

Glebe District Hockey Club

Life Membership Biography

George Manou

Born 9th August 1960

Elected Life Member of the Glebe District Hockey Club in 2012

George was born in Parkes NSW in 1960 to Loui and Maria Manou, who immigrated to Australia during the 1950s from the Greek Island of Lesbos with his older siblings, Desi and Gary. The family moved to the big smoke in 1965 where George's childhood was spent living with his parents in their grocer's shop at the bottom of Trafalgar Street Annandale, close to where Trafalgar Street runs into the Crescent. It was only a hop, skip and a jump, less than a kilometre from George's parent's shop to Jubilee Oval.

In the early to mid 1960's George's older brother, Gary, was associated with the successful running fraternity that operated out of Jubilee Oval during the summer months. John Atterton, Nancy Atterton (nee Foggerty), John Cowan, and Graeme Gilmour were leading lights in this athletic group. Hockey players shared Jubilee Oval with the athletic squad. Gary had played junior and senior hockey in Parkes and was encouraged to have a run with the Glebe Hockey Club, which he did. Gary became a goal keeper and played 436 games for Glebe from 1966 to 2004. Eight seasons were spent as custodian of the first grade goal. His career was cut short by recurring hamstring injuries. In the '60s and '70s Gary was a driving force as a coach with the Glebe junior teams.

Gary encouraged George to play hockey and in 1970 he finally pulled on the maroon and white of Glebe. Mid-year, the family returned to Greece for 4 months and George did not complete the season. 1975 saw George restart his hockey career as a field player for the U16 A grade No 2 Team. To quote the 1975 club report, "The surprise of the year was the Goal Keeper George Manou – he hadn't played in goals before but he took up Goal Keeping because he said he wasn't good enough in the field of play" Kevin (Yogi Bear) Weeks. He has been in goals for Glebe ever since.

After graduating from Juniors, he made his way up the playing ranks and spent 10 years as the Glebe first grade goal keeper from 1982 to 1991. Sadly, George never won a first grade premiership with the Club but has won many lower grade premierships including two 6th grade premierships in the last 2 years. During his days in First Grade, George was twice ranked in the top 10 players in contention for the Brian Booth Medal.

Harry Wark recalls he was fortunate enough to have played with George when he was a young man on the up. They played together in the Glebe second grade team of 1981 coached by current Club Patron Bill Stubbs, which won the Sydney Hockey Association Second Grade Premiership.

There is nothing selfish about George. He is the consummate team player, low maintenance, even tempered and easy to get along with, accepting victory with humility and defeat with good grace.

He is more of a stay at home goal-keeper than an attacking one. He has, and has always had, good judgement in knowing when to come and attack the ball carrying forward and when to stay at home in the goal. Modern outdoor keepers by and large tend to come out too early, which stems from playing indoor hockey in the summer months.

The top two goal keepers at Glebe in 2012 would do well to ask George's opinion about how well they read the game, as in his hey-day George was one of the best. George has good reflexes (even now at 52 years) and reads a game well. Although not as mobile or agile as some keepers, George rarely concedes an easy goal. Opposition forwards have to earn their goals. In a career spanning 37 years I have seen George only concede one or two give-me goals, which is an impressive record.

George and his wife Maija have three children, Teren (133 Club Games), Aleks (170 Club Games) and Kris (110 Junior Club Games), all of whom have played for Glebe. Aleks is the current first grade centre-half and Kris is a full-back in the Club's under 15 team coached by George. George has coached Glebe junior teams, outdoor and indoor, for many years.

George is an Industrial Arts (Woodwork) teacher at Westfield Sport's High School in Western Sydney and has taught there for many years. He is actively involved with the hockey program at the school and has been involved with schoolboys' hockey at the state level with CHS. Maija is a Visual Arts teacher.

An easy going man, George has made an outstanding contribution to the life and times of the Glebe Hockey Club both on and off the field.

On Sunday the 12th of August 2012 George played his 600th game for Glebe, he was keenly watched by his Family who along with George have shared his many highs and lows with the Club.

On Sunday the 9th of December 2012 at the Glebe District Hockey Club Annual General Meeting, for Georges many years of Service to the club he was duly rewarded with a Life Membership to the Glebe District Hockey Club making him the 28th Club member to be Elected a life member in the Clubs 82 year History. Like the 27 life members before George has always asked what can he do for the club and not what can the Club do for George.

All of us associated with the Glebe District Hockey Club, players and supporters alike, would like to congratulate you George on your attainment of Life member status.