

1932 Hobart Mercury on Captain Fearon in Tasmania

LACROSSE

Game in Schools

"Does Not Rob Football"

Captain Fearon's Views

Captain J. H. Fearon, the sponsor of the visit of a team of Victorian lacrosse-men to Tasmania this week, and one of the greatest supporters of the game in Australasia, was asked by a representative of "The Mercury" at Launceston yesterday how Victorian football officials viewed the growing popularity of the game of lacrosse in Melbourne. He definitely stated that they were not in the least worried about it, realising that many men who were unsuitable for football found that they adapted themselves well to lacrosse, where the small man had as much chance as the big man. "It does not rob football," he stated. He also said that a season of lacrosse was of wonderful benefit to a footballer, because it taught a man to turn very quickly both ways, a point which often stood a lacrosse player in good stead when playing football.

Teach the Boys.

Captain Fearon stressed the value of teaching the game in the public and State schools. "South Australia," he said, "was the mother State of lacrosse, but because the junior players were neglected the game had slumped very badly in that State, there being no young players coming on to replace the veterans when the time came for them to retire." Captain Fearon has been a great advocate for many years of the game being allowed in schools, and he has been largely instrumental in inaugurating the game in the technical and high schools in Melbourne. These schools are now engaged in a keen mid-week competition, and they also play on Saturdays. The outlay for material is, of course, an item to be considered, but two very good lacrosse sticks can be purchased for the price of one good tennis racquet. The Victorian Association has helped the schools considerably in the provision of material.

The Melbourne High School has a team playing in the senior section in Victoria, and in every State in Australia except Tasmania, there could be found a man playing lacrosse who learned the game in the Melbourne High School. Captain Fearon was asked how headmasters viewed lacrosse being introduced into their schools, as some persons contended that it was a dangerous game but he replied emphatically that a census of accidents had been taken, and it had been found that there were fewer accidents in lacrosse than there were in cricket. He attributed this freedom from casualties, despite the vigorous nature of the game, to the great powers which the referee had. He could summarily order a man off the field for a semblance of rough play. In the team in Tasmania are three players who graduated in technical school competitions, and five others who graduated in high school competitions.

Strongest in Australasia.

The team now in Launceston consists of players chosen from the Williamstown Club, which is the strongest club in Australasia. Every Saturday afternoon it places over 70 players in the field, these being made up in teams classed as Senior, "A," "B," "C," "D," and "E." When Captain Fearon first became associated with the club 31 years ago there was only one team. One of the teams is now in the final in four of the sections. There is also a team of boys, the Williamstown Wanders, and Captain Fearon states that so popular is the game becoming that many young players have had to be turned away.

In connection with the present visit, Mr. A. J. Deacon, the manager, said that Mr. J. Traynor, an ex-Victorian player, who has been largely responsible for the revival of the game in Launceston, had written to the Victorian Association asking for an association team to be sent to Tasmania to give the game an impetus here. It was not possible to send an association side, and a call was made for volunteers to make the trip, but this did not meet with very much response, so that Captain Fearon then stepped forward and made the present visit of the Williamstown "A" team possible by his generosity.

Visit in 1914 Recalled

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Captain Fearon brought a team to Tasmania in 1914, and played matches in Launceston and Hobart, and it is interesting to note that a member of this side was Jack Beattie, playing his first inter-State match. Though he is now a veteran, Beattie is classed as the greatest forward in the game in Australia to-day. He is captain of the Malvern Club, and also of the combined Victorian side.

One reason difficulty was experienced in getting a representative association side to Tasmania this year was that the all-Australian lacrosse carnival is to be held at the end of the month, and the Victorians are training hard to defend their right to hold the Gardland-McHarg Cup for another year. The inter-State carnival is held every three years, and Victoria was the champion State at the 1929 carnival in Perth (West Australia). There are over 1,000 lacrosse players in Melbourne, exclusive of those engaged in the schools' competition, and, in addition, there is a strong association at Ballarat.

The Match To-day.

This afternoon, commencing on York Park at 1.15 p.m., lacrosse enthusiasts, and others interested, should be treated to a spectacular display by the visitors, who will be opposed to the newly-formed association in Northern Tasmania. An area 100 yards by 60 yards will be marked out on the oval, and Mr. A. J. Deacon, the manager of the visiting side, will be the referee. Mr. Deacon has represented Victoria as a lacrosse player in every State in Australia, except Tasmania. The only other player who will be seen in action to-day who has previously played for Victoria is V. Lancashire, who played against Queensland. The teams will play 13 a side in the match this afternoon.

Captain Fearon is also very interested in football, being chairman of the Williamstown Football Club and a delegate to the Victorian Football Association, as well as being senior vice-president of the Victorian Lacrosse Association. He paid a tribute to the work which Mr Traynor has done in the interests of the game since he has resided in Tasmania. "Lacrosse is an Olympic sport," he said, "and I am anxious to see Tasmania represented at the all-Australian carnival in 1935."

The Teams.

Following are the teams for the match to-day:—

Victoria.—F. Ray (capt.), V. Lancashire (vice), M. Titter, V. Arthur, C. Martin, A. Arthur, K. O'Brien, B. Newgreen, C. Crook, L. Ford, M. Murrie, F. Hogarth, and C. George.

Tasmania.—J. Traynor (capt.), J. Littler (vice), Horne, Pennefather, Gavit, H. Cox, Parkyn, Harrison, Reid, Williams, Monaghan, J. Jeffrey, and Watts.
