

Frederick Alldis Eastaugh – “Uncle Ted”

Many, many pages have been written about Professor Eastaugh's academic, professional and sporting careers. The following is a brief overview discussing his contributions to the Sydney University Hockey Club and hockey in general.

SUHC the beginnings:

Hockey was just starting in Sydney when Eastaugh arrived in early 1907. The first men's clubs Corinthians (1905) and Sydney University (1906) had only just been formed. The NSWHA was not created until a few months later, in July 1907. For hockey and SUHC he seemed to be the right man in the right place at the right time. It was immediately apparent to Eastaugh that the hockey club would not survive as a “University” club unless it fell under the umbrella of the University sports union. To gain acceptance the university hockey club had to abide by the stringent qualification rules of the sports union, undergraduates only. This would weaken the University team to almost beginner status, but this move paid off as the hockey club gained sports union acceptance in 1909. As a by-product he helped form the powerful Barbarians Hockey club, this new club contained University staff, graduates and many up and coming students from the Sydney Grammar school, enough players to put two teams on the park for 1907.

NSW hockey Association:

On the Thursday the 30th of May 1907 the existing seven clubs met to discuss the formation of a NSW hockey association, to be affiliated with the English association. In that meeting Eastaugh along with F. Peach and F.A. Sandilands was appointed to draw up and submit the first constitution. In which, they endeavoured to formulate rules that would suit local conditions and help firmly establish the game in NSW. However the games actual playing rules would be the same as set down by the English Hockey association. Interestingly one of the guidelines of this constitution was that the purpose of the association was not to formulate a competition amongst affiliated clubs, prominent players holding the opinion that competitions tend to impair the amateur spirit. After much review the clubs meet again on Monday 15th July and the constitution was formally accepted, from this meeting the first NSW Hockey association committee was elected, the first president was Mr A.M. Hemsley.

Eastaugh as a SUHC committee man:

Professor Eastaugh was first elected president of SUHC in 1907 and except for 2 years during WW1 while he was in England supporting the war effort he served the hockey club as president until 1945 a total of 34 years at the helm. At this point he was elected president of the SUSU, a position he held for 3 years until retirement in 1948. He believed he could do more for University sport at the SUSU, but he declined to continue as SUHC president as he “could not wear two conflicting hats.” This was a remarkable run, not only in length of time but in history. “Uncle Ted” led the club through 2 world wars, the great depression and the influenza epidemics of the 1930s. His son Edward, unfortunately in 1935 contracted pneumonia during one such outbreak in Sydney and died after a short illness. His son's untimely death hit his father hard.

Eastaugh as a hockey player:

From 1907 to 1915 he played for the Barbarians hockey club and several times for New South Wales. In this time he played approximately 70 games for the “Baa Baas” including a premiership. On returning from England in 1919 he discovered that the Barbarian's club was extinct, one of many hockey clubs and sporting clubs in general that did not survive the war. After the war he took to playing grade tennis and golf.

Eastaugh as a Newspaper columnist:

In 1907 Eastaugh started writing a regular hockey column in the Arrow newspaper under the name "By F.E." His weekly columns gave good insights into the various clubs and players of the time. Eastaugh would continue writing his weekly column preaching and discussing all things hockey till the end of the 1911 season.

Eastaugh the umpire:

Due to the shortage of umpires, as it was a new sport in Sydney, professor Eastaugh did more than his fair share of umpiring duties from 1907 to 1914. These included both men and women's matches at local, Intersarsity and state levels. Probably his umpiring highlight was in 1914 when he was chosen to umpire the first two women's international hockey matches ever played in Australia. They were played between NSW and a visiting team from England, and were organised in conjunction with the NSW women's state carnival at Rushcutters Bay in Sydney. After the carnival the players (good naturedly) presented both Eastaugh and the other umpire, a Mr Redgrave, with walking sticks.

Eastaugh the hockey supporter:

From early 1908 he opened his doors after Wednesday lectures to anyone – including players from any club, and women - who wanted to learn about the game of hockey, particularly the rules. His midweek lectures continued to grow and in some cases to whole teams, these included the Barbarians, Bandits and the newly formed University women's team. He was a great supporter of amateur sport. He openly encouraged women to take up hockey and regularly coached/umpired and gave guidance to the University's Women's team. This was noteworthy because the Sydney University Sports Union was a male organisation frowned on this and refused to allow women to train or play on university grounds. This was partly why the University's first sportswomen were called "the Newtown tarts". They were tarts because their skirts were often 6 inches above the ground and they were from Newtown because the only field they could use was near the Newtown garbage tip.

Eastaugh the Person:

As discussed previously his son Edward died from pneumonia in 1935 but what was not known till commented upon by a former student, Keith Bottomley in 1949.

Many students have had money problems, particularly in earlier days when government assistance was minimal. One such student before the war received a financial helping hand from Uncle Ted. The professor's only son had died from pneumonia; he then sold his son's books and gave the proceeds to his pupil. I do not for one moment believe that this was an isolated case, it merely serves to remind us that the somewhat gruff gentleman of later years was a man with a heart.

Eastaugh the Summary:

Nearing retirement the University student magazine Honi Stoit in late 1947 ran an article that probably summarises his sporting endeavours the best.

The sports union has a very able and useful president in Professor F.A. Eastaugh, who has made his influence felt increasingly since he accepted the office less than two years ago. His own summary of qualifications for the position is that he was no good as a swimmer and he has never played lacrosse or baseball.

The rather exceptional, if not unique, case of these two games is revealed by a little digging into sporting archives, which record more than a fair success in almost everything else. At school he was cricket and football captain, broad jumper and miler (running) and as an undergraduate at the Royal school of Mines he played rugby, soccer, rowed, sculled and boxed. During the Boer war he took up rifle shooting, and later represented England at hockey against France. Arriving here in 1907 he soon gained state representation in hockey and he also played a bit of cricket "with lots of fun but few runs." It was at this stage of his career that he again

indulged in boxing; this sport left him with a nose which was somewhat the worse for wear, much to the disgust of Mrs Eastaugh. Returning from the war in 1919 he found the Barbarians extinct. This used to be his old hockey club, of Varsity graduates. So he played grade tennis until golf lured him away, just as bowls now exercises a beckoning finger towards another recreation – which may even yet attain distinction of by becoming a constituent member club of the Sports Union. For the professor is a man of action as well as knowing what and how. Rumour has it that “Uncle Ted” as he is affectionately known in the precincts of the P.N.R. will be leaving us at the end of the year. If this is so, he will have the best wishes of sport Union members and inmates of the “Metal Polishing Institute” for blissful retirement amongst billiards and bowls. To use his own phraseology, he is one of our “better men”

This was an extraordinary man who crossed the world with his new wife in 1907 to start a new career and a new life, and then dedicated himself to men’s and women’s hockey for decades. The sport and our club would be much weaker – if we survived at all – without his efforts. Frederick Eastaugh is a man to be honoured by all past, present & future players.