

## ***Interview Part 1***

**Interview with Ellis Rothwell and Barry Rothwell, 27 April 2007**

**Interview conducted by Aimee Fitton and compiled by Belinda Fitton.**

*Wally Rothwell was one of the founding members of the Northern District Hockey Association. The association was started in 1927, and Wally was a life member.*

*Ellis Rothwell is Wally's son, and was involved in the Northern District Hockey Association during the 1940s, together with his family.*

*During his hockey career Ellis represented Australia, NSW and Northern District Hockey Association. Ellis officially opened the turf at Pennant Hills.*

*This is an interview with Ellis Rothwell and his son Barry Rothwell.*

*How old were you when you started to play hockey, and who taught you to play?*

Ellis - About 13 years old. My dad was Wally Rothwell was one of the founders of ND.

*When was ND first started?*

Ellis - It was a breakaway competition from Cumberland, that's how it started. Wally was a very strong and influential force for hockey in those days and became secretary for NSW Hockey Association. Also secretary for Australian Hockey Association, and was keeping the competition alive during the war. Wally also managed a number of Australian hockey teams in the early 1920s through to the 1930s.

*What made you decide to play hockey?*

Ellis - Dad encouraged me to play.

*What is your first memory of hockey?*

Ellis - Watching dad play in various games.

*What hockey clubs or associations have you played for over your hockey career?*

Ellis – ND (bulk of career) and Manly (later part of career). We originally lived in Ryde, then moved over to the Manly area. Barry started to play for Manly and the club was very keen to my experiences as it was a very young club.

Barry - Dad was about 40 when he started to play with Manly (basically came out of retirement) and played first grade for 3 seasons. He also started and coached the Manly under 16s side.

*What was it like playing hockey for NSW and Australia?*

Ellis - Very hard and lots of work. In those days we didn't have the training facilities available today. I used to visit a gymnasium in the city. We used to play on grass and with long hockey sticks.

Barry - dad was renowned for his skill in short corners, particularly playing with Northern District, dad was always the goal shooter. He hit the ball very hard, and was a lethal hitter.

*What position did you play?*

Ellis – Left Full Back. My best hit was a half volley (undercut), which hit the ball right out into the crowd.

*What did you enjoy the most playing for NSW and Australia?*

Ellis – I enjoyed playing for Australia, for the prestige, but I liked playing and representing my state.

Barry – Dad had a lot of friends in the NSW side.

*How long did you play hockey for NSW for?*

Ellis - About 8 to 10 years

Son – He probably started when he was about 20, through the years leading up to the war.

*Did you play hockey during the war?*

Ellis - Yes, but it was a restricted competition. While touring NZ the rules changed on the short corners. You previously had to hit it out from the back line and stop the ball dead before had a shot a goal. You could use your hand or stick to stop ball. In those days it was usually stopped by hand by one person then the striker would take a shot at goal. They changed it from a hit to a push. Advantage is that you can get the stick alongside the ball and disguise where the ball was going to go. In those days the whole team had to be behind the line of the goal

Ellis still watches hockey on TV and keeps up to date with all the rules.

*How did you first become involved in the Northern District Hockey Association?*

Ellis - He lived in the area (Ryde).

Barry – Through my grandfather, Wally.

*How many years were you involved in Northern District Hockey Association and what was your involvement in the club?*

Ellis – I was a player and umpired games (up to NSW level).

Barry – You were captain of the side weren't you?

Ellis – no Terry Lee (brother of Allan Lee, captain of Australia team that went to NZ) was captain. Dad was very close to Allan, and Barry was close to Terry. I became very good friends with young Terry.

Dad started the under 16 team at ND and was coaching, and that is how my brother and I started playing.

*What are some of the changes within the club while you were there?*

Ellis – The team became stronger as we played.

Barry – Did you ever win the premiership?

Ellis – Yes, I don't know how many times – lost count.

Barry – I remember when I was growing up and watching dad play. It was a very young club when it started and they started from scratch and as years went by, a lot of kids came through the teams. Membership in club increased.

*How long was your dad associated with ND?*

Ellis – About 40 years, he founded it. I was involved with Northern Districts for about 15 years

Son – probably more like 25 years.

*How did hockey fit into your life? Working and having a family?*

Ellis - It was very difficult and we did the gym one day a week in the city.

Barry – Mum was a very strong supporter of hockey to. She was a player herself and it was pretty much a family thing. They encouraged my brother and I to play. We spent every other afternoon in the backyard playing hockey. It was a great influence in our family life and dad encouraged it very much with my brother and I. We learnt a lot from dad. He coached us all the way. He was a great coach. Dad encouraged us and taught us life things through hockey, to be a good sport and things like that. He was a very hard task master and a very hard player. Very hard.

Anyone that played against him knew they had played against him. When dad coached the Northern District under 16 side, dad taught a bunch of kids to play hockey. Half of these kids had never picked up a hockey stick. He made us into a team that went for about 3 seasons, and won many games. He was a pretty good coach and he passed that on.

## ***Interview Part 2***

**Interview with Ellis Rothwell and Barry Rothwell, 27 April 2007**

**Interview conducted by Aimee Fitton and compiled by Belinda Fitton.**

*What did you do when you weren't playing hockey, what was your job?*

Ellis – well I worked for Berger's Paint for 47 years.

Barry – He was an industrial sales manager for Bergers paint. In the early years he was a sales representative, then he graduated through the company to management.

*What do you consider your greatest achievement in life?*

Ellis – Bringing up my two sons, to give 100% to their life and to enjoy it.

*Do you have any regrets?*

Ellis – Yes, that we didn't have more kids

Barry – Hang about, you've got great-grand kids to make up for it. You have 10 great-grand kids.

*What will you always remember about hockey?*

Ellis – The friendships that you make, and how you had to be fit.

Barry – The wild experiences while you were touring in New-Zealand?

Ellis – We used to spend the weekend in the country promoting hockey. When we were out at Orange, playing hockey, we had to spend time to throw rocks off the field before we started playing the hockey game.

*What was your best game of hockey that you had played?*

Ellis – There was a Test in New Zealand, which we lost.

Barry – must have been harsh?

Aimee – It was a good game though?

Ellis – Yes.

*In your early years of playing hockey, who was your inspiration?*

Ellis – to be the best full back in Australia.

Aimee – And you got there?

Ellis – No.

Son – Well if you didn't you got very close to it

Aimee – Playing for Australia, you must have been very close to it

*Was there anyone in particular who inspired you?*

Ellis – My father. He was a dedicated man and I can't express enough what he did for me.

Barry –He was a wonderful man, he was totally unselfish with his own time. Totally committed to doing everything he could for hockey and his family. He also founded the Northern District Hockey Association.

Barry – Wally was made a life member of the ND hockey club, and he was an Olympic grade umpire.

*In your opinion, what are some of the most important skills that a hockey player needs to know?*

Ellis – needs to be fit and needs to have knowledge of the game.  
Son – you always used to stress that stick and ball co-ordination was very important.  
Ellis - yes

*What are some of the biggest changes that you have seen in the game of hockey?*

Ellis – The rules and the equipment. The sticks are different so much more advanced, and the rules.

Aimee – did you have turf?

Barry – No never, always played on grass.

Aimee – you opened the turf at PH didn't you?

Ellis – Yes

Barry – That was a highlight.

Ellis - Yes

Aimee – What was your involvement in the club at that time?

Ellis – I was the oldest living member.

Barry – He was very proud of that.

*What is the funniest story that you remember in your hockey career?*

Ellis - Laughs

Son – I don't think he can answer that question.

Aimee – did anything happen in New Zealand?

*What is some advice that you could give to parents with children who are involved in hockey?*

Ellis – I don't know.

Barry – I think I can help you here, just to encourage and support, to play hard and fair.

Ellis – keep very fit and the goal keeper well protected.

*What did the goalie used to wear?*

Ellis – Just goalie pads.

Aimee – Nothing else? What happened if the ball hit any other part of the body?

Barry – You got hurt. They only had big pads (bigger then cricket pads) and gloves.

Ellis – And they also had a stick.

*What did the ball used to be made of?*

Barry - Hockey balls are now lighter. I think we used to play with a cricket ball, with a white leather casing.

Ellis – Yes that is right.

*What is some advice you could give to a coach?*

Ellis – You have to know the rules and be very fit. You should also have patience.

Barry – Treat everyone individually too, you cant put square pegs in round holes.

*Is there anything else that you would like to say?*

Ellis – I am very interested in seeing the enthusiasm which you have showed today.

Barry – Thank you for your time, dad has really enjoyed the interview.