ROY SLOGGETT – CHAMPION AUSTRALIAN LACROSSE DEFENDER

Roy Sloggett commenced playing lacrosse in 1948, in Under 16 competition at Malvern aged 15 and played his whole career in the defence or back line. This was 3 years after WW2, times were still tough, lacrosse equipment was difficult to import due to import and currency restrictions, and lacrosse was just getting back on its feet.

Roy was selected in his first A grade match for Malvern in 1952 (Age 19) and in that year was selected in the Victorian senior team to pay the biennial match against South Australia.

Roy played in 9 A grade premierships from 1952-1959 & 1964 and played in the state league grand final every year from 1952-1966, captaining Malvern in 1962.

He was selected in Victorian state teams every year from 1953-1961, captaining Victoria in 1961.

Given that national championships were only played every 3 years Roy was selected in the All - Australian team for 1953, 1956 and 1959, which meant every time a championship was played he was selected in that team, which is an outstanding achievement.

Roy was vice-captain of the 1959 Australian team which played and defeated the American team at the MCG, he was voted the best defender for Australia and threw 1 goal.

Roy also won the Vince Healy Trophy in 1958 (Victorian best and fairest award for A grade).

Roy retired at the end of the 1966 season.

Regrets? Roy's greatest regret was not making himself available for the inaugural Australian lacrosse tour in 1962. While he probably would have been a walk up start he was married with a young family and a mortgage, and simply couldn't afford the money or the time off from work to do so, as was the case with many players in that era.

Greatest players of his era?

Alf Evans (17 premierships for Malvern) – "He was like a general directing play", Allan Gandy "Was as good as anyone", Brian Griffin, Noel Jeffery, "He was a great centre", John Martin, Graham Reid, Alan Rolley, Ross Kean "Who fed Gandy, Don Gomer, and Don Lee, "A forward from Melbourne High School Old Boys".

"One of the reasons for SA's success was that they had superior stickwork, they were generally much better than Victoria or W.A."

Roy modestly said he modelled his game on fellow Malvern great John Heathcote.

Toughest opponents?

Denis Trainor – In the 1960 grand final, the scores were tied with 10 minutes of extra time to be played, Graeme Reddaway scored, we were just in front. I could see how determined Denis was at the face-off, he was always going to get it, the ball came out, Denis swooped on it and tore toward goal and scored, he was unstoppable, and

the game was tied. Caulfield went on to win the replay! He was fast, had good pace and a good shot for goal.

Other greats included Jack Church who came over from Adelaide towards the end of his career, and in terms of the younger brigade he was impressed by Alan Rolley and Eddie Toomey.

Above is Roy with the Vince Healy Trophy he won in 1958

Denis Trainor – I would rate Roy 9 out of 10 as no one gets 10! Roy changed the face of defence, he was the first to cross over into the forward line and become an attack player - he was a wonderful athlete. He used his crosse like a rapier, he was all over you like a rash, and he could check the ball out of someone's stick without them realizing what he had done. He could and did run all game. He was the best defender in my era. He was voted one of the best Australian players in the 1959 test against the U.S. A. and threw a goal. He was also very hard to dodge and would kill you on ground balls!

The coach of the 1959 Australian team, Keith Roennfeldt, commented in his report on the Test Match against the U.S.A. played at the M.C.G. "Roy Sloggett (Vice-captain) – Roy's brilliance in defence and his assistance in attack, required

tremendous coverage on the day which reflected great stamina and fitness in the trying conditions of the ground".

Roy Sloggett played lacrosse just prior to it becoming international, when carnivals in Australia were held every 3 years, when the nation was still recovering from the war years and overseas travel was very expensive, thus he never had the opportunity to match his skills against the best of the world, other than the test match in Melbourne in 1959 when as vice-captain he led the charge from the defence line to the attack, and threw a goal against the Americans at the MCG.

Arguably one of our greatest attacking defenders of all time, but sadly it is difficult if not impossible to measure players from Roy's era against the modern era, where they play with light weight plastic sticks, have full protective equipment and the opportunity to play with and against international players on a weekly basis. In Roy's day the opportunity to learn and improve was limited to what you played against at your club and your state.

A fabulous career, Roy Sloggett was one of the greats of Malvern and Victoria, and in his only opportunity against the U.S.A., for Australia, was one of our very best.

Well played Roy Sloggett – you remain a champion!