



BALMAIN TIGERS RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

*Celebrating our Centenary
1908-2008*

The NSW Balmain Ryde-Eastwood Tigers Cinderella comeback came to an end on Sunday, after they were defeated by an impressive Manly Sea-Eagles side at Campbelltown Stadium. The Tigers started the match on top, making the most of small opportunities to set an early lead, however Manly came out too strong in the second half for them to keep up with and their composure started to crack, allowing the Sea-Eagles to head into the quarter finals with a 34 – 18 win.

If ever there was a game where the 2 half's were opposite, this was it. The game started off with the big hitters from Manly giving no quarter to the Tigers. From the kick off the Sea-Eagles kept them pinned within their half and pushed deep to the Tigers line. However as it has been all year, the Tigers defence never looked as strong as when they are tight on their own line.

Although Manly had much more possession, it was the Tigers who were used the ball most efficiently. Balmain spent little time in Manly's half, but managed to score 3 times before half time.

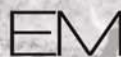
The first try came when Gavin Cowan powered 50 metres down the wing, throwing off 2 defenders to put the Tiger's 30 metres out. Ryan Tandy then gave a solid hit up, getting the ball midfield to Jarred Farlow who stepped inside to go himself, and after bouncing off one Manly defender managed to score against the posts, 6 – 0. Farlow and Tandy again made a brilliant combination 10 minutes later in the 26th minute, when Farlow stepped inside and flicked an offload to supporting Tandy 15 metres out, who carried over to score.

Ryan Tandy was definitely the man to watch. His hit ups and smart attacking always got his nose through the line, and his strength was hard to match, when in the 35th minute he broke the Manly line with 4 on his back for 20 metres, before offloading to Brendan Vengoa who beat the last defender to put the Tigers 18 – 6 going into half time.

But that was where the magic stopped for the Tigers. The second half was a complete Sea-Eagle white (and brown) wash. It took Manly only 4 minutes to bring the score to within 2 points, and only 4 minutes after that for them to take the lead.

The Sea-Eagles looked a completely new side, as their attacking was ferocious, grinding up metres through their forwards, then using their wing and centre's to take the points.

Although the penalties were harsh against the Tigers it seemed to have little real bearing as Manly took 28 unanswered points in 20 minutes. Then once they had this controlling lead, they proceeded to play solid, methodical football grinding out the minutes and not letting the Tigers have an opening.



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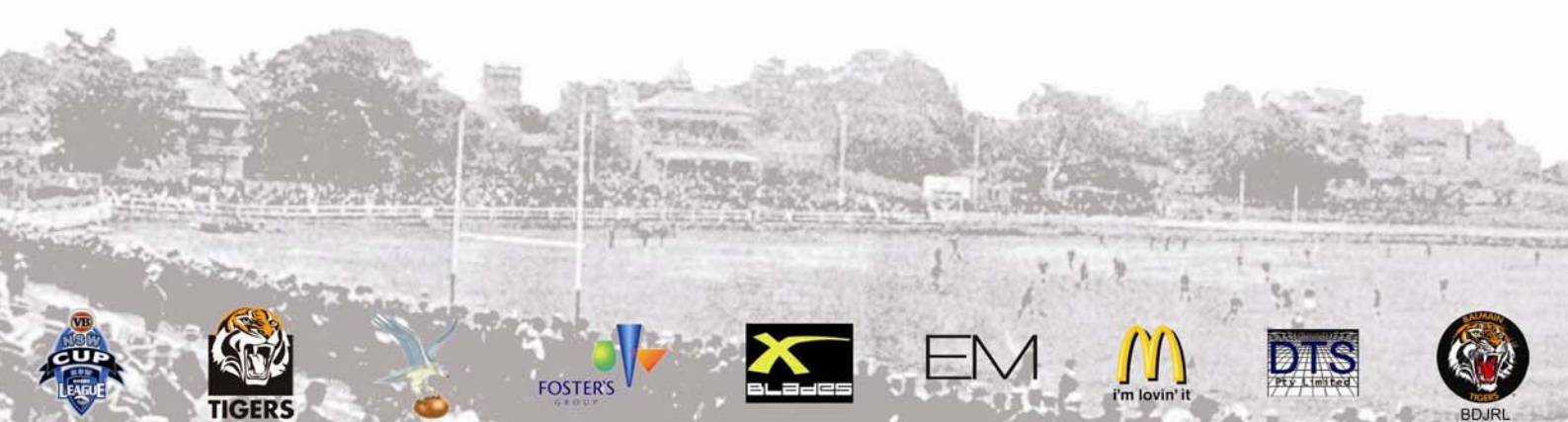


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It has been a valiant effort for the Balmain Ryde-Eastwood Tigers in the past few weeks. They came under criticism for much of the competition, with questions raised about the structure of the team. However Coach Paul Fletcher stuck it out, and worked with each player individually and the result ending in them not only making the top 8 after being bottom of the table, but then defeating the minor premiers.

By Ryan Cunningham



BDJRL

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