

FROM THE ARCHIVES

A reading of any edition of the Principal's Newsletter will show not only the Academic and Music achievements of Grammar students but also the wide range of Sporting activities that students enjoy. This range of sporting activities is in complete contrast to the fact that Cricket dominated boys' sport in the first fifty years of the School's history while there was very little competitive sport for the girls at the School.

Within a few weeks of starting at Grammar, C.H. Hodges, concerned that the boys were not interested in physical activity, introduced Cricket, a sport which he regarded not only as a manly game, but, more importantly, a game which molded character. Hodges was not only steeped in the traditions of the Rugby School where he had taught but he also espoused the "Etonian" philosophy of that period that sport inspired youth and developed School Spirit. Within a year of his starting at Grammar concrete and matting pitches had been laid on what is now the Sports' Reserve. At that time the land belonged to the School and was to do so until 1924 when the land was swapped with what is now the top end of Grammar and includes the Alan Morwood Oval.

For the first few years the School Cricket teams played friendly fixtures before being admitted into the local competition in 1892. Bolstered by staff members the School team dominated the local competition until, in 1904, the local association banned staff members from playing for the School team. The Past Grammarians' Cricket Club was founded as a consequence and until 1915 this team dominated the Townsville competition. The School team continued to do well but lost points when they had to forfeit fixtures during the holidays. The School 2nd XI, consisting of younger players, played matches against schools such as German Gardens (now Belgian Gardens), Central State School, Mundingburra, South Townsville, West End State School and the two Convent Schools (West End and the Strand). These schools still exist with the exception of the West End Convent which later became St Mary's. As an interesting side-line the 2nd XI played a Grammar Girls' team in 1907 and was beaten. It is one of the first occasions a girls' team is recorded as having played Cricket in Queensland.

To ensure that as many boys as possible played Cricket, Headmaster P.F. Rowland introduced a four team colour competition. This was to be the fore-runner of the Inter-House Competition that now exists at Grammar. A staff member was put in charge of each team and the matches were played with great spirit and enthusiasm. Hodges and his Second Master, W. Purves, also introduced a Cricket game called "scrud ball". The boys played this game amongst themselves in the play-ground. Participants were not allowed to lift the bat above knee height and bowling had to be under-arm. Hodges (1901-1910) and Purves (1911-1923) who later were to become Headmasters at the Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore) also fostered the game at that School.

After World War One the School no longer competed in the local competition. The Past Grammarians' Cricket Club also folded and many past students played with local clubs, the All Blacks Cricket Club in particular. With the growth of high schools in the Townsville area and in Charters Towers the Grammar teams concentrated their efforts into helping foster a School's Competition. Many of the better cricketers at Grammar also played in the local club competition. This was possible because school fixtures were played on a Saturday while club matches were moved to a Sunday. Some of the more prominent Grammar students who played Senior Cricket with success included T.B. Whight (later Headmaster at the School), F. Sides (Queensland and Victoria), G. Baker (Queensland), R. Andison, A.H. Tait, W. Kogler and H. Smallwood. Many of those played against a New South Wales team in 1931, a team that included such cricketing legends as Don Bradman, Stan McCabe, Bill Ives, Archie Jackson, A.F. Kippax and Ken Rigg. In 1929 Andison was to make 181 not out against the touring New South Wales team.

At the outbreak of World War Two Cricket was still the dominant sport at Grammar but was facing more and more competition from Rugby (League and Union). This was a consequence of the growth of the three private schools in the Charters Towers region as well as the opening of Town High School locally. For the first time Grammar students could play these sports without having to face adults older and bigger than them. This trend was to continue after the War when Cricket waned as the major sport for boys at Grammar.

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