

Tommy Raudonikis

Tommy is to League what Bart Cummings is to racing or Ron Barassi is to AFL:

The Godfather

Tough, tenacious 'Tom Terrific' never took a backward step on the football field.

He terrorised his opponents with his resolute competitiveness. With never a thought for his own welfare, he would take on the biggest forward and chase down the quickest half-back. And he always liked to leave them with a little something to remember him by!

Testimony to his toughness was the celebrated occasion in 1977 when he was relegated to the reserve bench in an interstate match in favour of a young Steve Mortimer. NSW was losing when Raudonikis took to the field late in the second half and he soon instigated a fight with his opposite number Greg Oliphant (who was being treated for an injury on the sideline!) An inspired NSW went on to a narrow 14-13 win after a great try. But it wasn't all toughness – Tommy was silky-skilled and quick off the mark and had a deadly short-kicking game. According to one commentator, Tommy was *"the little bloke who'd rather score a try in a rugby match than have a feed, I feel!"*

Raudonikis coached the Blues in 1997 and 1998. In those series he entered Origin folklore when he introduced the Cattle dog call. The NSW players responded by breaking from the scrum, fists flying, resulting in two infamous all-in-brawls.

After a playing and coaching career when 'never say die' was taken to the extreme, Tommy is now just happy to pop up during Origin season, waiting for his Blues to restore some of their recent lost pride.

Maybe he should make another comeback!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tggNOZf1MA



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RUGBY LEAGUE

