

## STEVE MOUNSEY – CHAMPION AUSTRALIAN DEFENDER

Steve Mounsey grew up in country Western Australia, moving every couple of years as his father was a school principal, with the family moving to Perth towards the end of 1974 when he was 14 years old.

His father had been a lacrosse player in his younger years, by all reports he was a very good player, as hard as nails, and had represented W.A. on several occasions from 1950-56 (Named in Australian All-star teams in 1953 and 1956).



Steve, dad and sister Libby

In 1975 Steve's father asked if I was interested in giving lacrosse a go, he agreed, so off they went to South Perth Lacrosse Club.

Without ever seeing a game or picking up a lacrosse stick, apart from one of dad's when I was 3 or 4, it was an interesting start. I vividly remember my first game, D Grade against Bayswater, thrown in the back line alongside another first timer, Peter Buchanan (WA and Australian representative), not really knowing the rules. I remember being intrigued when a shot missed the goal and everyone started running towards the end line, "What is this game"?

He soon developed a passion for the game and did his best to develop skills and understand the game. My father coached one of my junior teams and he was always a strong supporter of my progress, and a big influence. Mum and dad continued to attend my games throughout my career, up until I retired in 1999.

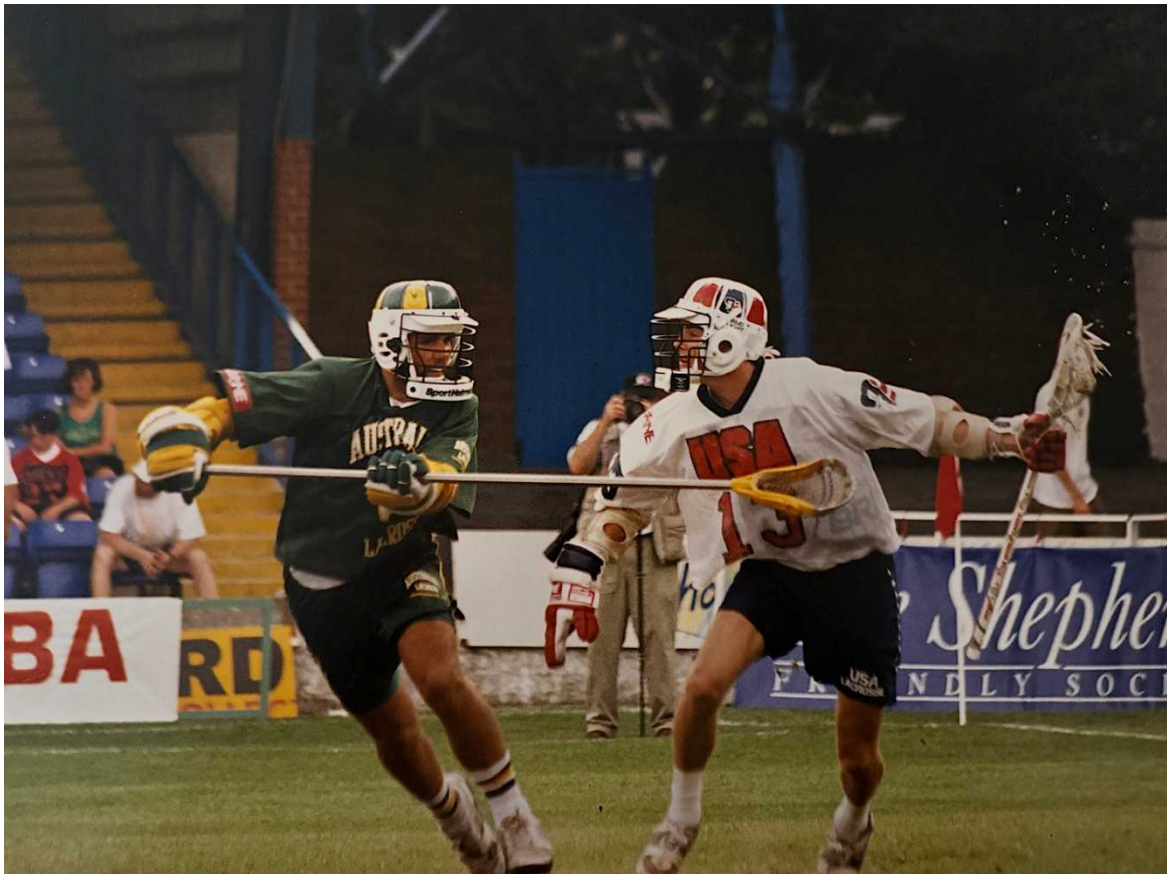
I remained at South Perth until the end of 1979, playing my first A grade game in the last game of the year and the last for South Perth. In 1980 the club was relocated and renamed Canning Lacrosse Club where I played A Grade for the five years of the club's existence, co-captain for the last 4 years.

The club folded at the completion of the 1984 season, and I was approached to join East Fremantle Lacrosse Club for 1985, where my sister Libby, who also represented WA and Australia, was playing at the time.

I played with East Fremantle from 1985 – 99, co-captain from 1985 to circa 1997, during which team East Freo was premiers in 1985, 90, 91, 92, 94, and 99.

Steve was a member of the W.A. senior state team for 9 years, starting in 1983 and retiring from national competition after 1996 (Only missing representation when he had national duties).

During that time he was co-captain 7 times (Excluding his first and last year as a player), W.A. were champions in 6 of those years, and Steve was selected in the Australian All Star team on 8 occasions from 9 appearances.



Steve Mounsey was first selected to represent Australia in 1984 at the Pre-Olympic World Tournament in L.A., and went on to represent Australia at the next 3 world championships (1986-1994), capping off a great international career by being selected in the All World team in 1994 at the age of 33.

With respect to coaching, Steve coached the 1993 East Fremantle Under 14's, and the 1985 & 1986 W.A. State schoolboys teams.

## **AWARDS**

- 1994 All World team
- 1994 All World Defender
- 1995 Life Member East Fremantle Lacrosse Club
- 2000 Wall of Fame (Fremantle City Council)

## **BIGGEST INFLUENCES ON MY CAREER**

Initially my father, on and off the field.

**JEFF KENNEDY** – He had high expectations for those around him and even higher expectations and standards for himself. He would lead by example, and you would want to follow that lead. He had a fantastic knowledge of the game, usually a few steps ahead of everyone around him. He always looked like he had time, even when under extreme pressure. His amazing skills and athletic ability also contributed to his success as a leader and player. I would say he is the best player I ever played with.

**PETER CANN** – Peter had the finishing ability like no other. As part of the Kennedy/Cann combination they were near on impossible to stop. Peter required very little space and time to put away many ‘‘quick stick’ goals. When playing for Canning against East Fremantle in the last game of the season in the early 1980s Peter required something like 13 goals to reach 100 goals for the season. We all knew that he was going to be the target in order to achieve the feat but despite much attention, double teaming and any other tactic we could think of, we could not stop him.

Playing with and against great players like Peter Cann and Jeff Kennedy had a great influence in my desire to improve and to combat the very different styles of play each opponent displays. Improving the ability to read the play, adjusting body and stick position, being patient but always alert, not over committing, communicating with the rest of the defensive unit, and having a very strong desire to be a winner and successful, were important elements I tried to develop.

East Fremantle Lacrosse Club was a breeding ground for those attributes.

**KLAY JOHNSON** – Klay brought a new insight into lacrosse when he came from the U.S. to W.A. and joined Subiaco. He was innovative in his thinking and in many ways changed the way we played lacrosse. As a player and coach for WA I was able to learn from him.

## **BEST PLAYERS**

Jeff Kennedy, Peter Cann, Robin Cornish, Klay Johnson, Peter Morley, John Butkiewicz, Rod Ansell, Darren Gibson

## **BEST INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS**

Dave Pietramala (U.S.A.), Gary Gait & Paul Gait (Canada)

## **TESTIMONIALS**

### **PETER CANN (Former Australian champion)**

I consider Steve one of the most complete defence players I have played with or saw in Australian lacrosse.

I played against Steve at club level and always found him fair, hard at the ball, sound skills, always a team player, particularly in tight situations. He was very handy at clearing the ball and a very good communicator and coordinator in defence.

Steve transferred to East Fremantle and we became team mates, again bringing to the club a positive attitude backed by a willingness to learn, a solid contribution to strategy, tactics and game day plans, Steve became highly rated and progressed to state representation where he displayed his highly skilled game in defence, very reliable and consistent and fair in any contest.

Steve represented Australia a number of times, and played with courage and conviction, one of Australia's best defenders of his time, he was selected in an all-world team in 1994, which confirmed his status as one of the best Australia has produced.

### **JEFF KENNEDY (Former Australian champion)**

Steve was a quiet achiever and the most reliable defence player I ever played with. In the Don Rudderham mould he was very rarely beaten and was always given the best attack opponent to play on. The only problem with Steve was he was too much of a gentleman to be a defence player. Absolute pleasure to play with!

### **ROD ANSELL (Former Australian champion)**

I had the great pleasure of playing alongside and against Steve Mounsey over a long period of time and he was a great defender and teammate who had excellent stick handling skills and was tough and aggressive with both stick and body. The skills he possessed allowed him to stand all types of attack players not only in Australia but on the world stage and he was accordingly recognised with All-World selection.

A tough "Lefty" who read the play well and was a very good communicator.

Steve was reliable, calm and composed - a total professional with a great attitude and desire to succeed on a personal and team level. He was a great leader as evidenced by him being Co-Captain of both Western Australia and Australia.

He was close to the complete package as a defender and a gentleman off the field.

### **CONCLUSION**

Champion defenders vary in that they can be pure hard men who inflict pain and dispossess their opponent, some are generals who control the defence and intercept, some are able to play close and take an opponent out, some are very good at clearing the ball out of defence into attack quickly. A defender being a gentleman on the field would appear to some to be a contradiction of terms, but not this man.

The modern era has probably produced more from the latter categories, with a focus on stopping supply, stripping the opponent, controlling the game and getting the ball down the other end. The other great strings to Steve's bow, or stick, was that he was also great leader and a strong team player.

Clearly Steve Mounsey has been one of the very best in all of these attributes in the modern era, without being a particularly ruthless or physically aggressive player, but he didn't have to be as he had a war chest of skills that allowed him to achieve his goals his way, and he was fortunate to be at a club where he could learn from the best and he certainly learnt and reaped the rewards of that experience.

A fabulous career from a modest yet highly effective champion, good D Steve!