

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EAST FREMANTLE LACROSSE CLUB

According to "The Umpire" (Fremantle) 8 April 1899 headed Lacrosse – The Fremantle Clubs -"Last night the lacrossites of the Port commenced operations for the forthcoming season by holding the annual meeting of the Fremantle Lacrosse Club at the Federal Hotel, where a good number of members, presided over by Mr. Thomas, had mustered. For some time past the idea had been entertained that the old Fremantle club, which was the only one at the seaside, would be too strong to allow of the three clubs (into which the players of Perth had been split up into Perth, Banks and Mercantile) having a fair chance against it in the Association matches, while it could not afford its own members an opportunity of obtaining a game. It was therefore proposed to establish a second club and last night this idea was carried into effect, for after consideration it was decided that an East Fremantle Lacrosse Club should be formed.

In arriving at this decision a perfectly friendly spirit between all the members was manifested. A division of the players on an electoral basis was made, the parties being divided under the headings—East Fremantle and South Fremantle - High Street, as in cricket, was regarded as the dividing line. The Fremantle Club is to consist of all members residing to the south of High Street, and the East Fremantle Club of those residing on the other side of the thoroughfare. The division showed that the lists of probable players of the two clubs will be as follows: East Fremantle—Wingrove, Gardiner, Linton, Byers, Robinson. Anuois Lane, Murray (2), Scott, McClure and Hammond (2): Fremantle—Howard, Lowe, Harvey, Wright;"Jonah", Birrill, Wilson, Stapleton, Rickards, Smiley, Duckett and Tickell.

From the foregoing it will be observed that the East Fremantle Club will be much the stronger of the two bodies so far as the playing talent is concerned, but the Fremantle Club (which is properly South Fremantle) has a big field to choose from, and it should be able to make a fair stand".

Thus, East Fremantle was formed in 1899 as the membership of the Fremantle Lacrosse Club, which formed in 1896, had become so large, and Perth had formed into 3 clubs, that in the interests of lacrosse, consideration should be given to forming a second club at the "Seaside".

According to the "Umpire" (Fremantle) 15 April 1899 "It was decided that those present should form themselves into a club, to play under the name of the East Fremantle Lacrosse Club. The colors chosen were guernsey, stockings and cap of navy blue, with a broad orange band and white knickerbockers. The general management of the club was vested in a committee of five - Messrs. F. C. Wingrove (capt.), L. H. Wicksteed (Sec. and Treas.), A. G. Acraman, W. F. Gardiner, and J. Murray.

The Easts start with twenty members, all of whom have expressed a determination to work and practice hard, so that they shall not be far out of the running at the end of the season. It was decided to make Wednesday and Friday in each week special practice evenings, and as it is anticipated that the Fremantles' will take advantage of this and join them as often as possible on these occasions, the Port should have two teams well able to hold their own against the City players".

The new club improved rapidly, being runners-up in A grade in 1902 and 1903, and premiers in 1904 and later in 1909, although in 1909 with both "Seaside" clubs

struggling and Fremantle having lost its home ground, amalgamation of the A grade teams became essential that year, but that didn't last until season's end, with the premiership team consisting of only East Fremantle players.



Sadly East Fremantle did not exist after 1909 and the remaining players transferred to Fremantle where they went on to win the A grade flag in 1910. Why these two clubs were struggling to succeed we don't know but according to Ian Toy's History of Lacrosse in W.A., "Both clubs suffered a blow in 1903 when the government railway workshops relocated to Midland, which caused warehouses to relocate along with workers".

East Fremantle was reformed in 1926 and again was born out of recruiting by Fremantle of young men in the East Fremantle district, mainly through the efforts of Hugh Rudderham and Fred Smith. In 1927 Fremantle granted player transfers to 15 Fremantle players to facilitate the reformation of East Fremantle.



1927 A grade team

In 1934 it once again became necessary for the two 'Port' clubs to reunite for that year only, this time retaining the East Fremantle colours and name, with both clubs playing as separate clubs from 1935.

The Club has operated continually since then from a number of venues in the East Fremantle, Fremantle and Melville districts. Since 1961 the Club's home ground has been in Preston Point Road, East Fremantle and it is at this permanent home the Club's greatest success has been achieved.

Lighting was first installed at Preston Point Road in 1975, which allowed additional training sessions, which ultimately improved skills, culminating in a phenomenal premiership run from 1975 through to 1985, winning nine premierships in that 11 year span. The quality and coverage of lighting has been significantly upgraded and improved over the years.

While the original uniform colours were navy blue with an orange band, and later became navy and black, the Club changed to blue and white uniforms in 1977, colours which were perceived to be more connected with the East Fremantle district.

Since reformation in 1926 East Fremantle has won a further 21 senior premierships, the first being in 1961, the last being in 2017. The 1981 season was particularly memorable with the Club winning six premierships in various grades.

While East Fremantle has had many players represent Australia the standouts would be Peter Cann (All World team 1982, MVP 1986), Jeff Kennedy (MVP 1982, All World team 1986) and Steve Mounsey (All World team 1994). What is staggering is that one Australian lacrosse club could produce the MVP and have two members of the 1982 and 1986 All World teams. Is it any wonder East Fremantle was so dominant from 1975-1985.



1985 A grade premiership team

Peter Cann holds the W.A. goal scoring record in A grade with 187 (1983).

In 2010 the East Fremantle Women's Lacrosse Club, originally formed in 1966, merged with the men's club, fielding teams in A and B grades, together with 2 junior teams. The women's team has won 13 premierships in A grade, the first in 1966, the inaugural year of women's lacrosse in W.A., and the most recent in 2019.

Champions of the women's teams who have represented Australia include Geri Bowden (1969, 72, 77(Playing coach), 78 (Vice-captain) & 1981) and Nadene Cann (1982 & 86 World Cup teams (Including gold in 86), and 1985 team). Of the current generation of champions, Madison Copeland was a member of the 2019 Under 19 World Cup team and was named in the 2019 All World team.

EAST FREMANTLE WOMEN'S LACROSSE CLUB

A GRADE 1985



Back Row: Sev Cukrov (Manageress), Ruth Poat (President), Helen Goddard, Caroline Cukrov, Susan Digregoria (Co-Captain), Wendy Hawks (Co-Captain), Lisa Novak, Kerry Tuana, Frank Poat (Coach).
Front Row: Nicole Badham, Donna Huxtable, Elizabeth Mounsey, Michelle Poat, Joy Cukrov, Bev Leavy.
Absent: Ann Burford, Pamela Burge.