

BACKGROUND OF THE ROOSTER TROPHY

The Rooster Trophy is awarded to the club who wins the Ellesmere Bowls Sub Centre mens interclub competition each year.

The trophy was presented to the Leeston Club in 1905 by Richard Loudon for competition between the Leeston and Southbridge Clubs and after 1909 included the Dunsandel Club. Originally it was played as a challenge event; the holder could be challenged by either of the other two clubs. The first match was played at Leeston (as nominal holder) and Southbridge on the 11th Jan 1905. Each side consisted of three fours teams with the result based on the accumulated scores across the three games. Southbridge won 67-52, then on 4th Feb 1905 Leeston won the rechallenge at Southbridge 67-46, then in April Southbridge beat Leeston 76-46 to hold the trophy over the winter.

Richard Loudon was of Irish descent but born in Liverpool in 1854. He arrived in NZ in 1864 and joined the Bank of New Zealand in 1873 in Blenheim and over the next 14 years moved across many branches including Picton, Tauranga, Balclutha, Fiji, Auckland and ended up in Gisborne in 1888 as branch accountant. He obviously was a very competent sportsman winning a gold medal in golf and the open singles in 1889 as well as acting as vice president of the Gisborne Bowling Club. He moved to Leeston and Bank Manager in 1893 and the same year married Jane Briton. Although Jane was a New Zealander her parents were now residing in Sydney so the wedding was held there. In 1894 Richard and Dr George Gosset formed the Leeston Golf Club which initially played in the A & P showgrounds without moving any structures such as animal pens which seem to be regarded as mere hazards. Getting a ball within four feet of the hole was regarded a sunk putt.

Richard acted as Vice President, President and Treasurer of the Leeston Bowling Club at various stages as well as Chairman of the Leeston Angling Society.

The trophy was referred to in the early days as the 'Silver Rooster' or 'Loudons Silver Rooster'. The significance of the rooster is uncertain. It may have been a reference to something local however rooster statuettes were popular in Victorian times as well as a jewellery item in brooches, pins and rings. A silver rooster was regarded as a symbol of courage, vigilance and prosperity and this may have been the reason Richard chose it.

Richard moved to Manly in Sydney in either 1914 or 1915. His three sons, all educated at Christs College followed him. Robert (Bob) born 1903 and Darby (sometimes spelt Derby) born 1897 both achieved renown on the rugby field representing New South Wales and the Wallabies in the 1920's and early 1930's. Both were flankers and both captained Australia in some games. The other son John Robert fought in WW1 as part of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles where he was Mentioned in Dispatches and then in WW2 in the Australian army with the rank of Lieutenant. Richard died in 1924 and was buried in the Rookwood Cemetery Sydney.

In 1915 the Rooster was changed to a round robin home and away format.

It was not until after WW2 that more clubs were established in Ellesmere; both Lincoln and Tai Tapu in 1946 and Diamond Harbour in 1947. The Akaroa Club was formed in 1906 but up until 1990 was affiliated to the Canterbury Centre not Ellesmere. The Rooster was then played between all the Ellesmere Clubs as a ten man event (a fours triples, pair singles) then a seven man (a fours, pair and singles) and more recently as a six man event (a triples, pair and singles).

References;

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