

Willie can learn from a crazy dude like me



A rebel no more . . . Mark Geyer with wife Meagan and kids Kennedy 5, Montanna 6, Mavrik 3, and Logan, 9, yesterday. Picture: MARC McCORMACK

MARK GEYER offers some advice for the sport's new bad boy Willie Mason on how to master his demons

THE year is 1991 and I've just had the best footballing year of my life. Coming off a Kangaroo tour, I played for City, in Origin and for my country against the Kiwis and, of course, we won the comp. Life was never better, or so I thought, for I was to get the news that would see my life spiral out of control over the next four years.

It was late November when then Penrith CEO Don Feltis rang me and said: "Mark, you've failed a drug test."

Three days after my unsuccessful bid for leniency — I was on the tail end of an eight-week suspension — and the phone started running hot.

Every journo had found out it was me who had tested positive to marijuana and had started the

Controversy part of my career



Face-off . . . Geyer and Wally Lewis in 1991

barrage of calls to my mum's house. My life as I knew it would never be the same.

That was the tip of the iceberg when it came to my indiscretions.

Everything from constant drug use to assault to binge drinking to

- **Six-match ban** after high tackle on Queensland fullback Paul Hauff in Origin II in 1991 (which led to incident, pictured left)
- **Eight-match ban** in 1992 for positive marijuana test
- **Sacked** by City in 1993 for failing to make a medical examination on time
- **Released** by Balmain in 1994 for missing training session
- **Suspension and injury limit** Geyer to 10 matches in 1996. Banned for six-matches for throwing a water bottle at a touch judge and verbally threatening another touch judge
- **Eye-gouging** and reckless high tackle charges led to 10-match ban in 1997

repeated suspensions was part of my staple diet from 1992 to 1995.

The demons I wrestled in my head some nights were scarier than *The Silence of the Lambs*, times 10.

I had psychologists try to get a read on what was making me tick.

I had the club pastor's try to reach me, but to all those who tried to help me I just rebelled further.

My life completely turned around when my wife told me I was to become a father for the first time and there was no way she'd ever let someone like me near our kid.

Everyone is different of course and they can only be helped if they first admit they have a problem.

I tell my story today in the hope a certain player reads this and hopefully gets something out of it and maybe realises that life gives you challenges for reasons.

It is how you overcome adversity that methodically shapes you into the man you will become.

As I write this, with my four healthy kids, I can't help but feel sorry for Willie Mason and those demons he is about to confront.

If it is any consolation he must be made aware the nightmare will one day end, that is of course if he wants it too, and he will then look back on his career and say, "Man I was one out-of-control crazy dude."

I know I did.