WWI and Sports in the Northern Territory: Celebrating a centenary of football

Dr. Matthew Stephen
Darwin, c1915

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3 1075
Darwin Football, c1916

Photo courtesy of the SLSA _b23025
Football’s beginning

• ‘[Reuben Cooper] came back [from Adelaide] with a football and no-one knew about the thing what was, then he created, originated, Aussie Rules in the Northern Territory.’

• The game was hatched in a pub bar over a few bottles of Pilsner when several footballers of the day were discussing football, and of course, someone quietly said, “I wonder could we get a game in Darwin?” “Yes too right we could” Another said, “It’s too hot.” Anyhow from that day football was hatched.’

• ‘A meeting of townsmen interested in football was held in the Hotel Victoria on the 2nd inst ...On the motion of Mr Breen, seconded by Mr Marriman, it was agreed that a match under Australian rules be played on the cricket ground on Saturday 18th inst., commencing at 4pm.’
Presentation Outline

• An overview of the NT political, economic and social context, 1914-1919
• Second of three presentations, 1\textsuperscript{st} an overview of the period 1914-1919, the 2\textsuperscript{nd} looking at sport during WWI & 3\textsuperscript{rd} the friendship between Willie Allen and the Herbert Family.
• Exploring some of the personal stories of WWI that make it so interesting.
Reuben John Cooper

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890_3_0228
Laurence ‘Larry’ Donnison

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3 0230
Willie Allen

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3 0227
John Anderson Gilruth

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Archive Service, Gilruth Collection,  NTRS 3427_42
Vesteys Meat works, c1914

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3  Vesteys Meatworks

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Vesteys Mess, August, 1915

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3 0201
‘Coloured boys’ strike breakers, Darwin 1915

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3 0216

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Industrial Unrest. AWU meeting, ‘The Stadium’

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3 0217
Darwin’s Red Cross

A couple of errors were made in acknowledging contributions to the Red Cross Fund in our issue of the 17th instant. Mrs. Walter Bell was credited with a donation of 10s instead of 17s 6d, and the name of Mrs. N. Bell, who donated 10s, was left out altogether.
War, Declared, 4 August 1914

NT Volunteers, 1914 AIF, originally the Cable Guard

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Library Service : ph0341_0002

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Boxing at ‘The Stadium’, c1914

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Library Service : ph0238_0427
8 Hour Day Sports Procession, Darwin, c1914

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Archive Service, HSNT Collection, NTRS 1854_1321

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
NT Swimming Championship, Fort Hill Baths, Oct 1915

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3/0206

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Reuben in War paint when on the Island he is one of the boys. In town very quiet & a gentleman. Best "Australian Rules Footballer in the Northern Territory. A good all round Athlete. Medals for swimming, footrunning, Boxing, wrestling, shooting football, cricket, Horseriding, buck jumping, believe me some boy. Engineer by education as a trade. Buffalo hunter by profession 20 years old 1918. Educated Adelaide Born in the N.T Halfcast.”
Reuben Cooper in ‘Starries’ uniform, c1914

Photo courtesy of the Castillon Family collection

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Reuben Cooper, buffalo hunting, c1915

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Library Service: ph0413-004

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Darwin, c1920s

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Library Service, Goodale Collection PHO0345/0156
Fancy Dress Football Game, Pine Creek, August 1914

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Library Service: ph0188_0138

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
NT’s First Rugby Union, 1916

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Library Service, Spillett Collection, ph0238_0015

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Darwin Football, c1916
[Willie Allen is ‘Goal keeper’]

Photo courtesy of the SLSA _b23025
Left Bob McDonald Protector of Aborigines. This is a photo taken of our football association up here. I was playing for the Gov team this day. Larry x L. Donnison. 16 aside.

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3/0232
Junior Football team, c1916

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Library Service: ph0170_0132
Football, circa 1916

[Reuben Cooper is marked with a circle. Robert ‘Bob’ Macdonald sits third from left]

Photo courtesy of Maxwell, personal collection
Reuben Cooper, buffalo hunting, c1915

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Library Service: ph0413-004

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
‘First Match played in Northern Territory. Australian rules. Tennis Court Darwin Oval 1916’

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3/0227

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Darwin interschool cricket teams, c1898

[Willie Allen, standing 2nd from right.]

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Library Service: PH0238-2081
Sports against visiting ships were popular events

“Ponto half caste Abo having a go at young Nelson Visit of H.M.S Cornwall, Feb 1916. H.M.S Cornwall of Falklands islands Naval battle 1915”

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3/0225

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Waratahs, 11 February 1917, at the Parap Parap oval

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3/0228
Kahlin Compound football team, circa 1922

Photo courtesy of the SLWA, Conigrave Collection, 2908B28
Waratahs, 11 February 1917

[R. Cooper, standing 3rd from left, Willie Allen sitting first left]

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3/0228

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Vesteys Football Club, c1918

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3/0229

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Wanderers, Premiers 1917-1918

Photo courtesy of the AFLNT Collection

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Public Meeting, Darwin Oval, December, 1918

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Archive Service, HSNT, NTRS1854_No078

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Armistice Day Sports, 16th December 1918

[The procession began with] A lorry, with all the Allied nations' representatives onboard, looked perhaps, the prettiest part. Next followed the Japanese with their "Rising Sun" and other banners; the Greeks, With one in full national regalia, at their head, were well re-presented. Lastly, the Chinese, who practically had a procession of their own,
Procession following effigy of Dr Gilruth, 17 December, 1918

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Archive Service, Rhodes, NTRS 2885_23

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Protesters at the Administrator’s Fence, 17 December 1918

Photo courtesy of the Northern Territory Archive Service, Rhodes, NTRS 2885_24

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Vesteys Football Club, c1919

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3/0233

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
Cooper v Cavill Swimming Challenge, February 1919

“Ernie Cavill, swimmer, called in at the "Times", office this Friday afternoon,
and signified his willingness to swim Reuben Cooper, Sergeant Green,
or any other swimmer, over any distance from 100 yards to a mile, to be mutually chosen, provided that a substantial purse is put up, and a substantial stake. This challenge and proviso also applies to fancy swimming, and is likewise open to all”

Northern Territory Times and Gazette, 15 February 1919
Ernie Cavill

A GRAND
Aquatic Carnival
AND
WATER GALA

Under the Patronage of His Worship the Mayor (Ct. D. C. Watts) and the Industrial Council of the Northern Territory.

WILL TAKE PLACE AT
Messrs. Vestey Bro.'s Baths,
By kind permission of the North Australian Meat Co., Ltd.,
ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9th,
Fifty per Cent. of the Nett. Proceeds will be handed to the Trades Hall Building Fund.

ERNIE CAVILL,
The World-Renowned Swimmer,
Will Give a Grand Display of
Fancy, Ornamental, and Speed Swimming
Prior to his Departure for the East.

Swimming Races  High Diving
Fancy Swimming  Life Saving
Water Pantomime  Aquatic Water Polo

Also a Swimming Race for Ladies.

THE GREAT MONTE CHRISTO ACT
Swimming Championship of the Northern Territory.

The Full Programme will be issued in a few days, and all Entries will be received by Mr. B. M. Balding, N.T. Industrial Council.

Northern Territory Times and Gazette, 1 February 1919

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
‘L-R: L Gorodsky, Sid Roberts, Reuben Cooper, George, M McIntosh, W [Billy] Watkins March 1919 Parap NT’

Photo courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Donnison Collection, MLMSS 890/3 0214

Presentation by Dr Matthew Stephen, Northern Territory Archives Centre, 15 July 2015
28 June 1919, the Treaty of Versailles

PEACE CELEBRATIONS
To be held on the Darwin Oval
ON SATURDAY, JULY 19th, 1919.

EVENING PROGRAMME.
Procession to start 7.30 p.m. at the Esplanade end of Cavenagh Street. Aboriginal and Chinese Torchlight Procession to march along Cavenagh Street, along Bennett Street to Smith Street, Smith Street to Club Hotel, and thence to the Oval, where the Procession will disperse.

Bonfire at 8 p.m. Concert to start at 8.15 p.m.
Musical Programme under direction W. F. Connolly, Esq.

CORROBORREE! CORROBORREE!
The whole to conclude with a

FIREWORKS DISPLAY.
Gold Medal, donated by Mr. Kalafatis, inscribed “Peace Day Celebrations, Darwin, 19th July 1919,” to be raffled on the Oval. Tickets obtainable from Mrs. and Miss Shadforth.

Collectors kindly note that all moneys collected by them must be in the hands of the Treasurer by noon on Monday, 21st instant.

A. O. RHODES, Hon. Treasurer.  J. W. CALLAN, Hon. Secretary.