

MARY HERBERT/PICKETT – AUSTRALIAN LACROSSE CHAMPION

Written by Judy Thurgood and John Nolan

May 2022

Mary was introduced to lacrosse as a 12 year old at Seacombe High in 1971, by Jean and Barry Bain. She was invited to a Sunday morning lacrosse training at the Seacombe High School (SHS) oval, watched the players briefly, but thought it was too challenging and went home. The following morning, some senior players chased Mary up and with encouragement from them and Jean, she soon became an enthusiast and never looked back. As with many other SHS lacrosse players, Mary also played basketball, with the 2 sports knowingly complementing each other.

Mary played in eight A Grade/League premierships for Seacombe. This included a remarkable seven in a row between 1974 and 1980 and fittingly, in Seacombe's final A grade premiership team in 1984.

Mary represented and captained South Australia at junior level (U16) in 1973 and 1974 and at senior level on 11 occasions between 1974 and 1988 and was captain from 1980 to 1988.

Recognised as a brilliant, dynamic midfield/attack player, 'with a lethal but controlled overhead check and under arm shot', she was the recipient of numerous club and association awards including A grade best and fairest awards in 1978 and 1983.

Holding a South Australian Sports Institute (SASI) lacrosse scholarship for 5 years, in 1988 Mary toured the United States and Canada with the highly successful SASI team as captain. For those not familiar with SASI, the squad was selected based on playing ability, potential and commitment to the game. SASI provided fitness training, testing and coaching as part of their elite sports programs. Costs were also covered for travel and uniforms. SA women's lacrosse gained a great advantage in the 80's as a result of being included in the program.

She had an outstanding international lacrosse career spanning 13 years and such was the regard for her qualities as a leader both on and off the field, that she was the Australian captain from 1980 to 1986.

In 1977, as an 18 year old, Mary gained selection in her first Australian team and toured the United States of America with four Seacombe team mates. In 1981, she played in a series against the USA in Australia. Mary was selected to Captain the Australian team for the first IFWLA World Championships in England in 1982 where Australia won the silver medal and Mary was named in the All World team. She represented Australia in two home tours against Scotland and Great Britain in 1983 and 1985 respectively.

The highlight of Mary's international career was in 1986 when she again captained Australia, this time to a World Championship Gold medal (defeating USA 10-7) at the 2nd IFWLA World Championship in the USA.

In 1986 following the World Cup it was reported that there was to be no All-World team as there was in '82, supposedly at the request of the players, but even a novice could recognize the talent of Jan Guilbride (England), Sue Mellis, Vivienne Broad, Mary Pickett and Colleen McVeigh (Australia), Jackie Wilson; Julie Elicker (Scotland), Betsy Williams, Sandy Campanaro and Margie Anderson (USA) and Julie Norton and Gail Cummings (Canada).



Mary retired from international lacrosse in 1986 following the World Cup victory, state representation in 1988 and club lacrosse in 1994.

Professionally, Mary has a Bachelor of Education and worked as a teacher, lecturer, leader and consultant in a variety of educational settings.

AWARDS

1982 All World team

1978 & 1983 SA Women's Lacrosse best & fairest award

1985 & 1986 Kleeman Trophy for Outstanding Achievement (Seacombe WLC)

1987 Life membership of Seacombe Women's Lacrosse Club

1993 Lacrosse South Australia award for 'Outstanding service to Women's Lacrosse'

2000 Australian Sports Medal in recognition of her contribution to Australia's sporting excellence.

2003 Women's Lacrosse Australia Merit Award 'in recognition of special achievements as a player and coach over a number of years'

2018 SA Sports Hall of Fame inductee. Mary was a member of the group S A women's lacrosse senior state players who won 11 consecutive national championships during the record breaking era from 1985 to 1995, who were collectively inducted.

COACHING & ADMINISTRATION

Mary served on SWLC, SAWLA and AWLC boards in various roles during her career, contributing to the development of lacrosse at all levels.

As a loyal and supportive member of the Seacombe Women's Lacrosse Club, Mary coached junior teams to premiership wins and was the senior club coach for many years. Further to this, she successfully coached the SA Under 16, 19 and 21 state teams and significantly the senior state team to national championship wins in 1992 and 1993, during SA's 11 in a row record breaking run.

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Mary held the challenging role of the SASI women's lacrosse coach for a year before funding unfortunately saw an end to the highly successful program.

Post her playing career, Mary achieved success as a coach at the Brighton Lacrosse Club with five league premierships to her credit in 1998, 1999, 2008, 2009 and 2013.

Throughout her career, she was well supported by her husband Colin and in turn both Mary and Colin proudly supported the international lacrosse careers of their children William and Isabelle.



Colin, Isabelle, Mary and William
A true Aussie lacrosse family

'Lacrosse still plays a major role in my life and subsequently my family's. This fantastic sport has given us so many wonderful opportunities, challenges, friends, team mates, trips, and amazing experiences. Being convinced in Year 8 to play a game that I had never seen or heard of, sent my life off in a completely different trajectory and I have immense gratitude to Jean and Barry Bain for their encouragement, coaching and support in those formative years at Seacombe'.

Will (1989) and Bella (1992) both played for Brighton Lacrosse Club and represented SA in U15, U18-19 and senior state teams.

Will represented Australia at the U19 World Championship in Canada in 2008 and then in the senior men's World Championship in Manchester (2010), Denver (2014) and Israel (2018). Will moved to England in 2015 where he currently plays for Hampstead Lacrosse Club in London.

Bella represented Australia at the U19 World Cup in Germany (2011) and then played in the senior women's World Cup in Canada (2013). Bella was awarded a scholarship to play at San Diego State University for three years and was their inaugural captain in 2012.

Best players I have seen or played with and why?

Our World Cup team in '86 was full of champions, notably skilful and dominant goal scorers: Sue Mellis (Sofarnos), Shirley Ploog and Viv Broad; and tough, aggressive and fast mid-fielders Colleen McVeigh, Marg Barlow and Jenny Williams.

I was fortunate to watch (and coach a bit) Sarah Aston and Sarah Forbes (Seacombe), Jen Adams, Hannah Nielsen and Sonia Lamonica (Judd) (Brighton) who developed from talented juniors into elite Australian and world champion players.

Toughest opponents?

Marg Barlow and Lydia Thompson – both relentless and tough defenders, who could also attack and score goals.

Influential coaches

Jean Bain (Seacombe), Peter Koshnitsky and Barb Mattsson (SA) and Noel Smith (Australia).

TESTIMONIALS

Pam Withers (Seacombe, South Australian and Australian player and coach)

Mary Pickett's nickname was "Herb". As far as excellence in women's lacrosse, I know none better. Her contribution as a player and captain was outstanding. With such a remarkably long service to the sport and the top levels she achieved, I believe that she is one of the elite in Australian women's lacrosse.

Barb Day (Nee Hoban) (Seacombe, South Australian, SASI & Australian player)

I always had the confidence in "Herb" to represent us as captain in a professional manner and with class. At the same time, she could still have a laugh and joke in the change room as one of the team. She had the ability to steal the ball at a crucial moment from an unsuspecting opposition player. We were always in with a chance of winning with her on the field.

Di Harvey (Nee Hoban) (Seacombe, South Australian, SASI & Australian player)

Mary was an enthusiastic trainer and always keen to do her best to achieve team and personal goals. Playing with Mary for many years at club, state and national levels, I saw her develop her practical skills and leadership qualities whilst always encouraging her team mates to achieve their best. Mary's ability to lead by example on and off the field and communicate at all levels gained her great respect and admiration.

CONCLUSION

Mary Pickett played in and captained two World Cup teams, winning a Silver and then Australia's first World Cup Gold. Selection in the first All-Star team in the inaugural World Cup in 1982 was also a highlight.

Having children in 1989 and 1992 brought her playing career to a close but she continued to contribute to Lacrosse as a coach, administrator and supporter of her children who followed in her footsteps.

Mary's Lacrosse CV undoubtedly establishes her as one of our all-time great players and captains, and a modest and unassuming one at that.

Congratulations Mary on a fabulous career, you are an Australian lacrosse champion.