

## DUDLEY HAMILTON – AUSTRALIAN LACROSSE CHAMPION

Dudley Hamilton started playing lacrosse in 1939 at Brighton Lacrosse Club at the age of 10 but with the onset of WW2, lacrosse effectively went into recess in many parts of the world, including Adelaide. Dudley preferred to play as a midfielder, or on the wing as he refers to it, but played in the centre when his coach required him to do so!

Dudley resumed playing lacrosse in 1947, now an 18 year old and played his first senior state game in 1952, and then captaining S.A. from 1954-55. Life was not that easy following the war and Dudley was appointed as a budget officer for ETSA (The SA electricity board) where he studied IT, which was an emerging profession at that time, and was charged with starting an IT department at ETSA and developing IT capability at that body. This was a great opportunity for a young man with a young family and sadly he had to forego his passion for lacrosse for his family and career and didn't play lacrosse at all from 1956-58.



Above is Keith Roennfeldt (Coach), Dudley Hamilton (Capt), Bob Alexander (V Capt) with the Bob Symonds Cup, Adelaide Railway Station, 2 August 1954

Dudley returned to lacrosse in a big way in 1959, firstly for his club Brighton, then to S.A. to play the visiting American team in Adelaide, then off to Melbourne to play in the carnival, and then selected as captain of the Australian team that prevailed over the American team in a test at the MCG. Dudley continued as SA captain from 1960-62, retiring at the end of the 1962 season.



Dudley above as Australian captain 1959

Dudley coached briefly from 1963 and in a recent interview with Tom Hardy, Tom recanted how Dudley was his first coach and stated that he was one of the greatest influences on his lacrosse career.

In the 1959 Australian team coach's report **Keith Roennfeldt** wrote "Dudley's leadership, his activeness in attack and defence, was at all times an inspiration to his team. We consider his, an outstanding captain's game, and a very definite factor in the outcome.

**Roy Sloggett**, who was vice-captain of the 1959 Australian team, and one of the stars of that game wrote of his captain - "One of the press reports of this game state "He was a star of that game". He was a highly skilled player with great endurance and in my opinion would compare favourably with all the great centre men who have played for Australia. It was a pleasure and privilege to have had the opportunity to play in the same team under his captaincy".

**Graham Lines**, who was also a member of the 1959 Australian team and numerous South Australian teams commented 'I played state six times with Dudley, and he was captain each time. I was always proud to have him as our captain. He was always our centremen and very "fleet footed". He was Keith Roennfeldt's right hand man. What a coach Keith was, we always called him "Father", a term that Allan Gandy introduced).

It's a privilege to comment on Dudley, along with Roy Sloggett, two great gentlemen of lacrosse'.



Dudley Hamilton a few years ago with Tom Hardy in Adelaide

## CONCLUSION

It is difficult to compare champions from different eras but as Roy Sloggett states "Dudley would in my opinion compare favourably with all the great centre men who have played for Australia". We also have to reflect that times were a lot tougher throughout the world for the first 2 decades after WW2, rationing took place during the 50's, times were tough, the cost of air travel was prohibitive for most people and sport in most cases had to take second place to earning a living and raising a family.

Clearly Dudley Hamilton was not only a gifted player of his era, the hickory era, he was a champion player and a great leader throughout his brief career. His career was shortened not by ability or injury, but by the circumstances of the times.

We'll play Dudley, a champion Australian lacrosse player and leader throughout his brief but stellar career.