

NORTHS' 17-7 WIN OPENS UP SEMI RACE

By ALAN CLARKSON
The battle for the Rugby League semi-finals came dramatically to life at the S.C.G. yesterday.

North Sydney gave the "kiss of life" to the final premiership rounds when they beat Manly-Warringah 17-7.

With their once-depleted pack of forwards taking control of the game in the second half, Norths played some bright football to finish with three tries to one.

Norths' win yesterday telescoped the teams and they are now in fifth place, only a point behind the fourth team, Manly.

Had Norths lost yesterday the semi-final four would have been practically set—but now the last place at least is there for the taking.

On yesterday's form, Norths could be just the team to grab that fourth spot.

What an amazing transformation in the Norths team in the short period Roy Francis has been in control.

There is no wizardry about it. Norths are simply playing good, constructive football.

Same rut
In recent years, had Norths been in the position they were yesterday, desperately wanting a win to have a chance for the semi-finals, they would have fared up like a pack of curds.

Yet, with virtually the same group of players, Norths yesterday went out to win on Manly and finished well on top.

"We thought Manly would try and play it up the middle so we planned to take them on there," Roy Francis said. "We killed them in the middle and we took it from there," he added proudly surveying his happy players.

Manly, whose form has been pretty impressive lately, were back into the same old rut, making the same old mistakes and with the same result.

As far as constructive play went, the Norths forwards gave Manly a lesson.

The Norths pack played as a solid unit. They moved the ball intelligently, switching play and backing up the man with the ball, as well as tackling ferociously.

The Manly forwards ran with hope—they ran and hoped something would narrow it.

It would be an interesting exercise in mathematics to one day count just how many times those Manly



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John Fairs proved a big-hearted trier.

Fairs suffered a gashed head, that required three stitches after the match, yet did not spare himself in the hard work.

Manly's John McDonald finished the match with a broken nose and a "cooked" thigh.

North Sydney 17 (10 a.m. try, 2 r, 2 p, 10 c) vs. Manly-Warringah (10 a.m. try, 2 r, 2 p, 10 c) at S.C.G. Crowd 10,000.

scored tries within four minutes of each other. Ambrum's try, came after second-over Warren Chatfield beat off Alec Tennant's tackle and sent the big winger careerling for the corner, where he went through Bob Butty's tackle to score.

Then McDonald fired out a long pass to Gough four minutes later and the speedy Manly winger scored a determined try wide out.

The clincher came 15 minutes from the finish when Irvine somehow scampered around three defenders (Ward, Pounder and Butty) to score a grand try and Norths led 14-7.

Just to seal the match Ambrum raced 80 yards for his second try after Norths won a scrum near their own line.

The ball went the blind, Ambrum pulled away from Ward and raced through to score.

In a hard-working pack Chatfield and lock-forward John McDonald were outstanding while half-back

twice in the first 15 minutes Fulton made long breaks but the strong Norths defence was able to smother these half chances.

For 15 minutes the scores were locked 9-7, although Norths always looked the better and more capable side.

Ambrum again

This made it 7-5 and the Norths fans were on their feet screaming when Chatfield again sent Ambrum racing for the corner but this time the winger put his foot into touch.

Manly had a few moments in the second half, but they all centred around Fulton, who valiantly tried to put some life into his team.

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RON COOTE

South Sydney, Rugby League team, went for a quiet spin at Redfern yesterday - and were nearly run down by Western Suburbs.

Souths won 16-9 in a really "slow shave."

They didn't overtake Wests until nine minutes from the end when it looked like Wests, hit by injury and redoubled, might pull off a through the gap look.

Red-headed Barry Bryant thought it was Christmas the way the "Gentlemen" Souths forwards let him run almost at will.

If Wests had more players backing up the man with the ball in the first half, they might have scored a couple of tries.

Instead, they were kept to one try—a neat effort by winger Peter Flinders, who had no real opposition as

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Hot and cold tag confirmed

By COL PEARCE

All Norths' forwards tackled in first-class fashion, with John McDowell and Noel Cavannah outstanding.

Karlsson was brought into the attack by Graham Williams by using the kick over the lead.

George Ambrum had a good game and scored two tries but was helped on his way by one of them by some inept tackling.

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BALMAIN HALF-BACK IN DOUBT

By ROD HUMPHRIES

RUGBY League competition leaders Balmain have match-winning half-back David Bolton in considerable doubt for today's "needle" match against Penrith at Penrith Park.

Bolton has flu and will decide this morning whether to play.

If he withdraws, reserve-grade half-back John McCarty is certain to be the replacement.

Penrith's effort against North Sydney last Sunday was atrocious, but they seem to always reserve their best football for Balmain.

Penrith will be a better side with captain-coach Bob Boland back.

Remarks by Boland, a former Balmain player — particularly about the composition of the team with the inclusion of Arthur Beetson, have upset the Balmain players.

It is really Tommy Bishop's Day in League today and a crowd exceeding 20,000 is hoped to pack the Sports Ground to see the Englishman play his first club match for Cronulla-Sutherland.

Cronulla are not expecting miracles from Bishop

town at Belmore Sports Ground today.

Captain-coach Johnny Raper said last night he would give the Saints a strong warning on the importance of today's game.

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COOTE'S FIRST

Forwards took the two major awards in "The Sun-Herald's" best-and-fairest Rugby League player contest yesterday.

Souths' international lock Ron Coote gained the top vote at Redfern Oval for his first points in the contest, while North Sydney's second-over Warren Chatfield received the three-pointer at the S.C.G.

Chatfield's "maior" took him to eight points — but there was no appreciable leeway made up on the leading bunch.

Canterbury-Bankstown's Len Johns, 16 points, still holds a slender two-point margin over Parramatta second-over Ron Lynch.

Each major award winner receives \$200.

The first three placegetters at the end of the competition rounds will receive



price money of \$800, \$400 and \$200.

FERRIS AUSTON Norths 4 Manly 10

WARREN CHATFIELD (S.C.G.) 3

LEN JOHN (C.B.) 16

RON COOTE (S.C.G.) 8

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