

1976-1986: Greatest Decade Nine

The defending Canadian champs fought off Nanaimo, Gorge and Athletics through an 18 games schedule to go unblemished in the 1976-77 season until January 29, when a 1-1 tie with Gorge Molsons cost them their first point.

On February 1, 1976, the heart behind Vic West stopped. **Wilf Sadler's** battle with a malignant brain tumor was over. The popular Victoria-born sportsman, who had devoted his life to amateur sports, passed away. Wilf and his wife Betty, had worked continuously in amateur sport to thank the community for the support they received after a tragic fire had claimed the lives of two of their young children.

Wilf's efforts began with soccer, a game he had played as a young fellow in James Bay. He seldom spoke of his football exploits except on occasion when he would recall the great goal he scored on brother Charlie. At five feet, six inches and 130 pounds, Wilf wasn't too impressive as a half-back while rangy Charlie was a better than average keeper. Way back in 1932, when Wilf was with the Outer Wharf Rangers, he had caught Charlie flat-footed with a curving shot into the top corner. Unfortunately, they were both on the same team!

After many years of work in the Juvenile and BC Soccer programs, Wilf became a driving force in Babe Ruth Baseball and president of the Victoria Baseball Association. Vic West, the club he and Harry Youson had saved from extinction, had been his top priority for nearly 20 seasons. He was president, social convener, chief fundraiser and top booster of the Green & White. One of Wilf's proudest honours had come in 1972 when he was named Victoria's Sportsman of the Year. A second would surely be the achievement of his Wests that his likeness still observes from a distinguished spot in their clubhouse.

Shortly after Wilf's passing, the distraught team suffered a loss to Nanaimo which deadlocked Wests and Athletics. Then a 2-2 draw, in their final league game, gave them their first Garrison Cup in 14 seasons by a single point. They lost the Jackson final to the A's but won the playoff title.

In that years' BC playdowns, Vic West bombed Kelowna 6-1 and handled Westburn Kejacks 3-1 to reach the final. At Swangard Stadium, they faced Columbus and exchanged close chances for 90 minutes. Then, four minutes into overtime, a deflected shot found the Wests net and they went down 1-0.

At the season's end, their talented young full-back, **Mike Hardy**, was honoured as the first recipient of the Sadler Memorial Leadership Award.

The McGavin Cup was back on the West's trophy shelf after they opened the 77-78 season with three series wins, including a 4-1 final over Athletics. They went on to recapture the league's Garrison award once again but that finished the good news. Only one entry, the Jackson Cup holder, would go to the BC's and the Wests had been knocked out early. On the brighter side, striker **Rob Williams** won the Dr. Hunter MVP award as well as claiming the goal scoring title for a second time.

In 1978, Vic West obtained the services of **Bob English** as their coach. After arriving in Victoria, the 40-yr. old, ex-Manchester pro had played a couple of seasons with Oak Bay. Bob brought the best out of a squad of mid-20 year olds, most of who had played together since their teens. **Frank Woods, Garnet Moen, Bob Duncan** and **Dan Henry** joined the squad that played well but had a disappointing season as they lost the McGavin Cup to Nanaimo and the league title to Athletics. At the end, they pulled it all together to collect the Jackson Cup along with a shot at the Province Cup.

In the BC series they smashed Vancouver Croatia 5-0 for the provincial title. That victory demonstrated their balanced potent attack, which, during league play, had seen **Henry** nail 16 goals, **Williams** 15, **Duncan** 14 and **Steve Forslund** 12.

The Dominion playoffs, in Calgary, involved a two-game qualifying round among four clubs and finished with La Salle Olympics on top. All the others went 1 and 1 so goals average decided the finalist. Wests were 4 goals for and 3 against while the other two were 4 and 4. The green goal machine had sputtered but they got through. Then they hit for 6 and gave up 2 in the final against La Salle for a second Dominion Challenge Championship.



1978-79 -- JACKSON, PROVINCE & DOMINION CUP WINNERS

Back Row, L-R: Steve Forslund, Frank Woods, Dan Henry, Jim De Goede, Darryl Hooker,
Ralph Anderson, Gary McLaren.

Centre Row, L-R: Tom Lavasseur, Henry Paul, Alex Stewart, Mark Crisp, Butch Foster, Garnet Moen,
Greg Mellish, Jaroslav Hraskey, Lew Williams, George Fuller, Ed Dewhurst.

Front Row, L-R: Ken Calve, Waining Lee, Rob Williams, Tim Achtzner, Bob Duncan, John McGuire,
Steve Moss, Bob English.

Bob English had enjoyed his coaching debut and credited the Wests success on depth, experience and conditioning.

Subsequent to these seasons, the West's clubhouse had been in the unique basement of the Lambrick Park house occupied by the Sadler's. When it was not available **George** and **Ora Paul, Alex** and **Billie Stewart** or **Paul** and **Ev Calve** hosted the teams after-game socials. With Wilf's passing and **Doug Hill's** suggestion, the club made a bold move by purchasing a house on Tennyson Street. Funds in the "rainy day account" and 40 friends of Vic West Soccer added \$4000 to cover the down payment. Twelve years later, 20 others contributed to the last installment of the \$56,000 investment. With the upper level rented, the downstairs has been completely renovated into a fine meeting and social area where many members and friends enjoy the West's hospitality.

Now, **Henry Paul, Brian Williams, Lew Williams, Alex Stewart** and **Ed Dewhurst**, who had become more involved in the fast changing club, shouldered extra responsibilities. **Henry** took on the business of purchasing the property, while **Brian**, who had held many executive positions, looked after the fund-raising bingo contract. Longtime president, **Lew**, was the driving force behind the clubhouse renovations, **Alex**, the bar manager and steady **Ed** kept the paperwork in order.

Membership fees, rent, the social club and bingo funds enabled the club to grow to four teams. At the same time, helping to support other soccer endeavors such as the major contribution made to the Lakehill Juvenile Association, donations to youth teams and young players requiring financial aid.

West's were still celebrating their previous season's success when the 1979-80 McGavin series began, but they got down to business during league play. After 15 games they were partnered with Athletics in first place. With help from U.Vic they finished on top to regain the Garrison although then made it only as far as the Jackson and Price Cup semi-finals. Luckily, that year the Jackson and League winners went to the provincials.

West's eliminated Kelowna, Vic Athletics and Columbus for their third BC title and another shot at the Canadian crown.

At the Western qualifying, in Saskatoon, Vic West advanced with two tight triumphs. First, a 1-0 squeaker and then a 3-2 overtime final that finished on a Calgary Kickers own goal.

In Halifax, it was different, when St. Johns Drydocks eliminated the West's from the Dominion series in the opening game.

Nanaimo City won the 1980-81 league race, however in Jackson Cup play, Vic West edged them out 2-1 on an overtime goal by newcomer **Howie Kirk**.

Dan Henry, who sat out most of the season, came up huge in the BC playoffs. First, West's and Nanaimo disposed of Sapperton and Westburn, then Dan nailed all the markers in West's 3-0 win over the up-islanders. A 2-0 semi-final victory over Langley put them into the final against Firefighters. That battle was scoreless after 90 minutes and finished 2-0 when Dan extended his run by clicking twice in overtime.

At the three-team Westerns, held in Victoria, with only the winner to advance, all teams finished the round-robin event even after these results;

Vic West 2	over	Sask. United 1
Winnipeg 3	over	Vic West 2
Sask. United 1	over	Winnipeg 0

Each team's goals for and goals against totals were equal and therefore total goals scored decided the outcome. West's advanced with 4 to Winnipeg's 3 and Saskatoon's 2.

Snow and rough grounds spoiled the Dominion series, in Calgary, where a late goal erased a Vic West lead forcing overtime and a penalty kick shoot-out. After so many close wins for the Green, that game ended in a close loss due to a missed fifth penalty shot.

Over the past few seasons the West's 2nd team, managed by **Tom Lavasseur**, had always been competitive. This year, they won promotion into the 1st Division by defeating Port Alberni up at the Pulp town in the last game of the season. Although they had some fine

prospects, such as **Clarence Duits, Tim Elwell, Mike Murray** and **Gary Edge**, there was little chance for them to break into the strong first sides' line-up.

The Wests executive, with some reluctance, approved the advancement and for the first time ever, two teams, Vic West and Vic West United, would wear green and white in the top division. The directors made an even bolder move that year when a 3rd Division Ladies team, known as the Rebels, approached them looking for a sponsor. The women, coached by **Greg Hendry** and **Brian Clarke**, were taken on and so began a long ground-breaking process of acceptance into the club that had been male-only for the past 85 years.

Wests, Athletics and U.Vic continued to dominate the Island League and in the 1981-82 season, Vic West won their 16th Jackson Cup. They had defeated U.Vic in the final and veteran, newcomer, **Ike McKay** was named MVP of the match. **Howie Kirk** was the BC qualifying game star when he scored in a 1-0 victory over the Athletics. Then **Jim De Goede, Tim Achtzner, Butch Foster, Gary McLaren** and **Waining Lee** stepped into the spotlight. Those defenders went through the Provincial, Westerns and Dominion playoffs giving up only two goals, while recording six shutouts in eight games.

Province Cup semi final results were Vic West 2 - Kamloops 1, then **Rob Williams** struck goal in the 1-0 final over Vancouver Croatia.

In the Westerns, a three team round-robin, Vic West advanced with a 1-0 penalty shoot-out against Calgary and a close 2-1 win over Winnipeg Tara.

Saskatoon hosted the Canadian Challenge Cup series where Wests continued their stingy streak by beating Kitchener 3-0 and Saskatoon 4-0. **Steve Forslund** and **Dallas Moen** were picked as the game stars after **Dan Henry** had notched three goals, **Williams** two, **Kirk** and **Forslund** one each. Vic West had won their fifth BC Province Cup including four-in-a-row and their third Canadian Championship. They may not have been the best 15 players, of the 50,000 in Canada, but they had again shown that they were the cream of 2000 senior amateur teams!

Wests United found the step up to the Premier Division too steep and after an unsuccessful season, **Joe Hammond, "Sandy" Crisp, Don Rainer, Barry Turner, Al Leard** and the rest were happy to be returning to the second level. The ladies had a good year in the Green thanks to the work of **Geri Dickson, Carla Hendry, Teri Doupe, Cathy Ross** and **Della Smith**. Their season highlight was an Easter trip to Hawaii where they took part in the Rainbow Tournament. A fourth Wests team started in the 5th Division that season when club veterans, **Tom Collett** and **Brian Cornall**, put together a squad that included **Bill Scott, Peter Day, Steve Fisher, Jimmy Stewart, Matt Thompson** and **Rick Merrifield**. They won that league title in their first year and a spot in the following season's 4th Division. **Ralph Anderson** had joined them and, in his 17th season for the Green, was selected that league's MVP.

The 82-83 season was a disappointment when several players took some time off and U.Vic held a hot hand in winning both the league and their first ever Jackson Cup.

Rob Williams was honoured for his fine play and sportsmanship when he became the second West to receive the Sadler Award.

Back on familiar grounds, the second team won the Dodds Cup when they bounced league winning Villa in the play-off final at Powell River. They pulled off that upset with a shorthanded line-up filled in by 4th Div players and manager, **Tom Lavasseur**, as the 12th man. At the season's ending awards night, they received the Referees' Team Sportsmanship Award for a second time.

The 4th Division and Women's teams had commendable seasons when **Mark Robb** and **Dan Hood** coaching the women, added a couple of long-time members in **Lisa Hayton**, **Val Robinson** and **Colleen Shields**. Their squad collected some honours at invitational tournaments and also a promotion into the Women's 2nd Division.

Butch Foster, ten years a Wests member with a solid attitude and loads of desire, took on the 1st Division coaching duties in 1983-84. Six other stalwarts, **Steve Moss**, **Gary McLaren**, **Steve Forslund**, **Jim De Goede**, **John McGuire** and **Rob Willams** had been with the unit since winning its first National title in 1976. Foster put the pieces together and the playing-coach led them to a South Island title.

During one late season game, against a short-handed, last place Croatia club, Wests won 22-0. That eight man team, with their manager in goal, became the victims of a 1st Division goal-scoring record and **Dan Henry** joined the Eight-in-One-Game record holders. An unfortunate show, but in the tight three-way race, goal average could have easily been the deciding factor.

Nanaimo City won the North League and the North-South Garrison Cup final 3-2. Then Wests downed them 2-1 for the Jackson Cup which forced a third match-up to qualify for the four-team BC playoff. Vic West got down to business with a 3-0 result that put them into their seventh Province Cup finals in nine years. **Dallas Moen**, the leagues' top shooter, was on the leather for two markers in the 3-2 BC semi-final over Coquitlam. An easier 3-0 count against Kamloops extended the Wests dynasty to six Province Cup victories.

Vic West had another shot at the Canadian title and this time it was held in Victoria. As hosts, they did not participate in the Western playdowns won by Edmonton Italia who joined Dundas United and Dartmouth Olands in the four teams Canadian series. Two thrilling semis finished with Dundas downing Dartmouth 2-1 on penalties after overtime and Vic West edging Edmonton 1-0 thanks to veteran **Ike McKay's** goal. Into the final, the incredible Wests once again demonstrated their adaptability and pride in a typical cup tie. Both sides had played solid defense during the first half waiting for breaks that never came. Early in the second stanza, **Steve Forslund** cracked one off the post and soon after, **Jim De Goede** came up with a diving save of a labeled shot. Still scoreless with less than 20 minutes to play, a **Forslund** cross sailed into the box and **Dallas Moen's** towering header rammed it into the netting. That 1-0 Dominion Championship win rates right near the top of historic soccer memories at Athletic Park.



VIC WEST 1983-84 JACKSON, PROVINCE & CANADIAN CHALLENGE CUP WINNERS

Back Row, L-R: Lew Williams, Henry Paul, Derek Drinkwater, Jim De Goede, Bob English, Brian Williams.

Second Row, L-R: Steve Forslund, Ike McKay, Butch Foster, Gary McLaren, Steve Moss, Tim Achatzner.

Front Row, L-R: Rob Wallace, John McGuire, Dan Henry, Dallas Moen, Yosu Iruretagoyena, Rob Williams.

A couple of regulars took a break at the start of the 1984 season and were replaced by **Jamie Lowery** and **Glenn Johnston**. By January 1st, Vic West held a slim single point league lead over Athletics, Prospect Lake and U.Vic in the best amateur soccer league in Canada. They suffered a mid-season stumble but finished with seven straight shutouts for a 14-4-2 final standing, but it wasn't quite enough to overtake the Athletics.

An inter-club game opened the Jackson series and Wests first side beat their seconds 2-0. Then they dislodged Nanaimo and Athletics before losing the final 3-2 to a spirited U.Vic eleven.

Wests hope of a fifth Canadian title was finished but **Jim De Goede** received the De Costa Goalkeeper award that year. And the team were rewarded for their fine past season's record when they shared the Victoria Sportsman's Team of the Year honours with U.Vic Vikings basketball boys. They were also invited to an international mini-soccer tournament in Campinas, Brazil and later hosted the USA amateur champs, Dallas Green Machine, in a June fixture. They lost that international 2-0 to a mixed bag of players from Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.

Danny Hood's women continued their climb with a promotion to the 1st Division and the 4th Div men's side graduated to the 3rd Div but later found the step too big.

The popular Island League continued to strengthen when teams from Powell River and Port Alberni began to climb. Athletics topped the 1985-86 league with an impressive record but they took their lumps from Foster's men in the Jackson semis.

Wests had attracted **Mark Robb**, **Drew Porter**, **Russ Rimmer** and **Doug Adlem** then two late signings of **Scott Weinberg** and **Frank Woods** paid dividends. That pair fit in fine and in the 1-0 cup final, over Powell River, Weinberg's header off a Woods' cross gave Wests the cup with the MVP going to **Frank Woods**. However, it was **Clarence Duits**, former second team keeper, sweeper **Lowery**, **Adlem** and **Rob Wallace** who had kept the Villa shooters at bay. The cup engravings show that to be the Wests 17th Jackson possession but research indicated it could be their 20th.

Athletics took the overtime Island show-down game and went after the BC's while the Wests hopes for seven were put on hold. However, **Clarence Duits** became the third Vic West player to gain the 40 year old Dr. Hunter MVP award.

Vic West joined the popular, fast growing, play for fun and fitness, Over-30s Division that season. **Bob Duncan** and **Bill Stewart** putting together a ready-made squad of old-boys from the 1st and 2nd Division teams.

The six-team club, now well settled in their new clubhouse, had completed its finest decade ever. Unlikely to ever be repeated, they had added three more Canadian titles and five British Columbia crowns. Vic West had compiled a record equal to the legendary New Westminster Royals dynasty of 1928 to 1936 when that team won four Dominion titles in nine years, and in the 1950's when they gained another four in eight seasons. Vic West's record was four Nationals and six Provincial crowns in a nine-year span. The team became known for its camaraderie, a certain togetherness the players shared on and off the field. It got them through the tough times as there were no superstars in their line-up and simply teamwork that provided the success.

Through the decade the teams MVP award has been held by **John McGuire, Rob Williams, Steve Moss, Butch Foster, Greg Mellish, Jim DeGoode, Ike McKay, Dallas Moen, Jamie Lowery, Glen Johnson** and **Tim Achtzner**.

The Price Cup playoff was discontinued during this decade but Vic West had won it in 1977. During this decade they also gathered the McGavin in 1976-77, 78, and 80. The Jackson Cup in 1978, 81, 82, 84, and 86. Province Cup for the BC Championships in 1979, 80, 81, 82, and 84. Canadian Championship Air Canada Dominion Challenge Cup in 1979, 82, and 84.

Successful women's and lower division teams were contributing to the growing club and also gaining a share of awards.

This ninth decade is the highlight of the Green & White story and will always remain their "Decade to Remember."