (c)		Warren FOLEY
Jim MARKER		Mick ENDERBY
Ernie RICHARDSON		Artie HALL
Bruce RANDALL		Henry HOLLOWAY
Max FOSTER		Bill WYLIE
John CHIPCHASE		Ted MACKIE
Arthur FORBES		Jackie GORDON
Allan BROTHERTON		Jack EVELEIGH
	<b>Reserves</b>	
Ron EKERT		Richie MEHANS
Bobby DICK		
<b>Referee:</b> Ossie Screen		
<b>Linesmen:</b> Art Wright, Bill Weatley		

Minor premiers Waratah won an exciting grand final 5-4. A crowd of approximately 9000 witnessed a fast, open game of rugby league played in ideal conditions. No score was registered in the first half. Waratah five-eight Warren Foley was once tackled over the line but dropped the ball. Lakes halfback Jim "Stag" Marker missed a goal right on half-time. Fifteen minutes after the interval young Foley sliced through a gap near the scrumbase and sent a long pass to Barry Dunstan. Winger

Billy Bunt had to face his own goal to take Barry Dunstan's pass but raked it in and beat a tackle to score out wide. Darcy Russell, who had missed several attempts earlier, converted from the sideline. Shortly afterwards Marker kicked two goals from penalties. Lakes had a chance to snatch the grand final; the roar rose as a penalty kick seemed to be sailing over the bar but swung away late. Arthur Forbes won the scrums 32-26 and the penalties also favoured Lakes 20-8. Lakes were without Ivan Wolfe who had a mouth infection as a result of an injection for boils. Kevin Hawkins was the replacement winger.

In 1952 the Kangaroo team was announced on Wednesday night, July 2. Albert Paul emerged from obscurity to gain selection thus becoming the first Lakes United player to wear the "green and gold". With Paul overseas officials had to find new leaders both on and off the field. George Davies, a member of the '47 premiership side took over as coach and carried on the good work of his predecessor. Lakes captain in Paul's absence was Noel Sharpe. Sharpe was an experienced campaigner who was also coach of the 1951/52 premiership winning Ourimbah side on the Central Coast. Paul and Wolfe (scored the clinching try) played against New Zealand (Newcastle won 9-7). Other Newcastle representative players were "Sam" Ekert, Kevin Hawkins and Noel Sharpe.

## 1953 A BLEAK YEAR

Albert Paul returned as coach but could not achieve the success he had previously enjoyed. No side made the end of season games. Paul was busy on the representative scene playing for Newcastle including a match against the American Allstars (lost 19-10), and Country Firsts. The highlight was the tour of New Zealand with the Australian side.

George Davies was always ready to assist the side when Paul was away. A young centre J. Dimmock brought up from juniors was robust, fast and a good defender and soon adapted to senior football.

Country week disrupted the NRL premiership mid May with some 40 players absent from first grade sides.

On May 23 Lakes defeated South 19-14 to keep in touch with the leading teams. The day, however was soured by an unusual event. Ross Paul was sent off in the reserve grade match and latter in the afternoon his older brother Albert received his marching orders in the first grade fixture.

By July 13 Lakes were running second last and virtually resigned to missing the semis. At this stage the table was headed by Cessnock (24) followed by North (22), Kurri (19), Maitland (15), Waratah (14), Central (13), South (11), Lakes (8) and West (6). Results did not improve so the Seagulls finished 10 points outside a semi-final place.

## 1954 SEAGULLS SHOCK SEA EAGLES

Former Balmain and NSW centre Col De Lore took control of first grade this season. De Lore had a strong squad with Ramsay Buckley, Harold Gray, Russell Naughton, Tom Pitman



**1954 First Grade Semi-Finalists**

*Photo: Maltfern Studios*

*Back (left): Ray Allsop, Jim Marker, Col De Lore, Ramsay Buckley, Arthur Forbes, Kev Hawkins, Ivan Wolfe.*

*Middle (left): M. Price, Gus Gray, Allan Brotherton, Russell Naughton, Tom Pitman, Tony Howse. Linesman: – Taylor. Ballboy: – Lonsdale.*

and Ivan Wolfe prominent. Ray Allsopp ('53 Western District rep) joined the club and proved an asset at five-eight. First grade made the semi-finals but were beaten 13-9 (8-7) by Cessnock. Before a crowd of 8008 at No 1 Sportsground, Lakes made the worst possible start when an early pass went astray and Don Schofield snapped up the loose ball and headed for the line only to be caught just short by Ivan Wolfe. From the next ruck the ball travelled quickly to Kevin Levido, who crossed near the corner flag. The match had been in progress less than two minutes. Lakes scored next when Jim Marker made a break from a scrum and Russell Naughton came up to join him. Naughton was tackled but let the ball go loose for Ramsay Buckley to toe over the line and dive on for a try near the posts. Naughton added the extras. Cessnock replied with a try to Schofield. Just before half time Naughton landed a good penalty goal. Lakes hit the front in the 60th minute, thanks to another goal by Naughton. Five minutes later Dave Parkinson succeeded with a penalty kick, this time from long range and near the sideline. Cessnock 10 Lakes 9. In the 68th minute Schofield scored his second try. Despite a break by Kevin Hawkins the Cessnock defence held out strongly to the finish.

Earlier in the season local supporters witnessed one of the best games of rugby league seen in the district for many years. Lakes hosted Manly Warringah at Belmont Sportsground. The match was played in the right spirit of clean, hard football and the final score 19 all was a true indication of play. Tony Howes (a signing from Cootamundra who strengthened the pack) was outstanding against the Sea Eagles.

Lakes United provided one of the major shocks of the season when they defeated competition leader Maitland 11-4 (5-2) at No 1 Sportsground. The win was the Seagulls eighth in succession and moved them within one point of equal leaders Maitland and Cessnock with three series remaining. The win was especially satisfying for Ernie Richardson who was playing his 100th game for Lakes. Richardson, along with Allan Brotherton received life membership this year. The unbeaten run was extended to ten before Cessnock handed out a thrashing 49-2. Lakes did have good excuses for the sub standard performance. Four key players were missing through injury and a reserve grader had to back up after a full game. To make matters worse, prop Buckley missed the match completely after the conveyance taking him to the coalfields broke down.

A highlight in any players career is to play against the British Lions. Lakes were proud to have De Lore, Gray and Allsopp help Newcastle Coalfields win 28-22 (10-10) at Maitland on August 22. Gray scored two tries in this match. Pitman was a reserve for the first match on May 22 in Newcastle when the Lions lost 11-10. Kevin Hawkins also represented Newcastle in 1954.

Harold "Gus" Gray had an outstanding year winning the Bert Agland Best and Fairest trophy to go with his representative honours.

Financially 1954 was a good year for Lakes; £1600 was paid out in bonuses.

---

## 1955 THE BIRTH OF THE SPORTSMAN'S CLUB

---

Tom "Whimpy" Pitman made a quiet beginning to his two year reign as first grade coach. All three grades missed the semi-finals but first grade made progress, gained confidence and recorded some encouraging results. Although the third grade competition was run on a club basis for many years it was not until 1955 that the competition was controlled on a district basis with each senior club entering a team.



*December 22, 1955 The Birth of the Sportsman's Club.*

*Main street, Belmont, Benyon's shop on its way to its new home adjacent the Belmont Sportsground.*

The early years of the third grade competition were not memorable for the Seagulls. Injuries and lack of players meant several games were forfeited.

Under the worst conditions possible (the early games had churned No1 Sportsground into a mud heap) Lakes played a 4 all draw with joint competition leader Maitland. Lakes also defeated the prominent Cessnock outfit but were too inconsistent for semi-final football.

Once again Lakes players Naughton and Gray represented against a touring side; this time the formidable French combination (Newcastle won 17-15). These two men also played against South Sydney in the City-Country series.

Naughton went on to represent Country as the number one fullback against City.

Before the last game of the season against Waratah (Lakes won 31-18) Mr H Edwards, senior vice president of the NRL presented life member certificates of the Lakes United club to Gray and Naughton.

1955 marked the formation of the Belmont Sportsman's Club. The club was the brain child of mainly three men: Searle Barton: president Belmont Cricket Club, Pat Cahill: president of LURLFC, Les Miller: president Belmont Baseball Club.

After a meeting between these men it was decided to advertise throughout the Belmont and Swansea areas informing local sporting bodies of a meeting for anyone interested in forming a sportsman club in the area.

The meeting was held under the wooden grandstand at the Belmont Sportsground on October 14, 1955. The attendance

was disappointing so it was decided to call a public meeting one month later.

On Friday November 18 the second meeting was attended by an enthusiastic cross section of the community. At this meeting plans were made for the drawing up of a constitution in which the aims of the club would be defined. It was also decided to call the club the Belmont Sportsman's Club.

At a meeting held on Sunday November 27 1955 the club discussed the possibility of gaining financial assistance to enable the purchase and relocation of "Benyons Shop" which stood in the main street of Belmont. Consequently the Belmont

Urban Committee supplied the necessary finance so the shop was moved to the Sportsground on December 22 1955.

After a great deal of renovation and repair by mostly voluntary labour the clubhouse was unofficially opened in February 1956. With four poker machines (on credit) but no liquor licence (beer was purchased from the Belmont Golf Club) the Sportsmans Club began to function. In weeks the club had 90 members and a bank balance of £180 which was increased to 250 members and £2500 in the ensuing months. It was estimated the club spent more in 12 months on the Belmont Sportsground area than the Lake Macquarie Shire Council was able to spend in 25 years. The official opening came seven months later on September 29. Sporting celebrities of the time

including: Cyril Bourke (RU International), Brian Carlson (RL International), Harry Clarke (Capt. Australian Surf Life Saving Team), Jim De Courcey (Cricket), Charlie Gill (RL International), William Morgan ("Paddy King" Australian Boxing Champion) and Wally Prigg (RL International) attended this historic day. The president of the LMSC, Mr JP Kenny, had the honour of opening the new club. It was the beginning of a tremendous support role the Sportsman's Club would play over the ensuing years.

---

## 1956 NAUGHTON'S YEAR

---

1956 saw a marked improvement in the first grade performances.

The lower grades however were inconsistent and finished out of play-off contention. Pitman had a host of fine players to coach including John "Killer" Davies, Ken Negus, Vernon Lee and Ivan Wolfe. Johnny Kelly (Temora) played his first season for the Seagulls. Subsequently Lakes had a good season finishing behind minor premier Maitland who they met in the first semi-final. Lakes won this game 11-10 (see Seven To Remember) forcing a grand final to be played between Maitland and the winner of the Lakes/Cessnock clash (Cessnock had beaten Central in the second semi-final). On September 8 Cessnock outplayed Lakes to win the final 19-2. Lakes played sound football but failed to take advantage of a strong wind in the first half. Cessnock rake Corsdale won most of the scrums

making Lakes do so much tackling that it eventually wilted from the constant battering from Anderson, Herb Pearson, Don Schofield and Gavin Stevenson. The biggest crowd of the season for a club game packed into No 1 Sportsground to witness this match. Gate receipts of £994 were received from 9,355 people.

Earlier in the season (June 23) Lakes and Central met in a memorable match; not so much for the quality of play but for the state of No1 Sportsground. The "Match of the Day" was delayed 20 minutes while officials decided whether play would be possible. Fifteen minutes before play was scheduled to begin only three small patches of ground were visible above the water. At one corner the water was almost knee deep. Midway through the second half of the reserve grade fixture referee Col Russell Snr asked officials to abandon the game but he was ordered to resume. Lakes eventually won 12-2.

Fullback Russell Naughton was at the top of his game in 1956. His tackling, once uncertain, had improved dramatically and his goal kicking was consistent. Naughton's strong running made him a match winner for the Belmont club. After seven competition games Naughton's point scoring record was outstanding. At this stage of the season he had already scored 151 points made up as follows; 83 points for Lakes (1 try, 40 goals), 32 points in representative football (16 goals) and 36 points in four trial games. Selectors, however, chose Ron Willey for the first interstate clash. Naughton also had a "blinder" against the touring New Zealand team but the Australian selectors were all watching Sydney club games that day. Local officials and supporters claimed Naughton was the forgotten man of Australian rugby league. Local league reporter R.S. Roulston (Newcastle Sun) went as far as to say it would be a miscarriage of justice if Naughton was not chosen for the Kangaroo Tour at the end of the season.

Tom "Gus" Sheppard and Neil McDonell also played outstanding football during the season and were rewarded with Newcastle guernseys.

Whilst 1956 was a good year for Lakes it could have been even better. Four Lakes men from 1955 were playing with Sydney clubs and what's more they were all forwards. Albert Paul was turning out for Canterbury Bankstown whilst Ron "Jake" Moses, Robert "Babe" Heaney and Harold "Gus" Gray played in Balmain's grand final side against St George.

---

## 1957 A TESTIMONIAL FOR "STAG"

---

Russell Naughton was appointed first grade captain/coach and although the side appeared solid enough on paper it could not compete against Maitland, Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and South Newcastle and so finished out of the play-off picture. Even as early as June 3 (after a 37-7 loss to Kurri) Lakes were already six points off fourth place. By mid July the situation was no better. A 24-20 win over North still left the Seagulls only an outside chance of making the semi's. Cessnock and Kurri (20) led with Central, Maitland, South and West four points behind. Lakes (10), North (10) and Waratah (4) followed. The next week Lakes lost 31-18 to West effectively ending the seniors season. In mid August Lakes defeated Kurri 32-4. This remarkable result would be remembered for the exploits of Ivan

Wolfe who scored six tries including five in the last half hour. Wolfe finished the season with 22 tries; a great performance in a nine team competition. The lower grades were disappointing with third grade forced to forfeit five games towards the end of the season.

Jim "Stag" Marker was honoured with a testimonial match on August 18 in recognition of his service to the club. The program included goal kicking displays, sprint races, and a match between the current first grade side and the "Old Boys" of yesteryear.

Lakes were fortunate to have many willing workers during the 1950's. An unofficial count in 1957 saw the "helpers" number 31.

In 1957 the Central Coast saga continued. Lakes threatened to suspend the Coast's competition, claiming Wyong and Toronto had issued clearances to suspended and disqualified players. Satisfactory explanations were given by both clubs and the competitions were not interrupted. This however did not stop the Central Coast president Mr Maher describing Lakes as "a three-team club from Belmont - a tinpot town, compared with the 50,000 residents on the coast".

---

## 1958 SCHOOLBOY RUGBY LEAGUE BEGINS

---

Once again the club experienced a disappointing season. Jimmy Scoular was back in the hot seat after Russell Naughton had left the district.

Scoular inherited a side containing nine players from the previous season. Tom Pitman came out of retirement to bolster the pack.

Lakes could not have started the season in more convincing fashion defeating top coalfields sides Cessnock 22-14 and Kurri Kurri 21-18. Two more wins and a draw followed but the good work was spoilt by four consecutive losses. (Indeed all three teams began the season with only one loss in the first six games.) The situation looked even bleaker when Waratah won 26-7 soon after. Two weeks later Scoular's team played their best football of the season to shock Western Suburbs 19-12. Heroes that day included left winger Gordon Jenkins who scored two tries and big Central Coast forward Arre Lammi who played a smashing game in his debut in first grade. The good form continued when Northern Suburbs were defeated 29-9 at No1 Sportsground. From a scoring viewpoint it was Ivan Wolfe's match. Wolfe scored three tries and kicked four excellent goals from as many attempts in the second half. This win leapfrogged Lakes into fourth place. With three series remaining the competition table stood as follows:

Maitland .....	26
Cessnock .....	24
Western Suburbs .....	20
Lakes United .....	19
Northern Suburbs .....	18
Waratah-Mayfield .....	17
Kurri Kurri .....	14
South Newcastle .....	8
Central Newcastle .....	4

To take a place in the final four Lakes had to win its last two



*The Seagulls hosted Cessnock in the opening match of the 1958 season. John "Pomma" Hemsworth is pursued by Vernon Lee. Lakes won 22-14.*

games against Maitland and Cessnock. Lakes had the bye in the last series so two points were already assured.

Minutes before full-time, with the score tied at 13 all, Maitland fullback Kevin Geelan sent centre Frank Threlfo racing clear to seal the match (and the Seagulls fate) 18-13. Pitman scored a try in this match to celebrate his 100th game for Lakes.

The most significant development to evolve from an otherwise ordinary season was the formation of the Lakes United Schoolboys.

Five "Seagulls" wore the red and blue of Newcastle during the 1958 season. Ivan Wolfe and Vernon Lee played against Western Suburbs (Sydney) while Neil McDonell (game one), Gus Sheppard (game two) and Gus Gray (both games) played against Great Britain (lost 35-6 and 30-23).

---

## 1959 CLUB CHAMPIONS

---

How many Lakes supporters can remember their side containing two former internationals? Well it happened in 1959 when the towns greatest rugby league player returned to Belmont and Rees Duncan Jnr moved into the area. Albert Paul and Duncan were team mates on the 1952 Kangaroo Tour.

Dick Higgins took over as coach inheriting the nucleus of a good team. Top men including Gordon Jenkins, Arre Lammi, Vernon Lee, John Shields, Mal Stewart and Ivan Wolfe were retained as well as Ron Davies and Russell Naughton returning from country contracts. Laurie Bennett was also signed from Lithgow. The major losses were John Davies and Stuart Northey.

The committee showed faith in their players by continuing the previous seasons bonus payment of a minimum of £10 for a win, £6 for a draw and £4 for a loss.

The club championship was introduced on a three club basis in 1959 and once again Lakes first attempt proved to be successful.

First grade finished second whilst reserve grade and third grade were minor premiers. Lakes and Maitland fought out a tremendous battle for the first ever Mal Woolford Cup. Going into their match in the 14th series Lakes held a slender six point lead over the Pumpkin Pickers. The 12 all draw in first grade proved vital in the final analysis. Despite many fine achievements since 1947 there was no doubt that this was Lakes United's most triumphant in the 13 year history of the club.

The season opened in sensational manner at Belmont

when Lakes finished the match against Western Suburbs with only 10 men. Pitman and Paul were both sent from the field then Naughton dislocated his elbow leaving Lakes playing with a three man pack. Lakes, however, continued to dominate the scrums and recorded an inspiring 42-8 win.

All grades continued to do well though injuries to Duncan, Paul, Ron Davies, Naughton and McDonell effected results towards the end of the premiership. Come the first semi-final and Lakes produced its best effort of the season defeating Northern Suburbs 15-3 (5-0).

The final against Maitland was a different story. Lakes failed to contain Terry Pannowitz and Richard Van Haren leaving Maitland to win 13-4 (2-4). It was a sad finale to Ivan Wolfe's season who was playing his 150th game for the club. In later years both Naughton and Paul would remark that the '59 side was the best Lakes team not to win a competition.

Reserve grade were unfortunate to have Mal Stewart injured in a car accident (replaced by Scoular) and went out 14-8 to Maitland. The third grade were in all sorts of trouble in their final down 7-0 early. A fine try by George Stokes led to a 13-7 victory.

On the representative scene Naughton, Duncan, Ron Davies and John Craig were in the Newcastle side which lost 25-6 to New Zealand on Saturday May 30.



### 1959 Finalists

*Back (left): Dick Higgins, Reg Stokes, "Snow" White, Neil McDonell, Vernon Lee, Rees Duncan, Gus Gray, Gus Sheppard, Russell Naughton, Tony House, Fred Davis, Bert Latimer, Bill Stockwell.*

*Front (left): Milton Maybury, Ron Davies, Johnny Craig, Ivan Wolfe, Albert Paul, Gordon Jenkins, John Shields, Lee O'Kelly, Russell Neal (ballboy).*

---

## 1960 "JAKE" RETURNS

---

Ron "Jake" Moses returned from Balmain to coach first grade. It was not a standout year. Lakes made a characteristic start with a 38-2 win against South Newcastle at Belmont. Left winger Gordon Jenkins scored four brilliant tries-just missed a fifth - and hooker Ray Lonsdale won practically every scrum to throw South on the defence for most of the match.

A match winning goal after the bell by Kurri prop Arthur Bevan provided a dramatic climax to the last match of the 7th Series. The Bulldogs won 15-14 after trailing 13-5 at half-time. Even at this point in the season it was apparent Lakes would have a real fight for a semi-final position. After seven matches the points table was:

Cessnock.....	12
Northern Suburbs .....	10
Maitland.....	9
Lakes United .....	7
Toronto .....	7
Kurri Kurri.....	7
Central Newcastle .....	6
Western Suburbs.....	6
Waratah Mayfield.....	4
South Newcastle .....	4

The next week the Rosella's won 16-12 at Belmont. Lakes speedy backline set up numerous overlaps only to see the ball go to ground at critical stages.

On June 20 Lakes lost 20-3 to eventual premiers Cessnock to leave the Seagulls three points behind fourth place clubs Toronto (11) and West (11). Central (10) were still in contention also. Three losses in as many matches (17-12 vs North, 15-5 vs West and 19-11 vs Maitland) practically ended the seniors aspirations for 1960. On a personal note Jenkins notched another four try effort towards seasons end in the 45-23 win over Waratah.

Consistency was the problem again in 1960, never really finding regular winning form to finish with a 9-8-1 record and three points off the semi-finals. 1960 was Toronto's debut season in the NRL.

The reserve graders kept the flag flying finishing fourth. Their second semi-final against Maitland was of a very high standard and one of the fastest seen for some time. Maitland won 27-25 after Lakes had led 22-3.

Newcastle representatives in 1960 were Rees Duncan, Gordon Jenkins and Ron Moses. Duncan (Capt) and Moses played against the visiting French side (lost 14-10).

---

## 1961 YOUNGSTERS SHOW PROMISE

---

Lakes United could point proudly to a group of young players who had officials believing 1961 would bring the desired results. Season number 15 saw Lakes field a side with an average age of 23. The captain/coach was another youngster in Johnny Craig. Apart from Rees Duncan Lakes retained the majority of players from the previous season. On the plus side John "Killer" Davies returned. Davies captained Northern NSW

two years previous and showed he was one of the best five-eights to appear in Newcastle since the war.

Once again Lakes made an exciting start to the season; this time a 17-13 thriller over South Newcastle. The good form continued for another six weeks (5 wins, 1 draw) before Western Suburbs shattered the unbeaten run winning 33-13 (14-6) at No 1 Sportsground. The Rosellas victory left them two points behind leaders Lakes with one match left to complete the first round.

In the 12th Series Toronto gave Lakes a real "fight" at Belmont before the home side won 26-4. Matches between the lakeside clubs carried plenty of feeling since Lakes had been opposed to Toronto's admission to the NRL the previous season. Players suffered numerous injuries in a game considered the toughest played that year. Naughton was knocked out with a "haymaker" and Toronto captain/coach Arthur Collinson finished with a badly gashed eye. The stream of injuries resulted in an extra 20 minutes of injury time being played. The lone ambulance attendant was kept moving as much as the players. Referee Ken Barwick awarded more than 40 penalties. Ugly scenes threatened as players punched and "crash tackled" their opponents for the last 15 minutes. The drama, however, did not end on the field. The next night Lakes delegate Pat Cahill submitted a motion of no-confidence in the NRL judiciary committee. Lakes player Warren Lynch had been sent from the field for alleged kneeing and the judiciary had found Lynch's actions accidental. Mr Cahill said the finding was farcical. The player was charged with deliberate kneeing and was either innocent or guilty. To find that the incident had been accidental and then caution Lynch was beyond comprehension. The motion was lost overwhelmingly.

The "Battle of Belmont" really took its toll on Craig's men, with the Seagulls losing their next four matches. As a result Lakes met Waratah in the second semi-final. A try by fullback Neville Mayers two minutes from full time enabled Waratah to escape with a 13-10 (5-7) win. Craig, Mal Stewart in attack and "Killer" Davies in defence were outstanding in Lakes backline. In a hard working pack prop George Stokes, second-rower Vernon Lee and lock Merv Taylor stood out.

No international sides visited but Newcastle still had the Caltex £1000 Divisional Championships to contest. Lakes players to represent were John Davies, Ron Davies, Gordon Jenkins and Keith Smith. Belmont played host to a Divisional match on Sunday May 21. Newcastle defeated Northern Division 38-17 before a crowd of approximately 4,300 (gate; £512).

On Sunday September 10 Russell Naughton was honoured with a testimonial match. The format involved a Newcastle selection opposing top Sydney club North Sydney. It was a fine tribute, the Bears showing their respect for Naughton by including players of the calibre of Brian Carlson ('52 Kangaroo), Ken Irvine ('63 and '67 Kangaroo), Norm Strong and Ron Potter.

April 1 was the day Norm Hartney played his 150th game for Lakes thus becoming the newest life member.

A new rule was unsuccessfully trailed in 1961. If the dummy half was caught in possession a scrum would be set. The idea was to encourage open football rather than the barging tactics employed by forwards.

---

## 1962 STANDING STILL

---

Bill Halverston became Lakes seventh coach in the last seven years. The new transfer rule was introduced and apart from some early problems was a big improvement on the residential rule. Lakes acquired Jim Bailey, John Cunningham and "Babe" Heaney. Lakes lost the services of two fine players for the '62 season; Johnny Craig and John Davies. The pack, despite the inclusion of Heaney was not as strong as previous years. Lakes seemed to stand still whilst most other clubs strengthened their ranks.

In many ways 1962 was a carbon copy of 1961. The season opener began on a high note despite rain and muddy grounds. Lakes were held to a 5-7 deficit at half-time by Kurri who played with 12 men for most of the match. After "oranges" Lakes came back to win 34-7. Lakes had four wins from as many starts before Western Suburbs again dealt the Seagulls first loss for the season (23-16). The next game North beat Lakes 28-9 to leave Lakes in equal third place.

Ivan Wolfe and his longtime teammate Russell Naughton got Lakes back on track against Toronto at Belmont. The pair scored 29 points between them (Wolfe five tries, Naughton seven goals) as Lakes won 35-4. Many handling errors were made and the form shown was not worthy of a semi-final contender.

The second half of the season was a disaster. With five series remaining Lakes were barely hanging onto a semi-final spot. The top of the table stood as follows:

Waratah Mayfield .....	23
Northern Suburbs .....	22
Western Suburbs .....	20
Lakes United .....	14
Maitland .....	14
South Newcastle .....	13

The next week Lakes defeated Toronto 36-7 and Maitland lost so fourth place was held outright for the time being. Lakes then lost their last four matches by a combined total of 66 points to 112 to fall five points shy of fourth place.

Third grade, coached by Fred Whiteland made the grand final losing 13-11 to Maitland. Maitland's third grade side had won 50 matches in succession covering the 1960/61 and '62 seasons.

Ivan Wolfe (who was the NRL's top try scorer) reached a milestone in his career against Waratah at Belmont by playing his 200th first grade game for Lakes United. In the same match Russell Naughton played his 199th game for the club.

Newcastle representative players for the season were Mal Stewart and Bob Heaney. Heaney had the honour of being a member of the Newcastle team which defeated Great Britain 23-18 on June 4 at No 1 Sportsground.

On April 29 Belmont hosted a semi-final of the Caltex "1000" Country Divisional Championships at Cahill Oval. Newcastle ran out 58-14 winners over North Coast Division.

---

## 1963 A SEASON TO FORGET

---

1963 was not a memorable season for Lakes United. First and reserve grade finished second last whilst third grade fared

little better finishing fifth. Jimmy Scoular was brought back to coach first grade but could not emulate his deeds of 1947. The club ranks were filled with keen young footballers but at this stage of their career found themselves struggling against stronger teams like South, Waratah, Central and Kurri.

The opening match of the season resulted in a 10-5 loss to Waratah (who would eventually finish in second place). The Waratah result turned out to be the catalyst to Lakes United's worst ever start to a season. Five games into the premiership and the top two grades were yet to register a win. In the sixth series first grade defeated Macquarie United by one point (14-13) but reserve grade were still unable to break their "goose-egg". The confidence gained from the win over the Scorpions led to Lakes winning their next three games including a 15-9 triumph over top side Waratah.

Overall results were ordinary and as a result first grade finished one place above the "wooden spoon". Scoular's men were never disgraced but quite simply the rest of the League were superior in 1963. Still Lakes contributed some fine football during the season. Much of the credit for the free flowing backline movements was attributed to the new scrum-maging rule whereby all forwards had to remain in the scrum until the ball had passed the second rower's feet. This rule made it harder for the lock to immediately harass the opposition inside backs.

A highlight of the season was the emergence of Allan Thomson as a player of unusual potential. Thomson made his debut for Newcastle on Sunday July 28 against South Africa (won 27-17). It has been suggested that the NRL paved the way for commercialised sport on Sundays when it was granted use of No 1 Sportsground for this match.

---

## 1964 LITTLE IMPROVEMENT

---

The 1964 season showed little in the way of improvement from the previous season. First grade recorded five wins and all three grades finished outside the "top four". The club restored the Jim Scoular-Ron Golden combination that was so successful in earlier years. Scoular would be coach whilst Golden held the position of team manager. Lakes United fielded a youthful side with "Babe" Heaney and Johnny Craig providing the experience. Once again Lakes gained the services of capable Central Coast players; this season it was Bill Morelli (second season) and brothers Eddie and Wes Singleton all from Woy Woy. Individually Heaney and Allan Thomson had big years. Both were members of the Newcastle team which won the State Cup (beat Parramatta 14-7 in the final) including a memorable victory over the great St George side of the time (5-3). Thomson also played for Country Seconds and won the Bert Agland Best and Fairest Trophy.

By 1964 little had changed regarding the relationship between Lakes and the Central Coast. The CCLA was keen to progress and saw Lakes United's power over them as a great hindrance. The Belmont club could at anytime "grab" a Central Coast player irrespective of the disruption it caused the local teams. Heated arguments between the two bodies was not uncommon, but as Lakes boundary (granted by the CRL in 1947) stretched as far south as Gosford, they held a

commanding position. Gosford president Mr Alan Hannaford stated "Lakes are a complete hindrance to the progress of league on the Central Coast."

As a team, however, the Seagulls were disappointing. Beaten 22-15 by Cessnock (themselves a middle of the road side in '64) in the opening series was an indication 1964 was not going to be one of Lakes better years. Towards the end of the season Lakes found some consistency and caused a major upset by beating Western Suburbs (21-20). Every win seemed to be followed by a couple of defeats so Lakes were out of the semi-final race by the end of the 13th series. John "Tonda" Regan's reserve grade side were the only one's to finish with a winning season; 10-8.

History was made on July 5 when a full series of premiership matches were played on a Sunday. Saturday was still considered the best day for football but occasionally a representative fixture would clash so Sunday matches would allow supporters the opportunity to see rugby league both days. Heaney and Thomson also represented Newcastle against France (won 16-14).

---

## 1965 ANOTHER DISMAL SEASON

---

Personnel was strengthened in 1965. Lakes "biggest" import was former Eastern Suburbs and Canterbury frontrower Ken Dawson. Although he carried a fair amount of beef Dawson still possessed the ability that won him a State guernsey. Another good signing was 19 year old John "Sleepy" Bucknell from Manly. Bucknell is best remembered for his part in the smashing of John Sattler's jaw in the 1970 Sydney grand final. Trevor Andrews from the Central Coast also began his career for Lakes but injury limited his appearances.

Allan Thomson began his first term as captain/coach. Success still eluded the club; First grade registering its fourth losing season in a row. The club also failed to produce a semi-finalist for the third season in a row.

Eventual minor premier Maitland beat Lakes 23-10 in the opening series and six games into the competition Lakes were languishing in last place. Things got worse the next week when South Newcastle took the lead with only 12 minutes remaining to gain a 21-16 win. The match would be remembered for the heavy injury toll; 17 minutes injury time was played. South finished the match with 12 men whilst Lakes had 11 men on the field when play finally ended. Centre Andrews received a break to his left shinbone. A drought had left all grounds rock hard.

Lakes did make a belated drive for the semis winning five games in a row including a fine 21-12 win over leader Northern Suburbs. The team was developing into a solid combination with the forwards the strength allied with an enthusiastic backline and the goal-kicking of Peter Thomson. Heaney, Dawson and Allan Thomson were the backbone of the pack whilst Johnny Craig at halfback controlled the backs.

A 24-2 loss to Central in the 13th series followed by a 22 all draw with Cessnock (Lakes scored 17 points in the last 23 minutes) left Lakes needing to defeat West then South to have any chance of making the final four. West beat Lakes 32-10 at Belmont after trailing 10-5 at half-time to eliminate the Seagulls for 1965.

The well worn excuse of representative commitments hindering Lakes premiership bid would fall on deaf ears this year. Only one player was required by Newcastle and Country Firsts; Allan Thomson. Thomson also toured New Zealand with Country leaving Craig to lead the side. Sunday football was regularly promoted by Lakes following the policy laid down by the NRL. In 1965 the senior competition was the closest on record. For the first time in NRL history four teams tied for first place in first grade. Maitland (1.880), South (1.388), West (1.235) and North (0.979) emerged as the best teams. No minor premier was recognised and percentages decided the final placings.

---

## 1966 A FRUSTRATING SEASON

---

The five yard rule was adopted this season, taking over from the three yard rule. Fast open play was evident by the extra couple of yards gained from the play the ball area. It was hoped the inside backs would have more room to make inroads into opposition territory. This was a frustrating season for supporters with their side experiencing either winning or losing streaks throughout the competition. It was first grades first winning season since 1961 and reserve grade showed improvement by making the final.

The season commenced with a 12-9 loss to Cessnock then a run of four wins and one draw followed by four losses. The last defeat; 14-9 to Macquarie left Lakes one point out of the four. Thomson's side won the next five games to lie in third place on 19 points behind West (22) and Cessnock (20). West defeated Lakes 11-9 leaving the Seagulls to win the two remaining fixtures to make the semis. Lakes defeated North 18-9 in a crucial match but still needed to beat Cessnock in the last series. Breathing down the Seagulls neck was South Newcastle who had the easier task of playing bottom team Waratah. Lakes could have ended the Lions hopes on the Saturday at Cessnock but fell 24-7 (11-4). Lakes tried hard but lacked the vigour of the home side led by Don Schofield. Come Sunday and Lakes chances rested with Waratah upsetting South. Up to the 63rd minute things looked good for Lakes; Waratah (although reduced to 12 men in the 55th minute when Dennis Barlow was sent-off), were leading 7-6 and seemed likely to go further ahead. A knocked down pass 15 yards from the South line was gathered by South centre Gary Banks who sent Neil Morgan in for a runaway try effectively ending 1966 as far as Lakes United first grade were concerned. Lakes were perhaps considered unlucky not to reach the semi-finals but really left their run too late. Having the points on the board was a valuable lesson Lakes learnt the hard way.

Lakes won their first competition since 1947 when it defeated Central 10-4 (2-2) in the Caltex \$1000 Final. Lakes earned \$700 prizemoney for the win in their first appearance in the final in the seven year history of the competition. Hooker Garry Walters won all the second half scrums enabling Lakes to settle into constant attack. Ken Dawson and Babe Heaney paved the way for some competent finishing by the backs. Centre Trevor Andrews and left winger Jimmy Campbell scored clinching tries after Central had edged ahead early in the second half. There was an element of doubt in Lakes second try.

Referee Les Rodway may of missed two forward passes leading up to the try. Bill Lockett and Peter Thomson landed sideline goals to complete the scoring. Five-eight Des Kimmorley showed great speed and a clever swerve to narrowly miss a try also.

Coach Thomson reached the next level by gaining State selection after his solid displays for Country in New Zealand and against City.

Trevor Andrews, Alan Grady and Bill Lockett (Yenda), all new to the club, were well known by seasons end. Thomson was selected to play against the Englishmen (lost 5-2).

---

## 1967 KANGAROO NUMBER TWO

---

When the season opened new rules took effect. The major change was the introduction of the four tackle rule. The five yard rule was continued and attacking teams were allowed a free "tap kick" after a penalty kick found touch.

First grade made the semi-finals for the first time in six years and reserve grade went all the way to the grand final. The loss of the Central Coast area (a new Group was formed) meant Lakes had to take stock and consolidate within their new boundaries; Gateshead to the North and Wallarah to the South. The Seagulls would now have to entice the better Central Coast players with improved contracts rather than ordering them to play in Belmont.

Some promising juniors came through to establish themselves in first grade. Des Kimmorley showed flashes of brilliance throughout the season. Brian Rohr was recruited from Gunnedah.

Allan Thomson was the sole representative player for the year and what a year it was. Thomson was deservedly named Country Player of the Year and represented Newcastle against



*1967: Lakes captain/coach and Test forward Allan Thomson wishes his Lieutenant Johnny Craig well before the second half of the Seagulls match at Passmore Oval. Lakes won 6-5. Thomson had played for Australia the previous day against New Zealand.*

New Zealand (won 14-7). Thomson played for Newcastle, Country and NSW culminating in his selection in the Australian Test side for the series against New Zealand. Thomson capped off an exceptional season when named for the 12th Kangaroo Tour.

First grade compiled a 12-5 record with one match not played. The 13th series was abandoned due to rain and transferred to become the last round but rain again prevented two matches(including Lakes match with Central) being played. Seeing that these matches had no bearing on the final outcome of the competition the NRL cancelled the remaining fixtures. Lakes needed to beat Central by 71 points to finish in second place.

Lakes were one of the youngest sides in the NRL in 1967. A balanced pack was supported by a lively set of backs. Lakes met Macquarie United in the minor semi-final. The Scorpions with a greater share of possession and playing the more constructive football proved the better side winning 18-9 (0-6).

Reserve grade, coached by Vernon Lee, were a fine combination but fell away midseason due to first grade injuries. Once back to full strength the side inflicted Western Suburbs first defeat in this grade for nearly three years. West exacted their revenge in the grand final winning 21-9.

Johnny Craig, Vernon Lee, John Wilkins (playing their 150th game for Lakes during the season) and Milton Maybury (12 years service) were awarded life membership.

---

## 1968 ALMOST

---

History was made by the NRL when it inaugurated a pre-season competition under floodlights consisting of five rounds. The Belmont Sportsman's Club, The Belmont Urban Committee and Lakes United Rugby League Football Club combined with several intercity associations to make the initial competition a success.

As the season proper began it soon became apparent that Western Suburbs would again be a threat to the rest of the league. Lakes too gained early prominence but were at times inconsistent. The second half of the season was a different matter. In a fluctuating 11th series duel Lakes defeated Macquarie 11-8 to take a share of second place.

Western Suburbs .....	18
Northern Suburbs.....	14
South Newcastle .....	14
Lakes United .....	14
Waratah Mayfield. ....	13
Macquarie United .....	12
Cessnock .....	10
Maitland .....	7
Kurri Kurri .....	6
Central Charlestown .....	2

By the end of the 16th series Lakes had moved into outright second but still two points behind West. The 17th series clash between the Seagulls and the Rosellas was the NBN "Match of the Day" played as usual at No 1 Sportsground. Lakes had been unable to beat West since 1964 and went perilously close in playing out an 11 all draw. West scored three tries to one but were unable to convert any. Two minutes from the end Father

John Cootes scorched through the Lakes defence for a great individual try that levelled the score after Lakes had led throughout. The draw seemingly assured West of the minor premiership until further drama unfolded in the final series. Lakes beat Waratah 30-14 while Maitland shocked West 27-18 to leave Lakes and West joint minor premiers.

The major semi-final was a closely fought contest and when the final whistle sounded only one point separated the two sides. Lakes 20 West 19.

Lakes United now had the ball at its feet, after 21 years, to finally annex its second premiership. With a solid competition record behind it, it seemed as though Lakes would be the "Premier Club".

South Newcastle, led by former international Peter Diamond, prevented the anticipated rematch with a 13-11 win over West. Diamond kicked a magnificent goal on the bell to win the final.

Inexperience and injuries in the grand final (see Seven To Remember) cost Lakes and from the five tries scored Lakes could notch only two, going down 9-6. Allan Thomson was a tower of strength all season representing Country Firsts and NSW. He was also named Country Player of the Year for the second year in a row and again won the Bert Angland Best and Fairest Trophy.

## 1969 BRIDESMAIDS ONCE MORE

Despite Allan Thomson joining Manly Warringah Lakes United were premiership contenders once more. The Thomson deal caused a minor uproar when Lakes placed on a \$12,000 transfer fee. Thomson appealed against the fee. The appeal hearing before the CRL resulted in a fee of \$8,000 being set. This set a record for a Newcastle player transferring to a Sydney

### GRAND FINAL - No 1 Sportsground

Sunday, September 21

#### Lakes United

vs

#### Maitland

John CRAIG (c)  
 Jeff McCLOY  
 Des KIMMORLEY  
 Bob HENSBY  
 Jim PORTER  
 Jim CAMPBELL  
 Neil HINCKS  
 Trevor ANDREWS  
 John COOK  
 John WILKINS  
 Brian SULLIVAN  
 Kevin JOHNSON  
 Roger McDONELL

Gary COLLINS  
 Mick McTERNAN  
 Wayne GRIFFITHS  
 Barry HOUSE  
 Merv WRIGHT  
 Alan WEST  
 Brian BURKE  
 Terry PANNOWITZ (c)  
 John MESKAUSKAS  
 Graham RADNIDGE  
 Dick COLLEDGE  
 Peter EDMONDS  
 Ron CLARKE

#### Reserves

Ron MADGE  
 Ian BAKER

Referee: John Wallace

Linesmen: Col Russel Snr, Dennis Murphy

club. The previous record had been \$7500 paid by North Sydney for South Newcastle's Gary Banks in 1967.

Albert Paul, the new first grade coach had a speedy and skillful team to work with: Brian Sullivan, Kevin Johnson and Roger McDonell in the front row; hard running John "Bruno" Cook and smart moving John Wilkins in the second row and Trevor Andrews last man down. Lakes had a pack equal to any in the competition. Out wide the exciting speed of Peter Cootes, Des Kimmorley and Jim Porter would score many wonderful tries for the Seagulls in 1969. Experience was provided by messrs Campbell, Craig, Hincks and Hensby.

Rugby League is an unpredictable game but it was somewhat surprising to find Lakes struggling as the first round was closing. A narrow loss to Maitland (14-11) at Cahill Oval on July 20 left Lakes sharing fourth place with South, who had played one less match. Lakes had a tough draw in their



### Lakes United Grand Finalists 1969

Back (left): Reg Stokes, Frank Mitchell, Roger McDonell, Bob Hensby, Peter Cootes, Trevor Andrews, Albert Paul (coach), Brian Sullivan, John Cook, Jim Porter, Kevin Johnson, Jim McLean.

Middle (left): Mick Douglas, Pat Sheehan, Dr Denis Gordon, Darryl Sattler, Johnny Craig, Barney Sneddon, Merv Neal (president), Bert Silkman.

Front (left): Neil Hincks, Steve Rapley, Des Kimmorley, Phil Radford, Jimmy Campbell, Jeff McCloy, John Wilkins, Michael Craig (ballboy).

remaining matches and were no certainties for a semi-final berth.

Paul's team did find form at the right stage of the season and finished a comfortable third. Reserve grade also made the semis but were knocked out by Cessnock 29-7.

The first grade minor-semi against Kurri was a thrilling affair, Lakes fighting off a determined challenge from the Bulldogs who dominated the middle portion of the second half. Craig stirred his team into action with Wilkins taking an intercept that sent Cootes over for a pressure relieving try. In the first half Wilkins scored a freak try when he ran straight through the ruck and skirted wide to beat Neville Bagnalls tackle. The final score was 24-19. The final against West was a tough game, both teams scoring two tries, only goals and field goals getting Lakes home. An early setback for the Seagulls was the retirement of Peter Cootes who fractured his left collarbone in the 10th minute.

West led 5-0 at half time courtesy of a try by Alby Wiggs in the 34th minute and 8-2 15 minutes into the second half when Owen Kilpatrick crossed Lakes line. The powerful Jim Porter kicked a surprise field goal from 40 yards out in the 59th minute. Almost immediately the best backline move of the game resulted in Porters first try. Five-eight Jim Campbell made a break on the blind side of the scrum in his own 25 and made it past halfway before finding Bob Hensby backing up who unloaded to Porter who beat a game effort from Geoff Spruce to score in the corner. West had only 12 men active at the time, halfback Mick Gallagher was on the sideline receiving attention. Six minutes later "Sammy" Hincks snapped a close range field goal to give the Seagulls the lead for the first time, 9-8.

Porter scored his second try 11 minutes from time extending the margin to four points. Lakes could not press home its advantage and a last minute mistake nearly allowed the Rosellas to snatch victory. Fullback Johnny Craig, who had played safely all game fielded a kick then lost the ball behind his line not far from the posts. Players from both sides struggled to reach the rolling ball before Porter saved the day. Final score Lakes 12, West 8.

Lakes grand final opponent was Maitland whose fullback Gary Collins had a high percentage kicking game and Lakes attempted to counter this by practising field goals themselves at training. In the major-semi Collins had landed place kicks and field goals (still worth 2 points) with ridiculous ease, finishing with 22 points himself.

On September 21 a swirling diagonal wind played its part in the 1969 grand final, the first ever to be played on a Sunday. Twelve goals were attempted in the first half (five by Maitland and seven by Lakes); only three were able to raise the flags. Lakes looked likely to hold a 4-2 lead at the break until Collins moved up to halfway, kicked into open space then raced through to gather the bouncing ball and outpace the defence to score in the left corner.

Halfback Hincks snapped a field goal early in the second half to give his team the lead briefly. A try by Maitland five-eight Alan West in the 49th minute regained the Pumpkin Pickers lead (8-6). Two angled goals by Brian Burke improved Maitland's position before Lakes revived its hopes when Porter scored in the 62nd minute. Barry House was down injured at the time and Lakes moved the ball sharply from successive rucks

for the big winger to dive over wide out. Maitland 12 Lakes 9.

The Seagulls, however, could not sustain the pressure and Maitland gained the edge with a long range field goal by Terry Pannowitz 11 minutes from the end. A try to Merv Wright (76 minute) and a last minute field goal by Collins sealed Lakes fate.

Led by Terry Pannowitz there was no doubting the superiority of Maitland so for the second year in a row Lakes United wore the "bridesmaid" tag. Coach Albert Paul had Lakes primed for a supreme effort in the grand final but even his inspiration wasn't enough to stop Maitland winning 19-9.

A successful season brought Newcastle honours to Porter, Hensby, Kimmorley and Andrews. Kimmorley and Porter made the Country Seconds with Kimmorley going on to represent Northern NSW.

Lakes were the top earner from gate takings during 1969 receiving \$7956 for their support.

On the Junior scene 170 boys were registered with Lakes United.

---

## 1970 SEPTEMBER 5 : BLACK SATURDAY

---

Lakes United began the new decade in much the same way it had left the sixties. First grade were a force in the NRL and for the first time since 1959 all three grades made the semi-finals. Former East and Balmain centre Bob Hensby became captain/coach and immediately had success; Lakes defeating West 15-11 in the final of the preseason competition. Two notable signings were Ron Burgess (Singleton) and Tony Shiels (Narrabri).

Consistent play had the Seagulls well placed after 12 matches. Defeating West 21-7 in the 13th Series put Lakes in third place and opened up a four point gap over the trailing clubs. The win would also prove to be vital later on.

Two games remained and Lakes and West were locked together on 20 points, four ahead of Macquarie but six behind Maitland. Lakes won their last two matches whilst West amazingly played two draws (19 all vs South and 22 all vs Maitland) allowing Lakes to slip into the major-semi. Maitland were too good for Lakes in this match (28-18) so Lakes were back at No1 Sportsground the following week to face West who had beaten North 28-3. Reserve and third grade both won their minor-semis so Lakes would be represented in all grades on final day.

Inscribe Saturday September 5 as a black day in the history of Lakes United. First grade were defeated 35-16 by West, reserves were also beaten 17-14 by West and third grade went down 30-5 to Maitland.

1970 was a World Cup year and the ARL showed its respect for the NRL by deferring the announcement of the World Cup squad until after the Newcastle grand final on Sunday September 20. Lakes had two World Cup trialists; Peter Cootes (NSW Country) and Brian Sullivan (Qld Country). Both these men also had the honour of representing Newcastle against Great Britain on Saturday June 27 (lost 49-16).

Popular reserve grade coach Johnny Craig made his 200th appearance for the club on Sunday July 19.

Lakes entered a team in the NRL Second Division and they acquitted themselves quite well.

## 1971 FALLING AT THE LAST HURDLE : AGAIN

Could 1971 finally be the year Lakes United broke a premiership drought felt since 1948 ? Ray "Wagga" Johnson was given the task of bringing the Ted O'Sullivan trophy back to Belmont.

Lakes 25th season was marked by two major rule changes. The six tackle rule was introduced and the value of a field goal was reduced to one point.

Early in the season Lakes struggled due mainly to heavy representative commitments. Trevor Andrews, Ron Burgess, Peter Cootes, Des Kimmorley and Brian Sullivan were members of the Newcastle side beaten 15-7 by Illawarra in the Caltex Country Divisional final played at No 1 Sportsground on April 21. Andrews and Kimmorley toured Queensland with Country and were joined by Cootes and Sullivan for the clashes with City. Kimmorley capped a fine season with selection for NSW in two matches against Queensland. He was unfortunate to suffer a fractured cheekbone in the second match and missed further local football.

The semi-final contenders were well established by the end of the 15th series. Waratah (25) led Maitland (24) followed by North (21), Lakes (20) and West (20). The next club was Cessnock (13). When Johnson finally got his best 13 on the paddock form improved and as a result all grades made the semis. Lakes did not cement a semi-final position until the 17th series when they beat Macquarie 33-19 at Cahill Oval. Due to a restructure in the draw and "Match of the Day" commitments at No 1 Sportsground Lakes were fortunate to play their last five competition games on home soil. Third grade coach Wayne Cartwright built up tremendous team spirit and his side suffered only two defeats to win the minor premiership by four points. In the third grade major-semi Lakes played fast open football to defeat Maitland 15-10 but lost the grand final (13-8) to a West team who won its eighth consecutive title in this grade. The reserve grade minor-semi was a sad farewell for captain/coach Johnny Craig when his team lost 27-9 to South. Craig was playing his 221st match for Lakes.

First grade played well to defeat Northern Suburbs 27-18 in the minor-semi then faced a Waratah Mayfield side coming off two hard matches with Maitland (the first major-semi was a 11 all draw, Maitland won the replay 15-6). Waratah were no match for Lakes in the final, the Seagulls won comfortably 25-12.

A record club crowd of 21,681 saw Maitland capitalize on an early scoring blitz to defeat Lakes 30-19 (22-4) in the grand final on September 19. Lakes had no excuses as Maitland turned in a brilliant display especially in the first 40 minutes. Lakes did suffer a disruption when halfback Neil "Sammy" Hincks was forced off with a rib injury midway through the first half causing a reshuffle of the backline.

Lakes United president Merv Neal was rewarded with life membership to the NRL for outstanding service to rugby league in the area.

GRAND FINAL - No 1 Sportsground		Sunday, September 19
<b>Lakes United</b> John FISHER Nigel McDONELL Des KIMMORLEY Ron BURGESS Peter COOTES Jim CAMPBELL Neil HINCKS Phil NEWTON Peter LINDE Trevor ANDREWS Brian SULLIVAN Tony SHIELS Ray JOHNSON (c)	vs	<b>Maitland</b> Ken SHINE Mick McTERNAN Merv WRIGHT Doug NEWMAN Greg BROOKER Alan WEST Brian BURKE Terry PANNOWITZ (c) Max McMAHON Graham RADNIDGE Keith POLLARD Alan McNAB Phil MULLARD
		<b>Reserves</b>
		John BROCK Hector BOLT
		<b>Referee:</b> Tom Gustard <b>Linesmen:</b> Ken Cartwright, Col Russell Snr

The 1971 season was farewelled in fine style with a 25th reunion dinner on October 3 at the Belmont Sportsman's Club who's \$300,000 extensions were just over 12 months old.

## 1972 BACK IN THE DOLDRUMS

Englishman Frank Adams became Lakes United's fifth coach since 1968. Adam's had previously been in charge of Waratah for the 1970/71 seasons. For part of the season first grade had a different captain and coach on the field at the same time. Ron Burgess was named captain early in the year and when Adams came into the side he decided to concentrate on moulding a rebuilt pack. With this in mind Burgess was left to lead the side.

After five good seasons the club performed poorly in every grade, no team producing a winning season. The only joy for first grade was winning the Marlboro Shield. This was a competition for the clubs that failed to make the semi-finals. Lakes accounted for Macquarie 23-13 then carried off the \$1000 first prize by defeating Waratah 28-17 in the final.

First grade did go close to making the semis. Having started the season with three losses and finishing the first round at 4-5, four points off fourth spot, Lakes weren't looking anything like a semi-final contender. On Sunday August 6 the Seagulls finally cracked fourth position by thrashing Central 55-10. The score might have been higher but for only one goal being successful from 10 first half attempts. Fourteen of the 15 tries scored that day were by backs. Jeff McCloy was the only forward to touchdown and Tony Shiels even kicked a goal.

With only the 18th series remaining the top of the table was:

Cessnock .....	26
Maitland .....	26
Western Suburbs .....	25
Lakes United .....	18
South Newcastle .....	18
Kurri Kurri .....	17

Lakes met South at No 1 Sportsground in what was a virtual play-off for fourth place. South won 31-19 to conclude Lakes season.

Centre Burgess stood out throughout the season and won the 2HD Goodsir-Cooper Sportsman of the Year award.

---

## 1973 "BRAMHA" RETURNS

---

1973 was not just an eventful year for Lakes United but for rugby league in general. A move was made to revert back to the unlimited tackle rule.

The sharp decline in spectator interest in Sydney (unlike Newcastle where support was very good) had NSWRL officials extremely concerned, so much so that vice president Mr Ken Charlton moved a notice of motion to reintroduce the dour struggle of unlimited tackles. The proposal was rejected 34 votes to 7.

The best early season news for Lakes was the return of Allan "Bramha" Thomson from Manly to take up the captain/coach position. Thomson had talent to work with (several members of the '74 squad were already in blue and gold) including five promising juniors making the step up to grade. Tom Sheppard, Glen Golden, Rob Crawford, Greg Heaney and Phil McClusky would all be "baptised" this season. Frontrower Russell Devonshire was also recruited from Parramatta.

A good season seemed to be ahead when a crowd of approximately 6000 saw Lakes win their second pre-season final 23-18 (13-13) over Cessnock at Cahill Oval. The season proper, however, started badly with three losses in a row before breaking the duck 31-12 versus Central.

In their seventh series clash with Waratah Lakes were behind 20-0 before recovering to level at 20 all before a last ditch field goal by Waratah fullback Ron Munro clinched the match 21-20. This defeat left Lakes languishing in second last place. Halfway through the season a 3-6 record had Lakes in 8th place, still four points outside the four. The rest of the season showed improvement but eight wins was never enough to make the semis. There was hope for the future winning five of the last six games plus an appearance in the final of the \$1000 Marlboro Shield (lost 19-13 to Kurri).

Other notable events during 1973 were:

\* A Lakes Supporters Club was started by Bruce Holt, Sepi Kidd and Atina Lancaster.

\* "Sammy" Hincks played his 200th game for Lakes versus Kurri at Cahill Oval on Sunday June 17 (won 16-3, third grade).

\* A new scoreboard was erected on the Northern hill courtesy of Macquarie Home Construction Co. Ltd.

\* Fullback Les "Bones" Jones was honoured with the HL Wheeler Player of the Year award.

\* Ron Burgess, Russell Devonshire, Allan Thomson (captain) and Eric White were Newcastle representatives. Newcastle were Country champions in 1973. Thomson went on to captain Country.

---

## 1974 THE WAIT IS OVER

---

Want to take a stab at naming the most memorable moment of 1974? Was it "Brocky's" match winning try in the major-semi? Or maybe Thomo holding aloft the victory wreath as he was carried off the Sportsground? Or maybe Ron Golden's speech at the Belmont Sportsmans Club after the grand final when he stated the only difference between the present side and his 1947 side was the younger men had a better five-eight. Ron's son Glen was the current five eight. Keep nominating but



1974 Grand Final

Photo: A. Jolly

Ron Burgess is wrapped up by a Western Suburbs player.

don't leave out the closing seconds of the grand final when Stephen Proudlock crossed in the right corner, in front of the HL Wheeler grandstand, to seal Lakes United's first major premiership since 1947. No doubt these were all highlights of a great season but much tackling and passing would elapse before "The Try" could be scored.

Before the season opened, Western Suburbs, led by former international halfback Dennis Ward, had assembled a side the remainder of the league would find very hard to beat. Lakes had strengthened its pack with the arrival of Grahame Huggins from Murwillumbah and Dennis Gardiner from Newtown. Indeed West lost only two games in the regular season and won the minor premiership by a massive nine points. Lakes would finish a distant second but had the best defensive record.

At the halfway stage of the season Lakes were in third



1974 Grand Final

Photo: A. Jolly

Lakes workhorse John Brock confronts the Rosella defence during the grand final of 1974.

position (5-4) and looking anything but a serious challenger to the Rosellas. So what brought about the sudden improvement? Well for once the selector's (Wayne Cartwright and Ollie Renfrew) could take some credit. A major reshuffle took place involving seven players. Ron Burgess (lock) and Tom Sheppard (centre) swapped places, Lindsay Gailey came into the side at half (Gailey was also coaching reserve grade) and John Fisher was moved from centre to fullback. The pairing of Burgess with 17 year old Simon Booth (straight out of juniors) played a big role in the sides success. The new combination improved results even to the extent of defeating West 31-8 in the 11th series at Cahill Oval.

The major semi-final was played at No1 Sportsground on Sunday September 1. Lakes were forced to make two changes. Paul "Jughead" Williams went to fullback for Fisher and Phil "Budda" Murray filled in for Huggins. A disciplined 80 minute effort gained Lakes a 16-12 win after being down 4-7 at halftime. The penalty count of 19-6 in Lakes favour was a telling factor. Murray, for 55 minutes and Wayne Cooper admirably filled Huggins front row position whilst Williams did well too. John Brock (second row) had a top game scoring the winning try and also giving the final pass for Glen Golden's try. Gardiner (front row) had his best game for Lakes often requiring two or three men to bring him down.

Two weeks later these two fine sides met for the last time in 1974. The grand final was a dour struggle, dominated by rugged defence. Attacking play was limited due to consistent handling errors. Lakes finally lifted their "bridesmaid" tag winning 7-2 (4-2) in a match that had spectators enthralled through-out (see Seven To Remember).

Neither lower grade made the semis though reserve grade missed by a point. Two Lakes players represented Newcastle; Thomson and Gardiner. "Thomo" played his 25th and final match for Newcastle against Great Britain (lost 24-14) thus qualifying for automatic life membership to the NRL. Thomson was also the HL Wheeler Player of the Year.

---

## 1975 BACK TO BACK TITLES

---

Even the staunchest of Lakes supporters would have thought it asking to much to perceive their team enjoying success similar to 1974. It's history now that that's exactly what happened.

The majority of players were retained from the previous season. Gailey was still coaching the reserves so Greg Thompson (Waratah) was brought in to cover the halfback role. The only other major changes were on the wings. Mark Pauling



**Lakes United First Grade Major and Minor Premiers 1975**

*Photo: Belmont Studios*

*Back (left): Tom Sheppard (trainer), George Perring (selector), Dennis Gardiner, Grahame Huggins, John Brock, Simon Booth.*  
*3rd Row (left): Phil Anthony (gear steward), Allan Willoughby (treasurer), Milton Maybury (secretary), Greg Thompson, Merv Neal (president), Bert Silkman (manager), Dr Denis Gordon.*  
*2nd Row (left): Tom Sheppard, John Fisher, Allan Thomson (coach), Glen Golden, Ron Burgess.*  
*Front Row (left): Greg Hill (ballboy), Tony Shiels, Grant Huggins, Paul Williams, Rodney Hill (ballboy).*  
*Insert: Stephen Brown.*



Goodsir-Cooper Sportsman of the Year award (jointly with Central's Phil Amidy) whilst Thomson picked up his second HL Wheeler Player of the Year award.

Five players made Newcastle sides during 1976 namely Simon Booth, Ron Burgess, Peter Cootes, Glen Golden and Tom Sheppard. Sheppard went on to represent Country.

Cahill Oval went the Goanna's way 14-8. Lakes were too strong in the grand final running out 18-11 winners.

Peter Cootes, Michael Pitman and Sauvage found themselves in Newcastle teams this year.

---

## 1977 A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW

---

Lakes United lost the influence and never say die attitude of Thomson, replacing him with the astute former St George winger Paul Mills. Gavin Gleeson and Rick Griffiths also transferred from South Newcastle. Lakes, however, lost many outstanding players. Booth (Manly), Bowden (West Ncle), Brock (retired), Burgess (Singleton), Pitman (Waratah), Sheppard (South Sydney), Shiels (Swansea) and Thomson (Macquarie) made the task of maintaining the standard very hard indeed.

Young players like Peter Allington, David Burt, Peter Jaeger and Steven Lowe would get their chance to cement first grade positions this year.

The 1977 season turned out to be a disaster for first grade. Things began well enough defeating Kurri 14-10 and Macquarie 20-14 before West inflicted a 42-0 hiding at Cahill Oval. This was the first of eight losses in a row. When the season had finished first grade had only four wins to their credit; the poorest performance since 1963.

Five Seagulls played for Newcastle during the season. They were Mick Burgess, Griffiths, Huggins, Paul Williams and Mills. Mills also played for Country Seconds.

---

## 1978 REBUILDING

---

When Grahame Huggins joined Lakes in 1974 he could hardly imagine that he would one day be coaching first grade but that was exactly the position he found himself in after the club had experienced a lean 1977. Huggins demanded nothing from his players that he could not do himself. Alain Sauvage was recruited from Erina to bolster the pack.

Huggins first term started well enough, three wins and a draw after five rounds to share second place. A dramatic loss in form for the rest of the season when only three more games would be won left first grade well out of semi-final contention. Both lower grades had solid seasons and made the play-offs. Reserve grade had to fight hard to sneak past Macquarie 20-16 in their minor-semi. The final against Maitland took some surprising turns as first Lakes then Maitland then Lakes again looked like winning. Lakes played with only 12 men for part of the match. Maitland held on to win 20-17. Third grade, led by John "Mad Dog" Daniels lost only three games in the regular season. In their major-semi against minor premiers Cessnock, the forwards paved the way for a 14-8 victory. This gave Daniels side the luxury of a weeks spell but an added bonus was to emerge. The final between Cessnock and South ended in a 21 all draw after referee Richard Reid ruled a Cessnock player went down in a voluntary tackle and the resultant penalty goal levelled the score. The replay the following Tuesday night at

---

## 1979 TURNING THE CORNER

---

Huggins second term as coach did not produce a vintage year but much was achieved and young players like Mark Harragon and Dave Hartney developed into first grade material.

The club did well to make the semis in all grades considering the serious injuries sustained by leading players. A 25-13 win over West put Lakes on top after 10 games:

Lakes United .....	14
North Newcastle .....	13
Maitland .....	13
Cessnock .....	12
Macquarie United .....	12
Western Suburbs .....	10

Form was fickle thereafter but good enough for first grade to finish fourth. Lakes bowed out in the minor-semi when beaten 19-3 (14-3) by Maitland. The Pumpkin Pickers always seemed in control except for a short period immediately after halftime. Most of the new players Lakes had acquired had good seasons. The centre pairing of Peter Dodds (Central) and Terry Quinn (Penrith) were combining well until Quinn had his jaw broken. Utility forward Peter Kelly (Eden) and hooker Glen Louge (South) also served the Seagulls well. Reserve grade also fell at the first hurdle, Cessnock doing the damage this time; 36-20. Third grade improved on the previous season to lose only two games and in the process became minor premiers. The major-semi was a physical game West emerging the victor 21-15. Lakes saved its poorest performance for the final versus Central and were well beaten 32-7. Central went on to win their first major premiership in any grade for 30 years when they upset West 10-9 in the grand final.

The major achievement of the season was reclaiming the Mal Woolford club championship trophy for the first time since 1959. Finding the champion club in 1979 was one of the most interesting in the history of the code. Going into the final series at Cahill Oval Lakes had to defeat Cessnock in all three grades to finish equal first with the Goannas in the club championship stakes. Remarkably that's exactly what eventuated. "Devo's" boys got the ball rolling winning 22-15 then Gailey's side did their part 25-11. The scene was set for an exciting climax to the 1979 season. Adding to the excitement was the fact that Lakes needed to win to ensure they stayed in fourth place. A win for Cessnock would secure them the minor premiership. The Goannas hopes were dashed when Lakes turned on a great performance (see Seven To Remember) to win 35-6.

In sport you must take your opportunities as they arise. Tommy Sheppard certainly took his when Terry Donnelly (Macquarie) decided not to board a small plane heading for a Divisional match at Wagga so in came Sheppard as a last minute replacement. Other Newcastle players were Terry Quinn and Peter Kelly. Newcastle were the champion division in 1979.

Winger Steven Lowe shared the seasons try scoring honours with Cessnocks Doug Tanna.

---

## 1980 PAPER SEAGULLS

---

The decade opened with the NRL introducing the five team semi-final format that had been in operation in Sydney since 1973. The previous seasons development plus the addition of players of proven quality had supporters looking forward to a good season. Rick Griffiths (South), Paul Grob (North), Mark Humphries (North), Roger Lavis (Penrith), Mick Screen (North), Gary Sharpe (Waratah) and giant prop Ross Visalli (Wollongong) were all new recruits. Peter Cootes and Steve Proudlock came out of retirement to add speed to the wings. Lakes lost Peter Kelly, Glen Golden, Steve Lowe and Greg Robbs to rival clubs. Newtown also signed Mick Pitman.

Unfortunately the side did not play to their potential as a result when the semi-finals were being played Lakes were spectators. First grade, with a 8-10 record, missed fourth spot by three points. Reserve grade were in contention most of the season whilst third grade struggled.

First grade were in a fair position after the first round:

Western Suburbs .....	14
Kurri Kurri .....	13
Cessnock .....	10
Lakes United .....	10
Waratah Mayfield .....	10
South Newcastle .....	9
Central Charlestown .....	8
Macquarie United .....	6
North Newcastle .....	5
Maitland .....	5

An unexpected loss to Central (19-18) at Cahill Oval in the 14th series was a crucial blow to play-off hopes. Waratah handed out a 34-8 drubbing the next week to knock Lakes out of the top five for the first time. Coming into the last series Lakes had to beat North and hope Macquarie could upset Waratah to force a play-off for fifth place. As it turned out neither result favoured Lakes; North won 20-16 and Waratah got past Macquarie 11-10.

Mark Humphries and Terry Quinn played for Newcastle in 1980.

---

## 1981 YOUNG MEN FLY THE FLAG

---

The 1981 season was one that Lakes supporters will care to forget in future years, first grade compiling a 5-13 record and reserve grade faring slightly better. An U/23 competition was introduced and Lakes young players performed exceptionally. Coach Grahame Huggins did a wonderful job with this team. Testimony to the talent of the U/23's was the fact that many went on to play first grade. The U/23 team had to work their way from fourth place to make the grand final, accounting for West 24-10; Macquarie 22-5 and then the more fancied Kurri 24-15 to set up a showdown with Waratah. Waratah won a thrilling match by the odd point 24-23. Despite a three to one margin against them in the scrums and penalties Lakes still managed to score five tries to four.

One of the most sensational incidents in the history of Lakes United occurred on Tuesday June 16 when the committee met and decided to terminate first grade coach John Stopford's two year contract. Stopford was called before the meeting and told

of the decision which took effect immediately. Admittedly Lakes had not started the season well winning only two of the first eight games but the announcement did surprise some supporters. Stopford, a former British Lion was deeply hurt by the shock decision. "I never expected anything like that; it took the wind out of my sails" said Stopford. Stopford asserted that the obvious reason for his dismissal was because of the first grades poor performances. "You can't sack a team so you have to find a single scapegoat like a coach" he said. "There are two kinds of coaches - those that are sacked and those waiting to be sacked". Stopford maintained he did his best with the player material the club had given him. Stopford felt stunned in the manner in which the dismissal had been made. When he arrived at the ground for training a "rubber" informed him he was required at the committee meeting where he was given the option of resigning then or at the end of the season. Stopford refused both and was then informed of his dismissal.

Lakes veteran and team captain Tommy Sheppard took over the coaching reigns for the remainder of the season compiling a 3-7 record.

Fullback Paul Grob was the sole representative player this year, playing for Newcastle (Country champions) and Country.

---

## 1982 THE MAYES REVOLUTION

---

Movement and change marked Lakes United's 36th season. A number of significant rule alterations were introduced including the differential scrum penalty and after the sixth tackle a "handover" was enforced. An era of Lakes United rugby league history ended when president Merv Neal announced his retirement. Neal was convinced that Lakes needed an infusion of "new blood" to bring back the success the club had been accustomed to.

Arguably the single most significant appointment since 1947 occurred when former Australian halfback Johnny Mayes was signed as first grade coach. Mayes, who had captain/coached North to the major premiership in 1979, was known as a strict disciplinarian. Among the alsorans in 1980/81 Mayes was faced with a tough task. He enlisted the services of Geoff Noble, an equally stern taskmaster, known for his ability of conditioning premiership winning sides. On the player front the retention committee (president Reg Squires, secretary Bruce Gill, Jeff McCloy and Jim Porter) introduced a number of new players to the club. John McKiernan (1981 Newcastle Player of the Year) signed but unfortunately was injured in a car accident. Kevin Hill, Col Mathias, Guy Tully (all Kurri), Jim Harvey, Grant Jackson, Grahame Sullivan (the Dubbo connection), Robert "Rip" Taylor, Todd Riley, Kirk Vidler (Bellingen), Steve Bower (South), Gary Dodds (Tumut) and Steve Lowe (Waratah) were added to strengthen the ranks.

The 1982 season began with an encouraging trial against Newtown and then a 24-14 win over West in the pre-season final. During the season the Seagulls were solid but lost ground with two narrow losses (14-12 and 16-7) to minor premier West. Lakes finished in the vital third position ahead of Cessnock who had been in the top three all season. There was tremendous interest in the final match of the premiership against Cessnock at Cahill Oval. Trailing the Goannas by two points on the table

a win would ensure Lakes third place since their average of 2.125 shaded Cessnock's 2.074. After falling behind 10-0 Lakes came back to score a memorable victory 31-18.

The NRL broke new ground by playing the qualifying semi-final between Lakes and Kurri at Lyle Peacock Field Toronto. A penalty goal in the 76th minute by Kurri hooker Mark Winkler enabled his side to squeeze past Lakes 11-10. The Seagulls in turn defeated Maitland 9-7 in an exciting minor-semi. The rematch with Kurri was once more a dour struggle, Kurri finally winning 25-18 (5-10).

The lower grades demonstrated the clubs depth, both making the semi-finals.

Peter Cootes gained automatic life membership by playing his 150th game for Lakes in the 18th series clash with Cessnock.

Terry Quinn, Rip Taylor and Todd Riley were Newcastle representatives.

## 1983 TRAVELLING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

You had to feel confident the club was travelling in the right direction as the 1983 season opened. Once again fresh faces were signed including Michael "Bunsen" Bates (Central), Kevin "Max" Hardman (South), Michael "Rowdy" McKiernan (Smithtown) and Tamworth North duo Alan Beresford and Doug Chester. Lakes also had three "law enforcers" on their books this year in Grahame Beams (Cronulla), Mark "Mary" Hanlon (South) and Russell Harrison (Lakes junior).

1982 Sydney finalists Eastern Suburbs were the Seagulls first opponent. A good crowd witnessed an exciting game with Lakes surprising East with some solid defence. After holding the Roosters to 14-10 at halftime the Sydney men ran in some fine tries to win 31-10.

Lakes went undefeated through the Caltex pre-season but the winning form came to an abrupt halt in the final at the ISC. In wet and windy conditions West finished in front 20-15.

Inconsistent early season form through representative commitments and injuries had Lakes five points adrift of top team Maitland after 13 matches. Lakes won their last five games by a combined total of 189-56 to finish in third place.

On Sunday July 31 Lakes officials were delving into the record books after the three grades had scored a combined total of 220 points against an injury plagued South Newcastle. The Merewether club was so devastated by injuries that their U/23 side took the field with only nine men and never had more than 12 on the field at any one time. Some of these courageous Lions had to back up for reserve grade too ! For the record the U/23's won 108-0, reserve grade 46-0 and first grade 66-0.

The semi-finals were a major disappointment for first grade. In the qualifying semi West scored on the bell to win 24-20. The minor-semi was controversial as Cessnock were awarded a penalty try by referee Keith Marker in the 67th minute when the score was locked at 14 all. Lakes fullback Kevin Hill was judged to have impeded Cessnock's Powell after he had kicked the ball into Lakes in-goal. Cessnock won 20-14.

Reserve grade, coached by Tony Shiels lost only one competition game all year (12-11 to Maitland) in winning the minor premiers. After a shock 20-17 loss to Cessnock this side bounced back to defeat Maitland 24-10 then go on to win

the grand final 19-8 (7-6). The win was only the second time in Lakes history that reserve grade were major premiers.

Glen Logue's U/23 side had a season to remember by going through the entire season undefeated (a 16 all draw with Central was their only imperfection). West third grade of 1969 were the last team to achieve this honour. The grand final was won 30-14 over Macquarie.

Lakes won the Mal Woolford club championship trophy by 55 points from Cessnock.

The representative scene saw Mark Brokenshire, Stephen Brown, Jim Harvey, Gary Johnson and Michael McKiernan selected for Newcastle.

Paul "Jughead" Williams, a tremendous clubman had a memorable climax to his season playing his 200th game for Lakes in the reserve grade grand final.

## 1984 RESURGENCE GAINS MOMENTUM

The learning curve continued upwards in 1984 as Lakes United proved to be one of the stronger clubs in town. The extensive rebuilding program continued. Four members of Maitland's 1983 champion squad (Kyle Connor, Dave "Sponge" Edwards, Phil Guest and Peter "Spider" Walsh) joined the Seagulls. David "Fred" Grant (Tamworth) was another signing.

Under new captain/coach Robert Taylor first grade went undefeated through the pre-season and this time defeated Kurri 28-25 in the final after being down 19-0 at one stage.

Once again Lakes were unable to string together consistent results early on but closed out the premiership in fine style winning the last 11 games. The last match was at home to West with the first grade minor premiers and club championship at stake. The Rosellas went into the match missing three regular first graders but nothing could be taken away from an impressive 38-6 (22-2) win to the Seagulls.

Lakes won the minor premiership on percentages. West however took the club championship earlier in the day when its third grade won 20-16 (Lakes won reserve grade 50-6) to finish with 400 club championship points to Lakes 399.

### GRAND FINAL - International Sports Centre Sunday, September 9

<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>Western Suburbs</b>
Todd RILEY		Shane MATHEWS
Mark HANLON		Mitchell KNIGHT
Kyle CONNOR		Craig DEDMAN
Doug CHESTER		Steve GAFFNEY
Tony LOWE		Glenn MURRAY
Peter WALSH		Neville ELWIN
Robert TAYLOR (c)		Peter WEBBER
Bruce BURGESS		Steve PREST
Col MATHIAS		Mal GRAHAM
Michael McKIERNAN		Gary MARTINE (c)
Tony LOVE		John FARRAR
Kevin HARDMAN		Wayne NEWLING
Dave EDWARDS		Guy KEENAN

#### Reserves

Darren GREGORY  
Stephen BROWN  
David GRANT

**Referee:** Tom Gustard

**Linesmen:** Dennis Smith, Paul Lovett

The major-semi was a nightmare for Lakes as West turned the tables 36-16 (22-2). Adding to the woe, referee Keith Marker sent-off Kevin Hardman (30th minute) and Taylor (55th minute). In this incredible match spectators saw;

- an all in brawl in the second minute.
- four players sin-binned plus the two dismissals.
- three first half tries to West resulting from Lakes passes.
- a spirited comeback from Lakes to pull within six points of West despite playing with only 10 men at one stage.

Hardman and Taylor were fined \$200 each and allowed to take their place in the final against Kurri. This turned out to be a much happier match for the Seagulls, steamrolling the Bulldogs 28-14. Leading 16-4 at the break Lakes scored two quick converted tries to put the final beyond Kurri's reach.

Lakes had their chances in the grand final but West were an exceptional side and kept their opposition tryless. Lakes best chance came when Taylor split the defence at midfield and looked to one side as backup arrived on the other. West went on to win 10-2.

Reserve grade were minor premiers again but lost two games in a row to surrender their title.

Third grades opportunity to win the minor premiership was dashed by West in the last series and had to settle for third place. Their season ended in the final losing 12-6 to the Rosellas.

Newcastle won the Country Championships for the first time since 1981. Lakes players selected were Stephen Brown, Kyle Connor, Robert Costello, Michael McKiernan and Rip Taylor. Connor and Taylor were selected for the match against the British Lions (lost 28-18).

---

## 1985 MAYBE THE GREATEST SEASON EVER

---

After three seasons of near misses Lakes United triumphed as first grade major premiers, the clubs first success since 1975. 1985 was indeed a great year for both seniors and juniors, some might argue the finest season ever.

Club honours attained were:

First grade major premiers.

Reserve grade major/minor premiers.

Third grade minor premiers/grand finalists.

Club champions.

President Cup winners.

Keith Barry Cup winners.

Junior club champions.

U/20's equal minor premiers.

U/18's major premiers (3rd year in succession)

U/16's grand finalists.

U/15's minor premiers/grand finalists.

The senior club retained 60% of the previous years grand final side. To fill the gaps Mark "Ecca" Bates (North), Mathew Callinan (Wingham), Gary "Gato" Johnson (returning from Brothers), Mick Sullivan (returning from Ipswich), Jim "Chook" Fowler and Greg "Jack" Haywood (both Lower Clarence) were added to Taylor's squad.

Saturday February 16 saw Lakes shock Penrith 18-16 in a trial game at Cahill Oval. Penrith turned out a strong side including Greg Alexander, Geoff Gerard, Matt Goodwin, Brad

### GRAND FINAL - International Sports Centre Sunday, September 8

<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>Cessnock</b>
Craig HUBBARD		David SWEENEY
Michael SHEEHAN		Rod WHITAKER
Trevor TUCKWELL		Geoff TODD
David GRANT		Boyd DAVIES
Mark BATES		Alan THOMPSON
Peter WALSH		Glen HINDMARSH
Mick SULLIVAN		John HUNTER
Robert TAYLOR (c)		Michael SCHOFIELD
Col MATHIAS		Chris SMITH
Darren GREGORY		Chris CUMMING
Mark BROKENSHIRE		Bruce STARKEY (c)
Bruce BURGESS		Dominic LEVIDO
David EDWARDS		Mark WATSON

**Referee:** Tom Gustard

**Linesmen:** Shane Crich, Dennis Smith

Izzard, Mark Levy, Royce Simmons and Tony Trudgett. The future of trials against Sydney opposition was put in jeopardy after Simmons was knocked out in a tackle and carried from the field unconscious 12 minutes into the second half. Canterbury secretary Peter Moore said his club decided against playing country teams because "too many country players want to make a name for themselves by taking a shot at a leading Sydney first grader."

Further pre-season drama unfolded when new recruit Callinan turned in a fine performance for Newcastle against Canterbury in the Challenge Cup and was subsequently approached to join the Bulldogs. The deal was completed, but only after both parties thrashed out an acceptable fee of \$7000. Callinan went on to play on the wing for Canterbury's premiership winning side that year.

First grade completed the season in third place behind minor premier Cessnock. A 14-10 win over West in the preliminary final followed by a 34-14 (16-2) victory of Cessnock gave Lakes a berth in the 1985 grand final.

The climax of the season was the fourth confrontation between Lakes and Cessnock for the season. The Goannas had won both competition matches 28-24 and 10-6. Little separated the two sides as the 8-2 half-time scoreline in favour of the Seagulls testified. The final 40 minutes of the season featured tough, tight defence with Cessnock unable to score a try until the 68th minute despite being camped down in Lakes territory for much of the half. A freak try six minutes before the siren virtually sealed Lakes first grand final win since 1975. Cessnock had given away a penalty 10 metres out from their own line and Walsh's ensuing attempt at goal drifted left across the face of goal. Schofield spilled the ball behind his own try line for Taylor to pounce on. Lakes 12 Cessnock 6. The remaining minutes were nerve wracking for both sets of fans but Lakes held on to ensure the Ted O'Sullivan trophy would be heading back to the Sportsman's Club. Coach Taylor paid tribute to former coach Johnny Mayes "A lot of the credit has to go to John Mayes-a Lakes win has been coming for four years and he started it" Taylor said.

Paul Williams reserve graders had a remarkable year. Undefeated through 18 series their only blemish was a 22-16 loss to West in the major-semi. They returned to form defeating Maitland 32-6 in the final and West 10-2 in the grand final. It was not surprising to note every member of the '85 reserve grade side had played at first grade level or higher.

Third grade did most things according to plan but with captain/coach Warren Holden the only experienced man went down 33-12 to Waratah in the early grand final.

Callinan, Mark Bates and Mark Brokenshire were Newcastle representatives.

The 30th Anniversary of the Sportsman's Club was indeed a memorable year for all concerned with the football, cricket and baseball clubs all winning their first grade competitions.

## 1986 A SEASON TO REMEMBER

1986 was another phenomenal season for Lakes. First grade were major/minor premiers, reserve grade minor premiers and third grade finished in second place. Lakes decisively won the club championship by 56 points from Western Suburbs. West however gained an early season success defeating Lakes 24-12 in the pre-season final at Harker Oval.

The key to Lakes success was undoubtedly its depth. The second competition match against Waratah illustrated this fact. Despite having six players away with Newcastle and another three regular first graders injured first grade won 28-10, reserve grade won 34-16 whilst third grade lost 46-14.

The 1986 season continued in similar vein to 1985. Following a 10-4 loss to West on Saturday August 3 1985 Lakes did not taste defeat again until July 26 1986. The 22-20 loss to

### GRAND FINAL - International Sports Centre Sunday, September 14

<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>South Newcastle</b>
Darren BUTLER		Darryl MORRIS
Mark HANLON		Paul WAITE
David GRANT		Steve LIPPIATT
Trevor TUCKWELL		Les ROTUMAH
Mark BATES		John TONGUE
Peter WALSH		Steve ROBINSON
Robert TAYLOR (c)		Phil COLE
Greg HAYWOOD		Barry PHELPS
Darren SMITH		Nigel WILSON
Ian HAMPSON		Tony KEEVILL
David EDWARDS		Grant SQUIRES
Bruce BURGESS		Richard JONES (c)
Jim FOWLER		Paul HILL

#### Reserves

Steven WALTERS  
 Rick STONE  
 Stephen DRINKWATER  
 Peter PARSONS  
 Mick SULLIVAN  
**Referee:** Tom Gustard  
**Linesmen:** Mark Pinfeld, Phil Evans

fourth placed South Newcastle at Townson Oval snapped a 19 game streak without defeat. Referee Ross Williams ordered Rip Taylor from the field during this match.

The month of July was a terrible month for the club, apart from the loss to the Lions, first grade were dealt a double blow when representative forwards Col Mathias (July 6) and Mark Brokenshire (July 20) suffered broken arms.



#### Lakes United First Grade Major and Minor Premiers 1986

*Back (left): Warren Holden (trainer), Phil Anthony, Jim Fowler, Dave Edwards, Mark Brokenshire, Col Mathias, Rick Stone, Gary Mears (conditioner), Terry Johnson (trainer).*

*Middle (left): Bruce Gill, Peter Walsh, Stephen Drinkwater, David Grant, Robert Taylor (coach), Peter Parsons, Steve Walters, Trevor Tuckwell, Ron Russell.*

*Front (left): Mark Bates, Mick Sullivan, Scott Hackett (ballboy), Michael Anthony (ballboy), Bruce Burgess, Greg Haywood.*

In week 17 Lakes and West met at Cahill Oval in what was a virtual play-off for the minor premiership. Lakes prevailed 32-6 extending their lead to three points with one match remaining. The series 18 clash at Toronto held added incentive. If the Seagulls could defeat Macquarie they would chalk up 33 competition points for the season, a feat never achieved since the ten team format was revived in 1960. Lakes broke the record when they won 30-12.

Lakes confirmed their favouritism for the premiership when they defeated Cessnock 22-6 in the major-semi at the International Sports Centre.

Much controversy surrounded the Belmont club before the grand final had even began. The NRL judiciary had given Taylor a four match suspension on July 28 after the loss to South. Taylor's appeal was dismissed but the NRL appeals committee varied the wording to read; "suspended for four competition matches in which the club participates, to include semi-finals, finals and grand final where applicable.". Lakes secretary Bruce Gill submitted a letter to the appeals committee stating that Taylor had now carried out the terms of his suspension. The letter listed six matches, including lower grade fixtures, between August 2 and August 31 including three semi-finals (played on August 31). NRL chairman Neville Lyddiard stated "They've seized on a loophole. We must make sure it never happens again". Deputy chairman Glen Maloney (who along with Kevin Smith had voted against the decision) asserted that Lakes and Taylor had made fools of the League. "I'm disgusted and disappointed in their attitude" he said.

Since 1947 no side had kept its opposition scoreless in a deciding match. It was to be the Seagulls bringing about a parallel by defeating South 4-0 in the grand final of 1986. The score itself was extraordinary for such a significant match, the previous team to win with so few points was Maitland's 4-2 victory over Waratah in 1934.

Taylor employed one of his customary last minute changes by starting the match at halfback instead of his usual lock position. Ian Hampson was brought into the pack while regular starter Steve Walters sat on the bench for the first half. In the second half Taylor reverted to lock and called Walters into the fray. "Our idea was to play at least the first half with seven forwards instead of six. I think it worked pretty well" explained Taylor in a post match interview.

Obviously little separated the two teams in this no frills decider which featured tough tight defence allowing little in the way of attacking play. Darren "Doofa" Smith (who had a dislocated shoulder put back in place in the opening minutes) scored the only points when he burrowed his way over the try line in the 35th minute. South, with a gale at their backs in the second half produced a poor kicking game hindering their opportunities to score. Up until the try South had repelled everything Lakes could throw at them. Two grand final victories in succession equalled the feat of the 1974/75 side.

A successful season usually brings a high proportion of representative honours and 1986 was no exception:

Mark Brokenshire; Newcastle and Country Firsts.

Rip Taylor; Newcastle (capt) and Country Seconds.

Rick Stone; Newcastle and Country Seconds.

Jim Fowler, David Grant, Col Mathias and Peter Parsons; Newcastle.

Darren Smith and Steve Walters; Newcastle Colts.

Brokenshire, Fowler, Grant, Parsons and Taylor also had the honour of playing against New Zealand (lost 22-17).

---

## 1987 THREEPEAT : A GREAT GAME, A GREAT SEASON

---

Lakes 41st season in the NRL was one of the best ever. Captain/coach Peter "Spider" Walsh guided first grade to a third straight grand final victory to join Maitland (1956/7/8) and Western Suburbs (1980/81/82) as the only clubs to win three titles in a row. Reserve grade won the minor premiership for the fifth time in a row and third grade made the final. Walsh took over from Taylor who had moved to South Brisbane to take up a playing contract. Four players were missing from the '86 side. Mark Brokenshire (Manly), Mark Hanlon (South Newcastle), Darren Smith (Parramatta) and Trevor Tuckwell (South Sydney) all left positions to be filled.

To offset these losses the retention committee did a fine job securing replacements. Three former Seagulls returned; Kevin Hardman, Michael McKiernan and Michael Pitman whilst former Australian Schoolboy John Wilcox was also signed. The constantly strong junior club promoted Brett "Frank" Botham and Paul "Chief" Harragon for their initial season in grade.

Lakes won their first five games before South dealt them a sensational loss 28-18 at Cahill Oval on May 10. Lakes won well on occasions after this (32-6 vs West) but also lost games (36-6 vs Macquarie; 17-10 Central) to sides below them in the standings. In the end Lakes had to settle for third place. The qualifying semi saw Lakes keep West scoreless while scoring 10 points themselves then accounted for South 14-4 (12-4) in the major-semi to move into their fourth straight first grade grand final. A try three minutes before halftime epitomised the Seagulls determination. Halfback Steve Walters charged at the South line like a prop, broke four tackles with sheer strength and determination to get the ball down for a try.

A seven try scoring extravaganza greeted fans lucky enough to be at No1 Sportsground on August 30 – grand final day. Lakes scored four tries to three to overthrow a gallant South Newcastle who had led the match on three separate occasions. The Seagulls won 24-16 (see Seven To Remember) in an open entertaining game of rugby league.

On the representative scene Lakes players were again well employed. Mark Bates, Jim Fowler, David Grant, Greg Haywood, Michael McKiernan Peter Walsh and Steve Walters played for Newcastle. Haywood and Walters earned Country guernseys with Walters touring New Zealand and winning the number one halfback spot for the annual match against City. Steven Walters became only the second Lakes United player to be named the NSW Country Player of the Year and in doing so won a contract with the newly formed Newcastle Knights. Not a bad effort for a 20 year old who was playing reserve grade football just before the Country Championships.

Individually the 1987 season was a standout for the Seagull's senior players. Mick Pitman won the NRL Player of the Year Award (shared with Cessnock's David Woodbury) and the Coach of the Year award was taken out by Peter Walsh.

## 1988 REWRITING THE RECORD BOOK

With the Newcastle Knights entering the Winfield Cup competition it was inevitable that several Seagulls would be drawn to the higher level of rugby league. So it came as no surprise when Brett Botham, Paul Harragon, Greg Haywood, Michael McKiernan and Steve Walters were enlisted for the Knights debut season. Still the club did well to appear in a fifth consecutive first grade grand final whilst the other grades made the final. Michael Pitman took on the caretaker coach role for first grade side until Walsh returned from England.

Nine games into the season Lakes were placed mid-table:

South Newcastle .....	14
Cessnock .....	12
Central Charlestown .....	12
Western Suburbs .....	11
Maitland .....	11
Lakes United .....	10
Macquarie United .....	10

The second half of the season went better winning seven games and losing only to South (22-10) thus finishing in second place.

Lakes won well in the qualifying semi defeating Central 32-12 but were unable to score a point against South in the major-semi going down 8-0. Lakes "had the wood" on West this year winning both competition games 18-10 and 18-11 and extended the sequence in the final 16-10.

First grade tried hard in the grand final (played at the ISC) but carried too many players with injury problems into the match. This is to take nothing away from an outstanding Lions outfit who were the most consistent side all season (minor premiers by five points) and deserved their 29-8 victory.

Several longterm club records were broken during 1988. On June 18 first grade trounced North Newcastle 114-0 (21 tries, 15 goals). Lindsay Bowne broke Ivan Wolfe's 1957 record of six tries by crossing the line eight times. Peter Walsh's individual tally of 38 points from three tries and 13 goals eclipsed Russell Naughton's 1956 record of 26 points. (If you convert Walsh's points to back to the 1956 period he still walked off the ground with 35 points). The reserve grade also entered the record books by scoring a club high 138 points without reply. Only 15 series

were played in 1988 due to the atrocious weather conditions throughout the season.

---

## 1989 BACK TO EARTH

---

The second wettest winter in the recorded history of NSW played havoc with the 1989 season. Many games were postponed which disrupted the continuity of the premiership. The club did fairly well, all sides making the semis but none were good enough to win a competition.

First grade began by gaining slight revenge for the '88 grand final defeating the Lions 18-16. It was not a great start to a season, however with the record standing at 5-4 after the first round.

With three series remaining another loss would jeopardize Lakes (8 wins, 1 draw, 6 losses) semi-final chances. Fortunately Walsh's team played three teams below them on the ladder, won these games comfortably and qualified for the elimination semi-final. Lakes had beaten North Nelson Bay 32-16 in the 18th series at Cahill Oval to secure home field advantage for the semi. The NRL's newest club reversed the tables on Lakes, the Marlins winning their first ever semi-final appearance 19-12. Reserve grade started their sudden death campaign defeating Waratah 32-18 before South knocked them out 10-4. Third grade made a quick exit, eliminated by Toronto 16-6.

Lindsay Bowne was the only Lakes man to play for Newcastle in '89.

A highlight of presentation night was life membership badges being awarded to Col Mathias and Michael Pitman. Mathias continued the long list of players who came to Lakes from other areas and end up staying longer than even they anticipated. Pitman, a Lakes junior, might well have received his badge earlier but for the fact that quality players usually find their way to Sydney at some stage of their careers.

Phil "the Friar" Anthony, was honoured with life membership of the NRL. "Friars" honour was richly deserved having started with Lakes as a gear steward in 1971 before progressing to president in 1987.

---

## 1990 MUD, SWEAT AND TEARS

---

The mark of any season is usually an amalgam of statistics, off field developments and individual achievements. Once they have identified themselves time goes to work on the weaker ones. Lakes United's years wear names. Fast forward from the Scoular era..... 1952: Paul. 1956: Naughton. 1967: "Bramha". 1974: Great Side. 1986: Great Season.

Then came 1990.

Whilst not reaching the heights of recent seasons 1990 proved to be right up there in the most memorable category.

Here's the breakdown:

- First grade minor premiers/grand finalists.
  - Reserve grade major premiers.
  - President Cup and JJ Wilson Cup winners.
  - Junior club champions.
  - U/20'1, U/20'2 and U/16 teams all major/minor premiers.
- The 80th year of the NRL was memorable to say the least.

### GRAND FINAL - International Sports Centre Sunday, August 21

<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>South Newcastle</b>
Mathew BLACK		Tim VAUGHAN
Stephen DRINKWATER		Peter SLEAP
Lindsay BOWNE		Nick O'BRIEN
Phil CROWE		Peter PARR
Mark BATES		Steve ROBINSON
Peter WALSH (c)		Tim BUTLER
Scott GUSTARD		Tod DONALDSON
Andrew SWAN		Robert ROUSE
Col MATHIAS		Barry PHELPS
Mick PITMAN		Peter SAMS
Ben SULLIVAN		Paul HILL
Bruce BURGESS		Richard JONES (c)
Jim FOWLER		Tod ANDERSON

#### Reserves

David HARRINGTON

**Referee:** Mick Benson

**Linesmen:** Dave Bolewski, Shane Crich

**GRAND FINAL - Harker Oval**

Sunday, August 19

**Lakes United**

vs

**Waratah Mayfield**

Brett BOTHAM  
 Geoff MILTON  
 Darren BUTLER  
 Brian QUINTON  
 Mark BATES  
 Peter WALSH (c)  
 Craig HIBBARD  
 Kiel EMERTON  
 Stephen BROWN  
 Chris PRIGG  
 Scott GLANVILLE  
 Greg HAYWOOD  
 Michael McKIERNAN

Tony PICKEN  
 Ross HANLON  
 Garry FAIRHURST  
 Mark HANLON  
 Paul ROSENBAUM  
 Craig HIGGINS (c)  
 Paul ALLARDICE  
 Steve HONNERY  
 Graham RUSSELL  
 Richard McKELL  
 Scott BUDDEN  
 Daroa Ben MOIDE  
 Darryl WARDEN

**Reserves**

James PICKERING  
 Gary BRAY  
 Luke STANSFIELD  
 David GRANT

Kevin PYWELL  
 Wayne BUNT  
 Paul MURRAY  
 Ian PRESTON  
 Darren BRENNAN  
 Todd HARRISON

**Referee:** Mick Benson**Linesmen:** Tony Hardy, Peter Digby

Torrential rain again disrupted the competition and tradition was broken when a suburban ground, Harker Memorial Oval was used as a grand final venue. A bye was necessary during the competition due to the demise of the once powerful Maitland club. Another unusual fact was the unusually high number of drawn matches; nine. An unknown 18st giant of Samoan heritage James "the Fridge" Pickering became a crowd favourite. Lakes went undefeated through the second round to edge West for the minor premiership on percentages. The major- semi at Cahill Oval was a classic Lakes/West encounter, Lakes booted home 16-15 (0-7) by a "Spider" Walsh penalty goal after the bell.

The grand final produced a fairy tale finish for Waratah Mayfield. Going into the match as underdogs the Cheetahs played inspired football to win a thriller 17-14 (14-12).

Reserve grade captain/coach Col Mathias wasn't a happy man after the first round, his side looking only a slim chance of making the five. In a remarkable turnaround reserve grade not only made the semis but swept past Toronto 16-10, North Nelson Bay 16-8 and West 18-8 (who had previously beaten Lakes 40-20 and 16-10) before overcoming South 20-14 in the grand final.

Newcastle representative players this year were Brett Botham, Greg Haywood, Craig Hibberd, Chris Prigg and Brian Quinton.

---

## 1991 SPIDERS LAST

---

1991 was by no means a standout season but it did have its successes along the way.

The club responded by making the semis in all grades, third grade going all the way to the grand final. Former Australian schoolboy Mark Mulligan and front rower Shane Young were added to an already competent line-up. Walsh was back as coach aiming to add just one more premiership to his already impressive list.

Overall the season was steady with a semi-final place seemingly assured by the end of the 11th series. South (18) were the pacesetters followed by West (16), Lakes (14), Toronto (14)

and Waratah (14). A five point gap separated the next side, North Nelson Bay. Lakes lost touch with the top three in the 14th series when Toronto won 13-12 at Lyle Peacock Oval. The three point gap was extended to five in the 16th series when Lakes travelled to Harker Memorial Oval and were beaten 16-15. Lakes were in limbo for the next two weeks as they could neither make the top three nor miss a place in the elimination semi. Form, however, was not good as the season wound down. A 20-14 loss at Maitland (running second last) did nothing to instill confidence in the Seagull camp.

The elimination semi-final was played at Cahill Oval where Lakes overcame Waratah 12-8 in a hard fought match.

For the first 40 minutes of the minor-semi Lakes battled on gamely to keep within four points of the Scorpions. The second half was a different story, Toronto displaying the form that would eventually take them to a major premiership. The final score was 42-12 (16-12).

Both reserve grade and third grade had solid seasons finishing well up the ladder. Reserve grade just missed a place in the grand final by two points while Kevin Ross's third graders went all the way to the grand final before losing 18-14 to West.

The top two try scorers in the NRL this year were Lakes men. Brian Quinton topped the list with 18 tries followed by team mate Brett Botham with 15. Quinton was the only Lakes player to represent Newcastle.

---

## 1992 THE TRADITION CONTINUES

---

Lakes United had a new captain/coach for 1992. Steve Walters was back with the club after four seasons of Sydney football. "Walt" was entrusted with maintaining a winning tradition. He would respond admirably in his first season by taking first grade to the grand final. Lakes other major gain was Scott "Shitty" Carter, a former Newcastle Knights and Country hooker. The reserves also made the grand final while the third grade fell just short, going out in the final.

Lakes made a fine start, a draw at Nelson Bay followed by five wins before West spoilt the record 22-14. By the halfway stage of the season it seemed apparent the Rosellas were the dominant team in the competition. West were undefeated on 18 points followed by Lakes (15), South and Kurri (10), North Nelson Bay and Waratah (9), Maitland and Toronto (6), Central (5) and Cessnock (2).

Lakes stumbled slightly in the second round losing four matches (including an uncharacteristic 32-30 loss to Cessnock) but still managed to finish one point ahead of third placed South. West continued to dominate and were still without a loss in capturing the minor premiership by 11 points. Such was the Rosellas dominance they won 13 of their matches by a margin of 14 or more points.

Lakes won the qualifying semi 36-20 against South at Cahill Oval. The match will be remembered most for Seagull speedster Brian Quinton scoring five tries.

The major-semi at Harker Oval was typical semi-final football, tough and emotional as usual for any Lakes/West clash. The Rosellas won 24-14.

The next week in the final Lakes again had home ground advantage this time against Kurri. This game was played on a

**GRAND FINAL - Harker Oval****Sunday, September 6**

<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>Western Suburbs</b>
Mark MULLIGAN		Greg WEST
Jamie LOVETT		David WILD
Jeff WALTERS		Neil BAKER (c)
Brian QUINTON		Darren TREACY
Gary BRAY		Tim MORRISON
Steve WALTERS (c)		Eddie SMITH
Craig HIBBERD		Tony PRICE
Shane YOUNG		Tony McDONNELL
Scott CARTER		Paul BOWEN
Kiel EMERTON		Tim PERRIN
Greg HAYWOOD		David O'BRIEN
Troy POTTS		Greg PRICE
Matt HARRIS		Brett HOAD

**Reserves**

Jason WHITTAKER	Michael REID
	Scott BRADLEY

**Referee:** Paul Lovett**Linesmen:** Peter Digby, Tony Davis

Friday night with Lakes fighting off a determined Bulldog side 24-8.

The question asked now was could Lakes cause the upset of the season by stopping West's undefeated run. The answer probably came after the first 40 minutes of the grand final as West went to a 11-0 lead. The second half was no better for the Seagulls. The final score of 33-0 could be considered on the surface one of the blackest days in the club's history. Reserve grade had also lost their grand final 16-6 to West. There can be no argument that West were the outstanding team of 1992 but Lakes could be proud of what they had achieved too.

Representative players for 1992 were Scott Carter, Kiel Emerton, Matt Harris, Craig Hibberd, Mark Mulligan, Brian Quinton (also NSW Country), Jeff Walters and Shane Young.

---

## 1993 REGROUPING

---

Youth was given every opportunity in 1993 and they responded in fine style. First grade threatened to make the "decider" but were caught up in the emotional surge of Kurri. Thoughts of a grand final appearance could not have been further from Walters mind after the season was just one game old. West began 1993 like they had ended 1992 handing out a 52-10 thumping to the young Seagull outfit (West resumed their unbeaten run from '92 and did not lose until the sixth series; an exceptional run of 25 matches without defeat). Walters team regrouped and turned the corner on 12 points, only West (16), South (16) and Kurri (14) were above them. Arguably Lakes finest performance of the season was defeating West 12-6 at Harker Oval at the commencement of the second round. Four days later a 52-20 loss at Waratah started a three game streak where only one competition point was earned. This effectively put Lakes out of the minor premierships hunt but fortunately they closed with four wins to secure third place. It was an incoherent season so far. Great wins over West and Kurri (36-24) spoiled by lacklustre displays against Waratah and Maitland (lost 6-4).

The semi-finals would be remembered for the one-sidedness of the matches. In the qualifying semi Kurri walloped Lakes 30-10 then Lakes outplayed Waratah 30-8 to gain another crack at Kurri. Again the Bulldogs were the better side winning 40-12.

Reserve grades defensive record was the best in the NRL but this was of little consequence when North Nelson Bay beat them 19-6 in the elimination semi.

Third grade with former first grader Grant Squires in charge had a very good season making the grand final where Waratah were their nemesis 18-4.

---

## 1994 NO FOOTBALL IN AUGUST

---

Overall 1994 could be labelled as a disappointing season except for third grade becoming major/minor premiers. First grade would not play semi-final football for the first time since 1981. Reserve grade were knocked out in the elimination semi-final. Lakes began as well as a club could hope for winning the first four matches. The joy was halted abruptly by seven consecutive losses to place a top five spot in serious jeopardy. Eleven games into 1994 the competition standings were as follows:

Western Suburbs .....	17
Toronto Workers .....	17
Kurri Workers .....	16
Maitland .....	14
South Newcastle .....	14
North Nelson Bay .....	9
Waratah Mayfield .....	8
Lakes United .....	8
Cessnock .....	7
Central Charlestown .....	0

Lakes won three of their next four encounters to find themselves battling it out with Maitland and North Nelson Bay for fifth place. Lakes hosted Maitland in a vital match in the 16th series the loser virtually finished for the season. Lakes won 24-22 which put them in the five for the first time since May 22. At this stage Lakes were one point ahead of North Nelson Bay. To make the semis Lakes would have to win its remaining two matches away to Kurri then at home to West. The Seagulls suffered a 32-0 loss to the Bulldogs then found West to strong 52-12 allowing the Marlins to leapfrog into fifth spot.

Brett Huybers third graders had the thrill of being the first side to do the lap of honour around No1 Sportsground on grand final day. They won 28-6 over West.

---

## 1995 THE ANGUISH OF WEEK 18

---

Steve Walters, in his fourth term as coach would again rely on youth plus a sprinkling of experienced men. Steve Fulmer (Newcastle Knights) joined Lakes and had a steadying influence on what happened on the field until injury ended his season. The season did not start well, losing 30-14 to the Rosellas at Cahill Oval, then allowing South to snatch a 18-14 win in the closing minutes. The low point of the season came in the sixth series when North Nelson Bay inflicted a 52-0 hiding on the first grade side. This loss was the biggest ever recorded against a Lakes United first grade side. The previous record loss was in 1970 when Waratah had won 53-2. First grade recovered from the "debarcle at the bay" to stay in contention for a final five spot (the best winning streak was three) but still needed to win at Kurri in the last series to secure a play-off berth.

With only the 18th series remaining the contenders stood as follows:

Western Suburbs .....	28
Kurri Workers .....	26
North Neslon Bay .....	21
Toronto Workers .....	20
Lakes United.....	20
South Newcastle .....	19

The Seagulls had the opportunity to control their own destiny on the Saturday against Kurri but found the Bulldogs tough opposition. A positive result was made even more difficult for Lakes when Steve Murdoch was sent from the field in the 34th minute. Kurri took full advantage to run out winners 52-4. On the same day South sneaked past Maitland 36-26 after being behind 18-0 at one stage to leave Lakes hoping West could do them a favour and win at Toronto on the Sunday.

Unfortunately this was not to be, the Scorpions scoring a surprise 26-24 victory to put the final nail in the seniors coffin for 1995. It was a sad farewell for Steve Walters who's untiring efforts had made first graders out of a number of junior players.

Lakes had considerable depth this season. Reserve grade with former Lakes great Michael Pitman as coach were major/minor premiers; winning a nail biting grand final 22-16 (6-16). Sean Harrison crossed in the final seconds to break a 16 all deadlock. Grant Hughes' third grade side did well towards the end of the season to make the grand final but lost 14-8 (8-2) to West.

On the representative scene Malcom Kim and Kiel Emerton were selected for Newcastle duty during the season. Newcastle were Country champions and also won the nationwide Ansett Cup in 1995.

---

## 1996 THREE OUT OF THREE AIN'T BAD

---

Rarely, if ever, can something which happens in sport be placed precisely at a moment in time. The event is the climax, the culmination of months of hard work by players, coaches and officials which comes to fruition at seasons end. But history demands a date, and the one celebrated in Lakes United's 50th season will be September 1, the day the Seagulls were once again champions of the NRL.

After two lean seasons Lakes committee went on a recruitment drive not seen since 1983. The captain/coach position was filled by former East and Newcastle centre David Smith who had experienced the thrill of premiership success with Kurri the previous year. To bolster the pack Max Chapman (Newcastle), Paul Jeffries (Newcastle), Troy Miles (Newcastle) and Terry Pastourmoglou (Toronto) were signed. The backline was strengthened with the addition of Paul Allardice (Waratah), Adam Hall (Toronto), Daryl Johnson (Kurri), Daniel Lewis (North Sydney), Ewan McGrady (Kurri) and Jamie O'Connor (NNBay).

The Seagulls had an impressive build-up winning the Sevens tournament (defeated Maitland 32-22 in the final) and clinching the MMI Cup pre-season competition by virtue of an undefeated record over three rounds. Continued good form saw Lakes sharing first place with West after seven matches. The only setback was a 24-18 loss at Toronto.

In week eight one of the largest crowds seen at Cahill Oval in recent times turned out to witness the Seagulls and Rosellas do battle for outright leadership of the competition. The duel lived up to its billing with many fine attacking movements by both sides and tempers flaring on more than one occasion. A feature of the match was Lakes persistent defence, especially when an opposition try seemed inevitable. Lock forward Craig Hibberd typified the home sides display by effecting several bone jarring tackles on men much bigger than himself. Lakes eventually prevailed 20-6 after leading 10-6 at halftime. The only sour note was the knee injury to coach Smith which left him sidelined for one month.

Two weeks later former Rothman's medallist McGrady (now playing halfback) crossed for a hat-trick of tries as Lakes recorded their best ever result against Maitland; 72-6. In the 13th series Lakes almost surrendered a valuable point at Anna Bay against the Marlins, McGrady kicked a field goal seconds from fulltime to keep Lakes two points ahead of West. It was a real escape act for the Seagulls, not helped by the sending off of Smith (in his first game back) midway through the second half.

As the competition wound down Lakes suffered two dramatic losses to South (who came back from 8-16 with five minutes left to win 18-16) and West 22-20 (6-14). The loss at Harker Oval enabled West to take out their fifth consecutive minor premiership. Waratah felt the brunt of these defeats in the 18th series when the Seagulls scored 13 tries to win 66-0. A highlight of this game was winger Daniel Lewis crossing the Cheetahs line on six occasions.

Lakes produced a solid display against South in the qualifying semi at Cahill Oval (won 35-10 (22-6)) to set up another classic encounter with West the following week.

The major-semi, played at Harker Oval, was arguably the match of the season. Extra time was required after the first 80 minutes left the score deadlocked at 16 all. Both sides were left with 12 men after Mal Kim (Lakes) and Tim Perrin (West) were sent-off in separate incidents. The Rosellas were first to strike with a field goal (17-16) then Lakes replied with a try (20-17) before West regained the lead again courtesy of a converted try (23-20). Time was ticking away for the Seagulls when a Lakes player was tackled dangerously close to the touchline around the halfway line. McGrady trotted casually to dummy half with nothing really "on" for the desperate Seagulls. In a split second the mecurial half dummied to the open then darted down the narrow blind side to race away for a match winning try. Apart from gaining a place in the grand final the 24-23 victory gave Smith's team a break which would prove invaluable in the coming weeks.

Reserve grade also had their dramas in the playoffs narrowly losing 12-10 to West before going out to Kurri 13-12 after extra time in the final.

Sunday, September 1 finally saw the grand final most people had anticipated. West had made it the hard way with a tense 20-16 extra-time win over defending premiers Kurri. Lakes would be at full strength while the Rosellas would miss the services of hooker Tony Hutton who was injured in an incident the previous Sunday. Two days of constant rain had left the centre square of No 1 Sportsground in a heavy condition but the rest of the field was conducive to fast, open rugby league. Ironically as the grand final commenced the sun appeared and shone brightly for the remainder of the afternoon.

West kicked off with the advantage of a south-east wind and immediately had Lakes under pressure due to an early handling error. Within three minutes West centre Brett Cullen scored in the right corner for a 4-0 scoreline. When the Seagulls finally moved into the opposition territory they made it count with a try to David Smith after Craig Hibberd had cut back inside to find his skipper charging up the middle of the ruck. The conversion by Jeff Walters gave Lakes an unexpected 6-4 lead. The Rosella onslaught continued as Lakes were forced to "drop out" from their own line on several occasions. In the 22nd minute Lakes again worked their way into a scoring position. This time the roles were reversed with Smith taking on the defence before lobbing a pass to Hibberd who dummied to his outside men before scampering around to touchdown near the posts. West reduced the margin to six points just before halftime thanks to a penalty goal after Smith had kicked out on the full from another drop out.

The second half began in similar fashion to the first but West, relying on long passes could not find a way through Lakes defence. As the game wore on Lakes began to gain the ascendancy knowing their opponents had played an extended amount of tough football in recent weeks. Smith extended Lakes advantage in the 58th minute when he burst onto a deft pass from McGrady (who once again had instigated a try from a seemingly harmless situation) to score his second four pointer. Soon after it was all over with Lakes United triumphant 16-6. The win was especially satisfying for Hibberd, Walters and Kiel Emerton who had felt the agony of defeat in two previous grand finals for Lakes. Overall it was an admirable team performance with the forwards working tirelessly in all facets of the game

**GRAND FINAL - No 1 Sportsground**

**Sunday, September 1**

**Lakes United**

vs

**Western Suburbs**

Brendon GEORGE  
Adam HALL  
Jeff WALTERS  
David SMITH (c)  
Daniel LEWIS  
Paul ALLARDICE  
Ewan McGRADY  
Terry PASTOURMOGLOU  
Paul JEFFRIES  
Kiel EMERTON  
Troy MILES  
Max CHAPMAN  
Craig HIBBERD

Scott BRADLEY  
Peter JENNER  
Brett CULLEN  
Jamie GREENAWAY  
Frank LAWLER  
Steve STONE  
Tony PRICE (c)  
Anthony McDONNELL  
Paul BOWEN  
Mick REID  
Todd ANDERSON  
Brett HOAD  
Peter CHAPMAN

**Reserves**

Mal KIM  
Shannon BARWICK  
Daryl JOHNSTON  
Grant ATHERTON  
Dean CREIGHTON

Tim PERRIN  
Brendan McKELL  
Les SMITH  
Greg PRICE

**Referee:** Tony Hardy

**Linesmen:** Steve Mathews, Geoff Whiddon

whilst the backs provided the class needed to succeed in big games.

It was a outstanding year for David Smith who also won the NRL Coach of the Year award in his first year of coaching. George Perring, a club stalwart for 29 years was deservedly honoured with life membership of the NRL.

Coupled with its historical significance season number 50 will always have the distinction of being among the most memorable years for Lakes United.



**Lakes United First Grade Major Premiers 1996**

*Photo: Ron Bell*

*Back (left): Tim Dempsey (Manager), Brendon George, Terry Pastourmoglou, Adam Hall, Jeff Walters, Troy Miles, Kiel Emerton, Paul Williams (Assistant Coach).*

*Front (left): Paul Allardice, Paul Jeffries, Craig Hibberd, David Smith (coach), Daniel Lewis, Ewan McGrady, Max Chapman.*

# A Gallery Of Great Players

Who was Lakes United's best ever winger ? Or halfback ? Or front row forward ? Old timers are often accused of looking at the past through rose-coloured glasses while the modern generation claim the good old days weren't quite as good as one remembers. It's all a matter of opinion really. To provide the reader with some thought and controversy I have played "coach" and, based on my research, selected the best "teams" from three different eras. If you like don the selector's cap

yourself and see what kind of side you can come up with.

# PART II

---

# 1947-1960

---

<i>Fullback</i>	<b>Russell Naughton</b>	A true sportsman and one of the most prolific goal kickers the club has ever known. Formed a renowned combination with Wolfe. Noted for his powerful running and long distance kicking. Country representative. Considered unfortunate not to have played for Australia.
<i>Wing</i>	<b>Ivan Wolfe</b>	Although small in stature the nuggety Wolfe had uncanny ability to score tries due mainly to his great determination and marked turn of speed. Country representative.
<i>Wing</i>	<b>Gordon Jenkins</b>	“The Flying Snowball” was an elusive winger who knew how to finish a try as well as being a solid defender. Newcastle representative.
<i>Centre</i>	<b>Col De Lore</b>	A noted defender who played for Balmain. NSW representative.
<i>Centre</i>	<b>Rees Duncan</b>	Regarded as a deceptive attacking centre who played with Manly Warringah and Western Suburbs (Sydney). 1952 Kangaroo.
<i>Five-eight</i>	<b>Alan Staunton</b>	Arguably the perfect five-eight blessed with good vision and great hands. An excellent defender. Played with St George and considered unlucky not to tour with the 1952 Kangaroos.
<i>Halfback</i>	<b>Jimmy Scouler</b>	A fiery halfback and one of the most dynamic footballers to play for Lakes. Played for Newtown & North Sydney. NSW representative.
<i>Lock</i>	<b>Harold Gray</b>	Tall, tough and talented Gray was a devastating low tackler. Played for Balmain in the 1956 grand final. Regarded as Newcastle’s premier lock for a number of seasons. Country representative.
<i>Second Row</i>	<b>Albert Paul</b>	Unquestionably one of Lakes best ever, known for his allround ability. Played for Canterbury & Newtown. 1952 Kangaroo.
<i>Second Row</i>	<b>Max Foster</b>	There have been few players to match the ferocious tackling of Foster. Received great respect from rival players. Country representative.
<i>Front Row</i>	<b>Ramsay Buckley</b>	Every successful side needed a Ramsay Buckley. A rugged prop who’s steady play often went unnoticed. Country representative.
<i>Hooker</i>	<b>George Sanderson</b>	A great scrummager in an era when winning the ball often meant winning the game. Combined well with Buckley.
<i>Front Row</i>	<b>Tom Pitman</b>	A tough, consistent forward for both Lakes and Newtown. NSW representative.
<i>Reserve</i>	<b>Johnny Davies</b>	“Killer” was a strong running five-eight or centre and a tenacious tackler. Northern NSW representative.
<i>Reserve</i>	<b>Bert Sharpe</b>	Safe hands, a great cover defender and the ability to kick the football proficiently with either boot made Sharpe a noted fullback. Country representative.

---

# 1961-1975

---

<i>Fullback</i>	<b>John Fisher</b>	“Fish” was a fine attacking fullback able to chime into the backline at the right moment. Played for Western Suburbs (Sydney).
<i>Wing</i>	<b>Jim Porter</b>	Big and fast, few wingers could match Porter for strength and speed. Played in grand finals for Eastern Suburbs ('72 & '74) and Parramatta ('76 & '77). 1975 World Cup representative.
<i>Wing</i>	<b>Simon Booth</b>	Stylish three quarter with the ability to slip through openings in defence. Played for Manly Warringah in the 1978 grand final. Also played for Balmain. Country representative.
<i>Centre</i>	<b>Ron Burgess</b>	Regarded as one of Lakes most gifted centres “Burgo” gave his outside support exceptional service. Country representative.
<i>Centre</i>	<b>Des Kimmorley</b>	Fast and elusive with a deceptive step and swerve, Kimmorley was also a deadly defender. NSW representative.
<i>Five-Eight</i>	<b>Glen Golden</b>	“Goldie” was an ideal link between forwards and backs. Very consistent player. Newcastle representative.
<i>Halfback</i>	<b>Johnny Craig</b>	Longevity distinguished by productivity summarizes the career of Craig. A great club man. Newcastle representative.
<i>Lock</i>	<b>Tommy Sheppard</b>	“Sheppo” could play anywhere from fullback to second row. He could read a game and was a talented ball player; the ideal link man. Country representative.
<i>Second Row</i>	<b>Allan Thomson</b>	Remembered mostly for his low tackling Thomson’s greatest attribute was his desire to succeed. Played for Manly in the 1970 & 1972 grand finals. 1967 Kangaroo.
<i>Second Row</i>	<b>John Bucknall</b>	“Sleepy” was a fiery character and a very capable player. Played for Manly in the 1970 grand final. NSW Representative.
<i>Front Row</i>	<b>Grahame Huggins</b>	“Huggo” was a rugged ball playing prop who never took a backward step. Newcastle representative.
<i>Hooker</i>	<b>Tony Shiels</b>	Faultless dummy-half work and a non stop tackler who kept the centre of the ruck secure. Shiels greatest attribute was his ability to read a game.
<i>Front Row</i>	<b>Bob Heaney</b>	“Babe” was a hard running forward who never gave an inch. A member of the famous '64 Newcastle side and a grand finalist with Balmain in 1956. Country representative.
<i>Reserve</i>	<b>Trevor Andrews</b>	A versatile player proficient in the forwards or backs. Country representative.
<i>Reserve</i>	<b>Dennis Gardiner</b>	A massively-framed prop renown for tank like charges that made him virtually unstoppable close to the line. Played for Newtown. NSW Colts and Country representative.

---

# 1976-1996

---

<i>Fullback</i>	<b>Mark Mulligan</b>	“Mull” was an accomplished fullback possessing an elusive side step. Safe under pressure. Australian Schoolboy representative.
<i>Wing</i>	<b>Steven Lowe</b>	Lowe was an exciting winger who could make a try out of nothing. He possessed great acceleration. Country representative.
<i>Wing</i>	<b>Peter Cootes</b>	Perhaps the fastest and most electrifying player ever to wear the blue and gold. At the very least he was a great scorer of tries. Played for Manly. Country representative and World Cup trialist.
<i>Centre</i>	<b>Terry Quinn</b>	An aggressive attacking centre who played for Penrith. Country representative.
<i>Centre</i>	<b>Brian Quinton</b>	His trademark was explosive acceleration enabling him to make or score a try in a split second. Played with St George and Newcastle (Knights). Country representative.
<i>Five-Eight</i>	<b>Peter Walsh</b>	“Spider” was a great tactical five eight. An exceptional “reader” of a game his general kicking often put his team in a good position. Played for Western Suburbs (Sydney). Country representative.
<i>Halfback</i>	<b>Robert Taylor</b>	Arguably the most influential player of the ‘80’s “Rip” was an inspiration to team mates. Quite simply a winner. Country representative.
<i>Lock</i>	<b>Michael McKiernan</b>	“Rowdy” was a punishing tackler with the ability to slip a deft pass to support. Played for Newcastle (Knights). Country representative.
<i>Second Row</i>	<b>Mick Pitman</b>	Pitman was a complete footballer equally adept as a defender or ball carrier. Played for Newtown in the 1981 grand final. Also played for Canterbury. Country representative.
<i>Second Row</i>	<b>Peter Kelly</b>	Kelly was a tough, ruthless forward and underrated ball player. Played in three grand finals for Canterbury plus seasons at Newtown and Penrith. NSW representative considered unlucky not to have played for Australia.
<i>Front Row</i>	<b>Mark Brokenshire</b>	Renowned for his bone-jarring defence and strong running. Played for Canterbury in the 1994 grand final. Also played with Manly. Country representative.
<i>Hooker</i>	<b>Scott Carter</b>	“Shitty” controlled the game from dummy-half. Built low to the ground he was an intelligent runner with the knack of putting a teammate into a gap. Played for Newcastle (Knights). Country representative.
<i>Front Row</i>	<b>Steve Bowden</b>	Fiery prop renowned for his toughness. Played for Newtown. NSW representative.
<i>Reserve</i>	<b>Steve Walters</b>	“Walt” was a fiery character not afraid to take on larger opponents. A fierce competitor as well as being a very good allround halfback. Played for Newcastle (Knights). Country representative.
<i>Reserve</i>	<b>Ewan McGrady</b>	A freakish attacking player who’s darting incisive bursts were his trademark. Had the ability to play any backline position proficiently. Also played for Canterbury.

## Seven to Remember

The problem is criteria.

What qualifies as one of the greatest matches involving Lakes United? Excitement ? Drama ? Significance ? An individual milestone ?

Selecting the seven greatest games has its pitfalls. The biggest one is it's impossible.

Choose a match. Did it have dazzling end to end action ? Was there a photo finish ? Were there brilliant attacking movements or was it a defensive masterpiece ? Was it an upset ? Were there record setting performances ?

You get the idea. Now substitute "memorable" for "greatest". Does that make things easier ? There are few rules,

# PART III

fewer boundaries, fewer guidelines, fewer prerequisites. The memories simply have to endure.

There is nothing official about this list. Some of your favourite matches might be missing. For every game that made the list there was a painful omission.

The intent; relive some memories. Consider how fate always had a say. See how the truth usually - but not always - emerges from beneath doubt's shadow. Notice how rugby league history can turn in one memorable action.

If you like compare my choices with yours. Just remember the odds of any two lists of memorable games being exactly the same are even longer than the odds against the 1947 side winning the premiership at their first attempt.

# Saturday, September 20, 1947

## Grand Final

## New Lambton Oval

### LAKES UNITED 13

### NORTHERN SUBURBS 0

GRAND FINAL - New Lambton Oval		Saturday, September 20
<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>Northern Suburbs</b>
Bert SHAPRE		Les GILBERT
Alan WARD		Jack WOOD
George DAVIES		Billy McKENZIE
Trevor SMYTHE		Ron CROSSLEY
Billy SMYTH		Doug RATLEY
Ron GOLDEN		Charlie SMITH
Jim SCoulAR (c)		Bruce STOKES
Ernie RICHARDSON		Jack HUTCHINSON
Don McKINNON		Ernie EYRE (c)
Albert PAUL		Reg NARVO
Ramsay BUCKLEY		Charlie GILL
George SANDERSON		Bob CRANE
Allan BROTHERTON		Danny McGAW
<b>Reserves</b>		
Merv NEAL		
Max FOSTER		
<b>Lakes United 13</b>		<b>Northern Suburbs 0</b>
Davies, Paul, Ward Tries		
McKinnon 2 goals		
<b>Referee:</b> Rennie Baker		
<b>Linesmen:</b> Harry Brown, "Barney" Mercer		

Things were different in 1947. First prize in the State Lottery stood at £500. Joe Louis was the world heavy weight boxing champion. Hiraji (12/1) would win the Melbourne Cup. Golfer "Ossie" Pickworth won the Australian Open Championship and the NRL's newest club experienced a debut season few will forget. On Saturday, September 20 Lakes United played beyond themselves and won the NRL first grade premiership at their first attempt.

Two weeks earlier North had inflicted a 16-4 loss on Lakes in the first semi. The Bluebags win meant a grand final would be necessary. Lakes, as minor premier, had the right of reply. Their opponents would come from the West versus North clash on September 13. (North won 15-4).

Going into the grand final Lakes injury problems were minimal. Albert Paul would be returning after missing the semi-final and Trevor Smythe and Ernie Richardson were confident of playing after 14 days rest.

North, however, had problems. Their recent games against Lakes and West had taken their toll. Centre Kevin Robertson (bruised heel) was unable to take his place in the team, and was replaced by Billy McKenzie. Even when the grand final was just 15 minutes old it was apparent lock forward Jack Hutchinson's knee would not last a full game.

North had the advantage of a brisk breeze in the first half but were unable to pierce the Lakes defence. When Lakes had the ball they threw it about generously, sometimes overhead or

without apparent sense of direction. A Lakes man always seemed to be in a position to catch the ball and promote the movement. After 20 minutes of even play the Lakes forwards began to out ruck their opponents. On the half hour front rower Allan Brotherton crashed through several tackles, unloaded to George Sanderson who then passed to Paul who sent winger Alan Ward on to score. Wards quick thinking improved the position for Don McKinnon to convert. McKinnon kicked a penalty goal soon after to make the haltime score Lakes 7 North 0. Lakes pressured North early in the second stanza but the Bluebags came back with hard rucking. Five-eight Ron Golden set up Lakes second try with a clever short kick in midfield that found George Davies following through to win possession and score "under the sticks". The conversion attempt was unsuccessful.

Captain/coach Scoular's instructions for intense co-operation between forward and backs, with short passing to keep the ball moving was never more evident than in the 75th minute. Nearly every player was included in a sweeping length of the field movement which stopped just short of the line. From the next ruck Paul snapped up the ball and forced his way over the line to make the final score 13-0.

The scrums had gone Lakes way 29-26 while the penalties favoured North 19-12.

There were remarkable scenes when the match ended as hundreds of supporters converged on the Lakes players and carried them shoulder-high off the field. After the game Scoular, who's brilliant combination with Golden was a decisive factor, paid tribute to his team mates. "Without the co-operation of every man in the side our victory would not have been possible. The players have been intensely loyal. North made us play every bit of the way".

The match confirmed that Ramsay Buckley, Albert Paul and Bert Sharpe were among the season's best. After mis-handling the first ball he received Sharpe settled down to a glorious display of catching and two footed kicking. After the game McKinnon and Sanderson announced their retirements.

Lakes officials and supporters were so overcome with emotion they could hardly speak. The club had made history by winning the premiership at the first attempt.

A crowd approximately 9000 paid £423 to view the match.

## LEAGUE GRAND FINAL TO LAKES UNITED

### *Brilliant Play By Scoular's Men*

Lakes United, by convincingly defeating Norths, 13 points to nil, at New Lambton Oval last Saturday, won the League Premiership, a record achievement in their initial season in the Newcastle Rugby League Competition.



**Lakes United First Grade Major and Minor Premiers 1947**

*Back (left): Tom Keating, Alan Ward, Albert Paul, Don McKinnon, Allan Brotherton, Ramsay Buckley, George Sanderson.*

*Front (left): Tom Preston, Merv Neal, Ron Golden, Jim Scoular (coach), Ernie Richardson, Billy Smyth, Bert Sharpe.*

*Mascot: David Paul. Insets (left): Trevor Smythe, George Davies.*

# Saturday, September 1, 1951

Final

No 1 Sportsground

MAITLAND 20

LAKES UNITED 18

FINAL - No 1 Sportsground		Saturday, September 1	
<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>Maitland</b>	
Russell NAUGHTON		Les MILNE	
Ivan WOLFE		Bill CALLINAN	
John MAGUIRE		Col MAXWELL (c)	
Noel SHARPE		Frank THRELFO	
Kevin HAWKINS		Ron CROSSLEY	
Alan STAUNTON		Les BROWN	
Jim MARKER		Reg CURRAN	
Harold GRAY		Billy DAVIES	
Ernie RICHARDSON		Gordon HARLEY	
Albert PAUL (c)		Jim EVANS	
Allan BROTHERTON		Doug AVARD	
Arthur FORBES		Carl BROSSMAN	
Leo HURLEY		Les TANNER	
<b>Lakes United 18</b>		<b>Maitland 20</b>	
Hawkin, Paul tries		Callinan 2,	
Marker 3 goals		Curren, Threlfo tries	
Naughton 3 goals		Crossley 4 goals	
<b>Referee:</b> Ossie Screen			
<b>Linesmen:</b> Jock Wright, Bill Wheatley			

There have been many NRL games with last second desperation victories. From early Lakes history one match stands apart from the rest : the 1951 final.

Maitland and Lakes spent the entire game playing tug'o'war with the lead and the nervous systems of the deafening crowd at No 1 Sportsground.

Lakes had made its first final since 1947 whilst Maitland had not appeared in a final since 1934 when Paddy Maher led the Pumpkin Pickers to a 4-2 win. The match was almost half an hour late in starting due to injuries in the early games. During the closing stages of the reserve grade final police were kept busy quelling a series of fights that broke out in the thickly packed area in front of the main stand.

Amid enthusiastic applause Paddy Maher "kicked off" the 1951 final. Lakes won the toss and defended the northern end, having first use of a slight north-westerly breeze whereas Maitland were running into the sun. Both sides missed early penalty goals (Naughton's from 45 yards out hit the upright). Five minutes into the game Albert Paul went down the blindside and crashed his way over from 10 yards out. Ron Crossley (Maitland) missed another penalty from the halfway line. After 10 minutes Maitland produced a good try for Reg Curren after a midfield burst from Gordon Harley. Maitland 3 Lakes 3.

Skipper Col Maxwell narrowly missed a penalty attempt soon after. A play the ball penalty against Maitland saw the ball given to "Stag" Marker just outside the quarter line. Marker's

nervous kick went well astray. Arthur Forbes won nine of the first 13 scrums so Maitland's solid defence was constantly tested. In the 25th minute a brilliant reverse passing movement initiated by Ernie Richardson and Russell Naughton (eight players swapped passes) resulted in Kevin Hawkins crossing in the left corner. Marker's conversion gave Lakes a 8-3 lead. Marker had two more opportunities to post points being successful once. Crossley would have scored soon after only for a splendid tackle from Marker. Another penalty goal from an incorrect feed left the halftime score at Lakes 10 Maitland 5.

Seven minutes into the second half centre Frank Threlfo intercepted a pass on his own 25 yard line and with great pace raced in to score between the uprights. Maitland 10 Lakes 10.

Minutes later Lakes were in front again. Naughton landed a fine goal from 40 yards out straight in front. Naughton was in action next fielding the ball behind his own line, then evaded six tackles in a tricky run before linking up with Paul who made it to the Maitland 25 before the defence closed in. Naughton soon after landed an even better penalty goal from halfway and near the sideline.

Lakes 14 Maitland 10.

Controversy surrounded Naughton's next goal. The linesmen disagreed to leave referee Ossie Screen with the decision. Lakes 16 Maitland 10. Crossley replied with a penalty goal for Maitland to keep Maxwell's team in touch.

With less than 10 minutes remaining "Bluey" Davies burst away from a midfield scrum to send Callinan in wide out, Crossley converted brilliantly to give Maitland the lead 17-16. Next Marker landed a pressure goal to give the Seagulls a one point margin and the final was all but over.

More sensation was soon to follow. Crossley attempted a match winning penalty goal as the bell rang, the kick was straight but fell just beneath the crossbar. The noise of the capacity crowd drowned out the sound of the bell. Lakes player Sharpe knocked on and Screen, not hearing the bell set a scrum. Maitland won the vital scrum and Maxwell promptly put Callinan in for his second try in the same corner snatching a sensational victory. Maitland supporters went berserk and rushed onto the ground. It was eight minutes before the ground was cleared for the meaningless conversion attempt. Lakes supporters to this day claim the match should have ended with the knock on.

The gate takings were £996.



**Lakes United 1951**

*Back (left): Allan Brotherton, "Sam" Ekert, Russell Naughton, Bruce Randall, Leo Hurley, Alan Staunton, Arthur Forbes.*

*Middle (left): - Power, Jim Marker, Kevin Hawkins, Albert Paul (coach), Ernie Richardson, Ivan Wolfe.*

*Front (left): Terry Watts (ballboy), Keith Marker (ballboy), Don Mayo (ballboy).*



1947



1950



## A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF LAKES GUERNSEYS

*Lakes United's club colours have been essentially blue and gold since 1947. The appearance of the playing strip has taken on frequent variations during the past 50 seasons.*



1954



1956





1957



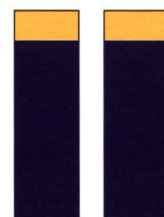
1961



1967

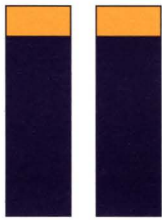


1969





1971



1974



1976



1979





1984



1985



1990



1993



# Saturday, August 25, 1956

## First Semi-Final No 1 Sportsground

LAKES UNITED 11

MAITLAND 10

### FIRST SEMI-FINAL - No 1 Sportsground Saturday, August 25

<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>Maitland</b>
Russell NAUGHTON		Kevin GEELAN
Ivan WOLFE		Bill CALLINAN
Neil McDONELL		Gerry LOWE
Col DE LORE		Devi DINES
John DAVIES		John MUNRO
John KELLY		Bob HODGINS
Ray MACE		Rob SCOTT-MURRAY
Frank CLEGG		Ray ELLIS
John BURLAND		Mick CALLAGHAN
Vernon LEE		Gordon HARLEY
Tom PITMAN (c)		Fred BROWN (c)
Ken NEGUS		Ken FOGARTY
Tom SHEPPARD		Ces BULL

<b>Lakes United 11</b>	<b>Maitland 10</b>
Burland try	Callaghan, Callinan tries
Naughton 4 goals	Lowe 2 goals

**Referee:** Noel Spohr  
**Linesmen:** Alf Wright, Bill Wheatley

Minor premiers Maitland met Lakes in the first semi-final of 1956 played at No1 Sportsground. Maitland had created history by going through the competition series undefeated (15 wins, 1 draw) and were favourites to continue in the same manner. In the unlikely event of a Lakes victory a grand final would be necessary between Maitland and the winner of the Lakes/Cessnock final. Cessnock would defeat Central 20-12 in the second semi-final. Lakes kicked off with a

slight advantage from a north-westerly wind. Four minutes later Gerry Lowe put Maitland in front with a goal when the Lakes centre's were "pinged" for offside from a scrum. Russ Naughton had a chance to level the scores but missed an easy goal from in front of the Maitland posts. In the 19th minute "Popeye" Hodgins cut through from five-eight after Maitland had won a scrum midfield. He ran winger Bill Callinan into position for that player to cross wide out.

Maitland 5 Lakes 0.

The match was half an hour old before Naughton, having missed with five previous attempts landed his first goal from an angle 40 yards out. Within three minutes Naughton had kicked two more goals, both from 45 yards out. Lakes went to the break leading 6-5.

The second half began in similar fashion to the first, but this time it was Lowe who missed a easy goal. Lakes then scored a great team try (45th minute). Neil McDonell made a break from halfway, unloaded to "Killer" Davies on the left wing who centred a ball for Johnny Kelly to catch. Kelly then passed to John Burland backing up to score near the posts. Lakes 11 Maitland 5.

Right winger Wolfe almost sealed the match for Lakes in the 56th minute when he kicked past Maitland fullback Kevin Geelan only to narrowly fail to ground the ball before it rolled over the dead ball line. Lowe potted an easy goal to close the gap to four points. After a long series of attacks Maitland scored their second try with five minutes (plus injury time) remaining. Callaghan scored wide out in the left corner but Geelan's kick missed the target.

The match was all but over (where have you heard that before !) when Lakes received a penalty. Naughton placed the ball for an attempt at goal but the bell rang before he kicked. Naughton picked the ball up, ran and was tackled for play to end. Lakes 11 Maitland 10. It was indeed a memorable victory in the club's 10 year history.



**Lakes United First Grade Finalists 1956**

Back (left): Frank Blain (secretary), Milton Maybury (treasurer), David Palmer, Neil McDonell, John Burland, Pat Cahill (president), Tom "Gus" Sheppard, Vernon Lee, Jack Hooper (manager), Ken Judd (gear steward), Bill Stockwell (assistant secretary).  
 Middle (left): Frank Clegg, Col De Lore, Ivan Wolfe, Tom Pitman (coach), Ray Mace, John Kelly, Russell Naughton.  
 Front (left): Vic Pleash (ambulance man), John Davies, David Lonsdale (ballboy), Tom Sheppard (mascot), Kevin Negus.

# Saturday, September 14, 1968

## Grand Final No 1 Sportsground

*SOUTH NEWCASTLE 9*

*LAKES UNITED 6*

<b>GRAND FINAL - No 1 Sportsground</b>	<b>Saturday, September 14</b>
<b>Lakes United</b> vs <b>South Newcastle</b>	
Geoff WATTS	John PASSMORE
Warren SMALL	Jim PERRY
Des KIMMORLEY	Warren HOUSE
Trevor ANDREWS	Peter DIAMOND (c)
Keith CALLAN	Kevin SWIFT
Noel McNAMARA	Neil MORGAN
Neil HINCKS	Harold MILLER
Allan THOMSON (c)	Barry LAWRENCE
Brian ROHR	Paul MAHONEY
John BEVAN	Cliff IRELAND
Brian SULLIVAN	Bill McCALL
Kevin JOHNSON	David EVANS
Roger McDONELL	Ray BEVERLEY
<b>Reserves</b>	
Jim CAMPBELL	
Nigel McDONELL	
<b>Lakes United 6</b>	<b>South 9</b>
Kimmorley 2 tries	Diamond, House, Ireland tries
<b>Referee:</b> Noel Spohr	
<b>Linesmen:</b> Dennis Murphy, Jim Handcock	

Two isolated infringements over 80 minutes of grand final football is hard to believe but that's exactly what happened when the Lions and Seagulls met in the 1968 decider.

Lakes went into the match warm favourites having twice dealt South convincing defeats during the season (21-9 and 19-8). Lakes were also undefeated since June 16. South had beaten West in the final (13-11) thanks to an inspired goal from their captain/coach and former international Peter Diamond and were confident of repeating the effort. South started the match defending the "Chip Shop" end of the ground with a strong wind at their backs and used this factor to great effect in the first half. The match itself was played under the "four tackle" rule with both sides trying to gain an advantage by constantly kicking the football (this was not unusual in this era as a team only had three rucks to move the ball downfield).

The grand final was 16 minutes old when South prop Bill McCall, who was to have an outstanding match, ran wide of the ruck and linked up with Barry Lawrence who sent Diamond in for the first try. These were to be the only points scored in the first half. Diamond did attempt a field goal but the kick was inaccurate. Des Kimmorley and Allan Thomson figured in a great deal of cover defence constantly impeding the Lions attack. Lakes had the misfortune to lose two key players to injury late in the first half. Second rower Brian Rohr retired after taking a severe bump near his left eye as he tackled Diamond and soon after five-eight Noel McNamara, hobbling

with a knee injury, left the game too. Surprisingly South won the first half scrums 11-6.

After the interval Lakes made tactical changes. Jimmy Campbell had earlier replaced Rohr in the second row and under 17 player Nigel McDonell, making his first grade debut, went to the left wing. Keith Callan went from wing to lock and captain/coach Thomson moved himself to five-eight. In hindsight Thomson's move to five-eight hardly seemed a good move following the loss of Rohr and the fact that Campbell had played well as reserve grade five-eight during the year.

The Seagulls displayed their best form in the early part of the second half. The revival was initiated by Kimmorley after two minutes when the Lakes centre (arguably Lakes best player on the day) was on the spot to gather a wild pass from "Puddy" Miller after the South halfback had fielded a long kick from Trevor Andrews. South 3 Lakes 3.

Soon after Neil Hincks attempted to put Lakes ahead with a field goal but it sailed wide of the posts. Kimmorley scored again in the 56th minute when he received a marginal pass from Brian Sullivan and flashed through to touchdown. Ironically the try came from another field goal attempt from Hincks. This time the kick was charged down and on the next ruck the lanky Lakes prop ran left before handing the vital pass to Kimmorley. Lakes 6 South 3.

The scores were level once more in the 67th minute when Souths right winger Kevin Swift changed direction with a crossfield run linking up with Miller. The halfback split the defence and ran deep deep into Lakes 25 before the cover converged. From the ensuing ruck McCall and David Evans sent Cliff Ireland in for a try. Just as Kimmorley had been unsuccessful with each of his conversion attempts Diamond's magic boot eluded him also.

Nine minutes from time South scored the winning try when Miller again made a break which McCall and Diamond continued for Warren House to cross unopposed. South 9 Lakes 6.

Lakes did not play with their usual sustained steadiness whilst Diamond explained "Experience counts in these games and our fellows stuck to their task in fine style". Diamond did have experience, finishing runner-up to St George on three occasions.

Lakes right winger Warren Small distinguished himself with two try saving tackles whilst Hincks and Kevin Johnson worked hard. The scrums finished Lakes way 19-18.

As previously stated an extraordinary feature of the 1968 grand final was the fact that it produced only two penalties - one to each team. South received their penalty in the first half for a forward pass and Lakes were awarded their solitary penalty for the same offense in the second half. Not once did referee Noel Spohr deem it necessary to order a scrum penalty.

It was the first time since the introduction of the automatic grand final system that a minor semi-finalist had won the major title. Souths victory was their fourth post-war grand final win and its third in six years. The loss was an immense disappointment to Lakes players, officials and supporters who had felt confident the game would mark the end of a 21 year wait.



Allan Thomson looks for a way through the Lions defence during the grand final of 1968.



Former Newcastle Herald Cartoonist Les Lumsden found the local ruby league competition a constant source of inspiration.

Left: "Wallaby" Morris and Jim McLean assist Brian Rohr from the field after his clash with Peter Diamond.

# Sunday, September 15, 1974

## Grand Final No1 Sportsground

LAKES UNITED 7

WESTERN SUBURBS 2

GRAND FINAL - No 1 Sportsground		Sunday, September 15
<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>Western Suburbs</b>
John FISHER		Paul SLATTERY
Steve PROUDLOCK		Vince CRONIN
Simon BOOTH		Greg OWEN
Ron BURGESS		Wayne HORE
Mark PAULING		Peter PERKINS
Glen GOLDEN		John MONIE
Lindsay GAILEY		Dennis WARD (c)
Tom SHEPPARD		Mick TRYPAS
John BROCK		Peter HOWLETT
Allan THOMSON (c)		Mick GOLDMAN
Grahame HUGGINS		Karl HUTCHINSON
Tony SHIELS		Allan DAGWELL
Dennis GARDINER		George SKEERS
	<b>Reserves</b>	Garry WHITMORE
Paul WILLIAMS		
Phil MURRAY		
Wayne COOPER		
<b>Lakes United 7</b>		<b>Western Suburbs 2</b>
Proudlock try		Perkins 1 goal
Burgess 1 goal		
Gailey 2 field goals		
<b>Referee:</b> Les Rodway		
<b>Linesmen:</b> Jack Stephens, John Walker		

It was a contest that will be paid homage for as long as rugby league is played in Belmont. Cursed by more than two decades of near misses, mediocrity and sometimes worse Thomson's team had an opportunity to finally break the major premiership drought.

During the season honours were even, West winning the first encounter 20-14 and Lakes the return match at Cahill Oval 31-8. Lakes won the major semi-final 16-12; West set up the rematch by ending Macquarie Uniteds run 20-13.

The Seagulls were back to full strength, Grahame Huggins and John Fisher passing Allan Thomsons personal fitness test to take their place in the side. West led by former international Dennis Ward (an old team mate of Thomson from their Manly days) also had a top side.

In fine but windy conditions the match started in typical grand final fashion with heavy forward exchanges. Lakes centre Ron Burgess scored the first points of the match in the fifth minute with a penalty goal from 20 yards out and just left of the posts.

West were forced to defend for long periods when Lakes hooker Tony Shiels won the first half scrums 11-5. Lakes best chance for a try came when Lindsay Gailey cut out Glen Golden and sent a pass to Fisher who had chimed into the backline perfectly. Fisher sent right winger Steve Proudlock flying down the hillside touchline. Only a desperation tackle from Paul Slattery saved a certain try. Soon after Gailey made a break, and found Proudlock backing up inside. Once again Slattery slowed the speedster enough for the defence to converge. The Seagull

forwards were making inroads into West territory with a "rolling" movement involving short passing. Gailey kept the pressure on with accurate kicking and followed up by kicking a field goal in the 17th minute. Lakes 3 West 0. Lakes nearly scored in the 20th minute after West won a scrum 20 yards from their own line where Ward fumbled the ball and Gailey toed it through to the try line. The Seagull halfback dived on the ball only inches from the line but Slattery would not allow him to play the ball. The resulting penalty goal attempt by Burgess was unsuccessful.

The Rosellas got on the scoreboard 12 minutes before half time from a penalty goal by Peter Perkins. Ward had been felled late after executing a chip kick into the Lakes ingoal. Lakes 3 West 2. When the Rosellas did get the ball they found the Lakes defence a hard nut to crack. Most of the penetration came from West fullback Slattery who made several incisive runs. West's best opportunity came late in the first half when Greg Owens was put into a gap by Peter Howlet and raced on to position Perkins perfectly. Unfortunately for West the pass was directed behind the winger and a try went begging.

West were forced to change their front row at half time when prop Karl Hutchinson could not continue because of an eye injury, Garry Whitmore took his place. Gailey took a heavy knock early in the second half but still managed to kick his second field goal after 11 minutes. West hooker Allan Dagwell started to even up possession (scrums finished 14 all) but still the Rosellas could not cross Lakes line. Midway through the half Lakes winger Mark Pauling suffered a rib injury, his place taken by Paul Williams.

Perkins was given an opportunity to level the score in the 56th minute but his attempt at goal sailed left of the posts.

Five minutes later Thomson surprised everyone with a speculative kick 15 yards out from the Rosella line. To the crowds amazement Proudlock almost scored from this kick, only the bounce of the ball preventing a try. Lakes had two more opportunities to extend their lead in the 64th and 72nd minutes but both penalty goals missed their target.

In the 75th minute a third field goal attempt by Gailey could easily have led to a try for West. The kick was charged down and Slattery received a quick pass from a team mate who had gathered the ball. From in front of his own goal posts Slattery made an incredible jinking run, evading five tackles, that ended near halfway when Gailey finally brought him down. In these few dramatic seconds every Lakes supporter was on the edge of their seats.

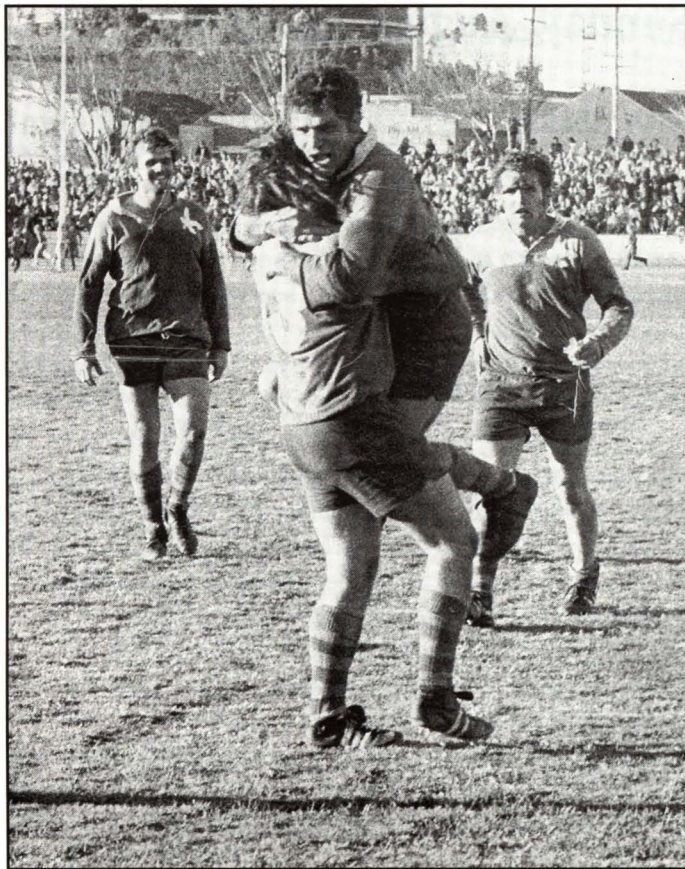
The timekeeper's window was open (ready to ring the bell for the last time in 1974) when Lakes made one last drive for the Western Suburbs line. On the sixth tackle two short passes to the blind side of the ruck found Proudlock flying in to score in front of the HL Wheeler grandstand (which was packed with Seagull supporters).

This triggered a rush of spectators onto the field so referee Les Rodway called an end to proceedings without the conversion attempt being made. A crowd of 21,154 paid \$11,037 to witness this absorbing match. Lakes captain/coach Thomson said the thrill of winning ranked with his selection for Australia in 1967. "The boys persevered in great style and gave me every support" said Thomson.

So 27 years after notching their first major premiership Lakes United were again the champion team of Newcastle.



*Lakes battering ram Dennis Gardiner takes on the Rosella defence.* Photo: A. Jolly



*Huggins, Gardiner, Thomson and Burgess share a memorable moment as the 1974 season concludes.* Photo: A. Jolly



**Lakes United Major Premiers 1974**

Photo: Belmont Studios

*Back row: Gus Sheppard, Phil Murray, John Brock, Dennis Gardiner, Grahame Huggins, Stephen Proudlock, Simon Booth.  
 Third row: Allan Willoughby, Merv Neal, Milton Maybury, Bert Silkman.  
 Second row: John Fisher, Lindsay Gailey, Allan Thomson, Glen Golden, Mark Pauling.  
 Front row: Tommy Sheppard, Tony Shiels, Paul Williams, Ron Burgess.*

# Sunday, August 19, 1979

## 18th Series

## Cahill Oval

### LAKES UNITED 35

### CESSNOCK 6

18th Series - Cahill Oval		Sunday, August 19	
<b>Lakes United</b>	vs	<b>Cessnock</b>	
Neville BAGNALL		David McKENDRY	
Steven LOWE		Tony WILLIAMS	
Terry QUINN		Boyd DAVIES	
David HARTNEY		George AMBRUM	
Paul WILLIAMS		Doug TANNA	
Glen GOLDEN		Glen HINDMARSH	
Greg ROBBS		Neil STEVENS	
Tom SHEPPARD (c)		Danny PEMBERTON	
Mark HARRAGON		Doug CLARK	
Michael PITMAN		David WOODBURY	
Steve POULTON		Henry TATANA (c)	
Glen LOGUE		Chris WALTERS	
Peter KELLY		Robert EVERSON	
<b>Lakes United 35</b>		<b>Cessnock 6</b>	
Lowe 3, Quinn 2,		Tanna, Williams tries	
Harrogan, Pitman tries			
Bagnall 7 goals			
<b>Referee:</b> Jack Geddes			
<b>Linesmen:</b> Col Thomson, Bob Haines			

**W**ould there be a tie in the Mal Woolford club championship of 1979?

The answer hinged on the outcome of Lakes United's clash with Cessnock in the last match of the home and away series. The scenario was simple; Lakes needed to defeat Cessnock in every grade to gain the maximum 26 points to draw level with the powerful coalfields club. There was added incentive for both teams. A loss for Cessnock would open the door for North to overtake them in the race for the minor premierships. It was imperative for Lakes to win to avoid a play-off for fourth place with Macquarie United.

Third grade (22-15) and then reserve grade (25-11) ensured the club championship would go right down to the last match of the premierships rounds.

Lakes were without captain/coach Grahame Huggins (thigh) and centre Peter Dodds (hamstring) for the most important match the Seagulls would play since 1976. Dave Hartney was promoted to centre and Greg Robbs resumed at halfback allowing acting skipper Tommy Sheppard to revert to lock. Mark Harragon moved up to second row with Peter Kelly and Steve Poulton the props.

Cessnock seemed to justify pre-match favouritism when they set up a 6-0 lead 20 minutes after kick-off. In the 14th minute the elusive Doug Tanna scored in the corner after Henry Tatana, Bob Everson, Roger Mullard and David Woodbury had handled. Six minutes later the Goanna's were in again. This time winger Tony Williams kicked through then beat two Lakes defenders to the ball as it rolled in goal. Cessnock 6 Lakes 0.

A subtle change then came over the match when winger Steve Lowe scored two tries in eight minutes. The first was the result of good lead up work from Robbs and Mick Pitman. The second try was a spectacular intercept and 60 metre dash to the line. Lakes 10 Cessnock 6.

Early on it looked as though goal kicking would play a vital role. With Dodds injured Lakes would rely on the boot of Neville Bagnall who's confidence was not exactly sky high after ordinary kicking performances in his last three games. Things did not start well for the veteran fullback, his first kick from a handy position screwing off his boot and floating well wide. "When I missed that first kick I was looking for a hole to hide in" a jubilant Bagnall revealed later.

Early in the second half Bagnall landed a penalty goal to extend Lakes lead to six points. In the 50th minute Robbs put Harragon into a gap for the big second rower to score. Lakes 17 Cessnock 6. From this point on Lakes outplayed Cessnock with an exhibition of grit and determination. The Seagull forwards never flinched from taking on the heavier opposition and began finding gaps up the middle of the ruck. Sheppard had an uncanny ability to sense an opening and slipped some fine passes to support. Lowe got his third try while Terry Quinn (2) and Pitman also made the score-sheet. Bagnall finished with seven goals. Tatana was unsuccessful with his three attempts.

So 20 years after winning their first club championship Lakes United, along with Cessnock, would once more have their name engraved on the Mal Woolford trophy.

# Club title tie for first time

By GEORGE PIGGFORD

Wins by Lakes United in all three grades yesterday produced an unprecedented tie for the Newcastle rugby league Mal Woolford club championship.

By gaining the maximum 26 points in the final-series matches against Cessnock, Lakes drew level with the Goannas on 314 points, four more than third-placed Western Suburbs.

It is the first time since 1959 that Lakes has finished at the top of the club championship ladder.

Cessnock won the title last year for the first time. Cessnock and Lakes both have teams in the semi-finals in all grades.

In reserve grade West won the minor premierships with 28 points, from Maitland (27) and Lakes and Cessnock (each 23).

Lakes and Cessnock will meet again in the minor semi-final next Sunday.

West and Lakes, with 30 points, were joint minor premiers in third grade, ahead of Central Charlestown (23) and Cessnock (22), which will play the minor semi-final.

# Sunday, August 30, 1987

## Grand Final No1 Sportsground

### LAKES UNITED 24

### SOUTH NEWCASTLE 16

Grand Final - No 1 Sportsground

Sunday, August 30

Lakes United

vs

South Newcastle

Brett BOTHAM  
Lindsay BOWNE  
Darren BUTLER  
Paul HARRAGON  
Mark BATES  
Peter WALSH (c)  
Steve WALTERS  
Michael McKIERNAN  
Michael PITMAN  
Greg HAYWOOD  
Jim FOWLER  
Bruce BURGESS  
David EDWARDS

Ashley GORDON  
Paul WAITE  
John BARR  
Robert McCLUSKEY  
Steve ROBINSON  
Steve LIPPATT  
John CROOKS  
Paul HAZELL  
Peter SAMS  
Tony KEEVILL  
Steve LOUIS  
Richard JONES (c)  
Paul MERLO

Reserves

Col MATHIAS  
Glen SULLIVAN  
David GRANT  
Stephen DRINKWATER

Les ROTUMAH  
Robert BAKER  
Adrian ROVERE  
Drew PANNOWITZ

Lakes United 24

Botham, Bowne, Harragon  
Walters tries  
Walsh 4 goals

South Newcastle 16

Pannowitz, Waite tries,  
penalty try  
Waite 2 goals

Referee: Tom Gustard

Linesmen: Owen Smith, Bob Stobbs

The season was full of thrills for Lakes United. Often forgotten in the glare of this successful season was a sensational match against South Newcastle three months previous (May 10) that set the scene for the grand final of 1987. Lakes, undefeated at the time met close rival South at Cahill Oval. Lakes had played most of the second half with 12 men after referee Gustard had sent replacement winger McLennan from the field in the 52nd minute. The score was 18-2 in Lakes favour at this stage. The Lions, however, staged a remarkable comeback running in five tries in 23 minutes to take the match 28-18. Lakes were actually down to 11 men during the half when captain/coach Walsh spent time in the sin-bin. In a post match statement Walsh exclaimed "with 13 men apiece on the paddock South will never beat us again this year."

A great deal of nostalgia surrounded the return to No1 Sportsground, after a break of five years, for grand final day. Lakes United won its third successive major premiership amid drama, controversy, tough and sometimes brilliant football and a see-sawing scoreboard. The match was not decided until four minutes from fulltime when Lakes halfback Steve Walters scored an individual try that allowed Seagull supporters to breathe easy.

The Lions drew first blood in the seventh minute. Lakes players charged down a kick only to see the ball roll into open space and toed into the ingoal for South winger Paul Waite to dive on the ball to score. Waite converted: South 6 Lakes 0.

Lakes reacted by applying constant pressure which paid off in the 22nd minute when Michael McKiernan hit the defence 20

metres from Souths line before slipping a close pass to centre Paul Harragon who carried several defenders over the line with him. Walsh converted. Lakes 6 South 6.

Six minutes later winger Lindsay Bowne touched down in the righthand corner after picking up the ball from a scrum five metres out from the South line. Lakes 10 South 6.

South mounted several attacking movements of their own into Lakes half only to squander possession at vital times. Fierce tackling kept Lakes pinned down and the Lions were rewarded in the 34th minute when hooker Richard Jones charged down a clearing kick and was then impeded by a Lakes player as he attempted to force the ball over the tryline. Referee Gustard had no hesitation in awarding a penalty try. South 12 Lakes 10.

Another error in attack by South allowed Walsh to pot a 30 metre penalty goal (36th minute) to make the halftime score 12 all. The Seagulls took the lead again 12 minutes after the restart when Walsh landed a fine penalty goal. Further drama unfolded in the 57th minute when Walsh charged down a clearing kick only to see the ball fall to South winger Ashley Gordon, who made a brilliant run down the left touchline. Gordon then passed infield to Steve Robinson, who in turn unloaded to Paul Hazell, who raced in for an apparent try. Gustard was about to award the try when Lakes players frantically brought to the referees attention a touch judge flagging at the point where Gordon had put a foot into touch.

In the 65th minute South took the lead for the third time in the match when centre Robert McCluskey put up a towering bomb which Walters fumbled on the line. Replacement centre Drew Pannowitz raced in to dive on the ball. South 16 Lakes 14. Almost immediately Walsh had an opportunity to square the match once more. The touch judges disagreed on the result of his penalty goal attempt leaving the referee to decide no goal.

Lakes were swift in their reply. In the 68th minute second rower Mick Pitman slipped a pass to fullback Brett Botham who dived for the line only to hit the goalpost as South men converged. Quickly he reached around and placed the ball over the line for a try. Walsh's conversion made the score Lakes 20 South 16. Controversy surrounded Botham's try, some observers claiming a double movement. This incident rocked South.

An individual try by Walters four minutes from the bell shattered another Lion comeback. Taking the ball from dummy-half the Lakes half ran to the defence before putting through a shallow grubber kick into the ingoal then won the race to the ball. The clinching try was scored in Lakes favourite corner; in front of the HL Wheeler stand. Thirteen years ago Proudlock had scored an equally memorable try in the 1974 grand final.

Lakes won the scrums 12-8 whilst the penalties favoured South 5-4. A crowd of 16,840 witnessed an enthralling grand final. For teenagers Botham, Harragon and Walters it was a day they would never forget. So too for the veteran Pitman who finally got his hands on a first grade major premiership trophy. For Walsh the win marked his first coaching success and his sixth grand final win in seven years. While the backline took most of the accolades the experienced pack was outstanding, especially in defence. The Seagulls victory equalled the achievements of Maitland (1956, 57 and 58) and Western Suburbs (1980, 81 and 82) as the only clubs to win three consecutive first grade grand finals.



**1987 Grand Final**

*Photo: Ken Robson*

*Seagull halfback Steve Walters on the attack as Dave Edwards and Drew Pannowitz look on.*



**Lakes United First Grade Major Premiers 1987**

*Back (left): Paul Hull (strapper), Bruce Gill (secretary), Col Mathias, Jim Fowler, Michael McKiernan, Dave Edwards, Paul Harrogan, Greg Haywood, Tony McLennan, David Grant, Terry Johnson (trainer), Phil Anthony (president).  
 Middle (left): John Wilcox, Bruce Burgess, Mark Bates, Glen Sullivan, Peter Walsh (coach), Darren Butler, Mick Pitman, Lindsay Bowne.  
 Front (left): Brett Botham, Phil Kennedy, Gavin Flanagan (ballboy), Michael Anthony (ballboy), Robert Flanagan (ballboy), Stephen Drinkwater, Rick Stone, Steve Walters.*

**The Men and Women  
Who Made Lakes Great**

# PART IV

For a club to function and remain competitive for 50 years requires countless numbers of men and women devoting a great deal of time and energy.

The early years saw men like Wall Bell, Col Brodie, Frank Blain, Dean Buckley, Bill Dart, Charlie Dixon, Jack Hibbard Snr, Jack Hilton, Bill "Rube" Iles, Peter Johnson, Don Mansfield and Barry Melville meet at Claude Street's barber shop for meetings. Hibbard Snr (at the time the secretary of the Newcastle Jockey Club) raised a considerable amount of money for Lakes due mainly to his friendship with the local racing identities. Hilton was a big influence in building the Fishermen into a formidable club. As an old Central Coast player himself he had many contacts and utilized this advantage to help bring good footballers to Belmont.

The women's contribution can be traced back to the same time. It was not unusual for the "House Full" sign to be displayed at dances organized by Mrs Street of the Ladies committee.

In 1955 Oscar Searle Barton (Cricket), Pat Cahill (Rugby League) and Les Miller (Baseball) were the driving forces behind the establishment of the Belmont Sportsman's Club which would provide facilities and funds to the sporting people of the area. Cahill had in 1955 inserted an advertisement in the local newspaper (at his own expense) initiating a public meeting. He also persuaded the chairman of the Belmont Urban Committee, Leo Ruane, to lend the newly formed club £1000 which was used to obtain the old milk bar (Ms Benyon's shop) situated in Belmont's main street. Cahill, a detective sergeant, would later facilitate the obtaining of a liquor licence for the club. Apart from his involvement with Lakes Cahill was the foundation president of the Sportsman's Club, a position he held until 1969. "The Bishop" (as Cahill was known) was unquestionably one of the most influential figures of early Lakes United history. Barton (at one stage the manager of Reg A. Baker's sports store in Belmont) was the club's original licensee and was appointed secretary manager in 1961.

By 1958 Lakes United had over forty men and women working voluntarily towards a common goal; the financial well being of the football club. The secret of the club's success around this time could be attributed to the number of families involved. Names like Foster, Irving, Judd, Maybury, Marker, Neal, Prosper, Sneddon and Stockwell made the Seagulls camp a close knit community.

1958 was also the year Merv "Horse" Neal joined the committee for the first of 24 consecutive years. No one person was more dedicated to Lakes United than Neal. His lifetime involvement in sport around the Belmont/Swansea area is nothing short of phenomenal. He was life member of no fewer than four clubs (Swansea Caves Surf Club 1960, Lakes United 1971, Newcastle Rugby League 1971 and Belmont Sportsmans Club 1979) and was an outstanding supporter of the Baseball and Cricket clubs. "Horse" was also involved as a player for Lakes in the early years including the famous 1947 season.

Through the 1960's the Ladies committee continued to provide much needed financial support. Betty McKinley (1967) and Ella Campbell (1968) joined the committee and soon became prominent workers for the club.

The tradition of family involvement continued into the 1970's with ladies like Lee Grothen, Iris Lee, May Mowbray, Pam Perring, Joan Sheppard and Jan Thomson working many long hours in the canteen.

As the 1980's dawned the names had changed but the dedication required had not. The new guard included the Anthonys, the Gills, the Kidds, the Russells, the Smiths and the Squires all of whom gave tremendous service to Lakes.

The most recent band of volunteers have not wavered from tradition either. In the authors opinion one other stalwart other than Merv Neal and Betty McKinley stand out. Bruce Holts involvement with Lakes United spans 31 seasons (he was co-opted onto the senior committee in 1965 after earlier serving Swansea Juniors). During this period Holt has worked constantly for Lakes and in the process witnessed both the highs and lows of many seasons.

Although the deeds of the players and coaching staff can never be overstated the commitment and devotion of a number of men and women have indeed make Lakes United a successful and respected club.

**Field Generals**

**PART V**

# JIM SCoulAR

Jimmy Scoular will be remembered as one of Lakes United's best ever but if it were not for the perseverance of two dedicated talent scouts the Fishermen could well have missed out on his services. Lakes were on the verge of entering the NRL and needed a quality captain/coach. Scoular had returned to Lithgow after playing for North Sydney in 1946 with no immediate plans. Charlie Derkene and "Berg" Prosper travelled to Lithgow and made the right offer so Lakes signed their first captain/coach.

Lakes United experienced a debut season few will forget. Under Scoular's leadership the Fishermen achieved phenomenal results culminating in the winning of the major and minor titles.

Jimmy Scoular was a master of his craft. Clever, elusive and the ideal build for a halfback his combination with Ron Golden set Lakes on the path to victory on many occasions.

Individually 1948 was another standout season for Scoular. After gaining Newcastle and Country honours state selectors included the fiery halfback in the squad for the first interstate clash. It was not, however, until the second match against Queensland that Scoular finally wore the sky blue guernsey. Len Smith was injured so the responsibility of skippering the NSW side was handed to Scoular. NSW won 17-13.

Later that night the 1948/49 Kangaroo touring party was announced amid much controversy. Smith's omission (he was the current Test skipper) dominated most of the headlines overshadowing several other strange selections. Three halfbacks were chosen ahead of Jimmy Scoular. Keith Froome

(Newtown), Bill Thompson (Toowoomba) and Bruce Hopkins (Canterbury).

Scoular went on to coach Lakes in later years but found it difficult to repeat the outstanding success of 1947. The deeds of this team will always remain the focal point of the Lakes United's early history and for that Jim Scoular can take a considerable amount of credit.

## Club Honours

**1947 Major and Minor Premiers**

## Representative Honours (with Lakes)

**1948 Newcastle, Country & NSW (Captain)**

**1950 Newcastle**

## Sydney Career

**1944 Newtown 2 games 2 tries**

**1946 Nth Syd 12 games 4 tries**

*Jimmy Scoular fiery and dynamic.*



# ALBERT PAUL

Albert Paul's impact on rugby league is difficult to capsule. For seven memorable years Paul set standards that will serve as barometers for greatness as long as the game is played in Belmont.

The year was 1947 and Paul's first in senior league. A product of Belmont junior teams he was, at 19, a member of that famous premiers side. In 1948 he joined Newtown but returned to Lakes the following year after suffering a broken jaw. Knee injuries restricted his football until 1951 but once fully fit demonstrated his allround ability. Paul's greatest asset was probably his constructive running from rucks. "Butch" became Lakes United's captain/coach for the 1951 season and held this position for three years. The highlight of a great career came in 1952 when Paul was selected to tour Britain and France with the Kangaroos. After 1953 he then spent five seasons out of the area including a stint with Canterbury in 1956. The other years were spent coaching country clubs (winning three premierships). Paul returned to Belmont in 1959 to contribute to a tremendous season for the Seagulls. He retired from senior football after the 1959 final. In 1969 Paul was appointed first grade coach of Lakes United and immediately took them to a grand final.

## Club Honours

**1947 Major and Minor Premiers**

**1959 Club Champions**

## Representative Honours (with Lakes)

**1947 Newcastle**

**1951 Newcastle**

**1952 Newcastle, Country Firsts, NSW & Australia**

**1953 Newcastle, Country Firsts, NSW & Australia**

## Tests for Australia

June 9 1952 vs New Zealand in Sydney : Lock : won 25-13.

Crowd 56,326

June 28 1952 vs New Zealand in Brisbane : Lock : lost 49-25

Crowd 29,245

July 2 1952 vs New Zealand in Sydney : 2nd Row : lost 19-9

Crowd 44,916

October 4 1952 vs Great Britain in Leeds : 2nd Row: lost 19-6

Crowd 34,305

## Tours

**1952/53 Kangaroo Tour of Great Britain and France**

Played 21 games; 9 tries, 4 goals, Captain on 4 occasions

**1953 New Zealand Tour**

Played 5 games; 1 try, 1 goal

Total matches for Australia: 29.

## Sydney Career

**1948 Newtown** 8 games 2 tries

**1956 Canterbury** 19 games 4 tries



*Albert Paul superb allround ability*

# ALLAN THOMSON

Allan Thomson ranks as one of the toughest forwards produced in postwar Newcastle. Thomson owed his record in rugby league to his own drive and fanatical dedication.

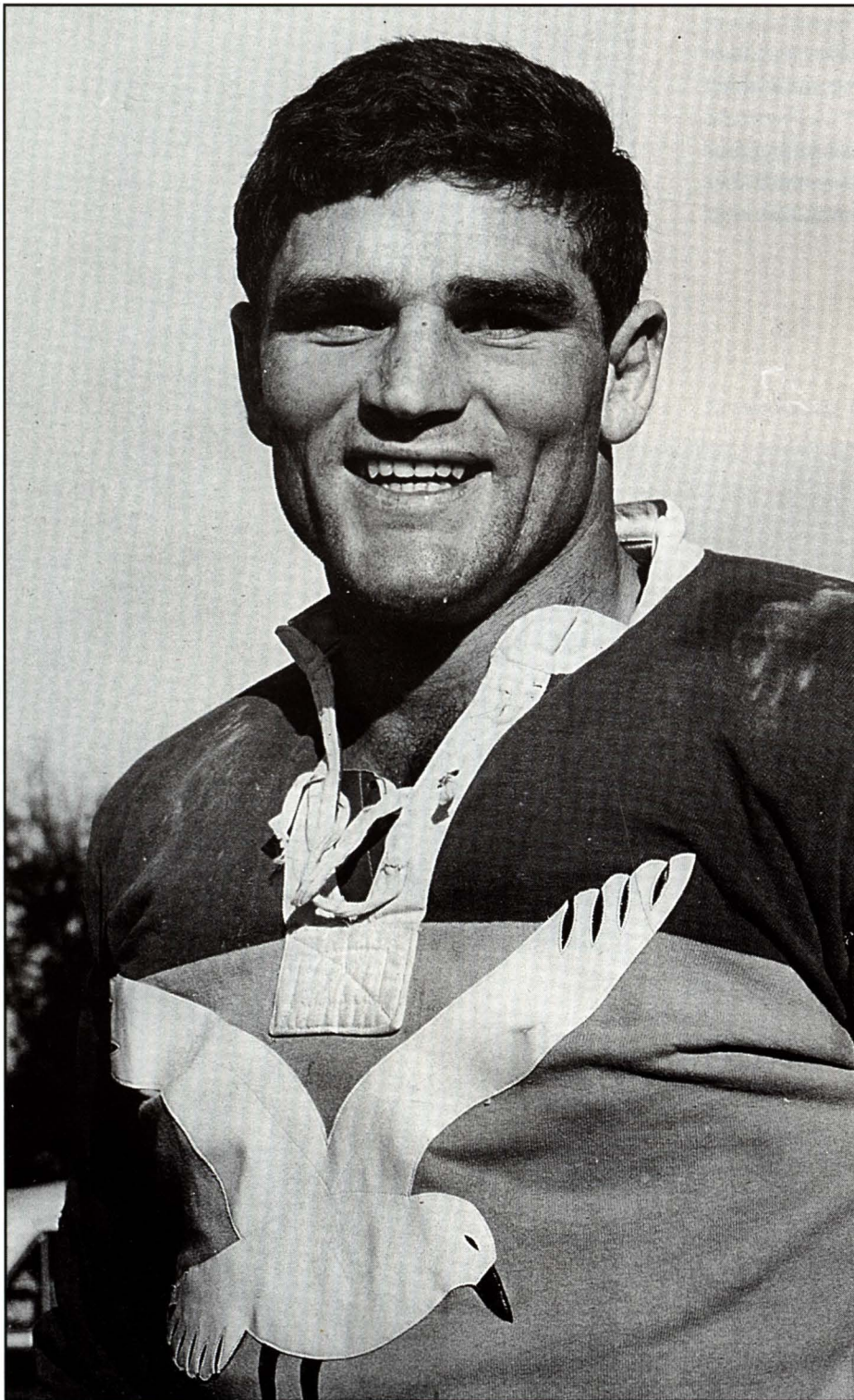
"Thomo" began playing senior football in 1963 after an outstanding junior career. He made his debut for Newcastle in the same year. He periodically backed up on Sundays for Wyong after playing for Lakes on the Saturday.

Thomson was only 22 years of age when he was handed the reigns of first grade for the first time. In 1967 his immaculate low tackling and robust bumping runs could not be ignored by national selectors so Thomson made his debut for Australia in the Test series against New Zealand. The climax of the season was selection in the Kangaroo touring party.

The next season was the disappointment of a grand final loss and 1970 was the identical result though this time in Manly Warringah colours. Thomson's luck changed in 1972, the nuggety second rower being a member of the Sea Eagles first major premiership team. Much to Manly's dismay "Bramha" returned to coach Lakes United the following season.

1974 saw Thomson realise his dream by leading Lakes to a grand final win. He was devastating this year with his tackling and determination never more evident. The Seagulls were the premier club again in 1975 under "Thomos" leadership.

Allan Thomson was a self made footballer; a fitness freak with training exploits few could adhere to made "Bramha" a legend in his own time.



## Club Honours

**1968 Minor Premiers (equal)**

**1974 Major Premiers**

**1975 Major and Minor Premiers**

**1976 Minor Premiers**

## Representative Honours (with Lakes)

**1963 Newcastle**

**1964 Newcastle, Country Seconds & NSW Colts**

**1965 Newcastle & Country Firsts**

**1966 Newcastle, Country Firsts & NSW**

**1967 Newcastle, Country Firsts, NSW & Australia**

**1968 Newcastle, Country Firsts & NSW**

**1973 Newcastle (Captain) & Country Firsts (Captain)**

**1974 Newcastle**

## Test for Australia

June 10 1967 vs New Zealand in Sydney :  
2nd Row : won 22-13

Crowd: 33,416

July 1 1967 vs New Zealand in Brisbane :  
2nd Row : won 35-22

Crowd: 30,122

January 7 1968 vs France in Toulouse :  
2nd Row : lost 16-13

Crowd: 4,898

## Tours

**1967/68 Kangaroo Tour of Great Britain and France**

Played 14 games; 3 tries.

Total Matches for Australia: 16

## Sydney Career

**1969-73 Manly Warringah 87 games 11 tries**

*Allan Thomson an unrelenting desire to succeed*

# ROBERT TAYLOR

It was no coincidence that the commencement of Lakes United's "Golden era" of the eighties coincided with the arrival of Robert Taylor from Bellingen in 1982. Taylor spent two seasons under the astute coaching of Johnny Mayes before taking over the coaching reins himself. In his first season as captain/coach he took the Seagulls to the grand final only to experience the agony of defeat. Taylor would not accept second best. Lakes won their first grand final for ten years the following season and repeated the effort in 1986 to equal the back to back record of the 1974/75 team.

Taylor was a dynamic footballer whether playing lock or halfback. Never far from the action Rip had the ability to lift any side he was playing in. He was an inspiring captain not afraid to let a team mate know if his game needed attention. His coaching record not only with the Seagulls but all over NSW country speaks volumes for the man's method of coaching.

Robert "Rip" Taylor will always be remembered as one of the most influential players ever to wear a Lakes United guernsey.

## Club Honours

- 1983 Club Champions
- 1984 Minor Premiers (equal)
- 1985 Club Champions
- 1985 Major Premiers
- 1986 Club Champions
- 1986 Major and Minor Premiers

## Representative Honours (with Lakes)

- 1982 Newcastle
- 1984 Newcastle (Country Champions)
- 1986 Newcastle & Country Seconds (Captain)

*Robert Taylor an inspirational leader*



# PETER WALSH

Peter Walsh was one of the real personalities of the modern era. He could enjoy a good time as much as anyone (probably better) but when it came down to the serious business of winning football games Lakes United have had none better.

Walsh had originally intended coming to Newcastle for one year (1981). He joined the Seagulls perennial rivals Western Suburbs and immediately found success winning two competitions in succession.

1983 was Maitland's year and Walsh again found himself doing a lap of honour; this time in black and white.

Come 1984 and the beginning of a great association with Lakes United. Over the next eight years Walsh played a major role in every success the club enjoyed. He figured in six grand finals for Lakes, winning three. In 1987 he proved he was equally adept at coaching by leading Lakes to a third successive major premiership. His coaching took the Seagulls to two further grand finals in 1988 and 1990. Since 1981 Walsh appeared in every Newcastle grand final up to 1988 inclusive; a remarkable sequence in any code.

"Spider" was never blessed with exceptional speed but could accelerate through a gap if the opportunity presented itself. A great tactical five-eight he could size up a situation and direct the attack to the opposition's weakness with consummate ease (and sometimes a few choice words). His general kicking game was also an asset and his point scoring deeds have been well documented.

Whenever supporters talk of Lakes United's greatest achievers the name Peter "Spider" Walsh is sure to rate very highly on the list.



*Peter Walsh a student of the game* Photo: Graeme Ireland

## Club Honours

**1984 Minor Premiers (equal)**

**1985 Club Champions**

**1985 Major Premiers**

**1986 Club Champions**

**1986 Major and Minor Premiers**

**1987 Major Premiers**

**1990 Minor Premiers**

## Representative Honours (with Lakes)

**1987 Newcastle (captain)**

## Sydney Career

**1976, 79-80 Western Suburbs 10 games 5 tries 15 goals**

## The Lifeblood Of The Club

Most successful sporting organisations are supported by a strong junior movement and Lakes United is no exception. In fact the club had its origins as Belmont Junior Rugby League Club. It has been documented under "The Early Years" that attempts to encourage the game in the area as far back as the '20's and '30's had failed until, in 1939, an All Age team and an under 16 team were formed.

The "Early Years" also made mention of the 1945 Belmont team competing in the Newcastle A Grade junior competition.

The history of Lakes United has been influenced to a large

degree by those involved in that team. In the years following the club's

# PART VI

acceptance into the NRL the young players were heavily relied upon. A chronological review of the progress and achievement made by junior and schoolboy rugby league illustrates the indispensable role they played in the senior bodies success.

---

## 1950

---

The immediate future of league in Belmont looked to be in good hands judging by the form shown by junior teams. The U/16's, U/18's and U/20's all had rising stars in their ranks, most notably Harold Gray and Ivan Wolfe. These sides played much of their football on Mitchell Park, Merewether and District Park in Broadmeadow. The committee took a progressive step by organising an U/14 competition to be played on Saturday mornings covering the area between Gateshead and Swansea and was governed by weight limits.

---

## 1951

---

Junior football was up and running. Alf Ernest and "Scotty" Campbell were among the early coaches.

---

## 1952

---

Albert Paul became the first Australian representative to come from the Belmont junior ranks.

---

## 1954

---

The opening of the Belmont High School twelve months previously offered a new opportunity to promote rugby league. Two footballs were donated to the school, "to be reviewed later in the season with view to assisting with jumpers for the next season" #.

---

## 1956

---

Sportsmasters from various schools in the area approached Lakes committee regarding the need to foster rugby league. As a result £20 (\$40) was donated to the East Lake Macquarie PSAAA for that purpose. As well a game between Belmont and Cessnock High Schools was played as a curtain raiser to the Lakes vs Cessnock fixture on Anzac Day. Three former Lakes juniors - "Gus" Gray, "Babe" Heaney and "Jake" Moses performed creditably in Balmain's forward pack, culminating in a grand final appearance against St George.

---

## 1958

---

A significant year which saw the formation of Lakes United Schoolboy Rugby League. At a meeting of the senior club under the old wooden grandstand a motion was moved by George Davies that the club explore the possibility of starting a Saturday morning competition for schoolboys in the area. An advertisement was placed in the "Gazette" asking interested persons to attend a special meeting at Belmont Oval. At the initial meeting, chaired by Athol Martin, Fred Dodds was

elected president and Les Owens secretary. The first teams were U/10's and U/12's. These boys played against sides from Toronto, who were starting junior and schoolboy competitions at the same time. In fact, Lakes gave Toronto permission to enter an U/15 team in the Newcastle competition and made a request of the NJRL that Toronto be given direct representation on the NJRL. It was not long before further schoolboy clubs were formed at Swansea and Windale, followed in later years by Belmont North, Gateshead and Mt Hutton. It appears the first junior rep players were B. Charters and F. Gibson, who were picked to play at Katoomba and were given one guinea (\$2.10) each for expenses.

---

## 1959

---

The format for the schoolboy competition became more organised and operated independently of the NJRL, Keith Marker, from Belmont High, was selected in the NSW schoolboys team and was given two guineas for his efforts. Allan Thomson was selected in the U/16 rep team to play at Bathurst. A donation of one guinea was made for his expenses (still earning bank interest). A report from the first annual general meeting of the Belmont Schoolboys Rugby League Committee showed Fred Dodds as president, Noel Densby as secretary, Ron McGregor as assistant secretary, George Talbot as treasurer and Merv Neal as registrar. Apart from his executive position Dodds took on the role of coach for many seasons and it would be impossible to calculate the number of boys who had been under his instruction at some stage during their careers.

---

## 1960

---

The junior format was expanded with the formation of a sub-committee (from Lakes management committee) to assist the juniors in forming an independent committee. The Schoolboy body was granted permission to play at the interval of senior home games. The "Russell Naughton Shield" was presented for the first time to the Lakes United "Junior Player of the Year". The inaugural winner was Allan Thomson.

---

## 1962

---

The junior executive was George Neader (president), Mick McDougall (secretary) and Ted McInerney (treasurer). The Schoolboys entered teams in the NJRL U/9, U/13 and U/14 competitions.

---

## 1963

---

Lakes recognised the efforts of schoolboy football further afield by donating a ball to Woy Woy High School (who had requested a set of jumpers).

---

## 1964

---

Former Lakes great (and former junior) Russell Naughton (president) joined McDougall and McInerney to form an executive that would take LUJRLFC forward over the next few years. Negotiations took place with the Urban Area Committee for the purpose of building a canteen at No.3 (Barton) Oval. Noel McNamara was selected in the NSW schoolboy team.

---

## 1965

---

A prosperous season which included a high level of representation in Newcastle teams; four players in the U/19's, with six in each of the U/17's and U/15's. Des Kimmorley and John Asquith captained the U/17's and U/15's respectively and Jack Tansey, a stalwart of the club coached the U/17's. Bruce Holt, a delegate from Swansea schoolboys, was co-opted onto Lakes senior committee. The significance of this action can not be under-estimated considering Holts input into the club in the years since, right up to the present day. Throughout the '60's Ray Bell (sub-junior president) and "Moe" Harding worked tirelessly for the benefit of many young Belmont boys. The junior club won their first President Cup (coached by Vernon Lee) as well as becoming club champions.

---

## 1966

---

The NRL moved to amalgamate the Saturday Morning Schoolboys with the Junior League. The new controlling body was named the Newcastle Junior Rugby League Association. Sub-Juniors were designated U/7's to U/14's whilst juniors were U/15's to U/19's.

---

## 1967

---

Ted McInerney was elected the first life member of LUJRLFC. The senior committee continued to foster schoolboy football in areas well away from the immediate district by donating footballs to Gwandalan, Mannering Park and Munmorah schools. The senior body recommended that the juniors "take over care and control of all sub-junior teams previously controlled by the Belmont Schoolboys committee". The Belmont Schoolboys voted unsuccessfully against the decision.#

---

## 1968

---

According to NJRL records Lakes second President Cup win. Jack Whittaker began his reign as president. The Lakes United Sub-junior Referees Association was formed. Sub-Junior sides began to benefit with sponsorship from local businesses and clubs like the Sportsmans Club, the 16ft Sailing Club, the RSL, Powercraft Marine and the Total garage at Belmont North.

---

## 1969

---

A prolific influx of quality junior players into the senior ranks. Around this time a very active coaching panel was formed with the object of "coaching the coaches".

---

## 1970

---

The winning of the club championship was a fitting reward for the effort put in by the committee. Another administrator of note, Jim Anderson, became secretary. With a registration of 228 players the club was a strong one from which the seniors would reap the benefits in the ensuing years. On the schoolboy scene Lakes United granted permission to George Perring and Reg Squires to call a meeting in the Valentine-Eleebana area for the purpose of forming a sub-junior club.

---

## 1971

---

The subject of payments to U/19 players was raised by junior delegates. Lakes management committee was quick to deny the request. Once again club champions and Jack Smyth's team won the converted President Cup, defeating Waratah 19-16.

---

## 1972-76

---

Each of Lakes first grade premiership-winning teams of 1974-75, reserve grade premiers of 1976 and third grade premiers of 1978 were made up of a substantial proportion of former juniors. Steve Bowden, who went on to play for NSW, and Country representatives Simon Booth, Michael Pitman, Steven Lowe and Tom Sheppard, emerged from the junior ranks at this time. Lakes were NJRL club champions in 1972.

---

## 1977

---

The first indication of sponsorship <sup>won 1st Div Premiership</sup> for junior teams when Bitumix contributes to the two U/19 sides. Valentine obtained sponsorship for the U/8's (Ross Prigg Electrical), U/11's (Decks Building Supplies) and U/12's (Macquarie Meats). Swansea juniors gained sponsorship from the Mawson Hotel.

---

## 1979

---

The PSSA recommended that Mount Hutton and Valentine primary schools, as well as Belmont High, receive the annual jumper allocation.

---

## 1980

---

Lyn Tansey was elected as the junior delegate on the senior committee. The juniors were subsequently informed that this situation could not be allowed as the senior committee did not allow for female voting rights.



*May 17, 1971*

*The schoolboy club was at its peak in 1971. Former Lakes great Col De Lore is shown here instructing youngsters at a coaching clinic.*

---

## 1981

---

Ray Nunn began his term as president. Under Nunn's leadership the juniors began a successful era.

---

## 1982

---

For the first time the J.J. Wilson Cup (U/16) was won. The U/16's were also major and minor premiers.

---

## 1983

---

President Cup winners - U/18's major and minor premiers - U/20's major premiers.

---

## 1984

---

Grahame Huggins was appointed Director of Coaching and was responsible for the resurrection of the coaching panel with new emphasis on coaching qualifications. The club won their first Keith Barry Cup and were club champions. The U/20's and U/18's were both major and minor premiers. The NRL included the coalfield clubs into the U/16, U/18 and U/20 competitions.

---

## 1985

---

The groundwork laid by Huggins and Nunn and a number of quality coaches began to produce even greater results. Club champions-President Cup and Barry Cup winners and the U/18's were premiers for the third successive year.

---

## 1986

---

Similar success with the club championship, President Cup, Barry Cup and U/18 premiership all retained.

---

## 1987

---

The "golden era" enjoyed by the juniors coincided with an equally successful era for the seniors. Once again an impressive array of former juniors took their place in all premiership-winning teams, particularly the first grade "hat-trick" of 1985-87. Brett Botham, Lindsay Bowne, Darren Smith, Rick Stone, Trevor Tuckwell and Steve Walters all went on to higher levels of football. 1987 was the year another product of Valentine sub-juniors and Lakes juniors, Paul Harragon, entered grade football. Harragon went on to become a fixture in Australian teams since making his debut in 1992 and his deeds at the highest level, coupled with his marketability, made him one of Australia's best known sportsmen.

---

## 1988

---

The Incorporation Cup (U/18) is won for the first time.

---

## 1989

---

A big year for the U/20's winning the President Cup and finishing joint major premiers.

---

## 1990

---

A remarkable year. The U/20's, coached by Tony Shiels, were undefeated in winning the minor premiership by 12 points with a for and against record of 620:92 in 17 games. The grand final was won 40-4 over Waratah and the side formed the nucleus of the all conquering President Cup outfit which won its final 56-4. Former Lakes junior Gary Burns coached the U/20 second division team to a 19-10 grand final win also. The U/16's rivalled the U/20's in the domination of their age group. Jeff Scott, yet another former junior, coached a team that scored 349 points to 123, were undefeated throughout the season and won their grand final 30-6 over Kurri. They also took out the Wilson Cup. Lakes were club champions too.

---

## 1991

---

The commencement of the club's domination of the Incorporation Cup. Paul Williams' coached teams would win this trophy in four successive years.

---

## 1992

---

The U/20's were major premiers and the President Cup took its place alongside the Incorporation Cup.

---

## 1993

---

Lakes juniors achieved what many league followers thought impossible: the winning of all four cup competitions in the one season. The historic night was not without its drama, the President and Incorporation Cups won with a last minute goal and field goal respectively.

---

## 1994

---

The U/18's and U/16's won their respective premierships and cup competitions. Secretary John Gibson and treasurer Bill Coles were instrumental in this period of outstanding results during the '80's and early '90's. Among the successful premiership and cup coaches were former Lakes first graders (and dedicated Lakes men) Huggins, Phil Newton, Nunn, Shiels, Tom Sheppard and Williams.

---

## 1995

---

Unfortunately the cup competitions which Lakes had dominated for so long were discontinued in 1995. Adam Muir (Valentine sub-juniors) became the fourth Lakes junior to don the "green and gold" after representing the Knights, Country and NSW.

---

## 1996

---

The most recent premiership success was that of the U/17's in addition to winning the NJRL club championship, extending the sequence to eight in succession. Perhaps it is these boys who will eventually emulate the likes of Kiel Emerton, Brendon George, Craig Hibberd, Paul Jeffries and Jeff Walters who played prominent roles in the first grade premiership victory of '96.

In recent years LURJFC has been guided by a keen committee led by president Paul Flett and secretary Alan Johns. It is doubtful whether the club would have achieved the success it has had if not for the foresight and willingness of countless individuals who encouraged young boys to play rugby league. It is people like these who will continue to guide the nursery - the "lifeblood" of Lakes United.

# Extract from LURJFC minutes.

**How They Finished**

# PART VII

Year	Club Championship	First Grade	Reserve Grade	Third Grade (U/23's 1981/2/3)		
1947	/	Minor Premiers	9th	/		
1948		6th	8th			
1949		2nd	8th			
1950		6th	Did not make semis			
1951		2nd	6th			
1952		2nd	3rd ◆			
1953		8th	8th		6th	
1954		3rd	3rd		8th	
1955		5th	6th		4th	7th
1956		7th	3rd		8th	9th
1957	8th ◆	7th ◆	7th ◆	9th		
1958	6th	6th	6th	6th		
1959	Club Champions	3rd	Minor Premiers	Minor Premiers		
1960	4th	5th	4th	5th		
1961	4th	4th	3rd	6th		
1962	7th	6th	9th	Minor Premiers (equal)		
1963	9th	9th	9th	5th		
1964	7th	8th	6th	7th		
1965	7th	6th	6th	8th		
1966	3rd	5th	4th	6th		
1967	4th	3rd	2nd	8th		
1968	3rd	Minor Premiers(equal)	5th *	6th		
1969	4th	3rd	4th	5th		
1970	3rd	2nd	4th	4th		
1971	2nd	3rd	4th	Minor Premiers		
1972	5th	6th	7th	6th		
1973	8th	6th	8th	8th		
1974	4th	2nd	5th	6th		
1975	3rd	Minor Premiers	3rd	9th		
1976	3rd	Minor Premiers	3rd	7th		
1977	7th	9th	2nd	4th		
1978	4th	8th	4th	2nd		
1979	Club Champions (tie)	4th	3rd	2nd		
1980	7th	6th	6th	9th		
1981	7th	9th	8th	4th		
1982	3rd	3rd	3rd	4th		
1983	Club Champions	3rd	Minor Premiers	Minor Premiers		
1984	2nd	Minor Premiers	Minor Premiers	2nd		
1985	Club Champions	3rd	Minor Premiers	Minor Premiers		
1986	Club Champions	Minor Premiers	Minor Premiers	2nd		
1987	2nd	3rd	Minor Premiers	2nd		
1988	4th	2nd	3rd	2nd		
1989	4th	4th	4th	4th		
1990	3rd	Minor Premiers	4th	8th		
1991	3rd	4th	2nd	2nd		
1992	2nd	2nd	3rd	2nd		
1993	2nd	3rd	4th	2nd		
1994	4th	6th	5th ▲	Minor Premiers		
1995	3rd	6th	Minor Premiers	3rd		
1996	2nd	2nd	2nd	6th		

Note: 1953-1958 G.A. Lloyd Pennant (First and reserve grade)

\* Lost play-off for fourth position to Kurri

◆ approximate finishing position

▲ Won play-off for fifth position against Kurri

**The Business End  
of the Season**

# PART VIII

## PLAY-OFF RESULTS 1947 to 1961

When Lakes United joined the NRL in 1947 the minor premier had the right of reply if defeated in either a semi-final or final. i.e. A grand final would be played.

### FIRST GRADE

Year	2nd semi-final	1st semi-final	Final	Grand Final
1947		lost 4-16 North		won 13-0 North
1949	lost 5-12 Kurri			
1951	won 20-7 Kurri		lost 18-20 Maitland	
1952	won 28-12 Kurri		won 21-13 Central	lost 4-5 Waratah
1954		lost 9-13 Cessnock		
1956		won 11-10 Maitland	lost 2-19 Cessnock	
1959		won 15-3 North	lost 4-13 Maitland	
1961	lost 10-13 Waratah			

### RESERVE GRADE

Year	2nd semi-final	1st semi-final	Final	Grand Final
1959		lost 8-12 Cessnock		lost 8-14 Maitland
1960	lost 25-27 Maitland			
1961		lost 4-12 West		

### THIRD GRADE

Year	2nd semi-final	1st semi-final	Final	Grand Final
1959			won 13-7 West	

## PLAY-OFF RESULTS 1962 to 1979

The NRL introduced automatic grand finals in 1962 and a new format was in vogue for the semi-finalists. i.e.

Major semi-final: 1st vs 2nd (winner to grand final). Minor semi-final: 3rd vs 4th (loser eliminated).

Final: loser of major semi vs winner of minor semi. (winner of final goes to grand final).

### FIRST GRADE

Year	Minor Semi	Major Semi	Final	Grand Final
1967	lost 9-18 Macquarie			
1968		won 20-19 West		lost 6-9 South
1969	won 24-19 Kurri		won 12-8 West	lost 9-19 Maitland
1970		lost 18-28 Maitland	lost 16-35 West	
1971	won 27-18 North		won 25-12 Waratah	lost 19-30 Maitland
1974		won 16-12 West		won 7-2 West
1975		won 28-9 West		won 30-17 West
1976		lost 17-22 West	lost 18-25 South	
1979	lost 3-19 Maitland			

### RESERVE GRADE

Year	Minor Semi	Major Semi	Final	Grand Final
1966	won 27-2 North		lost 6-10 Maitland	
1967		lost 9-21 West	won 9-6 Maitland	lost 9-21 West
1969	lost 7-29 Cessnock			
1970	won 21-4 South		lost 14-17 West	
1971	lost 9-27 South			
1975	won 15-13 Cessnock		won 18-13 Maitland	lost 10-12 West
1976	won 41-14 Kurri		won 23-17 North	won 20-12 West
1977		lost 12-30 Cessnock	lost 15-23 West	
1978	won 20-16 Macquarie		lost 17-20 Maitland	
1979	lost 20-36 Cessnock			

### THIRD GRADE

Year	Minor Semi	Major Semi	Final	Grand Final
1962		lost 18-20 Maitland	won 19-12 South	lost 11-13 Maitland
1970	won 14-7 Cessnock		lost 5-30 Maitland	
1971		won 15-10 Maitland		lost 8-13 West
1977	lost 15-18 North			
1978		won 14-8 Cessnock		won 18-11 Cessnock
1979		lost 15-21 West	lost 7-32 Central	

# PLAY-OFF RESULTS 1980 to 1996

In 1980 the five (5) team semi-final format was introduced.

i.e. Qualifying semi-final: 2nd vs 3rd

Elimination semi-final: 4th vs 5th (loser eliminated)

Major semi-final: 1st vs winner of qualifying semi (winner direct to grand final).

Minor semi-final: loser of qualifying semi vs winner of elimination semi.

Final: loser of major semi vs winner of minor semi (winner advances to grand final).

## FIRST GRADE

Year	Elimination Semi	Qualifying Semi	Minor Semi	Major Semi	Final	Grand Final
1982		lost 10-11 Kurri	won 9-7 Maitland		lost 18-25 Kurri	
1983		lost 20-24 West	lost 14-20 Cessnock			
1984				lost 16-36 West	won 28-14 Kurri	lost 2-10 West
1985		won 14-10 West		won 34-14 Cessnock		won 12-6 Cessnock
1986				won 22-6 Cessnock		won 4-0 South
1987		won 10-0 West		won 14-4 South		won 24-16 South
1988		won 32-12 Central		lost 0-8 South	won 16-10 West	lost 8-29 South
1989	lost 12-19 NNBay					
1990				won 16-15 West		lost 14-17 Waratah
1991	won 12-8 Waratah		lost 12-42 Toronto			
1992		won 36-20 South		lost 14-24 West	won 24-8 Kurri	lost 0-33 West
1993		lost 10-30 Kurri	won 30-8 Waratah		lost 12-40 Kurri	
1996		won 35-10 South		won 24-23 West a.e.t.		won 16-6 West

# PLAY-OFF RESULTS 1980 to 1996

## RESERVE GRADE

Year	Elimination Semi	Qualifying Semi	Minor Semi	Major Semi	Final	Grand Final
1982		lost 3-39 West	lost 14-15 Maitland			
1983				lost 17-20 Cessnock	won 24-10 Maitland	won 19-8 Cessnock
1984				lost 12-22 West	lost 8-14 Waratah	
1985				lost 16-22 West	won 32-6 Maitland	won 10-2 West
1986				lost 6-12 South	lost 12-24 West	
1987				lost 16-18 West	lost 20-26 Maitland	
1988		lost 6-19 Maitland	won 26-12 South		lost 16-30 West	
1989	won 32-18 Waratah		lost 4-10 South			
1990	won 16-10 Toronto		won 16-8 NNBay		won 18-8 West	won 20-14 South
1991		lost 2-24 South	won 28-12 Waratah		lost 6-8 South	
1992		won 14-2 Waratah		won 17-12 West		lost 6-16 West
1993	lost 6-19 NNBay					
1994	lost 10-23 Cessnock					
1995				won 20-6 Kurri		won 22-16 Maitland
1996		won 14-6 South		lost 10-12 West	lost 12-13 a.e.t. Kurri	

## THIRD GRADE / U23's (81, 82, 83)

Year	Elimination Semi	Qualifying Semi	Minor Semi	Major Semi	Final	Grand Final
1981	won 24-10 West		won 22-5 Macquarie		won 24-15 Kurri	lost 23-24 Waratah
1982	won 27-17 Maitland		won 15-13 Cessnock		lost 10-15 West	
1983				won 21-12 Cessnock		won 30-14 Macquarie
1984		lost 14-33 Maitland	won 28-10 Waratah		lost 6-12 West	
1985				lost 12-21 Waratah ♦	won 8-6 West	lost 12-33 Waratah
1986		won 13-8 South ♠		lost 6-20 Waratah	lost 10-26 Kurri	
1987		won 30-14 South		lost 6-31 West	lost 4-21 South	
1988		lost 14-22 West	won 18-0 Waratah		lost 8-16 West	
1989	lost 6-16 Toronto					
1991		won 22-10 Waratah		lost 14-34 West	won 20-12 Maitland	lost 14-18 West
1992		won 18-10 Waratah		lost 16-32 West	lost 0-10 Waratah	
1993		won 3-2 West		won 22-12 Waratah		lost 4-18 Waratah
1994				won 22-14 West		won 26-6 West
1995		lost 10-22 West	won 28-14 Cessnock		won 20-18 Kurri	lost 8-14 West

♠ First game 14 all

♦ First game 12 all

The Coaches

# PART IX

Year	First Grade	Reserve Grade	Third Grade
1947	Jim Scoular	Dean Buckley	
1948	Jim Scoular	Rube Iles	
1949	Jim Scoular	Albert Paul	
1950	Allan Quinlivan	Albert Paul	
1951	Albert Paul	Jim Marshall	
1952	Albert Paul/George Davies	Bill Smyth	
1953	Albert Paul	Ces De Sylva	
1954	Colin De Lore	N Woolley	
1955	Tom Pitman	John Chipchase	Fred Smith
1956	Tom Pitman	George Neader	Vic Harrison
1957	Russell Naughton	George Neader	Max Foster
1958	Jim Scoular	George Neader	Max Foster
1959	Dick Higgins	Jim Scoular	Max Foster
1960	Ron Moses	Jim Scoular	Reg Squires/George Stokes
1961	John Craig	Jack Smyth	Bert Silkman
1962	Bill Halverston	Jack Smyth	Fred Whiteland
1963	Jim Scoular	Jim Cowan	Vernon Lee
1964	Jim Scoular	John Regan	Vernon Lee
1965	Allan Thomson	John Regan	Arthur Bevan
1966	Allan Thomson	Reg Squires	Richard Reid
1967	Allan Thomson	Vernon Lee	Richard Reid
1968	Allan Thomson	John Craig	Berwin Worth
1969	Albert Paul	John Craig	Jack Smyth
1970	Bob Hensby	John Craig	Wayne Cartwright
1971	Ray Johnson	John Craig	Wayne Cartwright
1972	Frank Adams	Ollie Renfrew	Alan King
1973	Allan Thomson	Ollie Renfrew	Peter Ramplin
1974	Allan Thomson	Lindsay Gailey	Peter Ramplin
1975	Allan Thomson	Lindsay Gailey	Neil Hincks
1976	Allan Thomson	Lindsay Gailey	Wayne Cooper
1977	Paul Mills	Lindsay Gailey	John Daniels
1978	Grahame Huggins	Lindsay Gailey	John Daniels
1979	Grahame Huggins	Phil Newton	Russell Devonshire
1980	Wayne Cartwright	Les Hannah	Steve Rapley
1981	John Stopford/Tom Sheppard	Les Hannah	Grahame Huggins (U/23's)
1982	John Mayes	Lindsay Gailey	Grahame Huggins (U/23's)
1983	John Mayes	Tony Shiels	Glen Logue (U/23's)
1984	Robert Taylor	Paul Williams	Glen Golden
1985	Robert Taylor	Paul Williams	Tony Shiels/Warren Holden
1986	Robert Taylor	Paul Williams	Terry Quinn
1987	Peter Walsh	Grant Squires	Gary Johnson
1988	Michael Pitman/Peter Walsh	Phil Newton	Steve Piper
1989	Peter Walsh	Phil Newton	Paul Hunt
1990	Peter Walsh	Col Mathias	Scott Seamer
1991	Peter Walsh	Col Mathias	Kevin Ross
1992	Steve Walters	David Grant	Kevin Ross
1993	Steve Walters	David Grant	Grant Squires
1994	Steve Walters	Michael Pitman	Brett Huyburs
1995	Steve Walters	Michael Pitman	Grant Hughes
1996	David Smith	Todd Emerton	Dion Roughan

The Officials

# PART X

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
1947	Peter Johnson	Charlie Dixon	Col Brodie
1948	Peter Johnson	Charlie Dixon	Col Brodie
1949	Jack Hickey	Jim Davies	Barney Sneddon
1950	Charlie Farmer	Charlie Dixon	Bill Power
1951	Charlie Farmer	Charlie Dixon	Bill Power
1952	Charlie Farmer	Charlie Dixon	Bill Power
1953	Pat Cahill	Charlie Dixon	Bill Power
1954	Pat Cahill	Des Kimmorley Snr	Frank Blain
1955	Pat Cahill	Des Kimmorley/Brian Dalton	Frank Blain
1956	Pat Cahill	Frank Blain	Milton Maybury
1957	Pat Cahill	Frank Blain/Milton Maybury	Bill Stockwell
1958	Pat Cahill	Milton Maybury	Bill Stockwell
1959	Athol Martin	Milton Maybury	Bill Stockwell
1960	Athol Martin	Bert Latimer	Geoff Tobin
1961	Athol Martin	Pat Sheehan	Wal Hogdson
1962	Bert Latimer	Pat Sheehan	Reg H Stokes
1963	Bert Latimer	Pat Sheehan	Reg H Stokes/Darryl Sattler
1964	Merv Neal	Pat Sheehan	Darryl Sattler
1965	Merv Neal	Barney Sneddon	Ted Russell
1966	Merv Neal	Barney Sneddon	Arthur Bevan
1967	Merv Neal	Barney Sneddon	Arthur Bevan
1968	Merv Neal	Barney Sneddon	Arthur Bevan
1969	Merv Neal	Barney Sneddon	Arthur Bevan
1970	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1971	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1972	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1973	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1974	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1975	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1976	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1977	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1978	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1979	Merv Neal	Milton Maybury	Allan Willoughby
1980	Merv Neal	Kevin Lynch	Warren Scott
1981	Merv Neal	Kevin Lynch	George Perring
1982	Reg Squires	Bruce Gill	Jeff McCloy/Milton Maybury
1983	Reg Squires	Bruce Gill	Jeff McCloy
1984	Jim Courtney	Bruce Gill	Paul Hayes
1985	Reg Squires	Bruce Gill	Ron Russell
1986	Ron Russell	Bruce Gill	Meg Russell
1987	Phil Anthony	Bruce Gill	Ron Russell
1988	Phil Anthony	Ian McMillan	Ron Russell
1989	Phil Anthony	Bill Campbell	Ron Russell
1990	Bruce Gill	Bill Campbell	Ron Russell
1991	Bruce Gill	Bill Campbell	Ron Russell
1992	Richard Kidd	Bill Campbell	Bruce Gill
1993	Richard Kidd	Kevin Ross	Ray Nunn
1994	Tony Shiels/Bruce Holt	Kevin Ross	Ray Nunn
1995	Allan Walters	Kevin Ross	Ray Nunn
1996	Allan Walters	Chris Paul	Ray Nunn

# **A Short Walk From The Long Paddock**

The hectare of playing field located between the eastern extremities of Maude Street and Merleview Street has been the venue for rugby league in Belmont for close on 60 years. Many dramatic and exciting moments have enthralled thousands of spectators who have flocked to the ground to watch famous players and memorable matches.

# PART XI

When Mathew Mote Cobbin left England in 1852 to settle in NSW he could never have imagined the land he would acquire would one day be the focal point of local sport. Years later when his son William took control of the estate very little had changed. The site was essentially an assortment of farmland and orchards surrounded by swampy marsh. A popular section of the estate on a Saturday afternoon during the early 1930's was the "Long Paddock" where the boys would gather for a cricket match and the girls would play vigorously.

The Cahill Oval we know today was part of the Cobbin estate and was only a short walk from the "Long Paddock".

In 1935 the Belmont Urban Committee bought the land for £200 with the concept of developing sporting facilities for the youth of the town. During the same period the ground was levelled with the surplus topsoil graded onto the surrounds. Initially the ground was anything but a perfect site for sport. Gradually, with the passing of time, the introduction of professional ground staff (Keith Nancarrow the first curator was appointed in 1958) and the considerable financial contribution of the Sportsman's Club the Belmont Sportsground became a recognised field.

After World War Two Belmont's main street was widened with the excess earth spread over the Sportsground's boundaries. In 1949 the Coal Board was responsible for filling in Lachlan's swamp which is where part of the Sportsman's Club now stands. Trucks would continuously convey chitter and mining waste from the John Darling Colliery until the area was refined. Around the same time (1949) the ground was improved with the filling in of the drain (which ran in front of the grandstand) on the western boundary. In 1959 the oval was completely reconstructed. 3500 cubic yards of ash was put down, then covered with 1250 cubic yards of the best Maitland soil.

For a brief period in the mid 1950's the oval was used for speedway meetings. On December 6, 1955 representatives of Lakes United, the Belmont Baseball Club, the Belmont District Cricket Club and the Belmont Urban Committee met with Belmont Speedway Promotions with regard to tapering the outskirts of the oval to enhance the car and motorbike racing. Today the remains of the track (mainly clay and chitter) still hinders drainage even though the track now is 45 centimetres below the surface.

Once the speedway had ended moves were made by Lakes delegates to replace the old "slat" fence with a picket variety (erected in 1957).

The first grandstand was constructed of timber and built around the mid 1930's. Then came a caretakers cottage followed by a canteen. This was an era when the only lighting for training was a single tower situated at the southern end. The cost of lighting was approximately £9 per season.

During the 1960's further development was made. In December 1962 tenders were called for the construction of a shed for the Archery Club with provision for a scoreboard and

canteen. The project, situated on the northern end of the hill was completed by early February 1963.

The next significant development came in 1968 when a grandstand, capable of accommodating 500 spectators, was built at a cost of \$81,000 (paid for by the Sportsman's Club). Soon after modern floodlighting was installed. Four poles (75 feet tall each fitted with 15 1500 watt floodlights) allowed Cahill Oval (as the ground was now known) the luxury of staging night football. The lighting has become so advanced that night cricket is played on a regular basis.

1973 saw the construction of a new scoreboard on the northern hill which was subsequently demolished in 1992 due to the earthquake of 1988.

The 1980's saw major modifications realised. In 1981 the picket fence was replaced with a pipe version and in 1987 the actual playing field was moved 18 metres closer to the grandstand. This necessitated "squaring off" and reurfing the western corners.

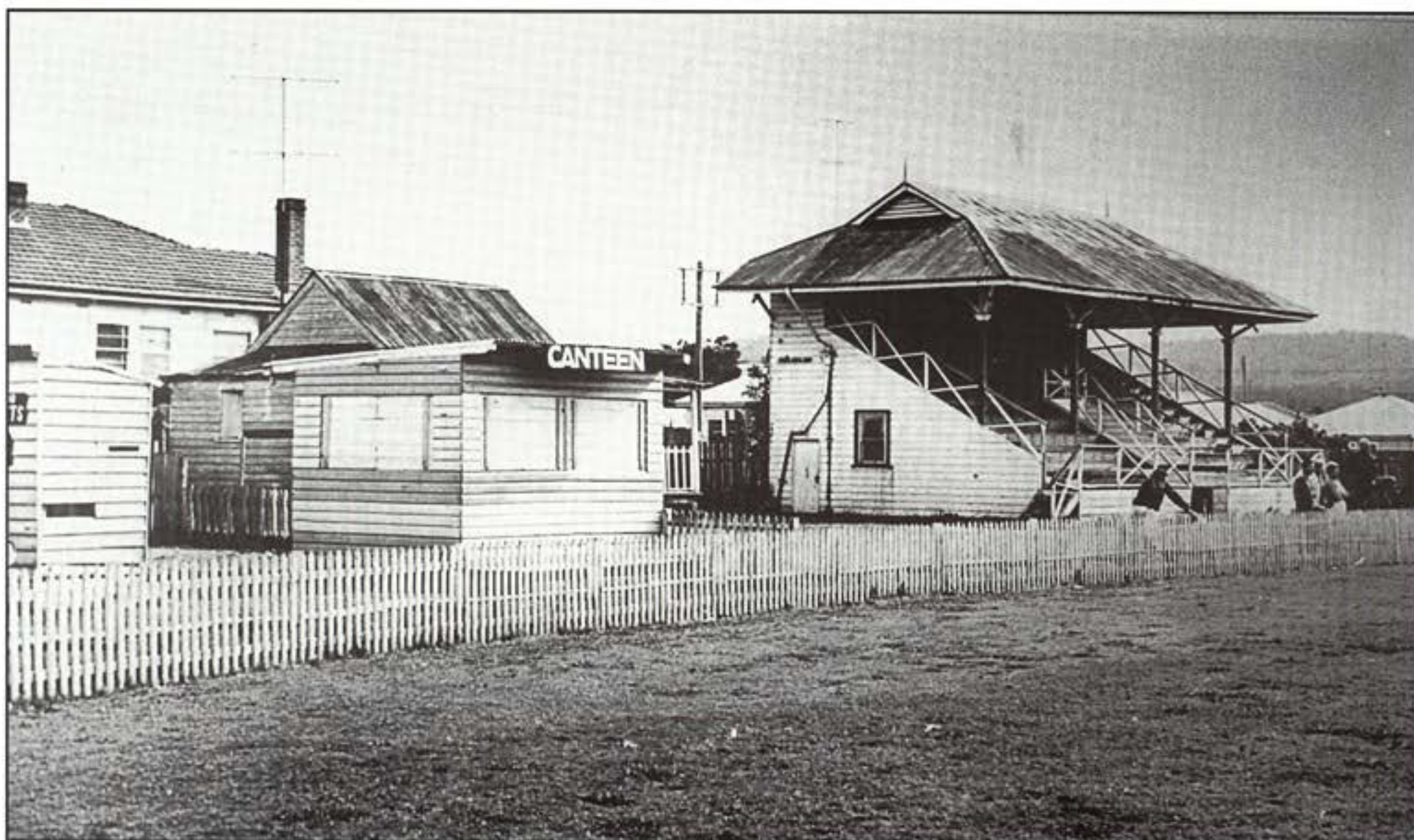
One question however can never be truly answered. What is the greatest number of spectators to attend a sporting fixture on this ground? In modern times the attendance record for any event goes to a cricket fixture played on January 13, 1993 between the Australian Country XI and the touring West Indies. Approximately 10,000 people crammed into Cahill Oval on that historic occasion. As for the greatest rugby league attendance is concerned it is really a matter of speculation. Older folk maintain the crowd which crammed into the Belmont Sportsground in September, 1950 has yet to be surpassed. On that day Maitland and Norths met in a play-off for fourth place in first grade (Maitland won 7-3), whilst a third grade semi-final was scheduled as the early fixture. (Central defeated Souths 16-7). New attendance and gate takings records were established.

Others will argue that tremendous crowds supported the Seagulls between 1968 and 1976. Suffice to say all those memorable occasions have tested the grounds capacity.

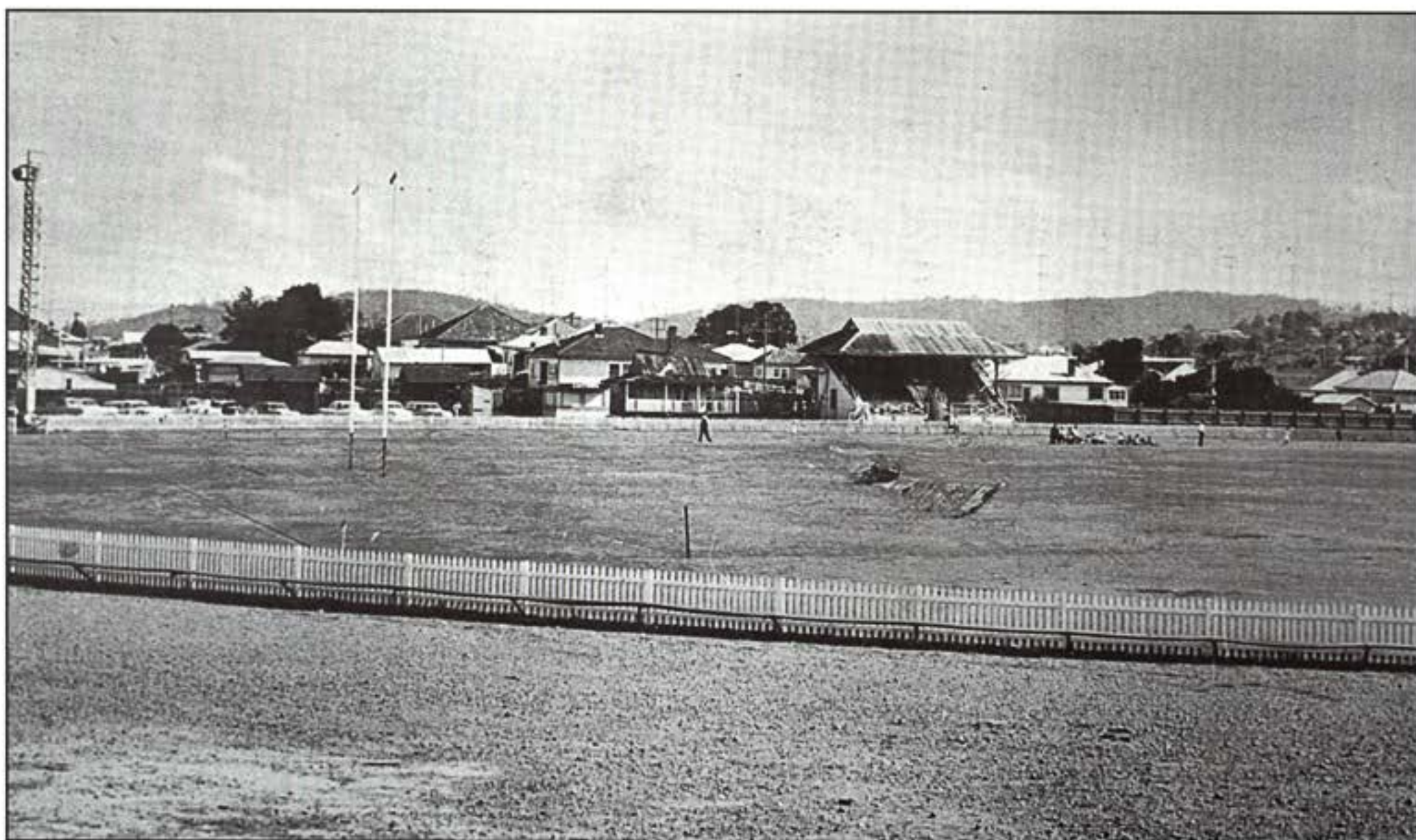
Although primarily known as the home of Lakes United Cahill Oval has played host to numerous sports over the years. Archery, Athletics, Australian Rules, Baseball, Basketball, Boxing, Cricket, Netball and Soccer have all shared in the use of facilities. Cahill Oval has also been the venue for a Rock Concert (1973), a Musical Extravaganza (1995/6) as well as numerous Marching Girl competitions.

The sporting complex of Belmont is unique. Apart from Cahill Oval the sporting bodies of the area have Barton One, Two, Three and Four Ovals, Lumsden Oval and Miller Oval to play their sport. If the first 50 years is anything to go by it will be difficult to imagine what form Cahill Oval will take by the year 2046.

This then is the story of Cahill Oval, a block of land that was transformed from farmland and orchards into a multi-purpose sporting venue with a reputation as one of the finest in the region.



*The original wooden grandstand flanked by the caretakers cottage, canteen and ticket box.*



*The Belmont Sportsground as it looked in the early 1960's.*

## **The Essentials**

Through the years Lakes United has been fortunate to have had many people willing to devote their time and expertise to the task of keeping players fit.

# PART XII

Through the years Lakes United has been fortunate to have had many people willing to devote their time and expertise to the task of keeping players fit. In the early years a conditioner was unheard of. It was the coaches' responsibility to ensure his men were ready to play. The "rubbers" were there to attend injuries and massage stiff limbs. These men had a thankless task on game day seeing only a minimal amount of football due to their commitments "in the shed". Many were ex-players who had themselves succumbed to injury. They just loved being involved with rugby league and the mateship that went with it.

The early Fishermen were indebted to that grand old man, George Plummer, who attended to their injuries since the entry into first grade football in 1947. Known for his miraculous cures it was little wonder he was christened "Mandrake". Freddy "The Rubber" Davis, trainer and pioneer, was another "get fit" man for many years. Arguably the most famous of all trainers was Gus Sheppard. After a successful playing career Gus turned his hand to treating injuries and getting players back onto the field. Kevin Cody and Kerry Shields are other notable trainers whose service to the club can never be forgotten.

The Ambulance men were the first trained people to take an active role in football matches. Older fans will remember the sight of an ambulance man, dressed immaculately, stretching out across the ground with his young assistant trailing several yards behind. Vic Pleash and Bill "Wallaby" Morris were popular ambulance men around this period.

Lakes United have been very fortunate when it came to club doctors. In the formative years Dr Neil Gordon looked after the

interest of Belmont men. Midway through 1968 Albert Paul adopted a professional approach by prompting Dr Denis Gordon to become Lakes club doctor. At this stage very few clubs had the luxury of their own doctor. Dr Gordon was a rugby man up until his involvement with Lakes but it was not long, however, before he became an significant member of the Seagull "family". Dr Phillip Robinson, through Dr Gordon, became an interested supporter so naturally found himself involved in a professional manner before long.

It was not until 1982 that a fully fledged conditioner was appointed. These were then men whose sole responsibility was to make sure everyone was in condition to play. Although not always the most popular figure in the club the conditioner was a necessary component of a coaches staff. Lakes have even gone as far as employing specialist strength and speed coaches. The most successful of these specialists was Gary Mears, who apart from enjoying success with Maitland in 1983, was a vital member of Lakes backroom staff during the mid 1980's. The game has come a long way since those early days when training involved a few laps around the oval followed by ballwork under a single floodlight.

It is a fact of rugby league that the back room staff have quite often been the characters of the club. So to anyone who has played the game for Lakes names like "Carrots", "Pip", "Tim the Bream", "Wazza" and "Mandrake" are sure to evoke a host of fond memories. These men and their like were indeed an essential component of the Seagull's first 50 seasons.



The famous cartoon that hung in the trainer's room for many years depicting the "gentle" touch of long time trainer Gus Sheppard.

**Life Members**

**PART XIII**

Life membership of any club is treasured by those who gain the honour. It is reward for years of service on and off the field of play. Listed below are the men and women who have received life membership of Lakes United Rugby League Football Club.

### LAKES UNITED RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB LIFE MEMBERS

1954 Allan Brotherton	1968 Allan Thomson	1984 Grahame Huggins
1954 Jim Marker		
1954 Ernie Richardson	1969 Neil Hincks	1986 Steven Piper
1955 Harold Gray	1970 Merv Neal	1987 Mrs Ella Campbell
1955 Russell Naughton	1970 Barney Sneddon	1987 Mrs Lee Grothen
		1987 Mrs Betty McKinley
		1987 Mrs May Mowbray
1956 Fred Davis	1971 Roger McDonell	1987 Mrs Jan Thomson
1956 Bill Prosper		1987 Kris Sazdanoff
1956 Jim Lonsdale	1974 John Brock	
	1974 Bruce Holt	
1957 Charlie Dixon		1989 Col Mathias
1957 Mrs June Foster	1975 George Mason	1989 Michael Pitman
1957 Arthur Holley	1975 Peter Ramplin	
1957 Mrs Laura Irving		
1957 Ivan Wolfe	1976 Ron Burgess	1990 Bruce Gill
	1976 Allan Dawber	1990 David Grant
	1976 Joe Marshall	1990 Peter Walsh
1958 Dai Irving	1976 Peter McKinley	
1958 Mrs Joan Judd	1976 Tony Shiels	1991 Mark Bates
	1976 Bert Silkman	1991 Ron Russell
		1991 Alan Tait
1959 Pat Cahill		1991 Bruce Whiteford
1961 Norm Hartney	1978 Wayne Cooper	
1961 Tom Sheppard Snr	1978 Dr Denis Gordon	1992 Stephen Brown
1961 Jack Smyth	1978 Paul Hayes	1992 Greg Haywood
		1992 Richard Kidd
1963 Jim Cowan	1979 Glen Golden	
1963 John Cunnungham	1979 Phil Newton	1993 Mrs Sue Kidd
1963 George Perring	1979 Frank Pepper	1993 Mrs Meg Russell
1963 Reg Stokes	1979 John Regan	1993 Mrs Lorraine Smith
1963 Fred Whiteland	1979 Allan Willoughby	
1964 Frank Penfold	1981 Les Jones	
1964 Reg Squires	1981 Kevin Lynch	1996 Kevin Cody
	1981 Tom Sheppard Jnr	1996 Tony Hill
	1981 Randall Smith	
1967 John Craig	1981 Paul Williams	
1967 Vernon Lee		
1967 Milton Maybury		
1967 John Wilkins	1982 Phil Anthony	
	1982 Peter Cootes	

### LADIES COMMITTEE LIFE MEMBERS

Ella Campbell	Lee Grothen	Gladys Marshall
Betty McKinley	May Mowbray	Pam Perring
	Jan Thomson	

### NRL LIFE MEMBERS

1959 Pat Cahill	1979 Tom Sheppard Snr	1989 Phil Anthony
1971 Merv Neal	1985 Bruce Holt	1992 Bill Campbell
1974 Allan Thomson	1985 Reg H. Stokes	1994 Kevin Lynch
		1996 George Perring

Information on life members was compiled from available minute books and interviews. A number of minute books are missing therefore the above list is not necessarily complete.

**For The Record**

# PART XIV

# THE RECORD BREAKERS (Competition matches only)

## INDIVIDUAL RECORDS

### SCORING

**Most tries in a match:** Lindsay Bowne - 8 vs North Newcastle - 18/6/88.

**Most goals in a match:** Peter Walsh - 13 vs North Newcastle - 18/6/88

**Most points in a match:** Peter Walsh - 38 - vs North Newcastle - 18/6/88.

**Most tries in a season:** Peter Cootes - 27 - 1976. (Premiership rounds)

**Most points in a season:** Peter Walsh - 186 - 1985. 13 tries, 67 goals (Premiership rounds)

**Most tries career:** Ivan Wolfe - 210 - 1951 to 1963.

**Most points career:** Russell Naughton - over 1500 - 1948 to 1962

### SERVICE

**Most games first grade:** Ivan Wolfe - 210.

**Most games all grades:** Neil Hincks - 237

## TEAM RECORDS

### SCORING

**Most tries in a first grade season:** 119 - 1996. (18 games - Premiership rounds)

**Most points scored in a first grade season:** 619 pts - 1996. (18 games - Premiership rounds)

**Most points scored in a season by any grade:** 746 pts - 1984 reserve grade. (18 games)

**Best defensive record in a first grade season:** 196 pts - 1968. (18 games). 163 pts - 1947 (16 games).

**Best defensive record in a season by any grade:** 100 pts - 1971 third grade. (18 games)

**Largest margin of victory in first grade:** 114-0 vs North Newcastle - 18/6/88.

**Largest margin of victory in any grade:** 138-0 vs North Newcastle reserve grade - 18/6/88.

**Largest margin of defeat in first grade:** 0-52 vs North Nelson Bay - 30/4/95.

**Largest margin of defeat in any grade:** 2-77 vs Maitland reserve grade - 11/8/62.

### GAMES WON

**Consecutive matches without defeat: First grade:** 19 (18 wins 1 draw)

After losing 10-4 to West on 3/8/85 first grade did not suffer defeat until beaten 22-20 by South on 26/7/86.

**Consecutive matches without defeat: All grades:** 31 (29 wins 2 draws)

After losing the final 15-10 to West (U/23's) on 5/9/82 third grade did not suffer defeat until beaten 19-8 by Maitland on 8/7/84.

### GAMES LOST

**Consecutive matches without victory: First grade:** 9

After defeating Toronto 36-7 on 29/6/62 first grade did not experience victory until defeating Macquarie 14-13 on 19/5/63.

**Consecutive matches without victory: All grades:** 18

After defeating Toronto 36-9 on 29/6/62 reserve grade did not experience victory until defeating Macquarie 16-12 on 4/8/63.

# LAKES UNITED

## SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR

## JUNIOR CLUB CHAMPION

Harold Gray	1959	
John Cunningham	1960	Allan Thomson
Russell Naughton	1961	David Charlton
Frank Penfold	1962	Allan Thomson
Reg Squires	1963	Noel Corkett
Allan Thomson	1964	Roger McDonell
Allan Thomson	1965	Phil Radford
Johnny Craig	1966	Michael Douglas
Allan Thomson	1967	Stephen Rapley
Allan Thomson	1968	Wayne Cooper
Des Kimmorley	1969	Richard Grice
Neil Hincks & Trevor Andrews	1970	Kerry McDonell
Neil Hincks	1971	Robert Crawford
Tony Shiels	1972	Glen Golden
Tony Shiels	1973	Paul Jones
Allan Thomson	1974	Michael Pitman
Tom Sheppard	1975	David Bowditch
Grahame Huggins	1976	Steven Lowe
Grahame Huggins	1977	James Holmes
Tom Sheppard	1978	Michael Bates
Tom Sheppard	1979	Stephen Brown
Paul Grob	1980	Michael Connelly
Paul Williams	1981	Michael Connelly
Robert Taylor	1982	Darren Loveday
Robert Taylor	1983	Rick Stone
Todd Riley	1984	Brett Botham
Robert Taylor	1985	Darryl Benson
Robert Taylor	1986	Luke Stansfield
Steve Walters	1987	Chad Emerton
Lindsay Bowne	1988	Scott McDonell
Peter Walsh	1989	Mitchell Maguire
Stephen Brown	1990	Adam Muir
Mathew Harris	1991	Adam Richardson
Shane Young	1992	Brendon George
Scott Carter	1993	Paul Jeffries
Kiel Emerton	1994	Danny Costello
Steve Murdoch	1995	Brock Mueller
Ewan McGrady	1996	Tim Lloyd

# THE POINT SCORERS

Point scoring achievements have only been recorded accurately since 1969. If earlier records had been kept names like Craig, Jenkins, Naughton and Wolfe almost certainly would have appeared.

## First Grade Premiership Matches

### LEADING TRY SCORER

1969	Peter Cootes.....	19 *
1970	Peter Cootes.....	18 *
1971	Peter Cootes.....	17
1972	Jimmy Campbell.....	15
1973	Eric White.....	12
1974	Mark Pauling.....	10
1975	Simon Booth.....	15
1976	Peter Cootes.....	27 *
1977	Steve Piper.....	7
1978	Peter Cootes.....	12
1979	Steve Lowe.....	20 *
1980	Peter Cootes.....	17 *
1981	Peter Cootes.....	15 *
1982	Steve Lowe.....	14
1983	Graham Beames/Rip Taylor.....	10
1984	Steve Lowe.....	13
1985	Mark Bates/Mick Sullivan.....	14 *
1986	Mark Bates.....	20 *
1987	Peter Walsh.....	9
1988	Lindsay Bowne.....	15
1989	David Harrington.....	10
1990	Brian Quinton.....	16
1991	Brian Quinton.....	18 *
1992	Jeff Walters.....	13
1993	Jeff Walters.....	10
1994	Jeff Walters.....	13
1995	Shannon Barwick.....	13
1996	David Smith.....	18

### LEADING POINT SCORER

Des Kimmorley.....	72
Alan King.....	108
Ron Burgess.....	133
Ron Burgess.....	99
Les Jones.....	102
Ron Burgess.....	130
Ron Burgess.....	177
Ron Burgess.....	148
Glen Sage.....	42
Neville Bagnall.....	78
Neville Bagnall.....	122
Neville Bagnall.....	115
Ron Burgess.....	50
Paul Williams.....	107
Graham Beames.....	90
Peter Walsh.....	136
Peter Walsh.....	186
Peter Walsh.....	141
Peter Walsh.....	134
Peter Walsh.....	98
Peter Walsh.....	76
Peter Walsh.....	96
Mark Mulligan.....	112
Jeff Walters.....	106
Dave Twomey.....	75
Jeff Walters.....	146
Daniel Lewis.....	79
David Smith.....	140

*Arguably the Seagulls best ever winger – Peter Cootes*

*Photo: George Steele*

----- The value of a try was increased to four points before the commencement of the 1983 season.

\* *Leading try scorer in NRL.*

# RESULTS AGAINST OTHER CLUBS

Have you ever thought "boy it seems like ages since we've beaten West" ?

Or... "we never seem to do well at Kurri" ?

Or... " we've certainly had the wood on Maitland lately" ?

Well, if you have, detailed below is an account of how Lakes United has acquitted themselves against the other nine NRL clubs (1947 to 1996). Post season matches have been included.

Club	Lakes Wins	Opposition Wins	Draws	Lakes Best Victory	Lakes Worst Defeat
Central Charlestown	69	29	0	76-4 1996	4-42 1963
Cessnock	53	50	2	38-5 1947 38-6 1994	2-49 1954
Kurri	68	37	2	46-7 1965	4-52 1995
Maitland	49	52	3	72-6 1996	5-46 1957
North Newcastle (1947-88)	52	34	0	114-0 1988	15-45 1957
North Nelson Bay (since 1989)	10	5	2	32-14 1991	0-52 1995
South Newcastle	72	31	2	66-0 1983	2-36 1961
Toronto (Macquarie) (since 1960)	51	20	4	55-0 1976	14-45 1981
Waratah Mayfield	58	39	6	66-0 1996	2-53 1970
Western Suburbs	49	66	4	47-4 1951	0-42 1977 10-52 1993



**Did You Know??**

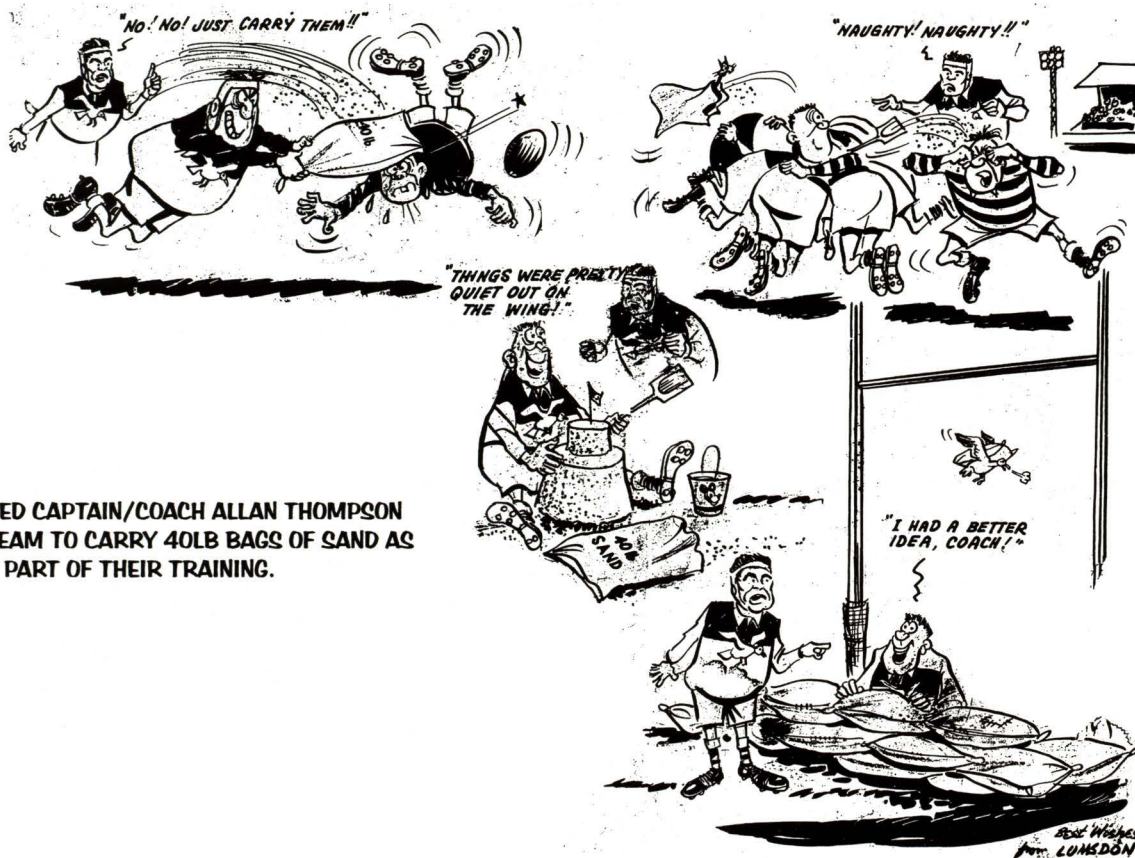
# PART XV

- ◆ League reporter Geoff Roach uncovered a deal whereby a referee accepted money from a Lakes player during a game at Belmont. He went even further by naming the referee as Noel Spohr and the player as "Babe" Heaney. It would never have happened in fact if it were not for the good eyesight of Heaney. He'd tackled a Waratah player and as he climbed to his feet spotted a crumpled pound note on the turf. Not wishing to lose such a prize he moved alongside Spohr in the first break in play and told him to "cop this". Spohr did a good job of minding the find but neither he nor Heaney ended up any the richer. Lakes committeeman Merv Neal claimed the note, explaining he had dropped it while putting out the boundry flags.
- ◆ *The price of football has changed somewhat since the 1950s. In 1953 a "double" would cost you sixpence. In 1957 the admission price was two shillings which skyrocketed to 2/6 the following season.*
- ◆ In 1957 women were not permitted inside the Sportsman's Club. After spending considerable time and effort painting the canteen Mrs Foster, Mrs Irving, Mrs Judd, Mrs Maybury, Mrs Prosper, Mrs Sneddon, Mrs Street Snr, Mrs Street Jnr and Mrs Stockwell (all members of the Ladies Auxiliary) had their drinks passed to them through a window of the club.
- ◆ *In 1956 training commenced as early as February 7.*
- ◆ In 1953 it was not unusual for Lakes to fill three "Double Decker" buses with supporters to travel to away games.
- ◆ *Tommy Knott was a busy man on game day. After selling doubles most of the day he would entertain supporters with his piano accordion after the match. (1957).*
- ◆ When "Thomo" toured with the Kangaroos in 1967 he received a weekly allowance of \$35 from the ARL.
- ◆ *Lakes first time-keeper was Charlie Derkene. Charlie was still involved with the club in the 1970's and even had another stint as time-keeper.*
- ◆ The 1974 season was full of excitement right up to the post match celebrations. Lakes player Les Jones and several supporters were lucky to be alive after a VW sedan careered up the front steps, crashed through plate glass doors and continued through a second set of doors into the main lounge. Police said a 17 year old youth had started his father's car outside the club to "warm the motor".
- ◆ *Dr Denis Gordon asserts that since his association with Lakes dating back to 1968, no player has received more stitches than long serving halfback "Sammy" Hincks.*
- ◆ It was reputed in 1970 that Lakes were the first league club to video its matches. Dr Gordon bought a "state of the art" video camera and with the help of another would mount the camera on top of Johnny Craig's old Holden (away games) or position the equipment in the press box (home games).
- ◆ *An interesting highlight of the 1956 season, as far as Wyong was concerned, was the winning of a grudge match 21-13 against Lakes. Former Lakes man Col De Lore was the Kangaroos captain/coach. It was a brutal encounter with numerous penalties and cautions.*
- ◆ In August 1959 several spectators were lucky to escape serious injury whilst attending the Lakes/Maitland fixture at No 1 Sportsground. The bell at the top of the press box fell almost 15 feet to the ground seconds after being rung for the last time that afternoon. The wire connecting the bell to its supporting bracket had snapped!
- ◆ *Lakes began their rivalry with Toronto in 1960. The first encounter ending in a 9 all draw. It was not until the second round of the 1966 season that the then Macquarie United enjoyed their first premiership success (14-9) over the Seagulls.*
- ◆ In fifty years of football it is difficult to conceive just how many points have been scored in first grade fixtures involving Lakes United. From the very first competitive match on April 19, 1947 to the final match of the 1996 season Lakes have scored in excess of 17,100 points whilst in the same period conceded approximately 13,300. These figures do not include semi-finals, finals or grand finals. For these matches the table reads 1,056 for and 1,054 against from 36 wins and 32 defeats.
- ◆ *Its always been desirable to start the season off on a winning note. Overall Lakes have a good record in this regard being successful on 30 occasions whilst finishing second 18 times. Only two matches involving the Seagulls have resulted in a draw, both away to North Nelson Bay (10 all and 12 all).*

- ◆ The year was 1976 and arguably Lakes best ever winger Peter Cootes scored an incredible 27 tries in the 18 premierships rounds. Only twice did Cootes fail to cross his opponents line. The record scoring sequence went as follows: Game 1: 1 try, G2: 1 try, G3: 1 try, G4: 1 try, G5: 1 try, G6: 0, G7: 4 tries, G8: 1 try, G9: 3 tries, G10: 1 try, G11: 3 tries, G12: 2 tries, G13: 1 try, G14: 3 tries, G15: 1 try, G16: 0, G17: 2 tries, G18: 1 try.
- ◆ Anyone associated with the "Thomson Era" is bound to have a story to tell about the demanding training methods he employed. One of the most unusual comes from Thomson's sister Carol, who's pet labrador "Bonnie" found the going a bit tough. If this was the case, Thomo would hoist the dog over his shoulders or tuck her under his arm and continue on his way. It must have been quite a sight for any motorist passing by to see a grown man lumbering down the road with a labrador draped over his shoulders!!
- ◆ Lakes stalwart, George Perring maintains in all his years selecting teams only twice has the three sides selected on the Tuesday night actually taken the field on the weekend. The first occasion resulted in a generous "donation" by third grade coach Peter Ramplin. After the teams had been picked "Rampo" stood up and announced that if these three sides took the paddock he would put a keg on after training . . . and would you believe that's exactly what happened!!
- ◆ Over the years many a player has come under the scrutiny of management for maybe enjoying one too many beers during the week. One such incident arose during the late 80's when three senior first graders were summoned before the committee to explain their behaviour. "It has come to our attention that between the three of you 88 schooners have been consumed after training this past week!" exclaimed an irate official. There was a brief moment of silence before one of the players, who went by the nickname of "Stanley", got to his feet and questioned "Does this figure include the regular Saturday morning session at the bowling club next door?"

**The English Dictionary defines SPONSOR** as: supporter, partisan, ally, backer.

From LURLFC point of view the above definition could not be more accurate. Lakes have been very fortunate to receive generous support from various companies and patrons since virtually day one. It was not, however, until 1978 that a major sponsor was commissioned. Pro Roll Bakery (78-79) was the first company to take advantage of naming rights to the playing strip. Since then Stock Distillery (81-82), Beechwood Homes (90-94), Challenge Holden (88-89), Macquarie Timber and Building Supplies (83-87), Tudor Poker Machines (1996) and the Belmont Sportsmans Club (1995) have all been fine supporters of Lakes United. It is rather ironic to note that the Sportsmans Club "logo" was finally displayed on the guernsey 40 years after initially providing financial assistance. Lakes United RLFC owe an enormous debt of appreciation to these major sponsors and indeed to all the business and individuals who have contributed to the clubs success.



LAKES UNITED CAPTAIN/COACH ALLAN THOMPSON ASKED HIS TEAM TO CARRY 40LB BAGS OF SAND AS PART OF THEIR TRAINING.

# Thanks for the Memories

## Naughton Shock Omission From State R.L. Team

Omission of Lakes United fullback, Russell Naughton, from the State team to visit Queensland this week was vari-  
ously described as a 'shock' and even as 'an insult to Newcastle  
Rugby League circles today as  
this season  
and to grade  
the

## LAKES WIN LEAGUE BOILOVER

### Maitland blitzed in semi battle

NEWCASTLE, Saturday.—In the great football shock of the season previously unbeaten minor premiers Maitland were defeated by Lakes United 11-10 in a punishing Rugby League semi-final at the Sports Ground today before a crowd of 20,000.

### STAR'S NEW ROLE

NEWCASTLE, Saturday.—The role of the star player in the Newcastle Rugby League semi-final was a new one for the first time in the history of the game.

### WARATAH WINS RUGGED UNION

NEWCASTLE, Saturday.—Waratah, showing the better condition in the second half, beat Merewether, 20 points to 15 in the Rugby Union semi-final at the No. 2 Sports Ground today and made the Grand Final.

### FAMILY

It appeared that Miss... of the... family...

## Back Batters Way To Lakes Victory

Lakes United forwards, in a big reversal of form, laid the way for Lakes to defeat the unbeaten minor premier Maitland, 11-10 in the first Rugby League semi-final at Newcastle Sports Ground on Saturday.

Each time the Lakes had to go back to the drawing board, it was because of the back-batters who were the mainstay of the team.

With the game in a hard-fought state, Lakes were able to score a try in the second half, which proved the difference between the two sides.

The Lakes' victory was a surprise to many, as they had been considered as underdogs in the semi-final.

## Wolfe Scores Six Tries To Top List

Six tries by Lakes United's brilliant winger Ivan Wolfe featured the Newcastle Rugby League series played on Saturday and made Wolfe top try-scorer for the season with 21-63 points.

Ivan Wolfe, the wing in the Newcastle side, scored six tries in the Newcastle Rugby League series played on Saturday. Wolfe's performance was a remarkable record for a player with only six of 15 competition games played, last nine, had two tries and has no chance of entering the semi-finals.

Wolfe's six tries in the Newcastle Rugby League series played on Saturday were a record for a player with only six of 15 competition games played.

## Car crashes into club bar



Belmont Sportsman's Club members clear debris left by the runaway car, after the freak mishap at Belmont Sportsman's Club early today.

## Death missed a Lakes United league star and several spectators by inches early today when a small sedan car crashed into the main bar.

The car crashed into the main bar of the Belmont Sportsman's Club early today, missing a Lakes United league star and several spectators by inches. The car was driven by a 17-year-old youth who had started his first driving lesson.

## Lakes Crushes West With Side Of 10

Lakes United made a spectacular start in the 1959 Newcastle Rugby League competition on Saturday.

Lakes United made a spectacular start in the 1959 Newcastle Rugby League competition on Saturday, crushing West with a side of 10.

## SEAGULLS FLY HIGH!

Lakes United captain/coach Peter Walsh has promised all year that his Seagull team of veterans and junior stars would be right on target to create history with the club's third successive major premiership.

### Three or the trot

The Lakes United team of veterans and junior stars would be right on target to create history with the club's third successive major premiership.

## WOLFE'S 200 th.

Lakes United winger Ivan Wolfe has reached his 200th try in the Newcastle Rugby League series.

Lakes United winger Ivan Wolfe has reached his 200th try in the Newcastle Rugby League series, a remarkable achievement for a player who has only been in the team for a short time.

## Lakes break long jinx to take title

Lakes United broke a long jinx to take the Newcastle Rugby League title on Saturday.

Lakes United broke a long jinx to take the Newcastle Rugby League title on Saturday, defeating Maitland in the grand final.

# Honours

## Club Champions

1959  
1979  
1983  
1985  
1986

## First Grade

1947	Major/Minor Premiers
1968 → 1974	Major Premiers ← Joint Minor Premiers-1968
1975	Major/Minor Premiers
1976	Minor Premiers
1984	Minor Premiers
1985	Major Premiers
1986	Major/Minor Premiers
1987	Major Premiers
1990	Minor Premiers
1996	Major Premiers

## Reserve Grade

1959	Minor Premiers
1976 → 1983	Major/Minor Premiers ← MAJOR PREMIERS
1984	Minor Premiers
1985	Major/Minor Premiers
1986	Minor Premiers
1987	Minor Premiers
1990	Major Premiers
1995	Major/Minor Premiers

## Third Grade - Under 23's

1959	Minor Premiers
1971	Minor Premiers
1978	Major Premiers
1983	Major/Minor Premiers
1985	Minor Premiers
1994	Major/Minor Premiers