



## **Detailed Citations – 1880-1940**

### **George Crisp, 1880-1892**

George Crisp initiated competitive football in Sydney by placing an advertisement in *The Sydney Mail* in 1880 seeking people to come together under “Victorian Rules”. Crisp served as the Treasurer of the Sydney club from 1881 to 1882 and was club captain from 1881 to 1889. Additionally, Crisp was the vice president of the NSW Football Association for several seasons over a 10-year period. Crisp represented New South Wales on 19 occasions from 1881 to 1890, seven of which he was captain including wins over Queensland.

### **Phillip Sheridan, 1880-1892**

Phillip Sheridan was the first president of the NSW Football Association, serving from 1880 to 1890. He was highly prominent in sporting circles in Sydney, particularly in cricket where he helped form the Sydney Cricket Club. Sheridan was one of the first trustees of the Sydney Cricket Ground and played a pivotal role in providing the NSW Football Association with access to the SCG during the winter season. There was strong competition for use of the ground with the Southern Rugby Union (SRU), later the NSW Rugby Union.

### **Jim Phelan, 1888-1925**

Jim Phelan gave thirty-seven years of service to the game in Sydney. He is credited with steering the Sydney competition through World War One and the financial issues around the demise of the league’s own ground. Phelan was involved in the East Sydney club and the Waratah club before the game’s 1894 collapse; he returned in 1904 to be the inaugural treasurer and secretary of the Newtown club. Phelan was primarily responsible for keeping the game going in Sydney throughout World War I in his role as the league’s secretary from 1915 until 1925. In addition to his skills in administration and acquiring ovals to play on, Phelan was an avid promoter who wrote about football in local publications until his death. In 1937 the first-grade best and fairest medal in Sydney was retitled – the Phelan Medal.

### **Harry J. Hedger, MBE, 1881 – 1894, 1903-1912**

Harry J. Hedger was one of most influential football administrators from the time the game was organised in Sydney in 1880, and especially in its resurgence from 1903. He played around 100 matches for various Sydney teams, but it was his effort to get the game in Sydney supported by Victoria that was his legacy. In 1903 he travelled to Melbourne at his own cost to address a VFL meeting, ultimately convincing the VFL to play a game on the SCG, with the gate money raised put towards a new league in Sydney. This kick-started the re-formed NSW Football League, with Hedger as treasurer. Hedger played a total of fifteen matches for NSW including the first-ever intercolonial game against Victoria on the SCG in 1881 and was captain in his final two games against Tasmania at the SCG in 1890. He was awarded the trophy for the competition's best player in 1888.

### **Ralph Robertson, 1903-1914**

Ralph Robertson is one of NSW's greatest-ever players and played a record 41 times for NSW including wins over Port Adelaide (1907) and South Melbourne (1909). He started his illustrious career with St Kilda in 1899 for two seasons playing before moving to Sydney in 1902 and signing with East Sydney with the reformation of the NSW ANFL in 1903. He captained Easts in 1905-1906 and moved to North Sydney in 1909 where led the red and blacks to the premiership. Robertson captained NSW on 12 occasions between 1904 and 1914, being named among the best in most matches. He was voted NSW's best player at the 1908, 1911 and 1914 national carnivals. Robertson curtailed his playing career to enlist in the British Army as a lieutenant; he died in a flying accident in World War I.

### **Chris Lethbridge, 1913-1922**

Chris Lethbridge is named in the back pocket in the NSW Greatest Team Ever. Originally from Wagga, Lethbridge played for the YMCA club in Sydney in 1912 and was pivotal in NSW's win over Queensland. Recruited by Fitzroy he played 148 games from 1913 to 1922, bookending his career playing in the 1913 and 1922 premiership teams, and captaining the side in the latter. Lethbridge later became Fitzroy's coach for the 1925 season where his win-loss ratio was an impressive 12-5. An extract from *The Sporting Globe* in 1925 described Lethbridge as having a "reputation of being one of the toughest men the game has known".

### **Stan Milton, 1919-1940**

Stan Milton kicked 1361 goals in Sydney football across a 25-year playing career. Milton played 124 games for Paddington (321 goals), 17 games 52 goals for East Sydney, and 183 games for Eastern Suburbs booting 988 goals. He won the Sydney Football League's goal kicking a record five times – 1922, 1924, 1925, 1927, and 1933. He also represented NSW 26 times, bagging 151 goals. It is said that if he had the appetite, Milton could have certainly played VFL if his 10-goal outing in the Eastern Suburbs' match against Geelong in 1927 is any indication. The leading goalkicking award in AFL Sydney is named in his honour.

### **Sir Doug Nicholls, OBE 1922-1936**

Sir Doug Nicholls has the honour of having the AFL Indigenous Round named after him following a football career which overcame racial prejudices and a life post footy which included being a pastor, an advocate for reconciliation, and serving as Governor of South Australia. Sir Doug was also the first Indigenous Australian to receive an Order of the British Empire and to be knighted. Sir Doug honed his football craft playing for Cummeragunja (1922-24) in what is now the Picola league. Upon moving to Melbourne, he represented Northcote in the VFA from 1927-31 winning two best and fairest awards and collecting a premiership. Sir Doug Nicholls played 54 games for Fitzroy in the VFL from 1932 to 1936 and was the first Aboriginal player to represent the VFL. He coached Cummeragunja in 1939.

### **W R “Billy” McKoy, 1924-1935**

Billy McKoy was a wingman from Albury who played for the Sydney club and represented NSW on 31 occasions, often being named as one of the best players on the ground. McKoy won the Provan Trophy (later renamed the Phelan Medal) in 1928 and 1929 and was a runner up in 1930. McKoy also played in Sydney Football Club's premiership teams of 1925 and 1931. He famously kicked the winning goal over Victoria at Erskineville Oval in 1925.

### **Frank Dixon 1926-62**

Frank Dixon started his football life with Daceyville Waratahs Junior Club in 1926 and won the league's best and fairest. He transferred to South Sydney in 1930 and played around 150 first grade games including two premierships and two runners-up seasons. Dixon represented NSW on nine occasions and led the state as captain from 1935-37. Post World War II he was elected senior vice president of the Sydney Football League and from 1947-52 he was the head coach of the NSW State team. Away from football, Dixon was Deputy Lord Mayor of Sydney between 1960-1962 and was honoured with the naming of the Trumper Park Grandstand after him for his services to the game.

### **Jimmy Stiff 1929-1935**

Jimmy Stiff's football career was relatively short but highly impactful. A NSW representative through school, he was selected for the senior state side at age 17. He was easily recognised for his skill and attack on the ball and played ten representative matches for NSW, including the 1933 national carnival, where he was judged player of the tournament – the only NSW player to ever receive such an accolade. Stiff played in two premiership sides with South Sydney (1934 and 1935) and was part of three losing grand final teams. He was tragically killed in a motor cycle accident in 1937.

### **Stan Powditch 1929-1943**

Stan Powditch was a prolific goal kicker who topped the Sydney competition goalkicking four times. He played with South Sydney from 1929 to 1933 when he controversially transferred to new club St

George. He kicked 46 goals in 11 appearances for NSW in interstate matches including twenty-nine goals at the 1933 carnival where he was pipped for the leading goalkicking award by one goal by Victorian and Collingwood champion spearhead Gordon Coventry. His goalkicking prowess proved pivotal in St George's first premiership in 1937; "Powder" kicked 114 goals (and only 38 behinds). His final season was in 1943 and he finished with 776 goals from 177 games at an average of 4.38 per game.

#### **Wilbur (Bill) Mohr 1929-41**

Bill Mohr was a super forward for St Kilda, booting 735 goals for the Saints in just 195 games from 1929 to 1941. He was recruited by the Saints from Federals in Wagga (now known as Wagga Tigers). Mohr was relatively slight standing at 182cm and 80.5 kilograms but his accuracy in front of goal was lauded by all who watched him play. Mohr was one of the first inductees into the Australian Football Hall of Fame and was part of St Kilda's team of the century having captained the team in 1937 and won two best and fairest awards throughout his career. He was selected as full forward in the NSW Greatest Team.

#### **Gordon Strang 1931-36; 1938**

Gordon Strang played for Richmond from 1931-36 and then in 1938, but he was first noticed when booting 10 goals for the Jindera Football Club as a 19-year-old in 1927. He managed 98 games in his first stint with Tigers, then spent 1937 as captain coach in North Launceston. Strang returned to Richmond in 1938 to play 18 games and take his career goal tally to 108. Strang was named centre half-back in the NSW Greatest Team as well as in Richmond's Team of the Century.

#### **Haydn Bunton 1931-37; 1942**

Haydn Bunton was born in Albury in 1911 and is widely regarded as one of the greatest footballers of all time. Always a precocious talent, Bunton booted four goals in the Albury Rovers' 1926 premiership and won the side's best and fairest that year – he was 15 years old. Bunton would play 119 games for Fitzroy, 72 for Subiaco and 17 for Port Adelaide, winning three Brownlow Medals and three Sandover Medals. He is in the Australian Football Hall of Fame and the AFL Team of the Century (forward pocket). Despite his successes at the top level of the sport, Bunton never won a flag in the VFL, WAFL or SANFL, with consecutive premierships at Albury and West Albury from 1926-1929 his greatest team performances. He was a unanimous choice as first rover for the NSW Greatest Team.

#### **Jack Williamson 1932-1941**

Known as a scrupulously fair player, well-liked by teammates and opponents alike, Jack Williamson was a star of football in Sydney. Born in Kyabram, Victoria, in 1913, Williamson's family moved to Leeton so he grew up playing football in the Riverina. Williamson found work in Sydney in 1932 as a cabinet maker and signed with Eastern Suburbs. A force at centre half back, he won four Phelan

Medals playing for Eastern Suburbs represented NSW on twenty occasions including the 1933 national carnival in Sydney.

### **Ken Ferguson 1934 – 1970**

Ken Ferguson dedicated himself to football administration for more than three decades and was known as the heart and soul of Sydney football. Ferguson began his role in football at the South Sydney Club, and he was elected assistant secretary of the Sydney league in 1934 before taking the reins two years later. It was not until his retirement from the railways in 1967 that he was appointed full time League secretary for AFL Sydney before retiring in 1970. He was elected a life member of the NSW ANFL in 1941 and also received an AFL Merit Award in 1955.