

1946-1956: Decade Six

At a special meeting held, September 30, 1946, **Frank “Pop” Jenkins** was elected president of the club. **Percy Wilson** was vice-president, **Jack Price** secretary- treasurer and **Bob Bell** the team manager.

By December 3rd, Wests had sewn up the first half league schedule before going on to take the second half and another Garrison Cup. Later in the season, Magistrate Hall presented the Jackson Cup to captain **Jack Okell** after “**Chuck**” **Restell** and **Doug Gent** had led the Green & White in a 3-1 final over Navy.

It was a class way for the Wests to celebrate their 50th Anniversary and a reunion banquet was attended by old-boys like **Chuck Kinlock**, **Dick Chester**, **Ted Beaney**, **Jimmy Allen** and **Frank Shandley**. Honour guest had included the four managers who had handled the team in that half century, **Frank Youson**, **Bill Thompson**, **Dr. Poyntz** and **Tommy Restell**. Also honoured were the long time handlers of the Vic West junior teams, **Bill Dixon** and **Alex Stevens**.

By this time, the club was back to holding regular meetings in player’s or executive’s homes. One of the main topics was to establish a clubhouse and several possibilities were explored. They all seemed to end against a brick wall and nothing developed except gaining the use of the Boilermakers Hall on Esquimalt Road for meetings and poor weather training.

The 1947-48 season had Legion and Esquimalt sharing the awards while Oak Bay and Vic West came away empty-handed. Once again Wests collected the first half honours but they came up flat in the second half and lost in the league playoff by a 6-3 count to the Legion.

Victoria United’s inter-city club went with full-time players so Wests lost the **Travis boys**, “**Chuck**” **Restell** and **Earl Barnswell**. This opened some spots that were filled by **Bill Hope**, **Gordie Hobson** and **Doug Hudlin**.

Ernie Fields and his Black and White juvenile team joined the fold around this time. Ernie had been in sports all his life and he started as a kid playing hockey on the Prairies. After, he moved east and embraced baseball and soccer, then during the depression, came west to the Fraser Valley and became involved in basketball. World War II brought him to the Island as an army cook, after which, he was soon wrapped up in Victoria sports and most naturally took on the leadership of the Wests. The likable, cigar smoking, proprietor of Duffy’s Cafe was as proud of the Wests as he was of his famous “Red Hots.”

But the 1948-49 season turned out to be another downer for Vic West when once again they were faced with rebuilding and added more new faces like **Ron Bland**, **Bernie Clarkson**, **Todd Garnet**, **Elliott** and **Allen**.

The District League doubled to eight teams in 1949-50 and the Wests enjoyed the competition of the newcomers from Navy and Heaneys. They continued to add new blood with keeper **Norm Richards**, **Mickey** and **Charlie Smith**, **Jim** and **Will Turner**, **Archie Sluggett** and **Lionel Speller** joining their side. After a long spell of bad weather, with half the games left to play and seven clubs tightly bunched, the 21 games schedule was abandoned. A knockout series was instigated to decide the Garrison ownership and Vic West

took the 1-0 final off Esquimalt. They then lost their opening McGavin match but went all the way in the Jackson "Money" Cup. **Jim "Whitey" Turner** being on the mark twice in that 2-1 final overtime battle with Esquimalt.

August 1950 saw the election of **Ernie Fields** as president, **Roy Okell** vice-president, **Jack Price** secretary-treasurer and **Doug Gent** as team manager. The team remained unsettled and **Ron Woolcock, Pete Fowles, Dick Watson** and **Jim Burge** signed on. In the first half, Wests led most of the way only to be pinched out by Esquimalt and Duncan.

The Green got going in the McGavin series with **John "Chick" Newman** and **Bernie Clarkson** leading the way to 4-0 and 4-1 semi and final counts.

They also reach the Jackson Cup final but went down at the hands of Victoria United by a respectable 2-1 score when **Bill Hope** had the lone Vic West goal.

Clarkson had a grand game in the second part of the schedule when he smacked five in-a-row, plus another, during an 8-2 romp over Oak Bay. Wests went on to win the second half by a single point over Esquimalt before they ran out of time. **Len Scott** was back in lacrosse, **Doug Hudlin** busy with baseball, **Bernie Clarkson** had college exams and **Ron Bland** was injured. They withdrew and Esquimalt faced Duncan unsuccessfully for the Garrison.

Vic Drew had the boys playing top ball in the 1951-52 season although they lost an early round McGavin Cup game to Legion, who were flawless in the first half schedule. Wests went down to them again in the second half but still finished on top and met Legion in the cup final. That back-and-forth match ended 5-3 in favour of Vic West and "**Chick**" **Newman** was the man of the match with the tying, winning and cinching markers. In Jackson play Wests squeezed past Legion 2-1, took two games to hurdle Heaneys and then thumped Esquimalt 4-1 in the final. Coach Drew had inked two more **Speller** boys that year and in one game, **Murray, Roy** and **Lionel** were all wearing the green and white while their older brother, **Maurice**, was in black and white refereeing.



WESTS 1951-52 WINNERS OF GARRISON & JACKSON CUPS

Back Row, L-R: Murray Speller, Vic Drew, Ernie Field, Doug Gent, Jack Price, Will Turner,
Frank "Pop" Jenkins.

Second Row, L-R: Len Scott, Joe Clarkson, Jim Turner, Doug Hudlin, Ron Woolcock, George Brown.

Front Row, L-R: Bernie Clarkson, Norm Richards, Ron Bland, Roy Speller, Lionel Speller,
Dick Watson.

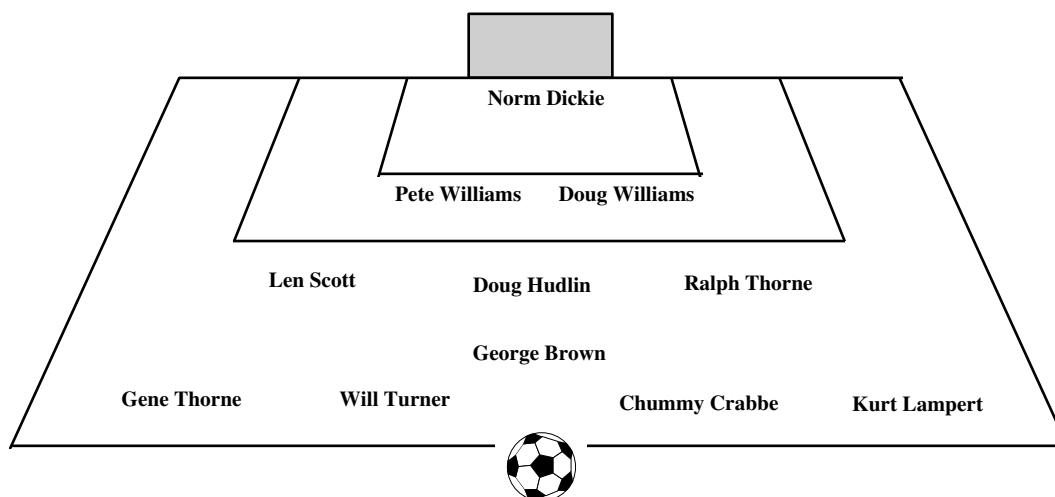
Missing: Gary Pynn, Gordy Pynn and Pete Fowles

Duncan Native Sons folded their team in 1952 and Vic West gained **Ed** and **Doug Williams** along with **Ralph Thorne** to fill gaps made when **Hope, Clarkson** and **Murray Speller** went to Vic United. The native boys were a valued addition and Vic West held onto the league title with an undefeated season. But it had not been easy as they finished with six saw-offs in a tight race with the Adanacs and Civil Service. Wests were not as fortunate in the

cup ties when the evenly match Adanacs, with whom they had drawn three times, dropped them 3-2 in an overtime McGavin semi and 2-1 in a second overtime Jackson Cup game after the first had finished 2-2. That fine side's line-up also included **Norm Richards, Doug Hudlin, Ron Woolcock, Lionel** and **Roy Speller, Jim Turner, Ron Bland, George Brown, Dick Watson, Len Scott, Will Turner, Harold Smethard** and **Gordy Pynn**.

At the start of the 1953-54 season, the Wests executive changed hands when **Lionel Speller** was elected president, **Ron Bland** manager and **Dick Watson** secretary.

The powerful Esquimalt squad made a runaway affair of the six-team league for the Garrison. Civil Service collected the McGavin and Vic West defeated Woods Motors, 3-2, in the Jackson final using this roster.



Subs: Lionel Speller, Ed Willams

Ed Williams, the team captain, received the cup and **Doug Hudlin** was singled out for his fine defensive work of breaking up the attackers forays and for his long goal kicks. Not that his kicks traveled an exceptional distance, but for the length of time he wasted placing the ball, pulling up his socks, tying his laces and stalling before kicking them! This was particularly effective in the late stages of a close match with the Wests leading.

The following season, the league was divided into a four-team 1st Division and an eight-team 2nd Division. Wests lost the services of the First Nation players when the Duncan team re-entered. They missed the skill of seven good players and had difficulty replacing them when there were a dozen teams searching for talent.

The club welcomed **Charlie Mills, Tommy Walker, Denny Atkinson, Ab Singh, Fred Curtis, Fred Swift** and **Charlie Forester**. Unfortunately they lost or tied too many matches that year and ended up facing their old teammates in a promotion-relegation series. That close series ended; Vic West 2 - Native Sons 0; Native Sons 2 - Vic West 1; Vic West 2 - Native Sons 1, allowing the Wests to barely hold their spot in the premier circuit.

Earlier, Heaneys ran away with the Division 1 championship. Then Canadian Scottish and Duncan Native Sons, both 2nd Division squads, had gained the Jackson and McGavin trophies.

Wests continued to struggle through 1955-56, the last season of their fifth decade. Making it to the semis in both cup competitions, but once again, they finished at the bottom of the league table. That year they faced Butler Brothers in the promotion-relegation series and split the first two games. But it didn't matter. After the fine showing of the 2nd Division teams, the league executive placed all the clubs into a single division for the following season.

Some more good family names had appeared with the Wests during the 1946-56 decade.

Jim and **Will Turner** put in a dozen season between them. Jim, better known as "Whitey", was a robust, high scoring forward and Will or "Red" a steady player on the forward or half-line through the early 50s.

Three **Speller** brothers, **Lionel, Murray** and **Roy** gave first class accounts on the Wests behalf. Lionel, who had returned from the war in the Pacific after being imprisoned by the Japanese, built himself up and joined the club in 1949. He served for eight seasons including a stretch as club president. Roy and Murray came on board in 1951 after both had terms with United. Murray was picked to play for Victoria when they hosted the English FA tour team in 1950. Playing left-back, he had a great game marking the world famous winger, Stanley Mathews.

The **Clarkson** name reappears during this decade when the sons of a Vic West original, **Reg Clarkson Sr.**, donned the green shirts. **Vince** played in goal when the team reorganized after the war and **Bernie**, a fast, talented, forward assisted from 1948 until 1952 when he was picked up by United. Younger brother, **Joe**, saw utility action in the 1952-53 season.

Other individuals who contributed over a number of seasons include **Doug Gent**, who had played in the pre-war Wednesday League, joining the Wests in 1940 and was back when they reappeared. He could cover most positions and held the coaching responsibilities during the early 1950s. **Ron Bland** stepped into the centre-back position in 1948 and was a regular until he took on the manager's job in 1954. And of course stead half-back **Len Scott** who served from the 1944 restart until the 1956 fold. Young, **Bill Hope** came out of Mt. View High to play full-back and centre-half for four seasons before United signed him in 1951. **George Brown**, a quick, run-and-gun centre-forward and **Dick Watson** had come from Oak Bay when that club folded.

Dick took on the added responsibility of club secretary. Little **Norm Richards** stepped out of juvenile ball and into the nets from 1950 until the clubs temporary demise.

Others who had seen two or three seasons with the Wests during this decade included a young **“Red” McMillan, Bill Prior, Charlie** and **Mickey Smith, Archie Sluggett** and **Alex Whyte** from Brentwood. Also **Pete Fowles, Jim Burge, Ron Woolcock, Gordy** and **Gary Pynn, Norm Dickie, “Chummy” Crabbe, Kurt Lampert, Davy Singh, Todd Atkinson** and **Fred Swift**.