



## LADIES HOCKEY

Before 1975 ladies hockey was played under the name of Johannesburg Old Girls. They played their matches at Johannesburg Girls School in Barnato Park on a sand pitch wearing pink shirts and black shorts. Matches were played on a Sunday with practice every Saturday afternoon. No practices were held during the evenings.

According to Pam Borrowdale “the nice thing about sand was that it was fast like astro and you could slide on it better than grass.” George Harrison was the coach and instilled such sportsmanship in his players, he was known as Uncle George. To give you an idea of George’s appreciation of his players, whoever made a provincial or Springbok team was given a silver napkin ring, and every year they made the team, he would have it engraved for them.

The team in the 1950’s was known as the “Yo Yo” team because they kept jumping between first (not premier) and second leagues. In those days there were approximately 10 teams in first league and I have it on good authority from Wendy Cooke that “Wanderers was the keenest opposition to ourselves.”

Rules of the game were not quite what they are to day. For example, when the ball went out there was a roll in. No hitting or throwing of the ball was allowed and both feet and the stick of the person rolling the ball had to be behind the side line. For a short corner, all eleven players of the defending team had to be behind the back line.

In 1949 Bae Dawn became the first Johannesburg Old Girl Springbok player. This feat was made even more incredible due to the fact that she made it from the second (reserve) league. Another Johannesburg Old Girl feat was the year of 1961, when all eleven were invited to the provincial trials at Balfour Park.

Hockey in those days were days of friends. Husbands made up the majority of the umpires and the level of hockey was high.

In 1975 when Johannesburg Girls High School did not want the club to use the grounds for practice or matches anymore, and the sand was being replaced by grass, the hockey side had to look for a new home. The Old Edwardian Society were happy to have them use their fields as they were hoping to attract ladies to the club and possible join other sub clubs like swimming and tennis. They were not charged to use the fields but they had to change their colours to those of the Society namely, red and

white. So in April 1975 Old Edwardians ladies hockey was officially launched with four teams in the league, two of which played in Premier League.

Since the official beginnings of the Old Edwardians ladies hockey, they have produced many fine players at both provincial and Springbok level. Those who have represented South Africa are Bae Down, Angela Harrison (captain), Ingrid Dane, Jill Sinclair, Hazel Hinder, Alison Dare and Lindsay Carlisle.



*The Old Edwardian ladies hockey team which played in the "champion-of-champions" tournament in Durban. They finished third, being eliminated in the one semi-final.*

Special mention must be made of Ros Howell. Ros not only led the club to great success on the field winning Champion of Champions twice but became captain of the South African team and later their coach, and took the side to the 2004 Sydney Olympic games. Without doubt she became the foundation stone of Old Edwardians hockey during her tenure at the club.

Those who made it into the green and gold of South Africa all owe a debt of gratitude to the various coaches that have assisted the club over the years. They include George Harrison, Mike Dane, Grete van den Kroll and Ros Howell.

Sadly, in 2003 the hockey side migrated to St Stithians School. Hockey was now being played exclusively on astro and we did not have the spare ground to accommodate such a facility. The club dominated Transvaal hockey, both indoors and outdoors in the 1990s, and in 1998 and 1999 won Premier League and the prestigious Champion of Champions tournament without losing a game. Some club, some record.



*Lindsey Carlisle and Alison Dare, O.E. Players in the S.A.National Hockey side - joint winners of the societys' 1996 Sportsman of the year trophy.*

The demise of the club was a sad day in the history of the Old Edwardian Society.

Old Edwardians ladies hockey would not have been what is was were it not for the ladies of the bygone era. The standards that were set by those in the formative years of the club have only been a guide line for those who have followed in their footsteps. Thanks to their initial tremendous efforts, those who came later were able to raise the bar to place Old Edwardian ladies hockey among, and at times, the top club side in the country.