## **Ron Eaton**

..... made his First Grade rugby league debut with North Sydney (Norths #296) in 1931 but was already well known in the North Sydney district as a First Grade Cricketer and a North Sydney Rugby Union player. A news article in 1932 reported that; "Eaton keeps fit in the summer hurling the little red ball at Bradman and Co. Catapulted from such a bulk, it speeds towards batsmen at a faster rate than it does from the hand of any other Sydney bowler.

Ron played cricket with the North Sydney Club, from 1926 as a Colt, before making his way up the grades and debuting in First Grade against St George in the 1927-28 season (Norths #218). He soon became an integral part of the North Sydney team, and in one game in 1928, he demolished the Cumberland team taking 7-11, with all seven batsmen falling to his fast medium bowling, and Cumberland being all out for 60 runs.

CUMBERLAND v. NORTH SYDNEY At North Sydney Oval, No. 1.	
CUMBERLAND First Innings	
HALL, c Gubbins, b Westwood 18 SMITH, b Eaton	

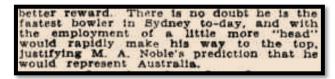
Ron Eaton demolishes Cumberland - The Sun 29 September 1928

In January 1930 Ron was selected to play with a NSW Second XI but had to withdraw. He was then selected and played for NSW in December 1930. Ron had a large presence in all things that he did in life, and the fast-medium bowler and left handed batsmen left a lasting impression in his one and only game for the NSW cricket team.

As last man in he took an almighty swipe to a ball from slow bowler "Chuck" Fleetwood-Smith which cleared the pickets at the Sydney Cricket Ground and bounced over the paling fence and onto the tennis courts at the back of the ground. He didn't last long at the crease as he was caught and out for seven runs. However he did have an impact with his bowling with match figures of 6-69, which gave him a First Class average of 11.5.



Daily Pictorial 28 December 1930



The Sun 30 September 1931

Ron moved to the Western Suburbs Cricket Club (Wests #286) in 1934-35. He made his First Grade debut for Wests against Balmain on 15 December 1934 and remained with Wests until the end of the 1935-36 season. Ron went back to the North Sydney Cricket Club in 1937-38 but a report in the Referee newspaper in September 1938 noted that Ron had turned out in the "nets" however his pace has dropped considerably since he played First Grade. This appeared to be the end of Ron Eaton's Grade cricket career.

Ron remained an amateur in his first season with North Sydney Rugby League Club, as at the start of the 1932 season he was considering a return to rugby union. After consideration, he resolved that he would be better suited to the thirteen aside code. While he played with the North Sydney Rugby League Club the previous year as an amateur, he could not see any point in remaining one. He stated that he had already begun training with the object of getting to the top in the League game.

The Daily Telegraph on 8 April 1932 wrote the following story; "The giant forward may not tower above the average player as do other rivals for the honour, but his massiveness is indisputable. He is a rugby union recruit, and now that H Bartley, W Leckie and N Walpole have also joined Norths after playing Union, he may feel more at home."

By 1933, Ron Eaton was a serious candidate for the upcoming Kangaroo tour of England. An article in the Catholic Freeman's Journal on 18 May 1933 noted; "Easily the best forward playing the game at the present time is Eaton of North Sydney. This man is a splendid specimen of physical development and is the type that is required to uphold Australia's credit during the coming tour. This fact is recognised, and it is a practical certainty that Eaton will be amongst the first players selected." Ron Eaton was selected in the trials for the Kangaroo tour, but in the trial match, didn't play to his usual standard and was overlooked for selection.

[Western Suburbs]	Frank McMILLAN (c) 1 FB	1 Laurie WARD	[Eastern Suburbs]
[North Sydney]	Grantley BENNETT 2 W	2 Fred GARDNER	[St George]
[Souths]	Jack WHY 3 C	3 Cliff PEARCE (c)	[Western Suburbs]
[Eastern Suburbs]	Dave BROWN 4 C	4 Ray MORRIS	[University]
[Western Suburbs]	Alan RIDLEY 5 W	5 Lex SMALL	[Balmain]
[University]	Ross McKINNON 6 FE	6 Les MEAD	[Western Suburbs]
[Eastern Suburbs]	Viv THICKNESSE 7 HB	7 Vic HEY	[Western Suburbs]
[Souths]	Frank CURRAN 8 FR	8 Ray STEHR	[Eastern Suburbs]
[Newtown]	Arthur FOLWELL 9 HK	9 George BISHOP	[Balmain]
[Western Suburbs]	Charlie WRENCH 10 FR	10 George TREWEEK	[Souths]
[Eastern Suburbs]	Joe PEARCE 11 2R	11 Clarrie KEMP	[St George]
[North Sydney]	Ron EATON 12 2R	12 Frank O'CONNOR	[Souths]
[Western Suburbs]	Frank SPONBERG 13 L	13 Eric LEWIS	[Souths]

## 25 May 1933 - NSW City Possibles (8) v NSW City Probables (18)

Reserves: Stan TANCRED, Wally HAMILL, Noel WALPOLE, Alf BIRTLES

Ron Eaton was not only a big character physically, but he also appeared to be up front in his views. In 1933 he was accused of being a member of the New Guard, a monarchist and anti-leftist movement that was active between 1931 and 1935. Ron Eaton publicly denied being a member of the New Guard.

In 1934 Ron had a dispute with the North Sydney Club and after the first three rounds of the competition, he told Selectors that he was no longer going to play with Norths, which was played out in the newspapers of the time. He cited business reasons for his decision. He changed his address from North Sydney to Smith St Summer Hill in 1934 but his work situation appeared not to have changed. His employment was described as 'Factory Manager.' Ron was a Cordial Maker all of his life and worked for Cawsey's Cordials making his way up to the very top in the Company. An article in the Sun newspaper in January 1935 reported that he suffered a probable work injury when he fell into a garage pit.

Ron Eaton, formerly of North Sydney, and now a Western Suburbs cricketer and footballer, had eleven stitches inserted in his upper lip last week. The accident was caused by Eaton falling into a garage pit. He also lost several teeth. The wound has healed well.

The Sun 20 January 1935

While Ron's dispute with the North Sydney Club was being played out in the media, he was also having marital issues. Edna Davey had left him in 1933 as she wanted to return to competitive swimming. The couple divorced in June 1934. This was probably what precipitated the move by Ron Eaton to the Western Suburbs district. This was fortuitous for Wests and ultimately for Ron as well because he married Sylvia James at Burwood in 1938. The couple remained together until Ron died.

Ron's change in residential address qualified him to play for the Western Suburbs Rugby League Club in 1935. A story in Rugby League News noted that; "Ron Eaton, another 'Magpie' front ranker, is also very big, and a few seasons back gave promise of developing into the big things of the game, but an unrestrained impetuousness, plus a bit of 'pitching' by foxy opponents often made the then North Sydney forward forget his real objective."



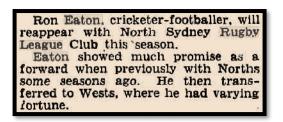
W Kiiliby about to be tackled by Ron Eaton The Labor Daily 26 April 1935



Wests v Newcastle 5 August 1935

Ron Eaton played twelve First Grade games for Wests in 1935 and after turning out for Wests in the trials at the start of 1936, decided to sit out the season. He went back to live at North Sydney so that he qualified residentially to play with North Sydney once again in 1937.

After retiring from top level sport Ron developed his business interests and became involved in other sports and charitable work, leveraging his sporting ability and contacts. In 1938, Ron and his wife were recorded helping to raise money for the Royal Alexandria Hospital for Children. (The Sun 31 July 1938)

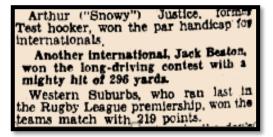


Daily Telegraph 6 March 1937



Ron was a member of the Oatlands Gold Club and became a low handicap golfer. In 1940 he entered the Rugby League Golf Championship at St Michaels in Sydney and won the contest against some very decent opposition. Wests took out the teams division which must have been of some consolation after the First Grade team took out the 'wooden spoon' that year.





Daily Telegraph 18 November 1940

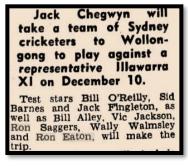
From 1940 until 1944, Ron continued his involvement with Golf and was regularly reported having success at the game. During this time Ron put on some weight and so in 1944, at the age of 35, he got back into shape with the objective of making a return to First Grade cricket in the 1944-45 season. Ron always gave his maximum effort and so put himself on a strict regime with "penance" and plenty of exercise. He lost five stone in weight as a result and returned to match fitness.

Ron Eaton, North Sydney fast bowler, used to be known as "Two-Ton"-after American pugilist Mr. Galento. But Eaton reduced five stone to return grade cricket. Three months' penance brought his weight down to 14 stone. Here's Eaton's recipe: • Train like a prize-fighter, running five miles each day swathed in four sweaters. • Play Sunday golf dressed like an Esquimo,

Daily Telegraph 22 October 1944

Ron's return to Grade cricket gave him a new energy and direction both on and off the sporting field. His form as a cricketer hadn't diminished. He made his way back into the North Sydney First Grade cricket team, and through his contacts he became involved with some of the best cricketers in the country, playing and promoting the game in rural and regional centres as part of Jack Chegwyn's XI. Ron toured with Chegwyn's team from November 1944 until early 1947. They visited towns such as Wollongong, Windsor (Queensland), Lithgow, Katoomba, Cessnock, Maitland, Bathurst, Lindfield (Sydney), and over the period some locations were visited on an annual basis.

Test players such as Bill O'Reilly, Sid Barnes, Jack Fingleton, Albert Cheetham, Ray Lindwall, Arthur Morris, and Ernie Toshack were all part of Chegwyn's teams. The travelling band not only promoted cricket across the State, but also raised funds, firstly for the war effort and later on local charities as well as organisations such as the Red Cross.



The Sun 8 November 1944

Chegwyn's team to visit Katoomba next Sunday is: J. Chegwyn, W. O'Reilly, S. Barnes, R. Saggers, V. Jackson, L. Livingston, K. Grieves, A. Wright, M. French, R. Eaton W. Walmsley, G. Powell.



The Sun 12 February 1945

Daily Telegraph 23 February 1945



11 September 1945



The Sun 16 November 1945

The team, which will visit Lithgow on February 24 for a Red Cross benefit match, comprises:—J. Chegwyn, C. Pepper, A. Morris, W. Alley, K. Grieves, R. Saggers, Vic, Jackson, W. South, W. Walmsley, Ron Eaton, C. O'Brien, A. Alterator.

Lithgow Mercury 14 February 1946

The photo below captures four members of Chegwyn's XI that played a Newcastle-Maitland team in the NSW Hunter Valley in September 1946. (Newcastle Morning Herald 24 September 1946)



Wal Walmsley, Ernie Toshack, Sid Barnes, Ron Eaton

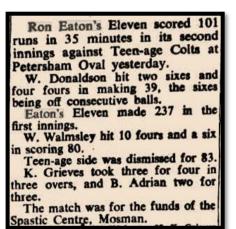
The caption to the photo read; "Players who may be selected to meet the Englishmen. Leading Sydney cricketers Wal Walmsley, Ernie Toshack, Sid Barnes and Ron Eaton, wait to bat for Chegwyn's XI." Ron Eaton became a good mate of Sid Barnes. Ron helped Sid with both his sporting career and employment. Wal Walmsley was Wests Third Grade Secretary between 1944 and 1947.

Ron Eaton was not one to sit back and wait for something to happen. He no doubt enjoyed the opportunity to play with Chegwyn's team, but Ron was also good at business and creating opportunities.

While he was still active with Chegwyn's team, he created his own teams in 1946 and 1947 based on the same concept of promoting cricket and raising money for charity. In 1946 he organised a combined Sydney Grade team to play Western Districts at Nyngan and in 1947 he organised the Ron Eaton XI that played a charitable matches against a Colts team to raise funds for the Mosman Spastic Centre and the Petersham Baby Centre.

Sydney grade combined cricket team will play Far Western Districts at Nyngan at Easter. The team has been brought together by North Sydney cricketer, Ron Eaton. Ted Brett (North Sydney) will be caplain. Internationals Ern Toshack and Frank Ward, and interstate men. R. Whitington, K. Carmody, and Bruce Cook will appear. Other members are A. Jesson, E. Fletcher, B. Watson, L. White (N. Syd.), and G. Barnes (Mosman).

SMH 17 April 1946



SMH 17 February 1947

Former Test opener Bill Brown will make his first Sydney appearance of the season at Petersham Oval tomorrow afternoon. Brown will play for a combined grade side led by Ron Eaton in a fixture against a teen-age XI. Internationals Ray Lindwall, Arthur Morris, and E. Toshack, Sheffield Shield players Ron Saggers, Bob Cristofani, Livingston, W. Donaldson, and W. Alley are in the line-up. Proceeds will go to the Petersham Baby Centre.

Ron Eaton was approaching the end of his cricket career but in 1946, at the age of 37, he was still good enough to take over the captaincy of the North Sydney First Grade cricket team from Sid Barnes who would be in England for the best part of the 1946-47 season. In fact Ron remained captain for his

final season with North Sydney in 1947-48.

Sydney, with Sid

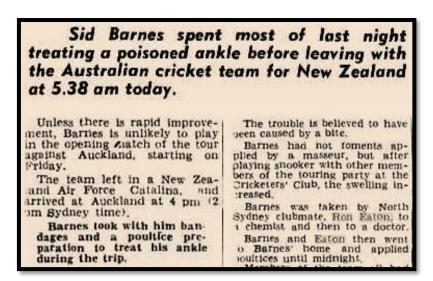
Daily Telegraph 8 March 1947



The Sun 9 October 1946

Ron had developed strong friendships with many of the leading sports personalities of the time and this would become even more so over the coming years as Ron focused on sports promotion in conjunction with Cawsey's Pty Ltd, and employing many prominent sportsmen.

Ron's friendship with Sid Barnes is highlighted in a story that appeared in The Sun in February 1946. Sid Barnes had an infected ankle the night before the Australian Cricket team was departing for New Zealand. Ron took care of Barnes that evening, firstly taking him to a Chemist and then a Doctor for treatment, and afterwards staying with Barnes and applying poultices to the infected ankle. The treatment was sufficient to get Sid Barnes on the plane for New Zealand the next day.



The Sun 26 February 1946

Later in 1946 it was reported that Ron Eaton drove Sid Barnes and Arthur Morris from Sydney to Brisbane in Ron's car so the Test Batsmen could acclimatise to the Brisbane heat and practice on the Gabba ground.

Off early for first Test	
Arthur Morris and Sid Barnes leave for the Brisbane Test tomorrow "to get ac- climatised." They will travel in former NSW fast bowler Ron Eaton's car.	Morris said he wanted to get to Brisbane as early as possible to obtain practice on the Gabba ground and ac- custom himself to the Bris- bane heat.

The Sun 24 November 1946

When Sid Barnes was proposing to return to Australia in late 1947, it was Ron Eaton who was in contact with him from Scotland by radiophone. Barnes trusted Ron Eaton to make all necessary arrangements for his arrival in Australia. Ron Eaton had previously employed Sid Barnes at Cawseys.

SYDNEY, Sat: Test batsman Sid Barnes will be available for New South Wales in the opening Sheffield Shield match with Queensland on October 24. Barnes made the announcement in a radiophone talk from Glasgow, Scotland, with Ron Eaton in Sydney.

Sunday Times (Perth) 28 September 1947

In 1947 Ron made himself available along with another North Sydney bowler to assist Arthur Morris and Eric Lukeman, both NSW cricketers, to help them with batting practice to prepare for an upcoming match.

Arthur Morris and E. Lukeman arranged for the North Sydney pair, Ron Eaton and V. Emery to provide them with practice.

Daily Telegraph 5 November 1947

By 1947 Ron Eaton was transitioning from the cricket field to the board room, and was becoming an ifluential player in Australian sport. One of his major deals was to employ Keith Miller as a Traveller

with Cawseys. The arrangement was important as it kept Miller in Australia and the work arrangement would give Keith plenty of time to fulfill his cricket commitments.

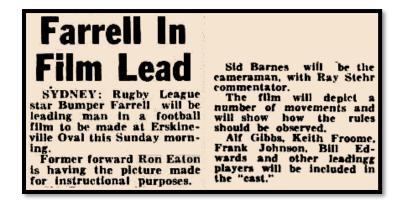


Keith Miller and Ron Eaton News (Adelaide) 13 March 1947



Maryborough Chronicle 8 March 1947

Over the next few years Ron Eaton became increasingly involved in sports promotion. In 1949 Ron Eaton decided to have a rugby league instructional film made. Bumper Farrell, the tough Newtown forward was to be the leading man, while Ron's good mate Sid Barnes would operate the camera and Ray Stehr would be the narrator. Ray Stehr by this time was also an employee of Cawseys. There is no record of Ron's film being a box office hit!



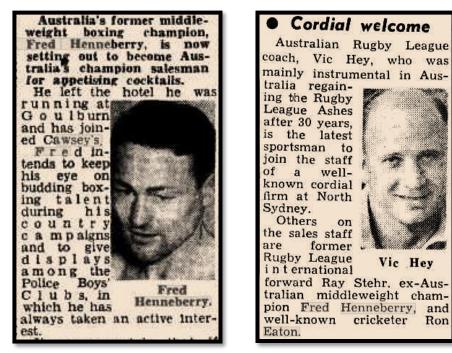
Brisbane Telegraph 21 May 1949

Later in 1949 Ron organised a free sporting demonstration, with champion golfer Norman Von Nida, hitting golf balls, Sid Barnes demonstrating batting technique and Ray Stehr packing into an imaginary scrum. Interestingly these were three of Ron Eaton's favorite sports.

Norman Nida. Sid von Barnes and footballer Ray Stehr are ganging up on a sporting crusade. Ron Eaton, of Cawseys Ltd., s putting on a sporting spree at the Assembly Hall tomorrow night-and it's free! Von Nida will hit golf balls into the hall, Barnes will display strokes, and Ray Stehr will go into an imaginary SCLIM.

The Sun 6 September 1949

In March 1950 former Australian middle-weight boxing champion, Fred Henneberry, joined Ron Eaton and the stable at Cawseys, and in November of that year, Australian Rugby League Coach, and former Wests champion footballer Vic Hey also joined the team.



The Truth 19 March 1950

The Sun 31 October 1950

latest

well-

to

on

Vic Hey

cricketer

and

Ron

former

Ron Eaton and Cawseys were expanding business activities and by 1950 had taken on the popular Vok liqueur brand. Part of the strategy to promote these products was to engage and associate the brands with popular sports personalities.

However by late 1950 Ron Eaton had extended this to sports sponsorship. The first of these was to offer a 1,000 pound prize for the best Test cricketer in the 1950-51 Test series between Australia and England. In 1952 Ron Eaton through Tolley's Wines offered a 1,000 pound sponsorship for a world professional Tennis championship. A similar proposal was put forward to support professional Tennis in 1953.



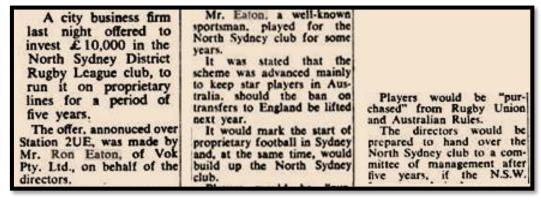
Daily News (Perth) 2 December 1950

Daily Examiner 13 January 1952

Ron Eaton had a long association with the sporting community in North Sydney, so it was an interesting proposal that he announced on radio 2UE in May 1951. Through Vok Pty Ltd he offered to invest 10,000 pounds in the North Sydney Rugby League Club to run it on proprietory lines for a period of five years. It was said that the scheme was put forward to keep players in Australia if the ban on transfers to England was lifted in the coming year.

This was several years before the establishment of licensed Clubs and there was really no precedent in Sydney rugby league to manage a football team in this manner. However Ron Eaton had a track record of being successful in business and sporting circles and it was possible, if the NSWRL and North Sydney were in agreement, that the arrangement could have worked. The NSWRL within a few days closed down the proposal, thanking Cawsey's (Vok), by advising that it was not within the League's constitution.

Ray Eaton later in 1951 offered Rex Mossop 500 pounds and a job at Cawsey's if he switched from union to play with the North Sydney Rugby League Club. The deal was being brokered by Ray Stehr but was rejected by Mossop. Stehr persisted and eventually arranged for Mossop to sign for the English Club Leigh with a 5,000 pounds sign on, match payments, accommodation and employment.



SMH 12 May 1951

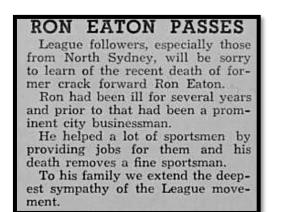
Sporting Globe 14 January 1953



The Sun 2 October 1951

Ron Eaton was not as prominent in the news media in the late 1950's. It may have been related to his ill health which he endured for a number of years. Upon his death, the Rugby League News noted his passing and acknowleged his contribution to business and to providing assistance to sportsmen in general. Ron energised sport in the 1940's and 1950's, developed friendships and business networks, and combined these to innovate and improve Australian sport.

Ron lived his later life in the northern Sydney Suburb of Castlecrag and died there in May 1960.



RLN June 4, 1960