

Despite efforts during the off season to secure a home ground, Merrylands were again forced to face another season without a home base for playing and training in their third season of operation.

This problem was proving to be a handicap for the Club and not only from the aspect of playing all matches without the debatable psychological advantage favouring home teams.

Because of the nature of the Sydney Sub-District competition which is conducted Sydney wide and not confined to various areas or local competitions (e.g. - Parramatta District, St. George District, Northern Suburbs District, etc.) teams from as far afield as Palm Beach, Cronulla, Bondi and the lower Blue Mountains may all be drawn in the one cup or grade. This means of course that teams are forced to travel great distances during the season to fulfil their match commitments and this may impose a very exacting travel agenda.

With a home ground this is restricted to eight or nine times a year a team must travel while enjoying the advantage of a home town match on the other eight or nine occasions. However, if a team lacks a home ground, this could involve upwards of nearly twenty weekends a year that a team may be forced to travel and this situation makes it difficult to attract and retain players and form a solid corps of supporters, for many potential players may be lost to the Club as they are not prepared to undertake the extensive travel involved and prefer to seek out other teams advantaged with a home ground.

This is altogether an unsatisfactory arrangement for such affected Clubs and Merrylands was one of these, yet this was the situation that had to be accepted and overcome it the Club did.

The majority of the previous seasons players were retained and to them were added several new players such as Rodney Osborne, John Chapman, Bill Penman, Paul Brown, Bob Absalom and Dennis Corliss with the team once again being Captain/Coached by Bob Henderson while Bob Austin became the third team manager in as many seasons, replacing Peter Harding.

Merrylands were once again graded in the Barraclough Cup, this time being placed in the "D" Division, and the Club were once again successful during the season winning twelve matches, drawing one and losing five to finish on 25 points in equal third position with Dundas.

BARRACLOUGH CUP - "D" DIVISION - 1970

Westmead	34
Narrabeen	27
Dundas	25
Merrylands	25
St. Augustines Old Boys	23
Blakehurst	18
Roseville	11
St. Leos Old Boys	2
Northmead - withdrawn	-

Bye Included.

As with previous years Merrylands had finished in the top four and seemingly qualified for one of the four semi-final positions, however they were to be eliminated from premiership contention under rather controversial circumstances following a belated decision by Sub-District officials to alter the play-off system to be adopted in the semi-finals.

Training throughout the week preceding the semi-finals the Club was dismayed to find out when enquiring on ground allocations on the night prior to the anticipated match that for some unaccountable reason the Sub-District body had decided to accept the top three teams only from the "D" Division of the Barraclough Cup and force them to play off in an elimination series.

Although Merrylands had finished equal third, their points for and against difference -13- worked out to be less than Dundas and so the Dundas Club were awarded the third position in the revised semi-final system.

Appeals and protestations to the Sub-District body by Merrylands Club officials were unsuccessful and the Club was removed from the list of Premiership contenders for the year.

Nearby Westmead Club, who lost only one match all season, were eventually to emerge as Barraclough Cup Premiers which did not surprise as they had inflicted a very heavy 22-3 defeat on Merrylands during the season, the Club's heaviest ever loss to that stage.

With the retirement of Terry Coates at the end of the previous season, Captain/Coach Bob Henderson assumed the responsibility of goalkicker and topped the point scorers for the season while once again Keith Weatherhead and Russel Donnelly, along with Col Davies, figured among the top try scorers for the year.

Throughout the season the Club managed to score a relatively low 86 points for while conceding 73 and were one of the one hundred and twenty eight teams to contest the fifteen divisions of five cups - Kentwell, Whiddon, Burke, Judd and Barraclough.

Incidentally at the end of that season Dundas, who were financially supported by their own licenced Club, were promoted to the Sydney second division football competition.