

1936-1946: Half a Century of Soccer

Wests opened this decade by winning the 1st Division Victoria District Football League and held the Garrison Cup for an unbelievable eight times in ten years. They also collected the Phoenix Award with a line-up of **Tommy Restell, Bob Bell, Ivan Sweeney, Ernie Lorandini, "Scotty" Robinson, Stan Thompson, John Watt, George Brown, Doug Laird, Jack Okell, Noel Morgan, Roy Barnes, Gordie Bell, Alex Stewart and George Barnes**. Times were tough and many players were forced to move in search of work. The Wests lost a couple of dandies when star winger **Gordie Bell** headed up north and "**Scotty**" **Stewart** went back with Esquimalt.

Dr. Poyntz, always searching for new talent, was able to replenish his losses with new talent like **Roy Okell, Harold Sage** and "**Chuck**" **Restell**. The club continued its winning ways with their 1937-38 season record reading, 46 goals for, 17 against after 12 games without a loss for a second consecutive league title. After some keen Jackson Cup matches, the final ended with a 3-2 victory over Esquimalt and Vic West had their second official cup possession after a 14 seasons wait.

In the McGavin Cup knockout series, Vic West won the final 4-1 over Saanich Thistles. This was the first time the Wests had won that award since its inception in 1934. The papers reported that Mayor McGavin was at the final and presented the cup to Wests captain, **Roy Barnes**, on April 24, 1938. However, the cup engraving reads-Vic City - 1937-38! A season ending home and away series against the Seattle All-stars saw the Wests win 3-1 in the States and play the Yanks to a 2-2 draw at home.

All this time the 2nd Division and Junior Cubs were doing well although very few results or standings appeared in the papers.

Dr. Poyntz left the Wests to become manager of Victoria United, who were now full time members of the PCSL. **Tommy Restell** was elected to take his place for the 1938-39 season and the Wests went on to win the six-team league for the third time in-a-row. During Jackson Cup play, they bounced Esquimalt 9-3 and the Navy 3-1 before downing the Young Liberals 5-0 in the final. Additional honours were gathered when team captain, **Bob Bell** and **Jack Okell**, were picked on the Victoria Rep side to play against the visiting Scottish Internationals.

At the start of the 1939-40 schedule, manager, **Tommy Restell**, who had broken into senior soccer in 1928 with Saanich before joining the Wests in 1930, hung up his boots. He faced a full time job rebuilding the squad after a number of regulars signed on with United. So Tom recruited **Joe Travis, Johnny Munroe, Lorne Murray, Stan Kitching, Jack Tonkin, Gord Cooper, Dave Duncan** and **Fred Williams**. Others like **Roy Okell, Alex Dallimore Jimmy Patterson** and **Doug Gent** had come up from the second team. They carried on the winning tradition and after five league games the standing read,

Vic West	8
Vic City	6
Esquimalt	4
Rangers	2
Garrison	2
Thistles	0

By the end of league play, Wests had gained still another title with an 8 wins and 1 loss record. They also collected the Fred Price and Jackson Cups with identical 2-1 victories over Victoria City. Only the McGavin escaped when they tied the final against City 0-0 but lost the replay 2-1 in overtime. During their run for provincial honours they met Victoria United in the local final. That battle finished 2-2 and the Wests had missed an upset by failing to connect on an overtime penalty shot! United finished them 3-1 in the replay!



VICTORIA WESTS 1939-40 GARRISON, JACKSON & PRICE CUP WINNERS

Back Row, L-R: Jim Patterson, Tom Restell, Jack Tonkin, Lorne Murray, Joe Travis, Charlie Restell,
Gordon Cooper, Fred Tooby.

Second Row, L-R: Doug Gent, Stan Kitching, Alex Dallimore, Tuck Embrey, John Munroe,

Front Row, L-R: Fred Williams, Roy Okell, Jack Okell, Dave Duncan.

Tommy had another busy season in 1940-41 when the soccer league hit rock bottom. Three of six teams folded from a loss of players due to the Second World War. More new faces such as 16-year old **Gordy Perkins**, **Terry Carlow** and **John Minnis** helped Vic West hold onto the Garrison Cup for the fourth year in succession. A task accomplished on a makeshift line-up that changed from week to week.

The Wests old-boys got together for a game with the Sons of England old-timers, and later, over 75 attended a reunion dinner. At it the chatter was about Pat Mulcahy being named to the Commission, football boots with blocked toe caps and riveted bars for \$3.95 a pair and "Torchy" Peden's bike racing accomplishments. Also, the heroics of the Dominos basketball team, plans to convert the Willows Horse Show Building to an ice arena and the untimely deaths of president Bill Thompson and "Ma" Kennedy.

"Ma," the well-liked Vic West School's custodian and football teams' best booster, attended most of their games and was well-known for her call;

*"We're for the green.
We're for the white,
We're for Vic West,
We're all right."*

Due to the pressure of business, Tommy retired before the 1941-42 season and **Norm Stewardson** was appointed manager. A short time later, he left to play in goals for the new Victoria Machinery Depot team, so **Bob Bell** took over as coach and manager at a tough time. Only four teams entered the league and VMD had jobs for good players! The services were gaining many young men but Bob found **Al Reside**, **Arnie Ferguson**, **Ab Travis**, **Norm Baker** and goal-getter **Malcolm McBride**. He talked **Tommy Restell** out of retirement and even signed old-timer **Jimmy Oakman**. Then they went out and surprised the powerhouse VMD, and everyone else, by winning the league title and also the McGavin Cup.

Vic West's senior team didn't enter the senior soccer league during the 1942-43 or 43-44 seasons. With so many in the services or on weekend war work, it was nearly impossible to field a team. Some Wests players combined with Esquimalt and played under the Esquimalt United name, as well, the Vic West 2nd Division squad carried on for a short period.

Wests restarted in the 1944-45 season with **Bobby Bell** back as manager and five teams, Army, VMD, Navy, Wests and Nanaimo in the Victoria and District League. Vic West had returned, and, after a two years absence, they won both halves of the schedule to regain ownership of the Garrison. That rebuilt team included newcomers **Vince Clarkson** and **Tara Singh** sharing the goaltending, "**Red**" **McMillan**, **Eddie Gibson**, **Len Scott**, **Charlie Musgrave**, **Earl Barnswell**, **Tom Hutchison**, **Cliff Robbins** and **Ron Webster**. Returnees included **Noel Morgan**, "**Chuck**" **Restell**, **Joe Travis** and **Gord Perkins** along with old-timers **Roy Barnes**, **Tommy Restell** and even **Harry Youson** was back.

In the Phoenix Cup competition, Wests met the strong VMD eleven in the final. Three players **Cliff Robbins**, **Bob Bell** and **Earl Barnswell** faced their brothers, Joe, Gordie and Barney with the Shipbuilders. It seemed only right when that unique match-up ended in a draw and the cup was held jointly.

At Easter, the Wests entered three sides into the Tony Hope Tournament. The five-a-side competition was held in memory of Tony, a promising young athlete, who had lost his life overseas. Vic West 'A' and 'B' squads met in the final with **Earl Barnswell**, as captain of the 'A' team, being presented with the Tony Hope Memorial Trophy. The Green-shirts became first holders of the award that had been presented by the Hope family.

Province Cup play had the Wests win the local berth and then down Nanaimo 5-1 to represent the Island in the BC semi-finals. A grand upset against St. Saviors saw Vic West win 3-1 before over 1200 fans at Athletic Park. Enthusiasm for the final was so high that many forgot their numerous injuries. **Noel Morgan** was out with a broken collar bone, **Tommy Restell** had a broken hand, **Roy Barnes** a broken ankle, **Eddie Gibson** a broken elbow and **Charlie Restell** a leg injury. At the final, in Vancouver, a strong North Shore unit won 6-2. It was a bad beating, however, the game had been closer than the score indicated.

Toppers made it a six-team league in 1945 when Legion replaced the Army unit. Wests stuck with their same line-up, adding only **Murray Speller** and later **Gordie Hayward**, to win the first half schedule by scoring 25 goals, giving up 13 and only suffer a single loss. In the second half, 28 GF, 14 GA and another loss were good enough to win the league honours for the eighth time in this decade.



1946 Garrison Cup presentation to Cliff Robbins by Magistrate Henry Hall

Left to Right: Al Reside, Bob Bell, John "Red" McMillan, Earl Barnswell, Charlie Musgrave, Gordie Cooper, "Chuck" Restell, Joe Travis, Cliff Robbins, Gord Hayward, Ab Travis.

Missing: Murray Speller, Tom Hutchinson and Noel Morgan.

West's went on to take the McGavin award with wins over Britannia Legion, VMD and Toppers by a 3-2 count in the final. **Charlie Musgrave** and **Gordie Bell** were the big guns and **Gordon "Doc" Hayward** a steady contributor. West's ran out of power and luck in the remaining cup ties when they dropped the Jackson final to the Toppers, lost in the Phoenix semis to Legion and the Provincial playdowns to Nanaimo. At the Easter Youth Jamboree, West's met the 'Rest' for the Tony Hope award and were edged out by a 5-4 count.

At the close of the season, the annual banquet was held at Terry's Dining Room, with about 70 in attendance. There were toasts, speeches, jokes and a singsong lead by **Sam Winterbottom, Jim Oakman, Fred Wright** and **Frank Tupman**. Seated at the head table were, **Pat Mulcahy** of the BC Soccer Commission, West's manager **Bobby Bell**, president "**Pop**" **Jenkins**, V&D League president **Charlie Lewis**, **Percy Wilson** the West's vice-president, **Charlie Restell** their team captain, secretary **Eddie Gibson** and old-timer **Frank Shandley**.

At a season ending meeting, treasurer **Harry Youson**, reported the club to be in good financial standing from the Cup winnings and collections. It was agreed to spend \$200 on the purchase of jackets for the players and rings for the president and vice-president.

In this era, Vic West's had reverted back to the old way of monthly club meetings. Under the leadership of the Restells and Bell along with solid players like **Ernie Lorandini, John Watt, Roy Barnes, Gord Cooper, Noel Morgan, George Barnes, Harold Sage** and **Jimmy Patterson** nothing but fellowship and good humor prevailed. In the dressing room, after a tight win or a tough loss, never a harsh word was said and that good team spirit obviously had a great deal to do with their fine record.

Brother combinations, who played for the West's during that time, included the **Restell's**. **Tommy** played first rate goal until he became team manager. He later went on to work with Victoria United and devoted an enormous amount of time and energy into the development of youth soccer in Victoria. "**Chuck**," who played and captained the team, began as a forward with his speed and ability at the centre-forward position being greatly appreciated. Later he did good service as a centre-half.

Bobby and **Gordon Bell** were two fine players who grew up in Vic West. **Gordie** broke into the senior ranks with the West's around 1933 and by 1935 he was picked on the rep side. A terrific goal-scoring winger who played with United and other clubs. **Bob** came on board in the 1935-36 season after playing junior ball in Victoria West. A solid full-back he had at least a dozen seasons in green and white strip. He had worked hard as a player, coach and in resurrecting the West's after the war when he became team manager.

Joe and **Ab Travis**, came from soccer-crazy Ladysmith. **Joe** first appeared on the Victoria scene in the 1938 Intermediate League as a good all-round player who could handle almost any position. By 1940, he was in the West's line-up and then on United's roster, sometimes filling in as keeper. After the war years he was known as one of the top goal tenders on the coast. **Abbie**, whose play with the West's began in 1941 and was interrupted by the war, rejoined them in 1945-46 when both brothers were regulars. Shortly after they played in the Coast circuit, first with Victoria and later, with various mainland teams. Their most memorable fixture was Victoria's history-making 1-0 win over Fulham in 1951. Joe and

his defense were flawless while Ab had fired in the only goal as the Reps became the first Canadian team to beat a touring professional side.

The third generation of Vic West **Okell's, Jack and Roy**, were key clubmen through this period. Both had learned their football at Vic West Park while playing for the school and West's Junior Cubs. Jack started his senior career in 1932 playing through to 1940 when he joined the Army. Roy played with the Young Liberals and then the Wests from 1936 to 1940. The club recognized their effort by presenting them with identification bracelets when the brothers left to go into military service.

"Scotty" Robinson was solid Vic West, some claimed, even his blood was green! He was raised in the community and loved sports, although small and slight in stature he was loaded with competitive spirit. As well as excelling in baseball, softball and soccer, he was well liked for his jovial nature. The Junior Jokers were his step to the senior Wests in 1927 where he played regularly until 1941. Then a wartime job with VMD persuaded him to change colours. Fourteen seasons weren't enough for Harry, not many knew him by that name, and when the Wests reformed after the war, "Scotty" was back as their manager in 1946.

In this ten year period, the Wests competed for eight seasons and set a grand record that would be hard to top. Besides taking the league's Garrison Cup in all eight seasons, they won the Jackson in 1938, 1939 and 1940. Added the McGavin in 1938, 1942 and 1945, the Price Cup in 1940 and the Phoenix in 1937 and 1938. Their decade highlight was probably the 1945 run at the Province Cup which had fallen one game short in the title loss to North Shore.

Other players, of this time, who served the Wests well and deserve good mention include. **Gord Cooper, Ernie Lorandini, Roy Barnes, Noel Morgan, George Barnes, Harold Sage, John Watt, Alex Dallimore, Jimmy Patterson, Lorne Murray, Johnny Munroe, Fred Williams, Len Scott, Gord Perkins and Tom Hutchinson.**