

Meg Wilson AM, OAM
Life Member (NHA, TWHA 1968, AWWHA 1971)



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The following short biography of Meg Wilson aims to highlight critical points of her life and underscore the leadership qualities she possessed. Although Wilson is in the Australian Sports Hall of Fame and has been recognised in the Australian government's honours system, she does not feature widely in the Australian sport historiography despite the significant contributions she made to the development of women's hockey and to the Hockeyroos' achievement of winning three Olympic gold medals.

Meg Wilson (née Weaver 1925-2021)

Meg Wilson, whose father was a tin miner at the Mount Bischoff mine in Tasmania, was the second AAWHA president to come from a working-class background, the first being Ruby Robinson. Wilson was born on 22 January 1925, the sixth of seven children, and was christened 'Mary' but was always called Meg at her father's insistence.¹

Wilson was a bright girl and won a bursary that partially covered the cost of high school. To allow her high school education to become a reality, her eldest brother Wally agreed to cover all expenses not covered by the scholarship. Wally's generosity enabled Wilson to attend Devonport

¹ Unless otherwise footnoted the information for this section came from the interview with Wilson.

High School for six years, commencing at age 11. Boarding at a private home, Wilson reported being “scared stiff” at first but gradually adjusting. She completed the standard five years at high school by age 15 but had to remain at school for another year because the University of Tasmania only accepted students aged 16 or older. She accepted a scholarship to Hobart Teachers’ College in 1942, doing the “B” course, which allowed her to take university courses as well as her teachers’ college courses. During that year she learned about the Diploma of Physical Education offered at Melbourne University and, after winning another scholarship, spent 1943 and 1944 studying physical education in Melbourne. Wilson began teaching in the Hobart area in 1945, followed by appointments in Devonport and Launceston. She completed the six courses needed for her degree in her first three years of teaching and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Tasmania in May 1948. At high school Wilson had played tennis and hockey, going on to play hockey for Tasmania from 1946 to 1950, and captaining the team from 1947 to 1950. She was selected to the All Australian team at each of her five Interstate Tournaments and was a member of the 1948 Australian Touring Team to New Zealand.

Wilson’s life was turned upside down in March 1953 when her husband, Bill (William Maxwell Wilson), contracted polio and died three days later. At 28, Wilson was a widow with a six-month-old daughter, Judy. She had stopped working after her marriage in 1950 and remained out of the workforce until 1957, when Judy was old enough to start school. Wilson returned to teaching and taught mostly in the Lilydale area, her hometown, until her retirement.

A few years after her husband’s death, Wilson re-entered hockey, recalling her Saturdays consisted of taking children from the Lilydale area to Launceston, coaching and umpiring junior players in the morning, then repeating this for senior teams in the afternoon. She coached the Tasmanian team from 1958 until 1963, and again from 1968 to 1980. Wilson served as Tasmanian president from 1966 to 1984 and was also manager/coach of the Australian team for the 1975 IFWHA World Championship in Scotland. Wilson’s election as an Australian selector in 1960 began her long involvement with the AAWHA. In 1965 she replaced Rita Taylor as a Tasmanian delegate to the AAWHA and continued as a Council delegate until November 1985, when elected as the AAWHA’s president.

Just as Kate Ogilvie had been the right woman to lead the AAWHA as it ventured onto the international stage in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Meg Wilson was an inspired presidential choice in 1985, having the skills needed to lead the association toward becoming the world’s leading

women's hockey nation. The case study of the organisation completed in the late 1990s described Wilson as someone who:

knew what was needed and, more importantly what had to be done to make it happen. Of measured character, she is a reflective thinker who prevails through relentless determination, born out of a combination of passion and astute analytical ability, together with an uncanny knack of being able to coax others into doing things which they would not normally consider themselves eligible.²

These were not her only leadership attributes. Interviewees also described Wilson as very caring and knowledgeable about hockey, very consultative, astute, progressive, approachable, someone who was willing to listen, and who always gave people a chance to have their voice heard. At the same time, Wilson was viewed as “a very strong person; strong in her thoughts and opinions” and who “ran a tight ship”, but who was also “very, very capable and competent.”³ National coach Ric Charlesworth respected Wilson and felt she was a very clever and capable woman who “knew what she was doing” and who had the “intellectual capacity to guide her.”⁴ Three-time Olympic gold medallist Rechelle Hawkes observed that Wilson “cared deeply about hockey and the Australian Team.”⁵ By the end of Wilson's presidency, the association had become very professional in its manner of doing business at the volunteer and staff levels, and respected by the Australian sporting community, the ASC, and the FIH.

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² Gilson et al., *Peak Performance*, 130.

³ Interview with Henny Oldenhove.

⁴ Interview by author with Ric Charlesworth, 11 August 2017

⁵ Interview by author with Rechelle Hawkes, 22 August 2017.

Meg Wilson AM - Administration - Hockey

Meg Wilson travelled the world as an ambassador, tirelessly promoting hockey and Australia. She was appointed as the first Australian Women's Hockey Association (AWHA) representative to the International Hockey Federation Council (FIH) in 1986 and quickly earned the respect of other representatives.

After a successful playing career where she played for both Tasmania and Australia, Wilson became a state A Umpire, and coached and managed the Australian team at the IFWHA Tournament in 1975.

Wilson then moved into the administration of the sport, where from 1985 until 1996, she was President of the AWHA, and from 1966 to 1989 was president of the Tasmanian Women's Hockey Association (TWHA). She is a life member of both organisations.

Wilson was also vice president of the Oceania Hockey Federation and from 1965 to 1985, was a selector for the AWHA and convenor of the AWHA Selection Committee from 1974 to 1985. She also sat on the board of the Tasmanian Sports Institute.

Wilson's concern for the sport at all levels saw her develop and introduce the games of Minky and Half Field hockey (both modified rules for juniors) to be promoted at primary schools throughout Australia.

Meg Wilson



Tasmanian Hockey Team 1946-1950
Captain 1947-1950



Australian Hockey Team 1946-1950
Vice-Captain 1949-1950
Photo 1948

Tasmanian Team 1946-1950	Tasmanian Captain 1947-1950
Australian Team 1946-1950	Australian Vice-Captain 1949
Australian Touring Team 1948	Australian Vice-Captain 1948
Tasmanian Women's Coach	1958-1963, 1968-1980
TWHA President	1966-1989
AWHA President	1985-1996