

## 1916-26: Their Third Decade

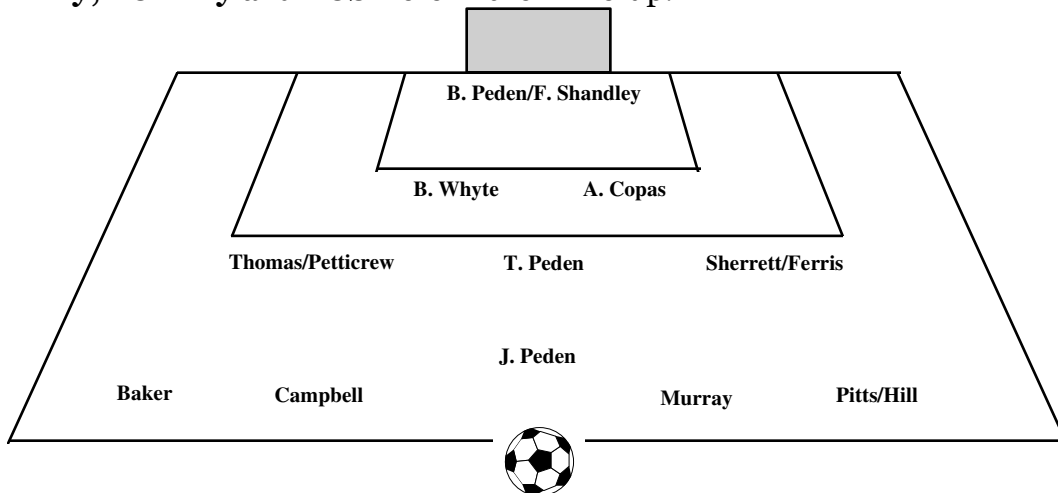
When asked how the Wests kept going during the First World War years, **Percy Wilson** commented; “We were able to continue on, when other clubs couldn’t, because a good number of our older players were exempt from duty due to their occupations. The team survived due to the hard work of manager, **Jack Youson** and older players like **Whyte, Sherratt, Peden** and the **Stewarts**, young **Mulcahy, McKay** and **Copas** plus the remnants of other clubs.”

In 1916-17, the senior soccer season didn’t get going until after Christmas when four military teams, Vic West and the fall Intermediate League winners, VIAA, entered. Wests won the title by beating Garrison 4-2 in a tie-breaker after the two sides had finished the schedule dead even.

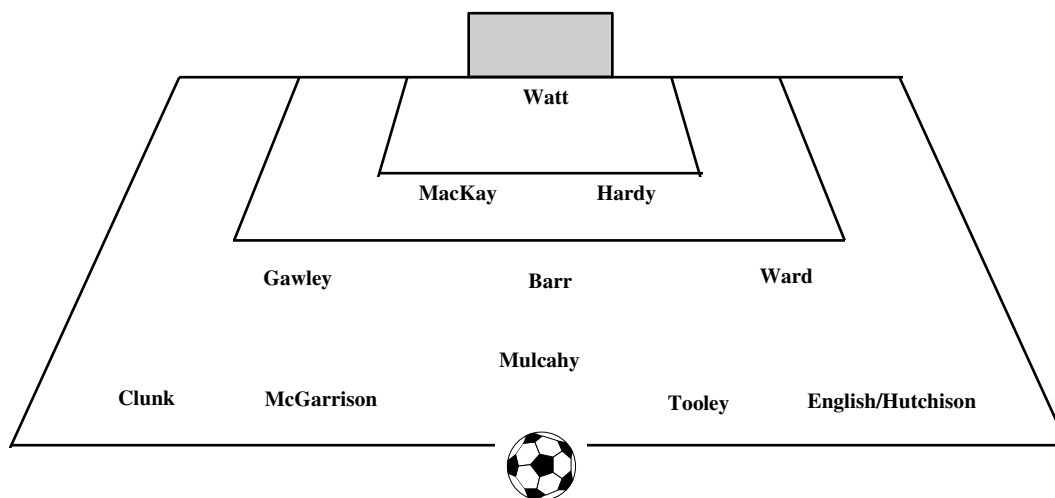
Jackson Cup play was set aside that year and in a mismatched Peden Cup game, on a muddy Central Park field, the newspaper reported. “In a game between the men and boys, Wests goalkeeper, **Mickelson**, had nothing to do but entertain the ladies by sampling candy from a nearby store. **Allen** was the only clean player on the field, and rumor had it that he went home for a bath between the opposition’s attacks. The net result of the match was that the park was the big loser as a considerable amount of soil had accompanied the players home after the final whistle.”

Many players were coming and going so it was difficult to keep a stable line-up. Vic West managed to retain the league title and were presented with the Jackson Cup as the league’s Okell award seemed to have disappeared.

That season the Wests should have considered a name change to **Peden’s** as three of them, **Johnny, Tommy** and **Bob** were in their line-up.



At the same time, Wests were building with a good junior side that included;



In the summer, some good lacrosse was played in a league consisting of Sidney, the Nationals and Vic West with their roster of; **Fairall, Patterson, S. and L. Redgrave, Plump, Popham, Ross, Brown, Morrison, Shandley, Alexander and Rowley.**

Ten entries, at the start of the 1918-19 football season, soon dropped to five when the war ended in November and the military teams disbanded. Fragments and Foundations ended up being the cup winners that season.

By the beginning of the 1919-20 season a good number of footballers had returned from overseas. The Wests had **Stan Okell, Tucker James** and **Frank Youson** back to boost their line-up. Nine clubs competed in the league with the Knights of Columbus edging the Wests by a single point. The Green & White took the Brown Cup and their first official Jackson Cup when **Tucker James** went on a goal-scoring spree. He counted nine times in five Brown Cup games and then notched five more in three Jackson matches including two in the 3-1 final over the Comrades.

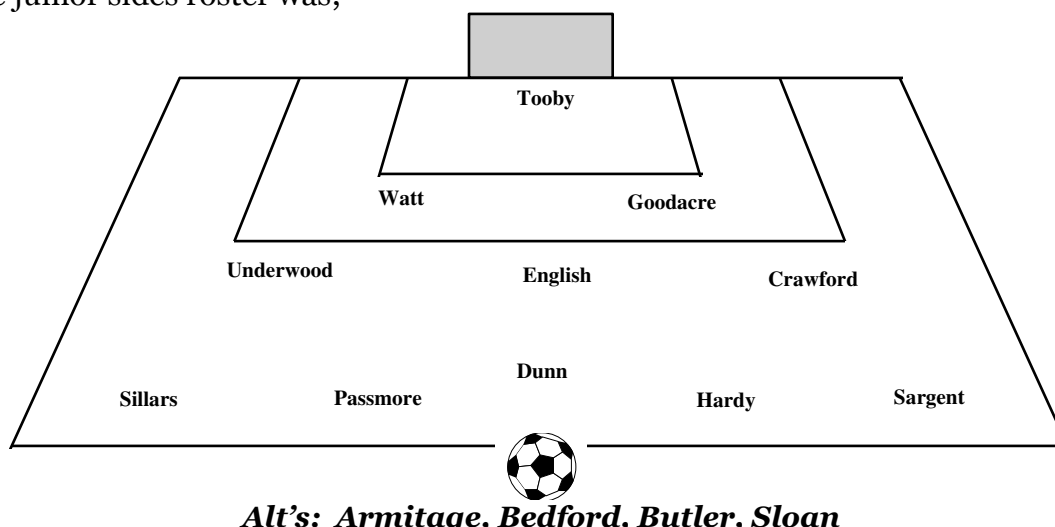
Later that season, after the West II had added **Sargent, Goodacre, Sillars** and **Dunn**, they defeated Saanich Rovers to grab a one point lead in their standings. But the Mets went undefeated with 9 wins and 3 ties to edge Vic West by one point. So both of the Green teams had hard luck that year after being nosed out by a single point in each division race.

The club property was also a war casualty. When recruiting began, young men signed up and there was no new membership for the club. Older members were busy with the war effort and there was no one left to raise funds and pay the bills. Eventually the mortgagee had to foreclose bringing an end to the VWAA clubhouse activities. So by this time the Victoria West Athletic Association had changed drastically. It was no longer a formal club but simply two football teams organized each fall.

At the beginning of the 20s the Wests held the soccer league title for three consecutive seasons from 1921 to 1924. They had experienced players like **Frank Shandley** in goals, **Bob Whyte, Harry Copas, Jim Allen, Cyril Baker, Sid** and **Jimmy Sherratt, Johnny Peden, Alex Muir** and **Pat Mulcahy**. In the next few years, they added some youth by signing **Guy Waddington, Stan Wright, Ed Popham, Cyril Connerton** and a 17 year old, upcoming star, **George Allan**.

Time was catching up to the West seniors however their junior eleven was going well. Manager **Alex Stevens'** juniors won the local competition in 1922, and then they defeated the mainland champions, Riverview, by winning 2-1. The victory put them into the B.C. Junior final again Nanaimo for the O.B. Allen Cup but that match ended 1-0 in favour of Nanaimo.

That fine junior sides roster was;



Around that time, the Wests had signed two great young players in **Bill Ogle** and **Tommy Heyland**, unfortunately, there was little to hold them in Victoria. Both inside-forwards, Bill had splendid form and a good shooting boot but he moved to the mainland. Tommy, often singled out as the flashiest man on the field, was enticed by Ladysmith and later played for Cumberland, when the mining town teams were at their peak.

One reason for the Wests soccer success, was their back four. They built their teams on a solid defensive foundation and **Bob Whyte** was the anchor. He had joined the club in 1909 and captained or managed their teams for many seasons. His display of harmony and good sportsmanship was exemplary. When Bob was in his prime, he was spoken of as the best back in BC, an efficient player who never failed to give his best, particularly when the competition was keen. He was regularly named to the rep sides and finally hung up his boots in 1932. A well-deserved rest after one of the longest and most highly respected terms of any Vic West member. Bob had played senior football for 26 seasons and was just as active in basketball. First as a player and later coaching some of Victoria's finest teams. After, he became involved in the city softball leagues for a lifetime of sports.

**Wilf Prevost**, a small, unbeatable full-back, was Whyte's partner for nine seasons, until the war interrupted. They were a solid back pair and automatically named to the city rep teams. During and after the war years, young **Harry Copas** took Wilf's spot. Small, fast and tenacious, he developed into a solid defender under Whyte's tutelage.

In 1909, **Jimmy Petticrew** had signed on and dominated the games from his centre-half position. He joined the Infantry in 1917 ending an eight year run with the Green & Whites. In the early 20s, he returned to football for a couple more seasons with the Wards-Mets squads.

West's first goalkeeper was **Ted Beaney** who had been with the Royal Artillery Regiment before joining the Wests. He was followed by **James Robertson**, a local lad, who guarded the nets for the next five seasons.

**Frank Shandley** signed on in 1919 and provided first-class work between the posts until 1925 when **Gordon Leeming** took over. He in turn, was followed by **Jim Hetherington** during the early 30s.

Before the start of the 1925-26 season, **Jack Youson** resigned as team manager after having held the position since 1911. He had directed the club through 14 years of attending meetings, recruiting players, lining fields, putting up nets and supplying oranges. Jack is credited with keeping the club going during the bleak war years, although had some help from his young nephew. **Harry** attended the matches with his uncle, helping out and watching his Saturday heroes with the hope of joining in someday.

At a meeting, held at Jack's home, the players decided to stay in football and Mr. **Bill Thompson** along with **Syd Sherratt**, as his assistant, were named to take over. Bill faced a tough job of rebuilding the team as many of the older players were retiring and young squads, such as Esquimalt, were taking hold. Wests had to keep up but replacements were hard to find and difficult to hold as work in Victoria was very limited. They did manage to sign a couple of fine British brothers in **Bob** and **Reg Shanks**, as well as juniors such as **Ted Dunn**, **Bill Passmore** and **Ernie Harwood**.

A summary of the third decade successes reads as follows.

- 📖 Won Senior City League - Garrison Cup 1917,-1918,-1922,-1923 & 1924
- 📖 Won Jackson Cup - 1918 & 1923
- 📖 Won Junior City Soccer League and BC Finalist - 1922
- 📖 Won Brown KO Cup – 1920