

This article was inspired by a photo brought to the February, 2025 Family Day event held at Richmond's Main Library. The Richmond Heritage Commission, supported by invited volunteers from the Richmond Archives, set up a display for this event. It was in the materials within the display that I came across a photo showing the 1946 Girls Grass Hockey Team from Richmond High School. When I saw this photo I was surprised, delighted and very intrigued! The game of field hockey, called grass hockey at that period of time, was an important part of Richmond's school sports program much, much, much earlier than I had thought!

I mentioned that I was surprised, delighted and intrigued to discover this photo, but, additionally, I was motivated to learn when and where this game began to be played in Richmond.

I think the motivation to try and uncover the Where, the When, the Ebb, the Flow of the development of this wonderful, lifetime sport, field hockey, rose to the fore from the deep gratitude I have for being able to be so involved for most of my life. I have had an amazing playing career, a wonderful teaching career, a lifetime joy of reading widely, lots of personal support and an opportunity to give back over the past half-century as a player, coach, umpire, administrator, builder and now a writer involved with the development of field hockey for men, women, boys, girls living in Richmond, B.C. Now, I am a Member and Director of the Friends Of The Richmond Archives.

The records consulted at the City of Richmond Archives to research and write this article included: school annuals/yearbooks, school newsletters, oral history recordings, newspapers, my personal Memoir and papers and papers related to the development of the Richmond Field Hockey Club. The support of Archives Staff and fellow Directors has been wonderful!!

John McBryde, in his wonderfully informative Master of Physical Education Thesis presented in 1986 at the University of British Columbia, titled: " The Bipartite Development of Men's and Women's Field Hockey in Canada in the Context of Separate International Hockey Federations", begins with a short description of the " Modernization of the Game of Hockey". The description states: " During the nineteenth century in England, largely as a consequence of several important social developments which took place at that time, sport was transformed from the various traditional folk pastimes and recreations to the modern focus of organized activities played around the world today. Hockey was one of the games which underwent this process."

As I try and reveal the beginnings of grass/field hockey in Richmond I am going to refer to the game as either 'grass hockey' or 'field hockey'. Early references also describe the game as 'ground hockey'. We live in Canada, where the word 'hockey' is associated immediately with 'ice hockey,' but for purposes here the wording will be grass hockey or field hockey.

An early reference to grass hockey being played in Richmond was found in the notes of a taped interview the Archives has in their library of resources, with Mr. George Fentiman from February 23, 1972. The interview is a fascinating description of the process of development of Richmond in the first third of the twentieth century. One comment from Mr. Fentiman relevant to this article is "... young people enjoyed grass hockey, lacrosse, local dances..."

This reveals that grass hockey was known and played by young people in Richmond in the first years of the twentieth century as an enjoyable pastime. The Vancouver Men's Field Hockey Club was formed in 1895. The Vancouver Women's Club was formed in 1896. In the season, 1902-03, a girls grass hockey team from Vancouver High School, a school that in 1910 was renamed King Edward High School, was formed. Grass hockey for men, women and schoolgirls continued to develop throughout the Greater Vancouver area and on Vancouver Island, at this period of time. Notably, the growth in sport, generally, throughout the Vancouver school system led in 1915 to the formation of the Vancouver Inter-High School Athletic Association to oversee that growth. During the 1918-19 academic year, the world was gripped by an influenza epidemic that resulted in the cessation of organized grass hockey for a time.

The initial development of grass hockey throughout the world is described as being mostly separate for men and women. It was in January, 1927 that the International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations, (I.F.W.H.A.) was formed. "The aims of the new Federation included to work for uniformity of rules ; to promote international matches and, perhaps even more significantly, to further the best interests of the game among women of all nations." This was a women's organization. Men's Associations were denied membership. All officers must be women. The first conference of the I.F.W.H.A was held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1930. "

One feature of women's hockey which endured for over a half century was the staging of regular conferences that included a tournament in which all women's (grass) hockey-playing countries were invited to participate."

The conferences were to be held every three years. “ Every member country was welcome to enter a team in the Tournament and invited to send a delegate to the conference. One of the functions of the host country was to arrange for each of the visiting teams, a tour that included matches, not only within the host country itself, but also with I.F.W.H.A. countries of the visiting team.” A unique inclusive spirit was created.

Readers may be wondering why the women formed their own international association and pointedly denied men’s involvement. The Hockey (Grass) Association, HA, was formed January 18, 1886. This was a men’s association. However, “ ...in England, women began to play (grass) hockey in a formal way during the 1880s and early 1890s.” Ireland was also establishing the game in a more formal manner as were Wales and Scotland. Consequently, the ladies, in 1895, made application to affiliate with the Hockey Association. The Hockey Association’s reply stated: “...the Hockey Association has been formed entirely in the interests of men’s clubs,...” The ladies were rebuffed, hence, the principle of denial of men being members and a direction that was based on inclusiveness.

I believe the development of grass hockey in Richmond grew primarily through the inclusion of the game in Richmond High School’s inter-school sport program

I’d like to present what I believe was the ground work that enabled enabled a girls grass hockey team to be formed in Richmond. In 1915, the Vancouver High Schools recognized the growth of inter-school sport and to oversee that growth the Vancouver Inter-High School Athletic Association was formed. In the 1920s, girls inter-school grass hockey began to re-build the growth of the game that had been established in the decade before the outbreak of WWI. Several new schools in the greater Vancouver region created teams and in 1919-1920 the Mainland Championship for high school girls grass hockey resumed. The formation of the International Federation of Women’s Hockey Associations, in 1927 and its inclusive philosophy played an important role. That was demonstrated ... “As early as 1929-30,”... the first season of formal women’s Mainland League fixtures,...” a representative team was chosen from the Women’s Association to play a team selected from the schools.”When Richmond High School opened its doors in 1927 the ground work to form its first Girls High School Grass Hockey Team was well established. There was a lot of support for these young players, their coach and their school to participate in the Vancouver High School Girls Grass Hockey League.

A key figure in the formation of the Richmond High's Girls Grass Hockey Team was very likely, the school Principal, Mr. A.R. MacNeill. I am going to present my thoughts behind my comment about his support being very likely, a little later in this article.



Richmond Archives [1929] - 1929 Grass Hockey Team - Richmond High

It was, in 1929, at Richmond High School that, I believe, the first organized grass/field hockey team was formed in Richmond. On page 2 in the book, "Memories of The Cambie Gym", by Geraldine Wray, there is a team picture of the first Richmond High Girls Grass Hockey Team that includes 11 players and their Coach, Miss Jean Musgrave. The players are wearing a dark V-neck trimmed in white, jersey, with a large, white capital-lettered " R " on the front. Little, at this time, is known exactly about the school's Richmond High School played against and where they played but I can say with certainty that it would have been Vancouver area High Schools. I do not believe they played any of their games in Richmond but must have found a suitable area on the school grounds to practice basic skills, learn about positional and game play and rules of the game. It would have been an exciting experience.

To play in Vancouver , the team would have ridden the B.C. Electric Railway Co. Interurban Line that ran from downtown Vancouver to Steveston, on Lulu Island. The Streetcar system was quite well developed in Vancouver throughout the 1930s, 40s and 50s so travelling to games in Vancouver from Richmond would have been very workable.

In a compilation book, titled "School Yard Memories", devoted to history related to Richmond's development over the past one hundred-fifty years, there is an interesting entry which supports the use of the Interurban by Richmond High School students. That entry follows:

" Transportation-Interurban Tram

One means of transportation that students at Richmond High utilized in the 1930-40s was the interurban tram. The station closest to the school was Cambie. Each day at 3:30pm students were lined up at the school and paraded to the station. The teachers supervised 'the parade.'



Richmond Archives - Interurban Tram

The Richmond High School's student body produced a newsletter that was called, "The Etudiant". It has been a wonderful source of information about the ebb and flow of grass hockey in these early years of the game in Richmond. The name of the newsletter is interesting in that it is the French word for "Student". It is also worthy to note that the widely varied content of the newsletter reveals the student body to have been very actively involved in school life.

The Etudiant, of the years, 1933 through 1938 does not mention the formation of grass hockey teams at Richmond High. In December, 1935 and again in December, 1936 grass hockey is mentioned but nothing beyond that. It was in the November, 1938, issue that a positive development for the growth of grass hockey was written. A playing field was being constructed for the school and "the field has been sectioned off into three playing grounds one of which is given to grass hockey".

I would like to expand a little about the philosophy behind the construction of the playing fields at Richmond High School. The construction of the playing fields reflect a philosophy held by Richmond High's Principal Mr. A.R. MacNeill. Mr. MacNeill became Principal in September, 1928, the second year of the school's opening. Miss I.E. Clemens was the Principal who guided the school through its initial school year 1927-1928. Mr. Allan Roy MacNeill remained as Principal for the next thirty-one years. A remarkable contribution of time, over which, I believe, he demonstrated himself to be, a very, very thoughtful person.

His son A.C. MacNeill expressed his father's thoughts about extracurricular activities in a brief history of his Dad, in May, 1994 then updated the brief history in April, 2003. What follows is a section relevant to the topic of this article.

He, A.R. MacNeill, had an active interest in High School Sports. In the late 1930s he spearheaded the idea to make school facilities available for students extracurricular activities. This was a forerunner of a widely accepted practice today. He felt that students would be better using the school gymnasium for an evening than standing around on the street corners of Marpole or Steveston. This innovative use of public facilities was not without opposition, in fact, some board members felt his resignation was in order for such a 'radical approach'. In 1932-33 the Cambie Gym was built beside Richmond High School. Then in 1938, a playing field was built for the School and one third of that field was set aside for grass hockey. The Greek principle of "a sound body, a sound mind" was being set into practice.

I believe Mr. MacNeill's thinking was very much alive in 1929 and I believe, he would have been in support of Miss Jean Musgrave initiating a Richmond High School's Girls Grass Hockey Team in spite of having to travel into Vancouver to participate in a league

In 1938, a practice area was created, then, a year later, November, 1939, Richmond High School fielded a Girls Grass Hockey Team. Lenore Waddington, a member of the Editorial Staff who held the position of Assistant Business Manager and Stenciler for The Etudiant wrote the following report on what turned out to be the final game of their season.

Before I present Lenore's report I need to state that it was at this same park, Connaught Park, Vancouver, that I played my first game of field hockey for the University of British Columbia's 3rd Team, in 1965. I was 20 years of age. These girls would likely have been 15 to 17 years of age, in 1939 . I related very, very much with Lenore's description of Connaught Park and her description of the game as having experienced those same emotions many times. Knowing that those young players, would today be over 100 years of age, yet we shared so many of the same experiences through this game, makes me pause and think. Thank you Lenore.

Lenore Waddington's Report
November, 1939

“ The girls' hockey game was played at Connaught Park on Thursday,
November 9, against the Kitsilano Girls Hockey Team.

Our team was nervous, and all the players were wishing it would rain so the game could be postponed. But this attitude soon changed when they saw the beautiful hockey field they were to play on, and that the girls from the opposite team were very friendly.

It was a fast and hard game. Half-way through, it started to rain and getting dark so quickly that the girls couldn't tell whether it was a piece of grass or the ball that was being hit,

While the referees were deciding whether of not to call time, several of Kitsilano's team were in the goal circle, fighting to score, and our guards were doing their best to get it out. Unfortunately, a player from the opposite team scored a goal a fraction of second before the whistle. Thus Kitsilano won, one to nothing! This game has given the Richmond team more confidence, but, because of the bad weather, they will not be able to play any more games this season. “

Signed, Lenore Waddington



There is also another very interesting entry about grass hockey in this same issue of The Etudiant . The entry is written in a section of the Girls League Meetings and states: “ Recently all the girls that are interested in grass hockey, were treated to a motion picture which point out the various principles of this game. The interest of the girls was captured by the reel beginning with a cartoon that really was quite charming. We expect that in a year or two a R.H.S. Grass Hockey team will be front page news. (We hope)”

These 1939 entries suggest that grass hockey was well regarded at Richmond High School and appeared to be preparing for a positive future.



Left - Principal, Richmond High: Center - Richmond High School: Right- Vice Principal, Richmond High

The newsletter of March, 1940 does not mention grass hockey being played but it does make two important announcements; a key reference to school colours, that was included in the lyrics of an entry being considered for school song and an important request of the student body.

The first announcement was in regard to a School Motto. It states: “ We take pleasure in presenting the prize for the School Motto to Lili Fujisawa. The winning motto is as follows: Fac tuum optimum. (Do your best).”

The second announcement was in regard to a School Shield. It states. “Congratulations to George Bredden, for designing the attractive school shield as drawn on our cover. This shield has been adopted by the school and has won the prize of \$2.00. The sea-gull on the shield is the school’s emblem.”



-The Shield and the Emblem designed by George Bredden have changed but the Motto, presented by Lili Fujisawa, FAC TUUM OPTIMUM—DO YOUR BEST—is Richmond High's Motto, today.

Richmond High School Shield with School Motto

A School Song was also being considered but not decided upon. However, important to uniforms that Richmond High's athletes wore, the lyrics mentioned the colours. The colours were "Maroon and White".

The important request stated: "The Etudiant is considering having a School Annual printed and would like to hear your ideas on this"

These were all very thoughtful demonstrations of the importance of the growth of this school, Richmond High School, to its students.

Before I continue, I wish to refer to the 1941 Etudiant Annual and the Editorial written at the beginning by Edith Adams, the Editor-in-Chief. Edith writes; "This year's graduating class is entering into a world of misery and unrest." ... "Each one must strive to become a citizen of which this democratic country can be proud. Perhaps, the fact that we have several boys and girls from England among us this year will strengthen our bonds of democracy and bring about a better understanding between the future citizens of Canada and Britain."

The students from England, Edith refers to, would have been 'War Guests'. English children who were evacuated to Canada by their parents after the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Richmond High hosted five students, two girls and three boys. The two girls were sisters, Margot and Mary Callear and both were athletic. Mary had an immediate, positive impact on the Richmond Girls Intermediate Grass Hockey team. However, in 1942, these students along with the entire Richmond High student body would experience the loss of many life-long friends of Japanese heritage to the internment. An unbelievable time of trauma for Richmond High School students.

Grass hockey was back in play for the 1940-1941 season and again for the 1941-1942 season. Continuity of the inclusion of Girls Grass Hockey in the inter-school athletic program was beginning to establish itself at Richmond High but in a time when the world was at war. During World War II, girls high school hockey continued, women's league grass hockey experienced much reduced levels of participation and men's grass hockey stopped altogether.

The 1942 Girls Grass Hockey season at Richmond High is interesting. There were two girls grass hockey teams, an Intermediate team and a Junior team. There is a very thorough record of the Intermediate team but only a little about the Junior team. The end of season summary in the 1942 school newsletter, *The Etudiant*, that follows, was written about the Intermediate team. Unfortunately, the reporter's name is not included.

The Summary:

"The Richmond Hockey team started off the season with enthusiasm this year. Prospects were good; there was a good team and coach; and the spirits of the team were high. The first game, even though it was a practice, raised the hope of the team when they defeated Fairview 4-1. The first game of the League was played against King Edward. Even though the game was tied, the team didn't lose faith. Later in the season the girls defeated King Edward in two games, 5-0 and 2-0. Of the next eight games, four were won, two tied, and two lost. Not a bad record for the team's second year!" The team played 10 games this season and Mary Callear, mentioned earlier, scored goals in 5 of those games. She played left inside and is described as "Small and fast and full of pep."

The schools Richmond played against are of interest. Fairview, King Edward, Grandview Central are gone. West Van, Prince of Wales, Lord Byng and Magee remain in service, today. I'm certain that all Richmond's games were played in Vancouver. I would think that West Van travelled into Vancouver as well.

The League, at this time, was split into two parts of the school year. The first half of the Intermediate Hockey season was played in October. The second half was played in March. I am imagining several wet weather games.

The 1942 season has two more interesting aspects. Early in this article I referred to the formation of the International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations in 1927 and its inclusive philosophy. I wrote of an example of this inclusiveness when at season's end in 1929 of the women's Mainland League fixtures, a representative team from the women's association was organized to play against a team selected from the schools. This inclusive philosophy was demonstrated again through the IFWHA inspired Field Day Games. "On Saturday, November 28, the Richmond girls played at Connaught Park in the Field Day Games. In these games both the Juniors and Inter-mediate played against teams from the Women's League, and although they put up a great battle they were overwhelmed by the senior ladies."

The girls would have been anxious, excited and challenged to participate in this event. No trophy was needed.

“ I’m sure exposure to non-threatening, inclusive, playing the game occasions like these would have inspired many girls to continue playing after graduation. The teacher that was the Coach and led the revival of girls grass hockey at Richmond High was Miss R. Wilson.

The second interesting event was FUN at school! I’ll let snippets from the description describe the occasion.

Well, it has happened at last— the girls played an exhibition game against the teachers. It’s a good thing the teachers didn’t have any practice (or did they)? All fooling aside, though, the teachers were really good sports to play Richmond’s Inter-mediate Girls Grass-hockey team. I vote for more and more games of this type. Oh, by the way, the Teachers won 1-0.”

In a Richmond High Recollections letter written by Ruth (Kastler) Bascoby, referring to 1944, she mentions that the school at this time included grades 7-12, a student body of “maybe 350 students”, and an intramural school sports system based on “Houses”.

Ruth states: “ We also had a grass hockey team which practiced on Saturday mornings. I could never get there on Saturday but I remember Dorothy Barr, Joyce Howard and others really had a good team. Miss McLaughlin was the coach... We also competed with John Oliver, Magee and Lord Byng” (High Schools in Vancouver).

Ruth also mentions an important addition to Richmond High’s support of its teams.

She writes: “Also, Jack, (a classmate), you, Joyce and I initiated the first cheerleaders for the city track meets, games and whatever. We even had sweaters made for the occasion. ... As far as I know, we started that and it probably continues today” Ruth was correct, for cheerleading did grow to become an important part of Richmond High’s school sports program.

Grass/Field hockey was also played at Richmond High School in the 1945 season. Below is a super team picture of the 1945-1946 Team. The photo looks to be taken on the front steps of the school. Unfortunately players names are not available. I think the Coach is Miss McLaughlin. The team uniform is very distinctive. A white, short-sleeve, collared shirt worn beneath a singlet type top with quite wide maroon and white horizontal rings. White shorts and short white socks round out the look. I am hoping the game socks are the long white socks to accommodate shin-pads!



1945-46 Richmond High Team

This leads me back to the Richmond High School Girls Grass Hockey Team photo that led me to this road of discovery of The Where, The When, The Ebb, The Flow of Grass/Field Hockey in Richmond. The photo I found, initially, is of the 1946 Richmond High School girls grass hockey team. The players look to be wearing a short-sleeved collared white shirt beneath a numbered, coloured, athletic, team 'bib'. The 'bib' would likely have been maroon. The white skirt they are wearing looks to be pleated. The field they are standing upon definitely looks like long grass with a forested back-drop. The field was most certainly not Connaught Park but could likely have been an area behind the main school buildings at Sexsmith and Cambie Roads, Richmond.

Richmond High School Grass Hockey Team, 1946 for school year 1946-47.



1946-47 Richmond High Team

Girls grass hockey began to grow throughout the 1940s at Richmond High School. In 1942 and again in 1944 the school fielded two teams for the season of play. The season of 1947 needs to be confirmed.

This leads us into the 1950s.

Nancy West writes in the Vancouver Sun, Oct. 6, 1950:

" GRASS HOCKEY TEAMS READY FOR THE SEASON

Girls' high school grass hockey opens here Tuesday.

This game of field hockey, often a rough, shin-hacking contest, is a popular part of the girls' sport curriculum.

Since England first adopted and refined the sport the game has become one of the major girls' games in our high Schools."

Ms West notes a "six week grass hockey season." She comments; "There's a large entry in the Vancouver and District High School hockey leagues. So large were the intermediate and junior team entries a few years back that the leagues were divided in an east and west schedule." She goes on to state,... "With 50 teams entered again this year..." I have to say, WOW!

The next paragraph echoes a philosophy presented and practiced by the women that I wrote about in the 1942 segment of this story. That philosophy was inclusivity as developed by the International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations and as practiced by the Vancouver and Vancouver Island women's field hockey community through the Field Day experience and through games set up between High School Girls' teams and Women's League teams. Ms West expressed the concept clearly in the following ; "An added novelty in the grass hockey set-up is the Saturday morning league, formed for schools who can't make the week-day games." Inclusivity wasn't a novelty at this time in women's field hockey. It was a thoughtful concept that in my opinion promoted real growth.

Ms West also mentions, "The opening games Tuesday find Intermediate team games scheduled between Magee and North Van, Lord Byng and Richmond...and a Junior B game for King Edward and Richmond.

The 1950-1951, 1951-1952 and 1952-1953 seasons saw Richmond High field three teams in each of those years.

The school year 1950-51 included An Intermediate Team, a Junior 'A' Team and a Junior 'B' Team. The Intermediate Team picture shows the players wearing a very, very nice school jacket over their uniform. The picture also clearly shows the long, curved blade of the hockey stick. Much, much different than the 2026 hockey stick.

Turning the stick over the ball, as is so basic to today's hockey stick, would have been a skill of the future.

Intermediate Grass Hockey—1950-51



1950-51 Richmond High Intermediate Team

The Coaches for the teams were Miss Alexander and Miss McLagan. They wrote: " Again this year Richmond High School is proud of the girls who represented our school in the Grass Hockey League. Although they did not take top honours, a wonderful picture of sportsmanship was shown and we are proud of them.

The Intermediate Team lost two games, tied two and won one.

The Junior 'A' Team lost two games and won four.

The Junior 'B' Team won two games, tied two and lost two.

The school year 1951-1952 was a significant year for Richmond High. It was the final full school year for Richmond High School's presence at its location on the northwest corner of Cambie and Sexsmith Roads. Richmond High School, Richmond's first designated high school, which was opened in 1927 was moving to a newly constructed building located, essentially, at the corner of Foster Road (now Minoru Blvd.) and Granville Avenue in the heart of Richmond. The new school served Grades 11 and 12 and for a short time Grade 13 (Senior Matriculation). The Richmond High School Girls Grass Hockey Teams of 1951-1952, then, would be the last teams to experience the full school year at this historic venue.

Miss Alexander and Miss McLagan remained the teams' Coaches, providing that touch of continuity and familiarity for the players. The school fielded Girls Intermediate (Titled Senior Team in photo below), Junior 'A' and Junior 'B' girls teams. The season ending summary presented below, is as was written in the 1952 Annual . This season became the Coach, Miss Alexander's final season as well. She was to be married at the completion of the school year.



[1951-1952] Girls' Junior A Hockey Team



[1951-1952] Girls' Intermediate (Senior) Grass Hockey Team



[1951-1952] Girls' Junior B Grass Hockey Team

The Intermediate Girls played wonderful grass hockey this season, tying all but one game. The Team's stars were goalie Wilma Charles and Shirley Swift. The Junior'A' Girls had an average season, winning two, tying two and losing two. The top honours go to Shirley Michie.

For a team of full-fledged amateurs, our Junior-B Team did quite well, winning three, Tying one and losing one.

The entry just presented represents the end of an era for Girls Grass Hockey at Richmond High School. Some of these players completed their high school grass hockey days this year. Other players were just in the midst of their high school playing days and others were starting.

A THANK YOU needs to go back to Miss Jean Musgrave who coached the first team in 1929 and to the Principal, Mr. A.R.MacNeill who supported starting the team.

I would like to make one other personal observation as it is a follow on from the 1950-1951 team picture when I noticed that the Intermediate Team were all wearing School jackets. The Senior Team in 1952 are again wearing school jackets but the jackets are also being worn by many of the Junior A and B team players. These jackets represent, to me, the pride to represent Richmond High School that was demonstrated several times over these first 25 years through the creation of the school newsletter, The Etudiant; the decision to begin a School Annual; the adoption of a School Motto; School Shield; School Song. They all say, we are proud of our school and we want that pride to reach into the future.

Now, we move into 1953, into a new school in a new location. I'd like to begin this section of the story with much of the Principal, Mr. A.R. MacNeill's message to the graduating class.

" This school year has been a difficult one for both pupils and staff of Richmond High School. For the first three months school was conducted on a shift basis in the old building and then, early in December, we moved to our fine new quarters and ran on the normal length of school day... Teachers and pupils alike are intensely proud of the new school with its excellent gymnasium and stage, with its well equipped shops and science laboratories, and its attractive, bright classrooms.

But, proud as we are of these tangible assets of Richmond High School, we are even more happy about that nebulous, intangible something called the “tone” of our school,—which shows itself in the relations of students with one another and with their teachers...

This school spirit is not something which was born with the new school,— but it has been given a tremendous boost by all that has taken place this year. In every phase of school life the keenest of interest has been shown and worthwhile results accomplished. The student body of 1952-1953 will leave behind it a record of which it may be proud and one which will serve as a model for the pupils of future years.”

—A.R. MacNeill

Grass/field hockey carried on at Richmond High’s new location but the school now only included students in Grades 11 and 12 plus for a short time, grade 13. This would mean that for grass/field hockey, the actual number of teams participating might eventually decline unless the Junior Secondary Schools, that provided the future high school students, offered the program.

Girl’s Senior, Intermediate and Junior teams coached by Miss McClagan, Miss Watts and Mrs. Forsyth were offered in the 1952-53 school year and were entered into the Vancouver Inter-High School League. the Senior and Intermediate teams went to their league semi-finals while the Junior team played five games finishing with 2 wins, 2 ties and 1 loss. I would say: successful seasons all. I noticed two new aspects to the team pictures. The players were wearing new uniforms that bore small white numbers near their left shoulder. The team pictures were taken indoors with the players arranged on benches. Perhaps in the new gym?

There is another interesting change that took place in the teaching profession at Richmond High School this year, 1952-53. The Coach of the Junior and Senior Girls Grass Hockey teams was Mrs. Forsyth. It was in the mid-1950s in Richmond that married women became allowed to pursue a Teaching career. I believe Mrs.Forsyth became the first married woman to coach a girls’ grass/field hockey team at Richmond High School.

Two teams, a Senior Team and a Junior Team represented Richmond High in the school year 1953-1954. Miss Wallis coached the Senior Girls and provided the following season ending summary.

“The team played outstandingly well in the Senior B League, losing only to Vancouver Technical High. Among the notable players Sylvie Vaselenak, Betty Mytko and Annie Chorney.

The Junior Team was co-coached by Miss Wallis and Mrs. Ritchie. The season ending summary is interesting.

“ Led by captain and centre-forward Juliette Godmaire the Junior Girls this year played a good league schedule. They finished well up in their league and in addition, played in invitation games against Duke of Connaught High.”

The last notation is interesting because the cornerstone of this school, was laid by and named after the Duke of Connaught, Canada's Governor General, during his fourth visit to Vancouver in 1912. At this location on sixth Avenue, in 1953, the new New Westminster City Hall was built and shared the grounds with the High School until the High School was demolished in 1955. The invitations to play against the Duke of Connaught in their season of 1953-54 attached this Richmond High's Junior Girls grass hockey team to a bit of British Columbia School's history.



[1953-54] - Junior Team - Richmond High

When Richmond's first dedicated high school, Richmond High, closed its doors December, 1952, the old, venerable building was renamed Cambie Junior Secondary School. The game, Grass Hockey, established at Richmond High in 1929, carried on at the reconfigured school, Cambie Junior Secondary School. This was reported in the Cambie Courier Annual of 1953-1954.

The brief report states: “ During the year we took part ... in Inter-High sports events. We did very well in Grass Hockey, in fact the girls competed in the semi-finals” The team would have been a Junior Team for the school enrolled Grades 7,8,9 and 10. The team would have played in the Vancouver Inter-High School Girls Grass Hockey League and played very well for they made it to the semi-finals but there is no mention as to who they played against. A team picture is not included in the Annual but this team does represent the first Girls Grass Hockey Team to represent the new school Cambie Junior Secondary and this, too, represents growth of the sport in the community of Richmond.

The next school year, 1954-1955, Cambie Junior High School fielded a grass hockey team again. The year-end write-up follows:

“The Grass Hockey Team had a very successful year considering the shifts. The girls turned out every morning at 9:30 to 11:30 to practice at Brighthouse Park. They played the following schools: Alpha, Pt. Grey, and Sutherland. This was the second year Cambie has entered the Grass hockey League, though they did not win all their games, there was much team work and sportsmanship. They practiced under the guidance of Mrs. J. Weatherbe, who has had previous experience coaching.”

The summary is interesting because it is the first written mention of “Practicing” and the first mention of a field, Brighthouse Park, being actually used for practice, beyond the field set aside in 1938 at Richmond High. Practicing at Brighthouse Park must have meant the team travelled back to Cambie on the Interurban for lunchtime and afternoon classes while on the shift system. It must be remembered that the hockey season was 6 weeks in the Fall. I would also like to note that Alpha Junior Secondary was in Burnaby; Pt. Grey in the west side of Vancouver and Sutherland was in North Vancouver. As well, I believe all games were away games for Richmond teams. Much travel and likely by interurban, streetcar and bus. The players demonstrated real commitment and must have thoroughly enjoyed playing the game.

I think before I continue with the ebb and flow of grass/field hockey in Richmond, I need to spend a moment on the last run of the Interurban tram that ran from the False Creek area of downtown Vancouver to Steveston, at the southwestern corner of Lulu Island, Richmond. This tram enabled many Richmond High School Grass Hockey Teams to travel into Vancouver to compete in the High School Girls Grass Hockey League through the 1930s, 40s and 50s, as I presented much earlier in this article. February 28, 1958 the famous Sockeye Special completed its final run, which ushered in the era of busses and cars.

Richmond's population had grown immensely and that created changes related to access to Vancouver. In 1957 the Oak Street Bridge opened providing easy access to central Richmond. The Deas Island Tunnel opened in 1959. The Fraser Street Bridge operated until 1974 and the Knight Street Bridge opened in 1974. The Arthur Laing Bridge opened in 1975. Richmond was provided more options to get to many more places to play but the organization of how to travel there is likely to have changed as well. In speaking to some of the individuals involved at this time the Team Coaches and Team Managers began organizing car pools to take the team to their games.

The year, 1955, saw the opening of Steveston Secondary School and soon thereafter the expansion of grass/field hockey in Richmond. Jon Henderson, whose book dedicated to a description of the development of Richmond Schools I referred to earlier, writes:

"Steveston began as a junior secondary school in 1955 and became a junior-senior secondary in 1959. In 1965 it changed again becoming a senior secondary, educating only Grade 11 and 12 students."

It was in Richmond High's 1959 Annual that it is noted that Richmond's Junior Girls' Grass Hockey team, coached by Miss Talbot, played against Steveston. Miss Talbot also reports that Richmond played games against Prince of Wales, Magee, Winston Churchill and Lord Byng which means that Steveston would have played against these same schools, all part of the Vancouver High School Girls' Field Hockey League. Field hockey in Richmond was growing.

Richmond High School Junior and Senior Grass Hockey Teams, 1959



[1959] Junior + Senior Teams - Richmond High

Grass/Field hockey carried on at Steveston High School throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s. The depth of the game within Richmond's school system increased as is revealed in the game results presented in Steveston's Annual of 1961. Steveston High in 1961 remained a Junior-Senior Secondary school.

I'd like to pause a moment to spend some time in 1961 at Steveston Junior-Senior Secondary School. This year there were two Girls' Grass Hockey Teams, a Juvenile Team and an Intermediate Team.

Mrs. Sanford, the Juvenile Team Coach writes: "The members of the junior grass hockey team have had only a few years of experience and in some cases none. They show promise of forming a strong intermediate and maybe a senior team in a few years.



[1961] Junior Grass Hockey Team - Steveston High

Steveston Junior-Senior Secondary, Palmer Junior Secondary and Cambie Junior Secondary were the participating schools. This league is of note because it involves only Richmond schools. It represents the first Richmond School's Girls'

Grass Hockey League.

Game Results 1st 2nd

Palmer 0 0

Steveston.... 0 1

Cambie 2

Steveston ... 1

The second entry for this year, 1961, describes the Steveston Intermediate Girls' Grass Hockey Team. Miss Wilson, the team's Coach commented: "This has been one of the best seasons for the members of the intermediate team. Playing against more experienced teams they have done well."

The schedule was wide ranging in that Delbrook was a North Vancouver team, Magee, Winston Churchill, and King Edward, all Vancouver teams and a close rival, Richmond High. Personally, learning about a game and a win against Delbrook, my Alma Mater, was really neat. I was in Grade 10 that year, a mere 65 years ago.



[1961] Intermediate Team - Steveston High

The two players in the middle of the semi-circle formed by the Team are in position to take a "bully". At this time in the game's evolution the "bully" was the method used to start and restart the game. An unique aspect, particular to grass/field hockey, that is not much used in today's game.

Games

Winston Churchill - 3 Magee - 2 King Edward - 3
Steveston - 0 Steveston - 2 Steveston - 0

Delbrook - 2 Richmond - 0
Steveston - 4 Steveston - 2

Mrs. Dobby was very involved as a coach of many of Steveston's Girls Grass Hockey teams throughout the mid-60s and I would like to close the description of Steveston's program in the 1960s with that of the 1963 team she coached. The description in the annual includes a team photo and is very appreciative of the time spent by Mrs. Dobby as their Coach.

"The Senior Girls' hockey team played in the Senior 'A' division of the Inter-high schedule for the first time this year. There were many new members on the team, some of whom had not previously played much hockey. We won two games, drew two, and lost one - a very creditable showing. Mrs Dobby was our very capable coach and spent many an afternoon teaching our girls the fundamentals of Grass-hockey."



[1963] Senior Girls' Team - Steveston High

Girls' grass hockey continued to be played at Steveston throughout the 1960s. A significant change occurred in 1965 when as mentioned earlier, Steveston became a Senior Secondary School, educating only Grade 11 and Grade 12 students. Girls attending Cambie and Palmer Junior Secondary schools and who may have played for their school's grass hockey team would go to Richmond High to complete Grades 11 and 12 and carry on their participation in the game there. Steveston High's new grade alignment created a smaller developmental base without feeder schools active in the game for support.

Grass/Field Hockey also continued to be an important part of Richmond High's extracurricular program throughout the 1960s.

The team photo of the Junior Girls' Grass Hockey Team for 1962-1963 is presented below. Sweat-tops with the school name on the front were part of the uniform. The girls in this period of time appear to wear shorts in preference to the traditional skirts. Their tops look to be white-collared. The team socks were horizontal stripes and likely maroon and white. The Head Coach was Miss Talbot. The blade of the field hockey stick remains the long style.

The 1962-63 Richmond High's Girls' Junior Grass Hockey Team.



[1962-63] Richmond High Junior Girls' Team

I would like to complete the 1960s with what I've found to be a heart-warming outlook toward this great game, written by Mrs. Nichols, the coach of the 1966 Richmond High Girls' Grass Hockey Team and many others throughout this period of time.

"These formidable - looking girls packed the season with one win, two ties, innumerable close losses, a few not - so - close losses, and just too much unpredictable fun."

Richmond High School Girls' Grass Hockey team—1966



[1966] Richmond High Girls' Grass Hockey Team

Grass/ field hockey at Richmond High School moved into the 1970s but, it appears with lesser participation. One school team seems to have been the norm.

Three notable changes appear to have occurred in the 1970s. Mrs. Ritchie states in the 1975 Annual that “ The team received new uniforms this year consisting of a maroon kilt and a white golfshirt.” Prior to this change, the girls playing grass/field hockey in Richmond schools had worn shorts. The second very notable change was in the blade of the hockey stick. It has taken on more of the look of a “hook” rather than a “blade”. Suffice it to say that the art of dribbling forever changed. And, the third notable change is that the game in Richmond is now most often referred to as “Field Hockey”.

Mrs. Ritchie led the team through two more seasons. Her summary of the 1976 season stated: “ The Senior “B” Field Hockey Team tied for first place with Point Grey in the Vancouver and District finals. ... The team improved tremendously this year as they developed a strong desire to make the play-offs. Our thanks go out to a very hard-working manager, Dorothy Kitchen, who kept the players as well as the equipment in good running order.”

The team shared the Vancouver Secondary Schools' Athletic Association Championship trophy for Girls' Field Hockey playing in the Senior 'B' League with Point Grey High School. The photo below, described as the photo won by Steveston in 1971 is also of the trophy shared by Richmond High but in 1976. On both occasions shared with Point Grey High School.

The 1977 season proved to be the final season for Girls' Grass/Field Hockey at Richmond High School.

I paused the description of girls' grass/field hockey at Steveston High School a little earlier in this article describing how the game might face a challenge when enrolling only Grade 11 and 12 students. Field hockey, however, did move ahead very successfully into the 1970s.

Below is a photo of the V.S.S.A.A., Vancouver Secondary Schools' Athletic Association Championship trophy for Girls' Field Hockey playing in the Senior 'B' League. The plaque placed on the trophy for 1971 shows that Point Grey High School and Steveston High School shared the championship. The final must have been tied and both teams declared champions. Well done, Steveston! Inclusivity, the time honoured practice of the International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations, formed in 1927 remained alive, well and thoughtful in Vancouver, in 1971 and again in 1976!



Trophy: Vancouver Secondary Schools' Athletic Association

The Steveston Senior Girls Grass Hockey Team of 1973 was, it appears, this school's last team to participate in the Vancouver Senior Secondary Schools League. Miss Gill was their Coach and wrote: "We tied 5 games and we lost 3 to give us 5 points in league standing - fourth out of five teams in our division - ...". Below is the photo of the Steveston High School Girls Grass Hockey Team



[1973] Steveston High, Senior Girls' Team

Miss Gill, needs a special mention. She is a young woman who was raised in Richmond, attended Richmond High School and played on the 1962-1963 Richmond High School Junior Girls Grass Hockey Team. After graduation she attended the University of British Columbia, completed a degree in Education and became a teacher at Steveston High School, in Richmond, B.C. One aspect of this coaching experience for Miss Gill that I applaud comes out in her stated intention post season. She wrote: "The team will be travelling to Schools in the Spring to give clinics and hopefully, interest other girls in playing." Giving Back!

Miss Gill coached again in the 1973-1974 but mentions in her season summary that, of the fourteen girls on the team only three would be returning next year. And, yes, it appears that this was the final season for Steveston's Girls Field Hockey.

The 73-74 Season did present two interesting developments. The first development was that, Steveston did not participate in the Vancouver Senior Secondary School Girls Field Hockey League but did play in a Richmond-based exhibition games league that included games with Boyd, Richmond, McRoberts and Cambie. The second very interesting development is the appearance in this league of Hugh Boyd Junior Secondary School and Hugh McRoberts Junior Secondary School. This brings to light two additional Richmond schools becoming involved in grass/field hockey and represented growth and expansion of the game throughout a growing community.

Hugh Boyd's appearance in 1973 appears to have been their only appearance in Richmond school girls' field hockey until the game was brought back to Boyd for the 1996 season by Lance Carey, Coach, with Janis The and Harjeet Manhas as Team Managers and Co-Sponsors. It was very special to have Janis as one of the Team Managers for Janis was the Team Manager when she and Nancy Carey guided McRoberts in the mid-1970s. This 'Ebb', 1973-1996 for Hugh Boyd Junior Secondary School represented a pause of twenty-three years.

The first McRoberts Junior Secondary School Girls' Field Hockey Team formed for the 1973-74 school year was coached by Ms Robinson. The team carried on for three more seasons 1974-75; 1975-76; 1976-77 with Ms Nancy Carey as the Coach and Ms Janis The as the Team Manager. The games were all played in Vancouver with car-pooling as the team's mode of travel. The 1976-77 school year represented the beginning of an 'Ebb', a pause in field hockey participation at McRoberts. This pause remained until Nancy Carey, Earl Osipov and Team Sponsor, Bob Jackson formed a Junior Girls' Field Hockey Team for the 1994 season. This represented a pause of eighteen years.

Below, are photos of Hugh Boyd Junior Secondary School's Girls Grass Hockey Team, 1973 and Hugh McRoberts Junior Secondary School's Girls' Grass Hockey Team, 1973.



[1973] Team Photos: Hugh Boyd (Left) + Hugh McRoberts (Right)



The Girls' Grass/ Field Hockey program appears to have ended in Richmond's Senior and Junior Secondary Schools in the late 1970s. Yet, in this rapidly growing community of the 1970s, the game took root and began to grow in a different way.

It is at this point that I wish to move forward with the topic of this article, "The Where, the When, the Ebb, the Flow of Field Hockey in Richmond, B.C., Canada", a little more quickly.

In 1970 Mr. Pat McMahon with the assistance of Mr. Jim Rice formed a boys' field hockey team. They used the South Arm Park grounds behind Whiteside Elementary School to practice. This one boys team, with the support of the Jokers Field Hockey Club President, Mr. Victor Warren, Junior Development Director, John Hawthorn and its Men's Team players, soon grew to several boys teams and led soon thereafter, to the creation of the Richmond Field Hockey Club

Below is a picture of Mr. Pat McMahon and Mr. Jim Rice with a team from this period. Mr. McMahon was the Coach and initiated the idea of starting a boys field hockey team as an option to other Spring sports while Mr. Rice, was the team Manager and the person who in 1977 wrote a Club Constitution and took the steps necessitated through the Societies Act to formally create The Richmond Field Hockey Club.



[1970-72] Richmond Field Hockey Club Founders with one of the First Teams

The formation of the Richmond Field Hockey Club represents a significant departure from the way in which the game of field hockey had developed in Richmond since 1929. The history of the game thus far in Richmond has been in the context of growth of the game within the school system. Additionally, prior to 1970, the game had been played by Junior and Senior High School girls. The game, framed within this structure, in the late 70s, in Richmond schools experienced an Ebb, a pause. Now, I wish to show how the formation and growth of the Richmond Field Hockey Club led to a Flow, greater growth and outstanding performance.

The Junior Boys side of the Richmond Field Hockey Club began in 1970. Several players from the Jokers Field Hockey Club came out to Richmond from Vancouver to help the boys learn and to practice the basic skills of this new game. It really helped that many were also soccer players. This gave the boys a strong start and the Jokers Men's tutelage paid off as early as 1972 when a U-13 Richmond Field Hockey Club boys' team placed 2nd at the Provincial Championships.

In 1977, Mr. McMahon and Mr. Rice realized that many of the boys were getting older and were eligible to play in the Men's League. For them to continue in the game in Richmond they needed to find a Coach. I had moved to Richmond in 1975 and received a call from Mr. Rice. The result of that conversation led to me taking a group of 15-17 year old boys into the Vancouver Men's Field Hockey League in September, 1977. The Club had grown, field hockey in Richmond had grown.

Below is a photo of the Richmond Field Hockey Club's first men's team. The picture includes, Lance Carey, Coach, and his University of B.C., Thunderbirds teammate of many years and fellow Canadian Team player, Doug Harrison. Doug helped stabilize the mid-field of the team and provided consistent support for these young players facing the challenge of playing their first season of men's field hockey.



*[1977] Richmond Field Hockey Club's
First Men's Team*

The number of teams grew. In 1980, the Club President, Mr. Eric Muir initiated an event that developed into an important club tradition. This was the Annual end of season Awards Banquet.

In 1982-83 the Richmond Field Hockey Club took another step forward when a women's team was formed. Jenny John of the British Columbia Field Hockey Association set the stage for a group of women to move toward the formation of a Richmond Field Hockey Club Senior Women's Team. The group was successful, the Rebels were formed and became the longest running team in the Club. The photo below was taken in 2003 but it does include several of the players who spent many seasons contributing significantly to the growth of the Club as players, coaches, managers and administrators.



[2003] Richmond Field Hockey Club Senior Women's Team

The year, 1985, completed the circle of participation. Nancy Carey and Roberta Hawbolt completed the circle through the formation of the girls side of the Richmond Field Hockey Club. One might have thought, "Well, Nancy is back". Three years of coaching at McRoberts Junior Secondary School in the mid-70s followed by taking on the position of 'Sport Chairman' for the Field Hockey Tournament at the British Columbia Summer Games hosted by Richmond in 1979, then, in 1985, initiating with Roberta, the Richmond Field Hockey Club's first Junior Girls team, the Harriers. The 15th Year since the formation of the Club was certainly significant.



[1985] Pennant Recognizing 15 Years since 1970 Formation (Left) &

[1987] Richmond Field Hockey Club Jr Girls' Team (Right)



I have described much of the growth of the Richmond Field Hockey Club in a Memoir, *TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE*, I wrote, published then re-wrote to add what I felt to be important new material and re-published in 2023. Consequently, my intention, now, is to describe, how The Richmond Field Hockey Club fitted in to the ebb and flow of field hockey in Richmond.

The circle was complete but the development of the game for boys began to wane toward the end of the 1980s. The boys of the 1970s grew to become the young men of the 1980s and 90s. The financial costs of raising a family in Richmond forced them to look elsewhere. They did and the Club lost its prospective coaches/managers/administrators. This movement out of Richmond of the young men eventually affected the development of the Men's side as well. Field hockey for Junior Boys ended in the mid-1990s and for the Men at the beginning of the Third Millennium. The Women's Team, the Rebels, carried on with one team and some years, a 2nd Team. The story with the Junior Girls side was completely different. They flourished.

The Richmond Field Hockey Club's first girls' team was the Harriers. The team name became a tradition as almost every girls team thereafter took the name of a bird and tried most often for the name to be of a bird found in Richmond. The Harriers immediately set the bar for skill and team play very high for the younger teams that followed. June/1992 the Harriers won the U-16 Girl's Provincial Club Championship held in Tsawassen, British Columbia. This was the first Provincial Club Championship won by the girls side of the Richmond Field Hockey Club. They were a team well coached by Nancy Carey and Bindi Biln and well managed by Cheryl Taunton.

Soon thereafter the Herons, the Eagles and the Snipes were formed, then, for a number of years a new young team was formed annually. There were the Flickers, Ospreys, Merlins, Finches, Pelicans, Owls, Warblers, Kestrels, Eaglets, Ducks, Thrashers, Flamingos, Roadrunners, Sandpipers...It was wonderful!

The consistent growth was recognized by the Parks Department in the City of Richmond and in particular Ross Sakai. He listened and learned that a better field surface was needed to really develop the standard of team play and to keep the growth on a positive trajectory. Ross advocated for a new improved location for the Richmond Field Hockey Club. His perseverance paid off and the Club was moved to Wowk Park on Woodward Road in 1991. The Parks Department took very good care of the surface and the level of skill, teamwork and team play improved markedly throughout the entire Club, boys, men, women, girls. Everyone.

The growth and the success of the Richmond Field Hockey Club through the 1970s and 1980s led the game in the 1990s back to the schools. Girls' High School Field Hockey remained a much participated-in, inter-high school sport throughout Greater Vancouver in the period when in Richmond's Junior and Senior Secondary Schools, the sport had ebbed. In the early 1990s the girls who played for the Harriers and Herons, the two older teams, became of high school age. Cheryl Taunton, the Harriers Manager, realized this and approached Richmond High's administration with the idea of forming a Girls Field Hockey Team. I spoke with Cheryl, and she mentioned that she had no idea of the long history of field hockey at Richmond High School when she approached the Principal, Mr. Bob Cartner. She received a very positive response from Mr. Cartner and with the help of Bob Jackson, Richmond School Board Sport Administrator and Gayle Guest who was the School Sponsor and became the Team Manager, a team was formed. Cheryl had asked Bindi Biln, the Harriers coach at this time, if she would take on the position of Head Coach. Bindi agreed and Richmond High's first Girls' Field Hockey Team since 1977 took to the field in the autumn of 1993. A homecoming! A bonus was the Canadian National Women's Field Hockey Team donated tartan kilts as part the team's uniform!

Below is a team picture.
Richmond Senior High School Girls' Field Hockey Team, 1993



An interesting aspect to the return of field hockey to Richmond High related to the position of the Head Coach in 1993 and the Head Coach in 1994. The reader may have noticed that the Head Coaches of Richmond High's Grass/field Hockey teams, historically, were women and were teachers at the school. That doorway opened, in part, in 1993, when Bindi Biln became Richmond High's first Girls' Field Hockey Team's Head Coach who was not a teacher at the school. In 1994, Lance Carey became Richmond High's Girls' Field Hockey Team's first male Head Coach and like Bindi was not a teacher at Richmond High.

Richmond High, in 1993, participated in the Vancouver Secondary Schools Girls Field Hockey League. Autumn was the season of play. The team played very well and with a record of 7 wins, 2 losses, 1 draw secured a position in the City Championships. They finished third in the City Championships thereby earning a berth into the Provincial Championships held at the University of British Columbia. After three days of good offensive and defensive play, they finished 11th of 16 teams participating. I always maintain that to even participate in this tournament is for all teams a real challenge and an honour. This was a terrific return of girls high school field hockey for Richmond High and for the community of Richmond.

Field Hockey was back in the Richmond School's Athletic program!. How fitting it was to have returned, first, to where it had started, Richmond High School!

Club field hockey for girls in Richmond and School field hockey for girls in Richmond helped the overall development of the game. School field hockey was a Fall sport and Club field hockey was a Spring sport. Their graduation points coincided. The final year of Club hockey for girls was Under-18. This coincided with Grade 12 Graduation. Quite a transitional time in their lives! Participation in the years ahead would be in the world of adult sport.

The continued growth of the Richmond Field Hockey Club's junior girls development program led, in the Autumn season of 1994, to the return of girls field hockey to Hugh McRoberts Junior Secondary. It is interesting to note that the Hugh McRoberts team of 1976 was coached by Nancy Carey.

Now, 18 years later, Nancy was involved with the coaching and formation of a Grade 8 Girls Field Hockey Team, again, at McRoberts, with co-coach, Earl Osipov and Sponsorship of Richmond Sports Administrator, Bob Jackson. This return of the girls field hockey program to McRoberts was significant. It began an incredible run of field hockey success and dominance from McRoberts for at least 14 years.

The team of 1994, pictured below, set the bar high, right away. The players were Grade 8s and 9s. The end of season write-up in the 1994-95 school Annual is exciting.

"... call it GRASS HOCKEY! It's FIELD HOCKEY! It's played on a FIELD! Speaking of fields, cheers could be heard whenever the McRoberts Field Hockey Team took the field, and boy did they take it by storm! They were the first team formed at McRoberts since the 70s and man are they proud! In their first season, they tied only one game winning the rest. They only had ONE goal scored against them during the whole season!!!

THEY also beat the long reigning champions, Point Grey, to win the Vancouver and District Championship!"



[1994] Hugh McRoberts Junior Secondary Team

In 1996 there was a significant change in the structure of Richmond Secondary Schools. All secondary schools became Senior Secondary Schools with a grade composition of Grade 8 to Grade 12. Ms Gayle Guest and Mr. Bob Jackson realized this and quickly initiated an Inter-High School Girls' Field Hockey League. A high school league that meant many more girls who wished to play field hockey throughout all of their high school years, now would have the opportunity to do so. It is to be noted that Ms Guest and Mr. Jackson had in the early 1990s worked on the melding and achieving of the acceptance of the Richmond High School Girls' Field Hockey Teams into the Vancouver High School Girls' Field Hockey League's play-off system for representation in the annual British Columbia Girls' Field Hockey Provincial Tournament. Gayle's and Bob's effort now provided many more Richmond girls a wonderful opportunity to represent their school in this historic High School Girls Field Hockey Tournament.

The new grade configuration coinciding with the steady growth in the number of girls playing Club field hockey in Richmond resulted in the growth of the number of high schools adding girls field hockey to their Autumn inter-high athletic program. The period of approximately 1996 through close to the end of the first decade of the 2000s, provided the community of Richmond with a league that saw up to 9 high school teams in Richmond playing field hockey. This was a highlight period of time for the flow of field hockey throughout Richmond in terms of participation and opportunity for a large number of girls.

And, Hugh McRoberts Senior High School, from the year of their re- entry into the girls Inter-high school Leagues in 1994 through to 2006 dominated league play in Richmond and were a significant force in girls' field hockey at the annual Girls' High School 'AAA' Provincial Championships during these years. Twice, 1998 and 2006, McRoberts were 'AAA' Provincial Champions. The picture below shows the 'AAA' Banners of Provincial Championship that these teams won for their school. They, today, proudly hang from the rafters of McRoberts School gymnasium.

From 1998, when McRoberts won its first Girls' High School 'AAA' Provincial Field Hockey Championship, through to 2006 when McRoberts won its 2nd Girls' High School 'AAA' Provincial Field Hockey Championship the team was guided by Mr. Roger Young, Head Coach and teacher of senior English. The team's record at these Championships over this period of time was remarkable!



Provincial “AAA” Championship Banners; McRoberts 1998-99 + 2006-07

The Richmond Field Hockey Club’s girls’ side benefitted as well from the new grade configuration, in that, all the girls in the U-14 - U-18 age groups, now, were able to play for their High School from Grade 8 through Grade 12. The ability to play field hockey for your school in the Autumn then play again for your Club Team in the Spring, as mentioned earlier, was terrific at this time in their lives

Throughout the 1990s and through to 2020, to the set-back of Covid-19 in March, 2020, the girls side of the Club experienced a lot of success in Greater Vancouver League play and Provincial Club Championships. The ‘AAA’ Girls’ High School Provincial Championships of 1998 and 2006 by McRoberts Senior Secondary were directly related to the development of the many skilled, capable club players. The Eagles, the Snipes, the Herons, the Warblers and the Eaglets were significant contributors of these very skilled, hard-working players who played for these two championship teams.

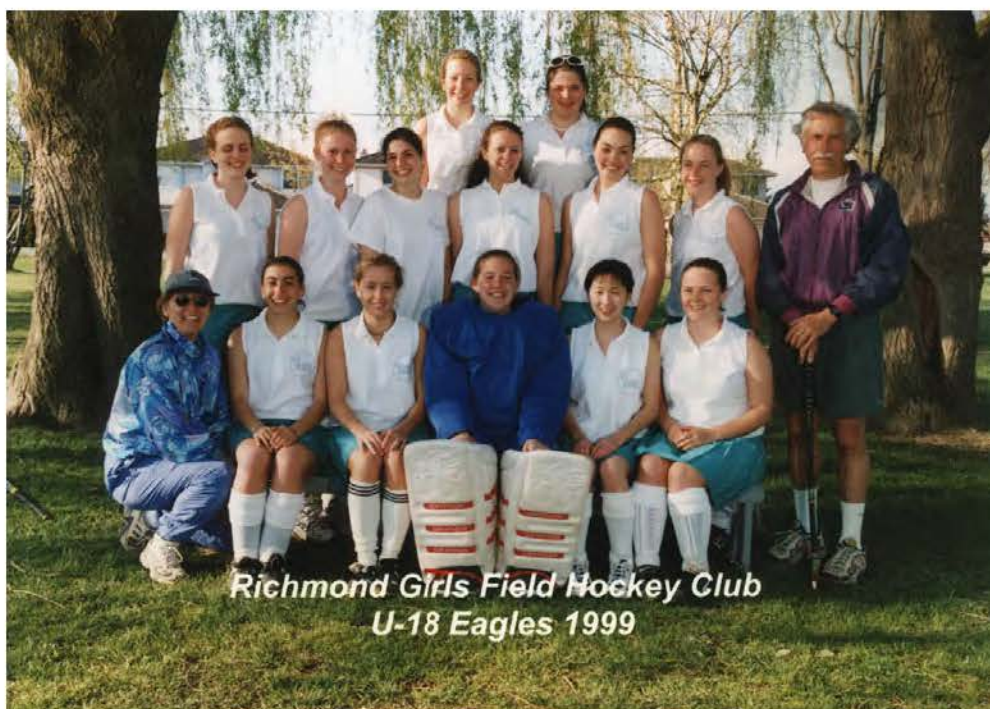
The Snipes, throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s during their many years together were a very strong league team and won 4 Provincial Club Championships. Their Coaches were Harley Rollins and Lex Hoos and the Team Manager was Judy Hoos.

The Eagles, throughout the 1990s, during their 8 years together, did not lose a league game and won 6 Provincial Club Championships. May 7, 2022, the Richmond Field Hockey Club's team, the Eagles, was inducted into the City of Richmond's Sports Wall of Fame in a ceremony conducted by His Worship Mayor Malcolm Brodie and Richmond's Councillors at the Gateway Theatre. Their Coaches were Nancy and Lance Carey and the Team Manager was Janet MacLean.

Below, on the left are the Snipes and on the right are the Eagles.



*Richmond Field Hockey
Club: "Snipes" & "Eagles"*



*Richmond Girls Field Hockey Club
U-18 Eagles 1999*

After 2006, a change began to take place that started with a decline in the number of high schools participating in the Richmond High School League. Mark Booth, the Sports Editor for the Richmond News, community paper, and a longtime follower of field hockey in Richmond wrote on November 10, 2014, "Today, McMath is the only Richmond school still playing and it's been that way for the past four years." This means the Richmond, Girls' High School Field Hockey League had not been active since 2010. The game continued at McMath, initially, under the direction of Marianne Longmore, then, from about 2013 on, under the direction of coaches TJ Sander and Kira Carre.

The McMath Wildcats, throughout this period, was a highly successful team. McMath Coach, TJ Sander, remembered and reflected on the absence of the Richmond High School Field Hockey League as he recognized its importance to the overall development of the game in Richmond. He also recognized that McMath was fortunate as their team's Vancouver League games were played as 'home and away'. That certainly mitigated the demands of travel. Historically, Richmond Girls Field Hockey Teams playing in the Vancouver League had to travel to Vancouver for all of their games.

The highlight for McMath had to have been the season of 2017. That season, the Wildcats repeated as Vancouver and District Champions and in November hosted the High School Girls' AAA Field Hockey Provincial Championships. Hosting this Championship was a first for Richmond High School Girls' Field Hockey. TJ Sanders, tipped his hat to Tania Webster as a key person in organizing this event for McMath and the community of Richmond. I believe the Provincial Girls' Field Hockey Championships Organizing Committee was also saying, "Thank You," for the contribution the Richmond field hockey community as a whole has made to the wider British Columbia field hockey community. And how did the McMath Wildcats perform in this tournament? The team played inspired hockey for school and community finishing an outstanding 5th overall, up from the very impressive 8th place finish in 2016.



[2017] McMath - "Wildcats"

McMath participated in the Vancouver League and the AAA Provincial Tournament for two more seasons before Covid-19 stopped all high school sport and to this day in 2026 it has not been played in Richmond Secondary Schools.

Richmond High School Girls Field Hockey completed in the school year 2019-20 at McMath Senior Secondary School. Since, approximately, 2010, McMath had been the sole high school playing the game. The Richmond Field Hockey Club hockey, over this period of time, carried on offering its program to the community of Richmond. Club documents in the period 2015-16-17 show, that for the most part, 9 or 10 teams comprising roughly 150 players per season participated in the junior field hockey program. Additionally, for three years prior to 2015, the Club hosted the Annual U-12 girls Provincial Field Hockey Festival for the British Columbia Field Hockey Association. The Festival was a lead-off event for British Columbia's U-12 season. In 2018, the U-16 Flickers won the Tier 2 Girls Provincial Club Championship and the U-18 Herons won the Tier 2 Girls Provincial Club Championship. Terrific results that demonstrated the Club's commitment to the development of the game in Richmond, British Columbia and to furthering the concept, so simply expressed in the motto presented in 1940 by Lili Fujisawa, for Richmond High School, then and now, FAC TUUM OPTIMUM (DO YOUR BEST).

March, 2020, Covid-19 struck. A successful effort in signing up over 30 U-12 girls intended to deepen the base of the Richmond Field Hockey Club was thwarted. Practice, game play, all stopped and the Club has not been able to recover. The Ebb of the Flow has set in and the hope is out there to re-start SOMETHING GOOD.

Epilogue

I would like to turn back to the beginning of this article that I have titled: “The Where, The When, The Ebb, The Flow of the Game of Field Hockey in Richmond, B.C., Canada”. The photo I discovered at the Family Day Celebration held at Richmond’s Main Library in 2025, brought to the surface, again, the deep gratitude I have for this game. The game that has consistently encouraged me to remain involved for most of my life. I have had an amazing playing career, a full family life, a wonderful teaching career, a lifetime of reading widely, lots of personal support. Throughout the last 60 plus years I have been provided many, many opportunities to give back. First, as a very committed player that completed with representation on the Canadian Men’s Field Hockey Team at the XXI Olympiad in 1976 in Montreal, Canada. One year later, I was given the opportunity to give back to my community, Richmond, B.C. Now, a half-century of coaching, managing, umpiring, administrating, building, alongside my wife, my partner, Nancy, and many, many supportive people who helped to act upon a collective focus of offering and developing field hockey for the men, women, boys, girls in the City of Richmond, have passed. Wonderful times for all of us!

The photo, of the 1946 Richmond High School Girl’s Grass Hockey Team, made me pause, as did the report written by Lenore Waddington in 1939, that I included. A pause in the photos case, to ponder, “My goodness! What I do not know!” The last eighteen months have been a broad learning experience. The real “KEY” learning has been experiencing the value of the Richmond Archives, its Staff and my fellow Friends Of The Richmond Archives, FOTRA, members. In paragraph 3 at the beginning of the article, I mentioned specific resources. The most wonderful, important and inspirational resources were the High School Annuals, we now refer to as Yearbooks and John McBryde’s, Master’s Thesis of 1986, THE BIPARTITE DEVELOPMENT OF HOCKEY— The Bipartite Development of Men’s and Women’s Field Hockey in Canada in the Context of Separate International Hockey Federations.

The article is not a thorough history but it has been an eyeopener for me. My hope is, it helps our community realize that the game of Field Hockey has been a positive part of Richmond’s School and Community life for a long time and it is in an Ebb awaiting a re-start, a Flow of SOMETHING GOOD.

Thank you,
Lance Carey

Acknowledgements

A sincere, Thank You, is extended to:

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- Ms Karen Ng, Records Analyst at the City of Richmond, British Columbia
- Mr. John McBryde, for his wonderful Master of Physical Education Thesis, "The Bipartite Development of Men's and Women's Field Hockey in Canada in the Context of Separate International Federations".
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- Ms Beth Gibson and Mr. Peter Mitchell, members of Richmond Secondary School Alumni Association, Richmond, British Columbia
- Ms Judith Mosley, Heritage Planner, Planning and Development, City of Richmond, British Columbia
- Mr. Glenn Kishi, Retired Principal, Steveston Secondary School, Richmond, British Columbia
- Mr. Jason Leslie, Principal, McRoberts Secondary School, Richmond, British Columbia
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