

Regardless of any successes that may have been achieved on the playing fields at any stage during the first ten years, 1975 would surely rate as Merrylands Rugby Union Clubs most progressive year ever during that period with a very creative and industrious committee following on from the previous year's committee and bringing a more professional touch to the administration of the Club's affairs and introducing many revolutionary ideas.

The committee, which comprised R. Austin, J. Meyer, C. Campbell, M. Whittaker, J. Bennett, I. Persic, C. Falzon, J. Murphy and R. Galea, took the most positive step in the Club's history with its decision to expand the Club from one team to two and make a dual challenge for its initial premiership honours in the Metropolitan Sub-District competition.

Furthermore, the Club Committee was also successful in acquiring a home ground for the first time since 1968 when negotiations with Holroyd Municipal Council and Merrylands Junior Rugby Union Club resulted in the Club securing the use of Central Gardens Oval for the season.

This was followed up with the designing of a Club emblem - a wolf's head - which was introduced into the Club and appeared on a cloth badge on the Club's jersey as well as on the Club's metal badges and letterheads for all official correspondence.

Other significant innovations introduced that year included the publication of a Club magazine - "The Barbarian", the hiring of buses to transport players and supporters to all away matches, the organising of the first annual Christmas party for members and their children, and arising from all of these a greater awareness of the need to supplement the Club's income, necessitating the exploration of other avenues of raising funds. Thus colour television raffles, five hundred cans of beer raffles, one hundred clubs, poker machine cards and men's smokes were introduced to help boost Club finances which became especially necessary with the increase from one to two teams and a subsequent rise in player registration fees, team affiliation fees and doubling of equipment expenses.

That year also saw the wives and girlfriends of the players band together to form their own committee and organise a kiosk at all home

games, the profits of which were directed back to the Club itself.

Dave Minett in his second year at the helm had charge of both teams while Jack Harding handled the management of both sides in his fourth term in this position.

New players to join the Club included Warren Walsh, John Hirst, John Jessop, Bob Sisinni, Graeme Scherf, Brian Davis, Tom Gablonski, Terry Swan, who rejoined after a six year absence, and later in the season Denis Robson and Bob Dengate.

The Merrylands' sides were entered in the Jeffrey Cup and Noice Cup for the season with the first fifteen captained initially by John Pearson and later by John Jessop, and the second fifteen captained by various players, and for the first few matches there were ample players to fill both sides with respectable performances coming from both teams. However, as the season progressed the playing ranks dwindled and before the competition had advanced very far it became obvious that the Club would have to struggle to continue fielding two sides. The idea of withdrawing one side was at no time entertained, with the committee agreeing to persevere with two teams regardless of results and so it became necessary for players to double up week after week to fulfil match commitments. The players responded to this challenge and consequently the Club was able to contest all but one match over both grades during the season.

The second fifteen in their initial season failed to reach the semi-finals, being placed well down in the competition table, however the first fifteen continued on with the fine record of the Club and finished in third position behind minor premiers Matraville and second placed Maccabi.

Along the road to their semi-final berth the first fifteen scored a resounding 48-4 win over Scots Old Boys which still stands as a Club record. Among other impressive performances during the season were a 20-0 and a 16-6 win over Armenians, an 18-0 win over Oak Hill, a 13-6 win over North Sydney and a 6-6 draw with Matraville.

JEFFREY CUP - 1975

Matraverse	25
Maccabi	22
Merrylands	19
Knox Old Boys	16
North Sydney	13
Oak Hill	13
Armenians	6

NOICE CUP - 1975

Matraverse	22
Knox Old Boys	21
Armenians	21
Oak Hill	17
Maccabi	12
North Sydney	11
Merrylands	6

\* Scots Old Boys were withdrawn from both cups.

With the Jeffrey and Noice Cups not being contested on a North Harbour-South Harbour basis Merrylands met fourth placed Knox Old Boys in the minor semi-finals, a team to whom Merrylands had fallen on both previous occasions they had met during the season, losing 10-0 and 16-3 in the premiership rounds.

In a tight semi-final the match finished at 3-3 with the points coming from a penalty goal apiece and Merrylands were declared the winners on the basis of finishing the higher of the two teams on the premiership ladder.

However, in another controversial incident reminiscent of five years earlier, Knox Old Boys protested to the Sub-District Association that the match should have gone into extra time and therefore demanded a reply. This was, of course, a totally impractical suggestion and the matter was left unresolved until the following Saturday when both teams arrived at the scheduled ground for the final against Matraverse, losers of the previous weeks major semi-final.

Despite discussions between the Clubs concerned no compromise was reached until the duly appointed referee arrived and declared he had been sent to referee a match between Matraverse and Merrylands, and so despite protests by Knox Old Boys' Officials, Merrylands took the field to contest the final.

Handicapped by injuries, Merrylands were outplayed and well beaten by 17-0 after trailing 7-0 at half time.

The team that represented Merrylands that day was :-

M. WHITTAKER, C. HUGHES, B. GOFF, R. SUTTON,  
I. PERSIC, J. JESSOP, R. SISINNI, J. PEARSON,  
C. FALZON, T. SWAN, J. HIRST, W. WALSH,  
D. MINETT, T. GABLONSKI, K. STANLEY.

In addition B. Bowie and J. Murphy took the field as replacements.

During the 1975 season Merrylands Jeffrey Cup side won nine games, drew one and lost four while scoring 167 points for and conceding 128.

Merrylands Noice Cup side won three matches and lost eleven while scoring 54 points for and conceding 147.

Chris Hughes finished the season with 50 points to become top point scorer from Brian Davis with 39 points, while Charlie Falzon was top try scorer with seven, three clear of John Jessop with four touchdowns.

During the season Merrylands Rugby Union Club also incorporated the Robert Henderson Memorial Trophy, named after the Club's former Captain/Coach, into its best and fairest awards following the demise of the Apex Batteries Rugby League team, for whom Bob had also played, co-inciding with the expansion of Merrylands into a two team Club.

Award winners at the annual end of season presentation night held in October were Bob Sutton, John Pearson and Graeme Scherf in the Jeffrey Cup and John Sainsbury, Chris Hughes and John Murphy in the Noice Cup.

John Pearson became the third player to have his name inscribed on the Rodney Osborne Memorial Trophy while John Sainsbury became the first player to have his name inscribed on the Robert Henderson Memorial Trophy since its adoption by the Merrylands Rugby Union Club.

During the 1975 season Merrylands were one of seventy three clubs fielding one hundred and sixty teams in fifteen cups - Kentwell, Whiddon, Burke, Judd, Barraclough, Stockdale, Blunt, Richardson, McLean, Grose, Walker, Clark, Jeffrey, Noice and Farrant.

MERRYLANDS R.U.F.C. - 1975

Back Row : R. Bland, D. Bouchier, J. McCabe, I. Persic, J. Murphy,  
J. Jessop, M. Whittaker, W. Bowie, W. Walsh, D. Minett  
(Coach), R. Sisinni, J. Hirst, B. Goff, K. Stanley,  
J. MacDonald, J. Pearson, J. Harding (Manager), J. Meyer.

Front Row : C. Hughes, C. Campbell, R. Sutton, C. Falzon, T. Gablonski,  
T. Swan, R. Austin (President).

