



# Lacrosse in Australia and at Burnside

## The History of Lacrosse

Lacrosse is one of the oldest sports in North America. The game's roots can be traced back to Native American religion, where lacrosse, or Baggataway, as named by the native Indians, was often played to resolve conflicts, heal sick people, and develop virile, strong men to be warriors. To Native Americans, lacrosse is still referred to as "The Creator's Game." Lacrosse was used by many tribes as training for war, with the Cherokee referring to the game as "little brother of war". These early games consisted of hundreds (and records of thousands) of players, with goals (being an object) being miles apart. These games were sometimes played over a whole, or even a number of days. The French explorers were reportedly the first Europeans to witness the sport, believing the sticks used resembled a Bishop's Crozier, or "La Crosse" in French. There are contradicting reports that the name was derived from a field hockey game the French played, call "jeu de la crosse".

## Lacrosse in Australia

Lacrosse was first introduced to Australia in 1876, when Canadian Lambton L Mount imported 40 lacrosse sticks from Canada, for the creation of the Melbourne Lacrosse Club. The first practice match was played in June 1876 at Albert Park, by players from the Melbourne club. Games continued to be played between the "Reds" and the "Blues" between 1877 and 1878 and by 1879, four clubs existed in Melbourne. From these beginnings, Men's lacrosse spread around the country. Women's Lacrosse was first established in Melbourne, Victoria, in 1936 with the formation of two teams Williamstown and YWCA/Melbourne University, with the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association (VWLA), now known as Women's Lacrosse Victoria, being formed in the same year, with Miss Rawlins (pioneer of the sport) as President, and Mrs Joy Parker (nee Newhouse) as Secretary. In 1939 the VWLA became affiliated with the All England Women's Lacrosse Association, and the following year with the United States Women's Lacrosse Association (USWLA). The first 'international' match was played at Melbourne University in 1938, against visiting American hockey players who also played lacrosse. By late 1940 Australia was deeply involved in the Second World War, and lacrosse sticks were put aside. The sport did not reform until 1962. It was in this year that Mrs Shaw, placed an advertisement in an Adelaide paper calling for women interested in playing lacrosse.

## Womens Competition

The prospect of interstate competition was the impetus needed, and the South Australian Women's Lacrosse Association (SAWLA) was formed, along with the Victorian Association re-forming. Following the first interstate match in August 1963 between SA and Victoria (in Adelaide), which saw Victoria take the honour as winners, the Australian Women's Lacrosse Council (AWLC) was formed, now known as Women's Lacrosse Australia (WLA). Joy Parker became the first President, and went on to become the first Patron and Life Member of both the VWLA and the AWLC. Word drifted across to Western Australia and in 1965, the Western Australian Women's Lacrosse Association (now known as Lacrosse West) was formed. In this year the first Senior Women's National Championship was held. The AWLC gradually developed, and by 1975 the game had spread to the island state of Tasmania, where the Tasmania Amateur Lacrosse Association formed (now known as Lacrosse Tasmania). In 1995, New South Wales Lacrosse Inc became the most recent State to join WLA. Lacrosse is now also beginning in Queensland.

## Mens Competition

Men's Lacrosse was formed in South Australia in 1883, with the Adelaide Lacrosse Club. The sport grew quickly, and by 1887 the Adelaide Lacrosse Club had been joined by North Adelaide Lacrosse Club, Noarlunga Lacrosse Club and Knightsbridge Lacrosse Club (based in Leabrook and the father of the Burnside Lacrosse Club). In 1888, the governing body, South Australian Lacrosse Association was formed. Clubs were soon established across the state, including Port Augusta, Port Germein, Jamestown and Riverton.

Pre war, lacrosse was one of the most popular sports in the country, unfortunately (for lacrosse) with the rise of Australian Rules Football, the sport of lacrosse in Australia has declined. Senior national championships have been held since 1978, with South Australia reigning supreme, being undefeated for the first 12 years of the competition, before a monumental defeat by Victoria.

## Burnside Lacrosse Club

The Knightsbridge Lacrosse Club, based in Leabrook, moved to the Eastern suburb of Linden Park in 1952 and was renamed the Burnside Lacrosse Club and commenced as a men's lacrosse club, in the Burnside Council District.

### *Alby Fewster*

Was one of several people who helped form the Burnside Lacrosse Club along with Carl Schulz, Ray Cathie and others from the East Torrens Lacrosse Club in 1952.

In spite of a problem with his left hip, which was with him from the tender age of seven, Alby was constantly involved in his principle sport of lacrosse. Alby had a 20 year playing career with East Torrens from 1928 to 1948; substantial considering the problem he had with his hip. Alby gave incalculable service to "his club" in administration from 1941 to the mid 1980's in such capacities as Treasurer, Secretary, and Chairman. Vice-Chairman, Vice-President and President. Alby was a delegate to the S.A.L.A. from 1943 to 1950. Manager of the S.A.L.A. State team in 1947 and again in 1949.



1961. Alby was respected by all as a man of courage who fought manfully against his illness. He wasn't the sort of man to "beat about the bush"; he called a spade a spade and appreciated similar directness and honesty in his dealings with others.

A trophy has been struck to perpetuate the Memory of Thomas Harold (Alby) Fewster and a commemoration game is held each year during the first minor round game between the East Torrens and Burnside Lacrosse Clubs and is played at the home ground of the previous years winner.

*Burnside - Chadstone Lacrosse Clubs*

Burnside Lacrosse Club and our Victorian Sister club Chadstone Lacrosse Club have enjoyed an ongoing annual inter-club weekend and games which is one of the longest in Australian Sporting History. Accurate history on this relationship is currently being compiled and will be included soon.



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