

Irene Sneyd 1925-1988

Life Member CCWSA 1982



Irene Sneyd can only be described as the Queen of women's soccer not only for the Budgewoi Club, not only for the former Central Coast Women's Soccer Association (CCWSA) and not only for Northern NSW Women's Association (NNSWWSA) but for the Australian Women's Soccer Association (AWSA). Irene has been decorated with Life Membership by five organisations: East Bankstown Soccer Club 1965, Budgewoi Soccer Club 1976, CCWSA 1979, NNSWWSA and AWSA..

Irene was born in Marrickville 1925, meet Lionel 1952 after a breakdown in her first marriage. She had four children, Ron, Jim, Ken and Vicky. They lived in Greenacre and were married 1964. They both became involved with the management of the East Bankstown Club from 1957. Lionel became a player at the Club which were playing in the Sydney Amateur League and supervised the coaching of the boys soccer skills. He coached, managed both junior and senior teams at the Club. He was also a Club selector and became President and Treasurer 1958. At the same time, Irene was involved with the operations of the Club taking on the Secretary and Treasurer's position at different periods which led her to be awarded Life Membership in 1965.

In 1970 Irene and Lionel moved to San Remo and quickly got involved with the Budgewoi Club as their three sons were all keen players. Irene got involved in the promotions, social events and minute secretary duties while Lionel was involved with refereeing and coaching.

It wasn't until 1976 that things started to move to create a women's competition. There were many occasions where social women's games were played in the past but it would take some canvassing to invite the current men's Clubs to participate in the setting up. It was agreed to organise a trial season in which ten clubs came to the party with a lot of positive feedback from other clubs. Irene was at helm. She was voted onto the Presidency of the inaugural Committee of Central Coast Women's Soccer Association (CCWSA). A position she would hold for three years until 1978. Together with the reins, she was active in the publicity and promotion of the CCWSA through sponsors and the media. She continually kept everyone aware of the activities with articles in the local newspapers. She took over the role of Publicity and Promotions position in 1977, 1978, 1980 and 1981.

As well as setting up the CCWSA, Irene was a prominent worker to help set up the Northern NSW Women's Association in 1977. She was elected to the Treasurers position and held it for nine years until 1985. In 1979 she became the Australian Women's Soccer Association's Treasurer and held that position for six years until 1985.

In 1981 Irene was given the honour of being the Head Delegate of the Australian Women's team tour of New Zealand.

In 1985 Irene and Lionel saw their last season on the Coast, before they moved to Southport on the Gold Coast Queensland. After the sudden death of Irene, Lionel returned to the Central Coast to coach the Budgewoi Women's 1st Grade in 1990.

Irene died suddenly from a massive heart attack in Southport in 1988.

Her legacy will live on forever, not only for her organisational skills but for her everlasting compassion towards the players and the officials, and others who crossed her path. In 1976 the Central Coast women player numbers were 130 as compared to the current number of 2,500. She would do anything to push her agenda to promote women's soccer and her girls whether at club, region, State or National level, it mattered not. She is one of a kind and should be remembered for her enduring energy and her passion for the game.

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