

Despite his fine record of the three previous seasons Bob Henderson was surprisingly replaced as Coach for the 1972 season by former Rugby League player Mick Organ who had basically the same team as the previous year to work with, re-inforced by new players Joe McCabe, Mick Carr, Peter Brennan, Brian Goff, Kevin Clayton, Dave Gerada, Bob Sutton and Joe Caschia.

The Club's prospects also improved with a switch in training venues to King Park, Merrylands where floodlighting allowed the team to prepare for their matches under much better conditions than those experienced over the previous three seasons with full scale team workouts now possible without the recurrent handling problems that had affected them in the past.

Bob Austin was also elected to the Presidency for the first time that year after serving as Vice President the previous year and he was to occupy that position for the remainder of the first decade, while Jack Harding commenced his first of five consecutive years as team manager that season.

The Club also altered its jersey design once again although still retaining the same registered Club colours, replacing the all gold jersey with a gold jersey with two black vee's.

Although replaced as Coach Bob Henderson still retained the captaincy of the Merrylands team which was graded in the Grose Cup competition for the season.

This side was to win twelve matches, draw two and lose two to finish the competition rounds on 26 points in second place on the South Harbour, four points behind Smithfield who were overall Grose Cup minor premiers.

Some of the match highlights during the season were a 26-4 win over Drummoyne, a 22-9 win over Barker Old Boys and wins against South Carlton/Cronulla by 17-4 and 30-9.

GROSE CUP - 1972

<u>SOUTH HARBOUR</u>		<u>NORTH HARBOUR</u>	
Smithfield	30	St. Ives	26
Merrylands	26	Roseville	23
South Carlton/Cronulla	17	Eastwood	19
Scots Old Boys	12	St. Leos Old Boys	15
Drummoyne	8	Barket Old Boys	8
Blue Mountains	6	Timor	2

Meeting South Carlton/Cronulla in the semi-final, Merrylands seemed assured of progressing to the final untroubled considering their two heavy defeats of that Club during the competition rounds, the last only three weeks previously. However, aided by good fortune and some fine goal kicking by Bob Henderson, Merrylands only managed to get up within the last few minutes to win 13-10 with Brian Goff scoring Merrylands sole try to their opponents two.

The following week Merrylands opposed Smithfield in the South Harbour final at Woollahra Oval and after previously winning 7-3 and 13-4 during the season Smithfield made it three in a row with a 6-0 win in a tryless match and terminated Merrylands challenge for the year.

The team that represented Merrylands that day was :-

M. WHITTAKER, T. CHAPMAN, K. WEATHERHEAD,
R. SUTTON, D. GERADA, B. GOFF, M. CARR,
P. BRENNAN, R. HENDERSON, K. CLAYTON, R. REES,
P. HIDDLESTONE, I. MACKAY, J. McCABE, J. MURPHY.

During the season Merrylands also competed in two knock-out competitions without success. Firstly they contested the Smithfield Rugby Union Club's Annual Keg Cup competition and were eliminated in the first round. Later in the season they entered a side in the Holroyd Centenary seven-a-side competition where they were eliminated in the second round by Parramatta.

This year also saw Merrylands undertake their first end-of-season trip for players and officials, an event that has since become an annual fixture, with over twenty members travelling by coach to Nelsons Bay for the weekend.

At the presentation night held later that year, again at Merrylands R.S.L. Club, more than one hundred people attended and saw best and fairest trophies presented to John Chapman, Bob Henderson and Kevin Clayton.

Throughout the 1972 season Merrylands scored 188 points and conceded 100, with Bob Henderson once again being top point scorer with 67 points. John Chapman was top try scorer for the year with nine, four more than Brian Goff who was second with five.

Merrylands was one of one hundred and forty eight teams entered in Sub-District competition that year, competing in twelve cups - Kentwell, Whiddon, Burke, Judd, Barraclough, Stockdale, Blunt, Richardson, McLean, Grose, Walker and Clark.

MERRYLANDS R.U.F.C. - 1972

Back Row : J. Harding (Manager), J. Murphy, B. Goff, J. Keating,
J. Chapman, I. McKay, P. Hiddlestone, R. Rees, R. Keyes,
R. Henderson, M. Organ (Coach).

Middle Row: A. Chapman, M. Whittaker, D. Gerada, M. Carr, R. Sutton.

Front Row : K. Weatherhead, K. Clayton, P. Brennan, R. Osborne,
R. Absalom.

