

Stanley (Stan) James McGregor 1904 – 1982

Stan joined the Briars Sporting Club in 1923 to play Rugby. He played in the 2nd Grade NSW Junior Rugby Competition who were runners up in their competition that year. I believe it was the first year Briars entered a Rugby XV in competition.

One of his memories of that time Stan said, "I can only recollect undressing in a canvas tent at Centennial Park and being very proud of myself in my outfit". In those days, the Club's colours were maroon and gold horizontal bars.

In a report of the team's progress that season, it was mentioned, "there was the famous or infamous MAC" who talked his way through matches and he talked his way through Club affairs off and on for many years following.

1924 season saw the footballers make a visit to play "Bathurst High" and "All Saints", the forerunner of many Rugby tours to the country and overseas in later years.

The Mayor of Bathurst accorded the Club's representatives a Civic Welcome with the match against Bathurst High noted for his "keenness of play". Briars ran out winners 9 to 5 with S. McGregor scoring the three tries!

1925 was a very important one in the Club's history. Firstly, to take a step up from 2nd Grade Juniors to 3rd Grade Seniors and caused a lot of debate before the season opened. Bob Clark, ever the conservative, led a faction which wanted the Club to move one step up to 1st Grade Juniors. However, the other side led by Mal Blair and Stan McGregor won the day with the latter's loquaciousness playing no small part in deciding the issue to go to 3rd Grade Seniors. The result proved a wise one with the Club never without a Burke Cup side thereafter.

In 1926, rugby had a very successful year with Mal Blair and Stan McGregor drafted to Western Suburbs District 1st Grade side.

In the mid 1930's, the Club held some swimming carnivals at the Enfield Pool at which it was noted that Stan won the 100 metres event from L. Nossiter. The Club abandoned the swimming carnivals shortly after through lack of interest and participation numbers.

Also, in the late 1920's early 1930's, Stan's father James Scott McGregor, who was a Vice President of the Club, was the esteemed scorer for the Crickets 1st Eleven. He was presented with a gold pencil for his "splendid services" to the team in 1930. James McGregor lived in Burwood and died in 1938 aged 57 years.

In the early 1950's, Rugby was very strong at Briars, winning the Kentwell Cup in 1952 and the Club Championship on three consecutive occasions (1951/52/53).

It was during this period that Stan introduced his son Ian ("young Stan") to the Club. Then only 11 years old, he performed ball boy duties for the Kentwell Cup sides of that period. "Old Stan" always believed that the Kentwell Cup side of 1952 would give The Invincibles of 1964 "a big run for their money". Stan, who was a team selector, was of the opinion that the fullback, Brian Williams, would not be out of place in any 1st grade team and Graeme Yule, the five-eight, went on to play 1st grade with Sydney University just to mention two of the players in that team. The redoubtable Bill McLaughlin was the coach of that outstanding side.

In 1958, Stan was Football Chairman at the Club. However, it was not a good year for him. He had introduced his eldest son John to the Club to play Rugby to assist in his rehabilitation after suffering some mental health issues. It was set to backfire on him as

during a game against Ingleburn at Holsworthy Army Camp, John became involved in a fight with an opposition forward. Fearing for his son's health and well being Stan went onto the field from the sideline and involved himself in the fight as well.

This resulted in him having to resign as Football Chairman. The Board considered his possible expulsion from Briars but because of his good standing with his peers and long service to the club and administration (35 years in all) he was censured only. John never played for the Club again.

It was noted in 1962, when he was Manager of the Whiddon Cup side, he attended training nights on most occasions. During a crisis at training one night at Goddard Park it was recalled "a furtive figure who stole from the darkness to place us all in the same predicament by switching off our floodlights at 9.30 pm sharp." This "kill joy" met with a fitting end however when he bumped into Stan McGregor one evening whilst retreating from the shed. His younger son Ian ("young Stan") had joined the Club that year and played rugby, squash and some cricket over many more years at Briars.

Stan will best be remembered, particularly by older members, for his veracious support and criticism of the ruby players at Rothwell Park as he strode along the eastern touchline, many times being scolded by Ted Stockdale for his loud commentary and being told by Stocky to "keep it down Stan".

He never criticised the opponents play, however but many times the referees "copped a blast" from him.

Also, his yearly trek to the Briars Annual Meeting each year, brought about his annual verbal diatribe where he espoused all the things wrong with the Club "that year" (and they were many that could be improved in his eyes, particularly as regards any rugby woes!)

Perhaps Stan's greatest act of loyalty to Briars was after his younger son moved across to rival club Colleagues after 12 years at Briars, having moved to live in the Eastern Suburbs. Stan was then living at Dee Why and his Saturdays would involve going to Rothwell Park first to check to see if the rugby was going satisfactorily and then going across to Woollahra to watch his son play, before going home again! A true Briar in every sense of the word!

Stan was a member for nearly 60 years with his son Ian still a member. So the family has one of the longest continuous memberships within the Club.

Stan died peacefully at Sydney Hospital on 16th May 1982, aged 77 years.

Compiled by Ian McGregor, member from 1962

Muswellbrook NSW

Briars 2nd Grade Junior Rugby Team 1923



Stan back row second from left

Briars Whiddon Cup Team 1962



Ian back row second from right; Stan front row, centre