

DOUG FOX – AUSTRALIAN LACROSSE CHAMPION

Doug Fox commenced playing lacrosse as a 10-year-old in 1954 with Camberwell – Glen Iris (CGI) in the Under 14's, following his father, Frank Fox, who was the leading attack player at Camberwell for many years and played in the 1938 Victorian senior team.

Doug played attack at CGI throughout his junior years, 1954–60, playing 78 junior games and scoring 232 goals. He missed his first season of senior lacrosse after breaking an arm fooling around on a trampoline but returned in 1962 as CGI's leading goal-scorer in "B" grade with 47 goals. Doug transferred to Melbourne University in 1963 under the "University Student" rule, where it was compulsory for players attending Melbourne University or Monash University, to play for the university they were attending. Doug played his first year at Melbourne Uni in attack but in 1964 the Uni team was struggling to find a regular goalie and it was agreed that he and Fergus Stewart would alternate each week from attack to goalkeeper but that arrangement lasted one week before somehow he got "stuck" in the role.



As he stated, "I was very much an "accidental" goal-keeper, having never played in that position prior to Uni, and no one gave me goal-keeper coaching".

Anyone knowing or seeing Doug would realize he had the perfect physique for goals, over 6' tall, broad enough not to leave much space for opponents to score. He was very athletic for a big man and also had the stick skills of a forward, which he honed during his first 10 years of lacrosse.

During his time at university Doug played in the inter-varsity competition and was captain of the Australian combined universities team in 1967–68.

Doug completed his studies in 1968 and moved to Surrey Park as Camberwell did not have a senior team, but he was very much involved in the redevelopment of the juniors at Camberwell, where he returned as a player once they could field a senior

team, which they did in 1976, and played state league at Camberwell until circa 1980, but continued playing in the senior teams until 1992.

Doug represented Victoria at senior level from 1966–77, including being appointed vice-captain from 1970–71 and captain in 1973 and selected at the 1968 national carnival in the All-Australian team.

Doug was first selected to represent Australia in 1970 for the Lancers tour of Australia and was appointed captain, followed by selection in the 1972 Australian touring team (USA & England) where he was appointed vice-captain, and inclusion in the World Series team in 1974 in Melbourne where he was again appointed captain.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS – PLAYING AND ADMINISTRATION

Full Blue Sports Award – Melbourne University 1964, 65, 66 & 67

Vince Healy Memorial Trophy (Victorian Lacrosse best & fairest) 1966

Don Hobbs Trophy (Best player award at Australian Championships) 1970

Victorian Amateur Sports Club – Sportsman of the Year Award 1975

Australian Lacrosse Council Certificate of Merit Award 1979

Life membership – Victorian Amateur Lacrosse Association 1981

Life membership – Camberwell Lacrosse Club 1982

Melbourne University Lacrosse Club Geoff West Shield Award for Outstanding Service 1994

Fellow Award (Life Member) Australian Lacrosse Council for outstanding contribution to Australian lacrosse as a player, coach, and administrator 1999

Australian Sports Medal 2000

Centenary of Australia Medal for contribution to Australian Society 2001

VicSport Lord Mayor's Award for contribution to sport in Victoria 2008

Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for outstanding contributions to Sport in Australia, principally in golf and lacrosse 2010

MAJOR INFLUENCES AS A PLAYER

Terry Allington – State and Australian team coach who was always super-prepared with scouting, inspired confidence, was innovative with player usage and never over-bearing.

Phil Humphreys – Experienced and brilliant defender who took me under his wing in my early interstate years and was always willing to engage in detailed game reviews.

BEST ATTACK PLAYERS HE PLAYED AGAINST AND WITH

Brian Griffin (WA), Allan Jennings (SA), Barry Benger (SA), Mike Raggatt (SA), Leigh Vandeeper (SA) and Ray Duthy (SA). Griffin, Jennings, Raggatt and Duthy were all brilliant inside receivers who could withstand a battering and still find the net. Benger was a great all-round attack man with dangerous dodging and shooting skills. Vandeeper could unleash powerful and accurate outside bombs on the run.

Opponents at club level he rated highly include Alan Rolley, Graeme Reddaway, Eddie Toomey and Keith Daly. Rolley and Toomey were both classy position players and finishers who got plenty of the ball in strong Williamstown teams. Reddaway was a tough Malvern dodger with great goal sense. Daly's powerful outside dodging was coupled with explosive and unpredictable shooting.

With regard to defenders that he played with at interstate and international level he included Phil Humphreys, Ian Toy, Barry Thompson, Jeff Kelly, Gus Garnsworthy, Peter Hobbs, John Carter and Peter Collett. All were tough and tight defenders, good readers of the play, strong and reliable clearers.

With regard to midfielders the best players to get the ball to when clearing were Mick Orr, Jeff Treloar, Rod Cordell, Roger Attenborough, Don Miller, Bill Stubbs, Graeme Ross and John O'Keefe. All had great anticipation, got away early, were reliable receivers and could be damaging at the other end.

One other player of note was his younger brother Graeme, whether it be as a midfielder or as an attack player, who also represented his state and country with distinction. As Doug noted "Graeme was one of the best midfielders when it came to clearing the ball. Graeme later played more attack than midfield, but he was outstanding in the midfield as well. He is 11 years younger than me and I only got to play a couple of years of club lacrosse with him, along two state teams and the 1974 World Series".

TESTIMONIALS

Former goalkeeper **Alan Chiron** – "Doug was so highly rated because he was always in control in of his actions and his demeanour, he never appeared flustered. Always gave his defence good calls and was always looking for the best pass out of the defensive area. He had a good clear voice and the ability to get the message across to his teammates.

One of Doug's unique characteristics was being 6 foot plus he always had his goal covered. He had good stick work and always appeared to have time to see what could be done without creating a problem".

In terms of his experiences playing with Doug he recalled in 1970, in Adelaide against the Lancers, Doug was taken from the field due to the team having too many players on the field. I went into goals from the midfield and Doug, when his penalty time was up, came on as an attack player and filled the spot very well. He was a good attack man and scored a number of goals in this position.

Roger Attenborough – “I had the opportunity to play with Doug at international level in 72 & 74 and against him in numerous games at interstate level. Doug was an exceptional player who rated with the very best goalies that I had the opportunity to play with or against and observe in my time as a player, coach, and spectator. What made him great? Doug was a tall man who had the ability to make himself even BIGGER in the goal. He had excellent skills, lightning quick reflexes, and always covered the angles giving little or no shot from under 45 degrees. He was a leader of the defence, always calm and collected, and seemingly in control of any situation. Once in control of the ball his passing skills made him a great clearer of the ball.

As an opposition player it was always disconcerting to have what you considered a great shot met half way through its flight with a Fox call of “MY BALL” followed by a very precise call of “CLEAR” for his defenders to react and spread.

One of Doug’s great attributes was that he played the game tough but fair, and always with humility”.

Ron Twomey – “When I first played in A Grade team and played against Doug I noted that he was always cool calm and composed and who could ever forget Doug stopping goal shots with ease and calling “my ball spread”.

Playing with Doug in the 1972 and 1974 Australian teams where he was either vice-captain or captain, I saw him not only as a great player, but a wonderful role model and team leader.

As a lacrosse player and team leader he performed at the highest levels at all times. He was a gifted sportsman man who applied his immense playing and administrative skills to the betterment of his club, state and country”.

DOUG’S THOUGHTS

“I consider that my grounding as an attack player was crucial to future success as a goal-keeper. I was by choice a “running” goal-keeper, always happy to carry the ball deep downfield, and continuing to score a few goals each year as goalie, no doubt raising the anxiety of my team coaches.

Looking back, another key aspect of my success as a goal-keeper was the hundreds of hours I spent as a kid tossing the ball against a neighbour’s low brick fence and catching it on the half-volley off the nature strip. Unknowingly at the time, this set me up to confidently take possession of ground shots as a goalie, rather than blocking or deflecting them.

As a tip for young aspiring goalies my perspective was always to be the springboard of attack rather than the last line of defence. By running out of goal with the ball I was able to create more fast breaks and pick up fouls to create man-up plays. It is rare to see running goalies these days and so it seems that they are being coached to stay close to the goal circle and, in so-doing, limit the capacity of their team to initiate damaging fast breaks – they are partial goalies in my view. This makes for slow clear “chess games” and takes out the run and gun, fast breaking game that lacrosse used to be”.

Great career Doug!