

Sport

Rachael McDonald
NETBALL

NETBALL enthusiasts will engulf Rockhampton's Jardine Park netball courts this weekend, but one much loved familiar face will not be courtside this year.

June Gosbee (15/10/1942 – 11/02/2014) was a much-loved Rockhampton Netball Association Life Member who died suddenly. Only the week before the active 71-year-old had been playing beach volleyball at the Rockhampton Indoor Sports Arena.

There is a group of women in Rockhampton who symbolise this massive sport which now hosts almost 150 teams. They are the group of ladies who were the pioneers of netball in Rockhampton – and June was one of them.

In the 1950s June was one of the original Rockhampton netballers. The small group played at the YWCA near the police station in town before shifting to Victoria Park when the sport of netball was referred to as "American basketball". The playing uniform of the day were box pleated tunics.

The sport then moved to St Vincent's, Wandal, where the Wandal Women's Netball Association was formed. Netball then made Jardine Park the sport's Rockhampton home in 1970. Back then Jardine Park was four courts and 38 teams played in five grades.

Netball was June's life – literally. In 1981 when Jardine Park was in the pipeline June and husband Tom were one of six families who didn't hesitate to put their house up as security to build the courts.

Daughter Michelle still remembers her mum saying "it was something you did and you didn't even think about it".

"They had to get members and fees in to pay off the courts in a certain time so they didn't lose their houses. Who would do that now?" Michelle said.

As netball was such a fast-growing sport, the passion June and the others had committed ensured that in no time at all their aim was achieved and Jardine Park was now a 12-court,



THE ORIGINALS: (clockwise from main photo) June Gosbee (pictured far right) with the Royals netball during the mid-1960s; Merle Horan and granddaughter Grace Wakeman at the 2013 Rockhampton Netball Association's grand finals; A photo taken in 1993 of the players from the 1963 joint premierships teams (then known as women's basketball) Merrymakers and Royals with June pictured far right; and June (far left) in a Rockhampton Cricko team in early 1960s.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED ROK180514JUNE1

designed sporting venue with clubhouse and facilities which are still in use today.

"Mum was someone you could ring at any time and she would be there to listen. She was reliable, caring, loving and dependable."

These traits are traits that everybody knew so well. She had the ability to touch many lives and make a lasting impact.

If she could make somebody's job just a little bit easier by doing just one job to help out she had achieved her goal.

Merle Horan, also an RNA

Life Member, was with June from the start of netball.

"She was competitive. June was a shooter and I played against her in defence," Merle said.

"We were always out to beat each other until the day June stopped playing."

In 1963 June and Merle were joint premiers playing for Royals and Merrymakers respectively. June was also a founding member of the Wanderers Netball Club, formed in the 1980s.

June moved from playing, to umpiring and various committee roles. Over the

years June held every position on a netball committee except president.

She was also the volunteer arriving at the courts at 6am on a carnival morning to make salad rolls and the week before June would help with carnival draws, do all the points during the carnival and then be one of the last one to leave.

She was also a regular team manager for her daughters' (Julie and Michelle) various netball teams. Her batches and batches of homemade

chocolate fudge was a favourite.

June attended the Rockhampton Netball Association's last general meeting in January this year and would still collect scoresheets each week and would take great pleasure in watching her granddaughter Grace play netball. Only last year June presented Grace with her best and fairest trophy.

The Rockhampton Netball Association made June a life member in 1991.

"She was always so active, always doing something.



June was always so approachable and generous," Merle said.

Netball was always about the people and the friends for June. She loved being involved.

June was enjoyed a passionate involvement with the Indoor Sports Centre where she was inducted into its Hall of Fame in October 2010.

Sport was a passion for June, whether playing or as a spectator or watching on TV.

June was wicketkeeper in the Queensland Cricko team (ladies cricket) and also played softball, vioro, beach volleyball, Indoor cricket and tennis.

June grew up in Marmor before moving to Rockhampton and attending Crescent Lagoon State School. June maintained her association with schools well after her own education, by actively volunteering in many school sport events, particularly netball.

"My mother's drive, motivation and determination, to do the best you can in life is one of the legacies she has left her family and many sporting friends she associated with," June's daughter Julie said.

Julie recalls her mother's words of encouragement as she played netball: "Play hard, play fair, have a go and do your best," an echo of the way June lived life to the fullest.

As family and friends gathered to farewell June the echoes of "We are the champions" honoured a very special woman who loved and devoted her life to family, friends and sport (netball).



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