

## COLLEEN (McVEIGH) HUNTER – AUSTRALIAN LACROSSE CHAMPION

Colleen McVeigh started her lacrosse career in 1974 as a 14-year-old where a friend and her sisters (The Barnaby girls) introduced her to lacrosse at the Williamstown Women's Lacrosse Club, with WWLC dominating A grade and winning their 10<sup>th</sup> straight grand final that year. Colleen, still a junior, played seniors in Williamstown's B grade team in 1974.

The following year (1975) Colleen played in Williamstown's A grade team, which again won the state senior grand final. Colleen played in 8 State league / A grade winning grand final teams for Williamstown Women's Lacrosse Club.

Colleen played 385 senior games for Williamstown from 1974 to 2022, winning the **Club's best and fairest award 11 times** and the "Best Clubman" award 9 times.

Colleen won the **Victorian state league best & fairest award (Jean Matthews Perpetual Trophy) a record 8 times** (1977, 81, 82, 83, 86, 90, 91, 98).

### STATE REPRESENTATION

Colleen first represented Victoria in 1974 in the Under 16 team against South Australia and again in 1975 played in the U16 national carnival.

Colleen went on to play in 17 senior Victorian teams (1977- 85, 88 - 90, 92, 95 - 96, 1998 -1999), captain or vice-captain 11 times, (1979 - 85, 1988 & 90 - 92), over a 24 year period.

### AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATION

Colleen played in **10 Australian teams** from 1978 to 1997, including **4 World Cup teams** (1982, 1986, 1989, 1997) and **6 touring teams** (1978, 1981, 1983, 85, 88 & 92), missing the 1993 World Cup following the birth of her daughter. Colleen was captain twice (1988 & 1989) and vice-captain 3 times (1981, 82 & 86 world cup gold medal team).



Colleen above on the front cover of the Australian program for the 1986 World Cup

### AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS & RECOGNITION

1982 - All World team (World teams were not selected in 1986, 89, 93 & 97)

2013 - Nell Rawlins Award for "Outstanding contributions to women's lacrosse in Victoria"

2025 - Victorian State Government Award for "Work & Commitment to Your Community in the Williamstown Electorate"

1993 - Life member WWLC



Colleen in action at the 1997 World Cup

## **COACHING AND ADMINISTRATION**

Colleen has coached juniors at all levels in the Victorian competition as well as senior teams, and is currently coaching children in the Quick Stix program at Williamstown and involved in the local schools' program. She is also the Club's junior coordinator, a role she has performed for over 20 years.

2000 Manager Victorian senior women's team

2003 Coach Victorian Under 17 team

2004 Coach Victorian Under 17 team

2011 Manager Victorian Under 21 Team

2013 Head coach Victorian Under 15 Fire & Ice teams

2014 Manager senior Victorian team

2014 Manager Under 18 Victorian team

2014 Manager Under 15 Fire team

2015 Manager Under 18 Victorian team

2016 Manager Under 18 Victorian team

2018 Manager senior Victorian team

2019 Manager Australian Under 19 world championship team

Colleen has also been an active member of the WWLC committee for 50 years, first serving on the Committee in 1974 as a “Junior representative”.

Colleen was also a Board member of Lacrosse Victoria for 2011 & 2012.

## **TESTIMONIALS**

### **NOEL SMITH (Former Australian coach)**

I had the privilege of coaching Colleen Hunter (née McVeigh) in the Victorian women's lacrosse team from 1979 - 1985 and later in the Australian women's teams of 1985, 1986 and 1989. During that time, I watched her grow from a determined and talented athlete into one of the most respected leaders in Australian lacrosse.

Colleen wasn't just a standout player, she was a true team player in every sense. Whether she was vice-captain in 1985, co-captain in 1986, or leading as captain in 1989, she brought a calm confidence, fierce work ethic, and deep commitment to the team's success. She led by example, on and off the field, always putting in the work and lifting those around her.

Her leadership wasn't just about titles. She had a natural ability to bring people together, to encourage younger players, and to drive the group forward with quiet strength and humility. She never sought the spotlight, but she earned every bit of respect that came her way.

More than anything, Colleen played with heart. You could always rely on her in big moments, she had that rare ability to stay composed under pressure, and to inspire others to do the same. Her dedication to the sport and her teammates was unwavering, and her legacy as a player and leader is one that still resonates.

It was an honour to coach her, and even more so to call her a friend.

## **CONCLUSION**

Colleen Hunter's lacrosse playing career and credentials speak for themselves. Despite the lack of opportunity to benefit from playing U.S. college lacrosse, few players would match her achievements.

As a player, Colleen would be the first player you would want on your team, be that club, state, or national level. Her fierce determination, incredible speed, skill, elite fitness, and tactical sense made her a formidable opponent. Not only was Colleen an extremely gifted athlete, she put the team first, running hard all over the field, preventing goals at one end, whilst setting up or scoring goals at the other end. Leading by example, Colleen was an inspirational captain and leader, and a humble one at that!

Coupled with Colleen's outstanding playing achievements she has been continuously involved in women's lacrosse for 50 years, giving back to the sport of lacrosse as a coach, manager, and administrator at all levels, from grass roots development to club and state coaching, to club and state administration and managing teams at club, state, and national level.

Well played Colleen, you are an Australian lacrosse champion!