

# CORDIES MY TIP FOR GRAND FINAL

The Northies to win? The Cordies to win? That is a question which has been kicked around all week in rugby union circles and only the supporters of these two grand final sides feel sure they have the answer.

For the fans without club affiliations, tomorrow's game is a real poser with surprisingly the logical favourite, RMC, being regarded by many as the underdog.

I make RMC the favourites on their record this season, 19 games played for only two losses, one against Norths and one against Wests. North's record is 13 wins, two draws and five losses from the 20 games played, including a semi-final and a final.

The overall record of these two old clubs also strongly favours RMC with 18 senior pennants since 1938 against only six by the Galloping Greens.

In the past decade, however, the Northies have been in the ascendancy, having taken part in six grand finals, winning three of them, including last year's premiership.

In the same period, the Cordies experienced a drought, their last premiership win being in 1962 when they defeated Canberra Royals in the grand final.

In this period the Corps XV also failed to make the semi-finals on four occasions, the only time in 35 years of organised competition in the ACT that they failed to do so.

## Much more purpose

This year has seen the College side restored to something like its former greatness, still playing its traditional entertaining style of rugby but with much more purpose.

To many times in recent seasons have the Cordies failed to produce the brilliant form of which they have been capable, much to the chargin of their coaches.

Not so this season, where they have been a model of consistency as their record shows.

The one big lapse was in the first round of competition matches when tomorrow's opponents, Norths ground them into the dust of Northbourne after winning an early battle of tactics.

Norths, that day, were magnificent, however, and I doubt whether any side

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### TEAMS

RMC		Norths	
Bob Brown	Fullback	Tom Anderson	
Greg Leary	Wingers	Damien Power	
Geoff Hay		Bob Kilby	
Steve Thornton	Centres	Gary Guy	
Steve Hodge		Gary Sly	
Joff Johnson	Pivots	David Fisher	
Alan McMuran	Halves	Mick Cuthel	
Paddy Ryan (c)	Number eights	Terry Payne	
John McNamara	Breaks	Greg Cartan	
Jeff Kassler		Bevan Leibke	
Peter Teys	Second row	Owen Butler	
Don Muirhead		Brian Lenthal (c)	
Eddie Antoniac	Props	Chris Lord	
Lew Gardiner		Mark Edmunds	
Peter White	Hookers	Ross Walker	
Referee: Ted Hancock			

in the competition could have held them out on the form displayed.

Still, despite past records, it is current form which counts when it comes to a grand final and the Northies once again have timed their run to perfection after a mid-season lapse.

## Great club spirit

The Northies, socially and on the paddock, are renowned for their great club spirit and have the ability to play to tactics laid down for them, tactics which do not always entertain but which win matches.

There can be no argument with this as we may

as well do away with competition on the sporting fields if the desire to win is not present.

The respective ability of these two grand finalists has been discussed frequently in recent weeks and it has been agreed that there is little between them.

What may count for something tomorrow is the ability to rise to the big occasion and we can be sure there will be plenty of support for both teams from the sidelines.

By now the coaches of both sides will certainly have decided upon their tactics and it will be up to the players to put them into action.

The respective captains, Paddy Ryan of RMC and Brian Lenthal of Norths are both capable foot-

ballers, who have the respect of the players under them and much will depend on their leadership tomorrow.

## Lenthal tough competitor

Lenthal is the more experienced and is a tough competitor who gives no quarter and seeks none.

With him is a team of players, of whom at least 12 to my knowledge, have had grand final experience.

Ryan is a great hearted footballer who leads by example and, like his giant fellow forward, Don Muirhead, will play himself to a standstill tomorrow.

Everything points to tomorrow's game being one to remember, a rousing finale to the 1972 season.

Most of the pundits appear to be going for Norths, mainly on the basis of their greater experience in finals.

Grand final atmosphere will be new to each and every one of the Cordies, at least as senior footballers, but they have the talent to upset their more experienced opponents.

The task of choosing the 1972 premiers is not an easy one. Norths came from third place to win last season and are confident of going one better this season to take out the premiership from fourth spot.

RMC are the front runners and in a much different frame of mind than when they were beaten soundly by Norths in a semi-final last year.

I reckon this is the year of the Cordies and my dollar will be on them at Manuka tomorrow.

## Referee

# GRAND FINAL PROMISES EXCELLENCE

By MICHAEL FOSTER

All the ingredients are available for an excellent match when Norths meet RMC in the grand final of the ACT rugby union season at Manuka tomorrow.

Both teams have peaked exactly as they should have and the match promises much both physically and tactically. Each club will be strongly supported because each has three teams appearing and each has a strong contingent of followers for its first team.

Both teams play enthralling rugby, RMC of the running, jumping, never standing-still kind, Norths of the kind which best suits their purpose, and that is to win.

Tomorrow's match will be a meeting of a young, fit, running team against a team of older, more experienced men who are more likely to seek a win through percentage rugby.

If Norths can control the game, and I think they can, they will win, not by much, but by enough. If, however, they make even one mistake and allow RMC to get on top the cadets will win handsomely.

Positionally RMC would have a slight edge with Bob Brown at full-back over Tom Anderson. Although Anderson has been playing steadily, he lacks Brown's panache.

RMC would also be stronger across the three-quarter line with pace and power to burn and suspect defence against them on Damien Power's wing, while at five-eighth the steady Joff Johnson would concede little to David Fisher of Norths as a player and nothing to anyone as a kicker.

Alan McMurrin has blossomed as the RMC half this season and played very well against Wests, but Mick Cuthel is also making 1972 a very good year and should give Norths an edge in opening attacks.

The RMC back row is fast and inventive and

would shade the Norths combination I would think while the battle within the wedges will be uncompromising even if it lacks the final attrition as between other clubs and these contestants. They respect one another, however grudgingly, and confrontations are face-to-face which is as they should be.

## Controlled rugby

It is here that I believe Norths will win the game, by playing the controlled rugby which won them the 1971 premiership and a place in this year's grand final from fourth spot.

Logic points to a Norths win but I for one would not be displeased to see the Cadets win a premiership for the first time in years. They have played good rugby throughout the season, carried a massive share of representative rugby and as my friend Paddy Ryan, the RMC captain said yesterday, when rubbishing me because I could not pick the winner: "It's now!"

The point is that it has to be now because the team loses its leading lights at the end of the year and if it is not now, then it may not be for another several seasons.

I hope it may be now, but do not think it will be.

Teams. — Page 20.

# GRUELLING GRAND FINAL PUTS GREENIES ON TOP

## NORTHIES THE CHAMPIONS

Tale of cadet and green horse



It was a stunt which drew applause and laughs from all at the rugby on Saturday. Firstly as the RMC band played before the main game, on marched a "uniformed cadet" (known to Northies as Michael "Chopper" Whitelaw, their cheer squad captain).



Then, also onto the paddock came North's famous Green Horse, which promptly gave chase to the "cadet".



The "cadet" began to stagger and trip as the Green Horse — North's club symbol — got closer and closer.



Finally, to laughter from all, the Green Horse "rucked" the Cadet off the paddock... and the RMC band, ever cool under pressure, played delightfully on.

Tremendous, colossal, herculean, prodigious, stupendous, titanic — at some time all these superlatives applied to the grand final in which Norths finished in front of RMC, 17 points to 13.

Norths became the 1972 premiers on Saturday — and worthy premiers they are — but RMC was not defeated.

Regardless who won or who lost in this grand final of grand finals at Manuka, neither side could be referred to as a defeated side.

In fact, both the Northies and the Cordies were the winners — they won the hearts and the acclaim of the big crowd for their great-hearted display of toughness and rugby skill.

It was a game to please the most finicky of rugby supporters because it had everything.

There was running rugby, brilliant solo dashes, the struggle for lineout ball, hard grinding rucks, a battle of tactics and, most of all, sheer guts.

With the scores tied at 13-all at the fulltime bell the 30 players had to turn around and continue for a further 10 minutes each way without a break to decide the issue.

The game started at five past three and finished right on five o'clock. That adds up to 115 minutes of furious effort with only a five minute break at the 40 minute mark.

It is hard to single out a player in either side for special mention as every man jack of them gave his best throughout the whole torrid two hours.

### Cuthel again winner's star

But once it was the magic of Mick Cuthel which swung the result Northwards.

Admittedly Cuthel especially strapped to support a sprained ankle before he went on, was beaten frequently in the first half by his opposite number, Alan MacMurrin.

But it was Cuthel who scored two tries against mighty defence and time and again he broke through to Cordie territory, turning defence into attack.

Cuthel's two tries on Saturday brought his season's tally to 14, second only to Damien Power's 17.

In three matches, a semi-final, a final and the grand final, Cuthel has scored 40 of North's 52 points, a grand effort.

It had frequently been mentioned during pre-match discussions that coach Mick Hickey's tactics could swing the match North's way, and there is no doubt that the Northies' switch of tactics in the second half did just this.

In the first half North ran the ball and kicked ahead but David Fisher's punts invariably found the safe hands of Cordie full-back Bob Brown. At half-time RMC had scored two tries to one to lead 13 to 6.

It was a different story in the second half when Fisher repeatedly turned the ball back into his forwards, where it became a test of strength between the two packs.

For almost the first 20

minutes of the second half Norths won lineout ball clearly with Owen Butler high above the pack, but it was taken down into grinding mauls and rucks.

### faltered flattered

In this period the pressure on the cadets was terrific but they never faltered in their task.

Every so often the Greenies would let the ball out and give their backs a run but there was no chink in the Cordie armour out wide.

The Cordies themselves continued to run the ball where possible and on occasions came within inches of getting a vital breakthrough.

The pre-match antics put the crowd in good humour when 'Cool Keys' Catling and the Mcquarie Mr. Moonshiners toured the oval on the back of a truck playing and singing Northie ditties.

Then that famous green horse — almost human in appearance — chased, caught and trampled to a "bloody" mess a 'Cordie' in battledress.

Norths kicked off in glorious spring weather with little wind — ideal conditions for entertaining rugby.

In the first few minutes the RMC was penalised for a late tackle of a North's player and this was the only such misdemeanour of the game.

In fact the absence of 'incidents' was mute evidence of how a game of rugby can be exciting and tough without players having to resort to unnecessary vigour.

Full credit must go to the referee Mr Ted Hancock for his handling of his first grand final. The whistle was used most judiciously.

### Leary scores first points

First points went to RMC after 15 minutes when MacMurrin cleared the ball quickly from a ruck to Leary, who forced his way over in the far corner.

Seven minutes later RMC went to a 7-nil lead following a penalty goal by Joff Johnson.

At 25 minutes Cuthel kicked high. Both North's winger Bob Kilby and RMC fullback Bob Brown tried to secure the bouncing ball but Butler seized it in his great hands and went over the line with real purpose.

Cuthel's conversion from the sideline was a beauty and Norths were only one point behind, 6-7.

Three minutes later Anderson made the mis-



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OWEN BUTLER, North's big Wallaby second rower, who scored the Galloping Greens' first try on Saturday.

take of dropping out from the 25 yard line on the full and RMC won the resulting scrum to clear to Leary, who charged over in a strong dash to score his second try.

Johnson came to lead Cuthel with a great conversion from the sideline to take his side to a 13-6 lead.

In the few minutes remaining before half-time Steve Hodge for RMC and Cuthel for Norths both came close to adding points.

Within two minutes of the start of the second half Cuthel scored the first of his two tries when he was helped over the line by his pack, Chris Lord being injured in the process and replaced by Peter Edwards.

### Penalty ties scores

Although he failed to convert his try Cuthel kicked a penalty eight minutes later to even the scores 13-all.

They stayed locked for the next 40 minutes, a period which provided some of the best rugby ever seen in local competition.

Norths played it tight, hoping for a Cordie crack which never came.

One wondered how the forwards could stand the constant grinding rucks without wilting.

At 30 minutes Butler started to give Cuthel clean ball in a sudden switch of tactics and the North's backs started probing, looking for the break. It still did not come.

Then the Cordies turned on some magnificent handling and the battle raged back and forth for five minutes without pause.

With time running out the pace started to tell with injuries — or was it sheer exhaustion — be-

coming frequent.

It is not possible to adequately put into words the mounting tension and excitement of these final few moments of the second half of this match.

Cuthel was injured, then Fisher in the first couple of minutes of extra time, 10 minutes each way without a breather.

Amazingly, Norths found reserves of strength and actually walked a scrum, putting the pressure on again.

### Matchwinner from ruck

The matchwinner came from a ruck close to the RMC line. Norths threw 10 men into the ruck and got the ball back to Cuthel who sold a dummy. Reaching forward, he just managed to ground the ball over the line. The conversion attempt just missed and Norths led 17-13.

Hodge was injured and replaced. RMC was still not beaten and first Steve Thornton, then Peter Teys, almost made it into the clear.

Norths tightened up and used every play in the book, taking time-consuming marks and forcing lineouts at every opportunity.

So ended a match which will go down in the record books as one of the best to be seen in the ACT.

Norths made it a double by beating RMC 4-0 in fourth grade, while RMC had some consolation in their 20-13 defeat of Wests in reserves.

Wests got into the picture with a 14-0 victory over Norths to take out the third grade premiership.

The season comes to a close next Saturday at Northbourne Oval when the grand final of the Waugh Cup and Canberra Cup will be staged.

## RUGBY UNION

# Greatest ACT grand final

By MICHAEL FOSTER

Norths 17 defeated RMC 13 after 20 minutes of extra time at Manuka Oval on Saturday in a match which will be recorded as one of the greatest grand finals in the history of rugby union in the ACT.

It will be enhanced by the passing of time so that in 20 years time rugby buffs who saw it will say convincingly: "Ah, but you should've seen the 1972 grand final. That was a great match". And they will be right.

From first whistle until the time, 100 minutes later, when RMC's Joff Johnson stayed motionless on all fours in his in-goal letting the final whistle seep through him, the game transfixed a very large and most appreciative crowd.

### Relentless

It was a game of grinding, relentless forward play, so totally committed as to allow for nothing but rugby, and of continuing probe and thrust and desperate defence in the backs.

It was a game in which every man gave himself entirely to his team, with the result that each man and both teams played far above previous capabilities.

During its 100 minutes spectators saw some finely devised and staged attacking movements, sometimes forwards or backs alone but often combinations of both, they saw desperate and technically correct tackling stop these movements dead, they saw fine lineout jumping and equally effective play smothering it and they saw rucking and scrummaging of a standard which had nothing to do with previously poor exhibitions of these important play phases throughout the season.

It was in fact a game of rugby that had a great deal for even the most discerning and was so totally absorbing that, for everyone but the players, the 100 minutes of play occupied what seemed like a normal Saturday match half of 40 minutes.

From the kick-off RMC applied the pressure that had been expected from Norths and prevented the 1971 premiers from imposing their play pattern on the game. The cadets won most of the loose ball and a lot from set play and as a result led 7-0 after 22 minutes from a blindside try by Greg Leary and a 50-yard penalty by Johnson.

Then Norths rallied and ground down the touchline with a display

of massive forward power with the rucks often augmented by some backs. They were held on the line but suddenly Owen Butler plunged into prominence and over the line to score. Mick Cuthel converted with a fine kick and it was 7-6 after 25 minutes.

Another three minutes passed and RMC was in control on the Norths 25-yard line. The cadets won the ball, dabbled right but swung left, Damien Power went for an intercept, missed and left Leary with the ball and the try-line clear. He scored and Johnson kicked a great conversion for RMC to lead 13-6.

Norths started the second half as they would have liked to play the game, in total domination, with the result that they pounded the line from the outset and the break came when Cuthel dived through a flurry of players for a try but missed the conversion.

RMC rallied briefly but Norths again assumed control and after 10 minutes forced a penalty which Cuthel kicked. The score was then even at 13-all and Norths it seemed must score but desperate attack met even more desperate defence, and indeed the Cadets broke out once or twice with fine concerted movements, only to be flung back.

At full-time the score was tied so the two periods of 10 minutes each way, without a break, began. Norths, tiring badly, managed to enforce control still and the opening was a repetition of the second half with the mistake being forced upon RMC after six minutes and Cuthel scoring from tightly controlled and powerful rucking maintained until the defence gave.

### Despairingly

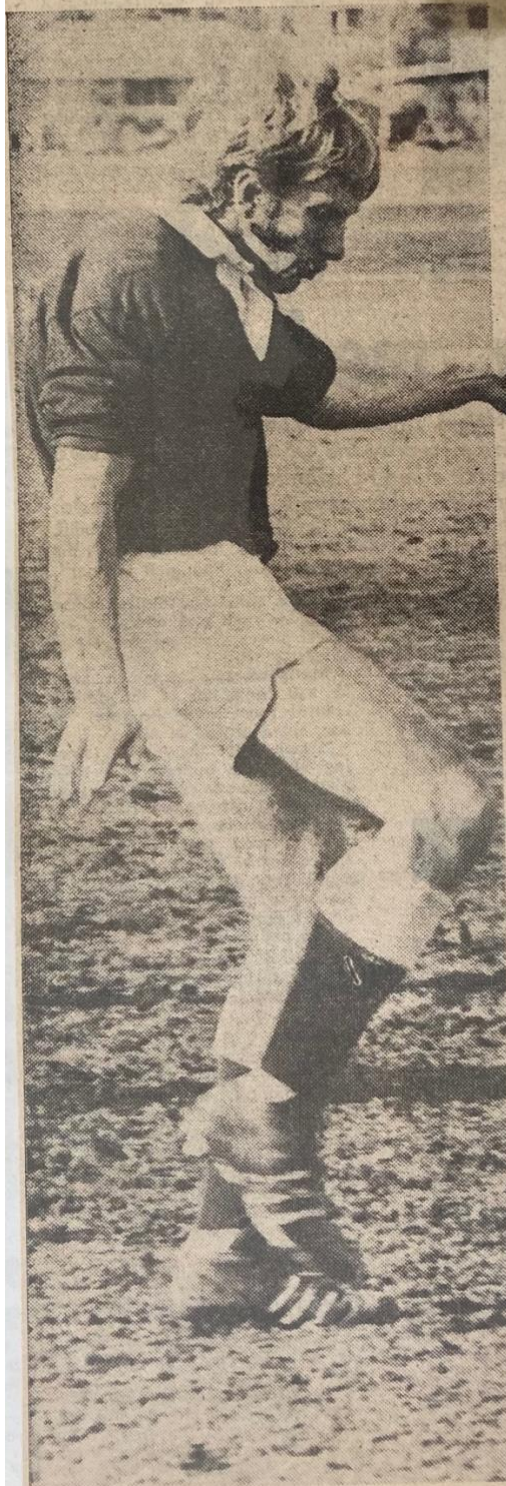
There was no further score although again RMC tried despairingly for the vital break as Norths closed the game as tight as a clam.

In such a match it is exceedingly difficult, and probably manifestly unfair, to name any one player as better than another, but if anyone deserves special mention it is the referee, Mr Ted Hancock. The game must be a highlight of his career and it reached the heights it did because of the type of control he exercised.

In other matches RMC became the reserve grade premier with a win over Wests 20-13, Wests won third grade 14-0 over Norths and Norths won fourths 4-0 over RMC.

Wallabies, Sydney rugby union match reports. — Page 15.

# PADDY RYAN VERSUS WILD MAN FROM WALES



RMC Dun-  
troon captain and  
Junior Wallaby  
Paddy Ryan  
(photo above)  
could be the  
Corps' match-  
winner tomorrow  
in the ACT  
rugby union  
grand final at  
Manuka.

But not if Norths — the other combatants — are right about their wild Welsh number eight, Terry Payne (photo left).

Paddy Ryan, also a lock, is regarded as one of the best counter-attacking forwards, particularly wide-out, in Australian rugby.

He has come good at just the right time for the Cordies, but Norths are looking to their import from Wales to contain Ryan.

And Payne has demonstrated in recent weeks all the mastery of the code one expects from a Welshman. Last week, in Norths win over Wests in the preliminary final, he drew thunderous applause from the grandstand for a solo dribbling rush of 30 yards — and that's not seen often in Canberra rugby.

And Payne has endeared himself to the funclubbers off the field as well as on. His enchanting Welsh accent and readiness to burst into song after an ale or two grooves in nicely with the Greenies reputation for enjoying life.

If he can deliver the goods tomorrow and contain the dynamic Ryan — a tall order for any rugby player — you can bet he'll be shouted all the ale he can handle on Saturday night.

● But Canberra News rugby writer Frank Ende believes that Ryan and RMC will not be contained by the Galloping Greens. You can read why on page 28.