

# THE TORCHBEARER

## NEWSLETTER 73

### "56ers Torchbearers Club Inc"

PO Box 2148, CAIRNS Q 4870

**Committee:**

Patron	Margaret Cochrane	
President	Jim Vallely	Tel 07 40532150
Vice President	Dennis Stevenson	Tel 07 40653223
Secretary/Treasurer	Bill Cummings	Tel 07 40312888
Email		admin@56ers.org.au



2022. Cr Coghlan thanked the Club for its support for the Games held in Townsville in 2022 and for its ongoing support.

The next biennial North Queensland Games are scheduled to be held in Cairns on 3rd–5th May 2024 and the Committee and NQ Games’ staff will liaise with the Club about arrangements closer to the date.

**WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THEM**

## Paavo Johannes Nurmi

### President’s Comments

Greetings fellow torchbearers and partners!

With our 2022 AGM and Christmas now behind us, I'm pleased to announce that our executive positions remain the same with the addition of Andrew Cummings as an assistant to his Dad Bill. Andrew will be a great asset to the Secretary-Treasurer position. He is doing a fine job with the newsletter and is a shining light to our younger members who would aspire to do likewise, as most of our "oldies" are paddling in our eighties.

Kind regards

Jim Vallely  
President



### ANNUAL MEETING

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

The Annual Meeting of the Association was held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2022 with office bearers elected as follows.

- President – Jim Vallely
- Vice President – Dennis Stevenson
- Hon Secretary/ Treasurer – Bill Cummings

Descendent member, Andrew Cummings, was elected as an assistant secretary and agreed to provide ongoing assistance to Dennis Stevenson as editor of the Torchbearer.

Margaret Cochrane continued as Patron of the Club.

### NORTH QUEENSLAND GAMES

Cr Rhonda Coghlan, of Cairns Regional Council, as Chairman of the North Queensland Games Committee, attended the Club’s annual meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November

### The Flying Finn

Born into a working-class family in Turku, Finland, in 1897, oldest of five, his father Johan passed away not long after in 1910 and one of his sisters Lahja a year later. The family struggled financially, renting out their kitchen to another family and living in a single room. Nurmi a talented student, left school to work as an errand boy for a bakery at the age of 12 to help provide for his family.

A young Nurmi with his friends admired and practiced distance running due to the achievements of the English long-distance runner Alfred Shrubbs and by the age of eleven, Nurmi ran the 1500 metres in 5:02 but had to give it away when leaving school. Although he stopped running actively, he got plenty of exercise pushing heavy carts up the steep slopes in Turku. He later credited these climbs for strengthening his back and leg muscles.

Nurmi at 15 years old was inspired by feats of Hannes Kolehmainen, a Finnish four-time Olympic Gold medallist who in 1912 at Stockholm “ran Finland onto the map of the world” winning the 5,000, 10,000 & Cross Country. Nurmi purchased his first pair of sneakers a few days later and began developing a strict training program.

Initially training doing cross country in summer and cross country skiing in the winter In 1914 Nurmi joined the sports club Turun Urheiluliitto and won his first race at the 3000 metres. Two years later, 2016, he revised his training program to include walking, sprints and calisthenics. In 1917 as an outcome of the Russian revolution Finland announced its independence. With the resulting civil war in 1918, during this time Nurmi remained politically passive and decided to provide for his family by concentrating on his work and his Olympic ambitions. In 1919 he joined military service in a machine gun company.

In the army, Nurmi quickly impressed in the athletic competitions: While others marched, Nurmi ran the whole distances with a rifle on his shoulder and a backpack full of sand. Nurmi's stubbornness caused him difficulties with his non-commissioned officers, but he was favoured by the superior officers. As the unit Commander Hugo Österman was a known sports aficionado, Nurmi and few other athletes were given free time to practice. Nurmi improvised new training methods. He ran behind trains, holding on to the rear bumper, to stretch his stride, and used heavy iron-clad army boots to strengthen his legs. Nurmi soon began setting personal bests and got close for the Olympic selection. On 29 May 1920, he set his first national record on the 3,000m and went on to win the 1,500m and the 5,000m at the Olympic trials in July.

Nurmi made his international debut in August at the 1920 Summer Olympics in Antwerp, Belgium. From the races allotted to him from the Finnish organisers he finished 2<sup>nd</sup> with Silver in the 5,000m, but went on to win Gold in the 10,000m, Cross Country & Cross



(Above, Nurmi at the 1920 Summer Olympics)

Country teams. With the defeat in the 5,000m he analysed his fast starts was letting him down. Nurmi started to carry a stopwatch and spread his efforts more uniformly over the distance. He aimed to perfect his technique and tactics to a point where the performances of his rivals would be rendered meaningless. Nurmi set his first world record on the 10,000m in Stockholm in 1921. In 1922, he broke the world records for the 2,000m, the 3,000m and the 5,000m. A year later, Nurmi added the records for the 1,500m and the mile. His feat of holding the world records for the mile, the 5,000m and the 10,000m at the same time has not been matched by any other athlete before or since. Nurmi also tested his speed in the 800m, winning the 1923 Finnish Championships with a new national record. Amongst all this excelling in mathematics, Nurmi graduated as an engineer in 1923 and returned home to prepare for the upcoming 1924 Olympic Games to be held in Paris, France. *To be continued...*

## 56er's Corner

In attendance at the North Queensland Games 2022, John O'Donoghue provided to the co-author Andrew, some newspaper clippings he had kept, reporting on the 1956 Relay which we thought we would share with you all.

Provided on the last page is the second and last section, various newspaper clippings, "Schoolboy wins Olympic mile" (4.11.56), "Torch Relay Run a Great Success" (5.6.56), "Aged runner will carry the torch in the first mile" (12.10.56).

## A VISIT TO OLYMPIA

*A story by Bill Cummings Secretary/Treasurer*

A trip to Greece in September last year 2022 afforded an opportunity to visit Olympia.

Contrary to what one might have expected, Olympia is not in a central location in Greece. It is right over on the west coast of the Peloponnese Peninsula - a large area in the south of Greece separated from the mainland by the long narrow east west Gulf of Corinth. The Peloponnese would be an island if it were not connected by the narrow isthmus of Corinth joining it to the mainland just west of Athens. However, offshore of the Peloponnese to the west is the Ionian Islands (home of Ulysses the hero of Homer's Odyssey epic) and at the time, there were strong Greek colonies further west in Sicily and Italy that participated in the Games.

It would appear that at the time the Games were conceived about 700BC, Olympia was a religious sanctuary in fairly neutral territory between some of the often-warring Greek city states.

Being on the west coast, the area receives a rainfall that would be higher than most of Greece and the area has a pleasant agricultural ambience with wooded hills and rivers.

The Games were a strictly Greek (Hellenic) event held every four years. At the core of the event, were religious ceremonies especially dedicated to Zeus the Father of the Gods. So apart from the ruins associated with the athletic events, on the site are ruins/ remains of religious temples.

The Games were supported by the rulers of the city states and this support continued when Greece was incorporated into the Empire of Alexander the Great of Macedonia and subsequently by Roman Emperors.

The Games lasted about a thousand years. But it was the religious aspect of the Games that appear to have led to their cessation in 393AD. At that time, the area had become part of the Eastern Roman Empire – the Byzantine Empire based on Constantinople that had adopted Christianity as a state sponsored religion. The Games were closed down by decree of Emperor Theodosius I and the buildings on the site burnt in 426AD. Large earthquakes in 522 and 551 AD completed the destruction.

Archaeological discovery and interest in Western Europe in the 1800s of places like Troy, Mycenae and Knossos led to the rediscovery of Olympia and the Olympic Games tradition. The concept of starting the Games again was promoted by French aristocrat Pierre de Coubertin and the Games were held again in Athens in 1896.

The small township of Olympia where we stayed overnight is mainly dedicated to catering for visitors with a number of hotels, restaurants and souvenir shops lining the main street that operate especially during the summer months.

As is the way with the world these days, that night as we sat in a restaurant, next to us was a young French couple with a baby. The young man had visited Cairns and taken the SeaSwift boat up to Thursday Island.

## Olympia

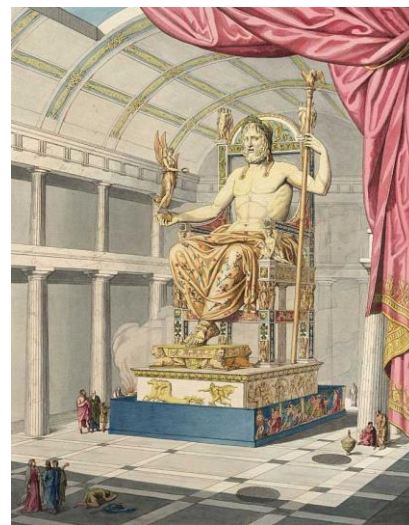


- 1: **The stadium & field**
- 2: **The Prytaneion**, officials residence & used for celebrations of victories
- 3: **Temple of Hera** (see description following)
- 4: **The Philippeion**, a circular memorial in limestone and marble containing ivory and gold statues of Philip's family, himself - King Philip II of Macedon, his son - Alexander the Great, his wife - Queen Olympias, his father King Amyntas III with wife Queen Eurydice I

- 5: **The Pelopion**, tomb of Pelops, later used for animal sacrifice
- 6: **The Nymphaeum**, water delivery system
- 7: **Treasuries at Olympia**, storage places for votive offerings
- 8: **The Bouleuterion**, an assembly house for local legislatures and other meetings.



- 9: **Temple of Zues**, 29m front x 70m length x 20m high fully developed classical Greek temple of the Doric order, one of the three orders of ancient Greek & later Roman architecture (others Ionic & the Corinthian),



most easily recognised by the simple circular capitals at the top of columns & housed the 13m high renowned statue (in 435 BC, carved by the sculptor Phidias taking 13 years) of the sky & thunder god: Zeus, which was one of the Seven

Wonders of the Ancient World. (Artist impression of Phidias sculpture of Zues)

### Foreground out of photo, No's indicated on picture

- 10&11: **The Palaestra** Wrestling grounds & gymnasium
- 12&13: **Roman Baths of the Kladeos & Hostels**
- 14: **Heroön**, Temple of the Heroes
- 15: **Workshop of Pheidias**
- 16: **The Leonidaion** Athletes lodging and largest building on the site.



Above: **The temple of Hera**, an ancient Archaic Greek temple that was dedicated to Hera, queen of the Greek gods. It was the oldest temple at Olympia and one of the most venerable in all Greece. It was originally a joint temple of Hera and Zeus, chief of the gods, until a separate temple was built for Zeus. It is at the altar of this temple, which is oriented east-west, that the Olympic flame is lit and carried to all parts of the world. The torch of the Olympic flame is lit in its ruins to this day.



**The Leonidaion**



**The Palaestra**



Janet (Bill's wife) standing beside a pillar, part of the structure of the Prytaneion.



**Jokes Corner**

A British man is visiting Australia. The customs agent asks him, "Do you have a criminal record?" The British man replies, "I didn't think you needed one to get into Australia anymore."

\*\*\*\*

A priest, a minister, and a rabbi want to see who's best at his job. So they each go into the woods, find a bear, and attempt to convert it. Later they get together. The priest begins: "When I found the bear, I read to him from the Catechism and sprinkled him with holy water. Next week is his First Communion."

"I found a bear by the stream," says the minister, "and preached God's holy word. The bear was so mesmerised that he let me baptise him."

They both look down at the rabbi, who is lying on a gurney in a body cast. "Looking back," he says, "maybe I shouldn't have started with the circumcision."

\*\*\*\*

Two guys were out walking their dogs on a hot day when they pass by a bar. The first guy says, "Let's go in there for a pint", and the second guy responds, "But they won't let us in with our dogs."

First guy: "Sure they will, just follow my lead."

He goes up to the pub, and sure enough, the bouncer says, "Sorry mate, but I can't let you in here with that dog."

He replies, "Oh, I'm blind and this is my seeing-eye dog", the bouncer responds, "Oh', ok then, come on in."

The second guy sees this and does the same thing. The bouncer says, "You can't come in here with a dog."

He replies, "I'm blind and this is my seeing-eye dog."

With a quizzical look the bouncer responds, "You have a Chihuahua for a seeing-eye dog?"

The second guy exclaims, "They gave me a Chihuahua?"

\*\*\*\*

In the public library, a man with his new library card questioned the pretty librarian.

"Do you mean to say," he asked, "that with this card I may take out any book I want?"

"Yes," she answered.

"And may I take out record albums, too?"

"Yes, you may."

"And may I take out ...?" he ventured.

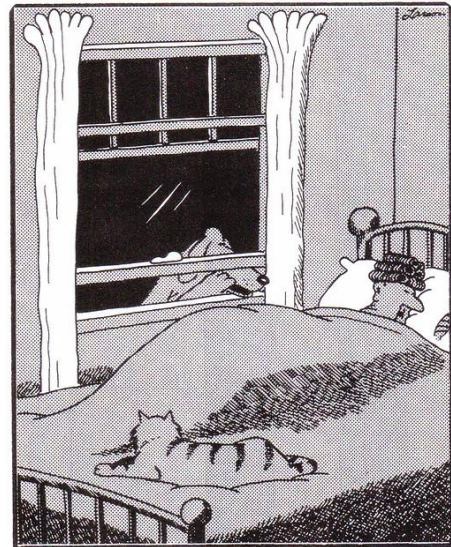
The Librarian noticing a gleam in his eye and a hopeful look interjected, "The librarians, sir, are for reference only."

\*\*\*\*

At a party, a young wife admonished her husband, "That's the fourth time you've gone back for ice cream and cake. Doesn't it embarrass you?"

"Why should it?" answered her spouse. "I keep telling them it's for you."

\*\*\*\*



"Puuuuut the caaaaaat ouuuuuuuut ... Puuuut the caaaaaat ouuuuuuuut ..."



Kind Regards

Dennis M Stevenson

[menafalls1@bigpond.com](mailto:menafalls1@bigpond.com)

"The Running Scotsman"

4. 11. 56

# SCHOOLBOY WINS OLYMPIC MILE

Seventeen-year-old Townsville Christian Brothers' schoolboy, John O'Donoghue, won the Olympic Torch mile championship in 4.45 at the Cluden racecourse on Saturday.

The event was staged in conjunction with the Townsville Turf Club's race meeting. O'Donoghue turned in the spectacular time after a gruelling race around the heavy track.

## GREAT FINISH

He figured in a great finish to beat 6ft. Townsville runner, Rick Southee, by an estimated 24yds, and Bowen's "Flying Dutchman" John Noort.

He was cheered by racing patrons as he entered the saddling enclosure to receive a trophy.

Racegoers were delighted with the diversion.

The names of the 14 competitors were semaphored and a running description of the race was given by Torch Relay Committee President (Ald. P. I. Molloy).

Runners carried the same number arm bands as worn by jockeys. Noort set a terrific pace. He dashed to the lead at the start and held it for most of the race.

But as the runners moved up the straight, O'Donoghue was in command. The Dutchman held on doggedly until the final few yards, when he slackened and was overtaken by Southee. G. Weatley, of Ayr, was fourth.

O'Donoghue this year became the Townsville secondary schools' mile champion. Recently in the Ingham Catholic School sports, he took four seconds off the half-mile record.

Runners who competed in the mile were: J. O'Donoghue (Townsville), R. Scuthee (Townsville), R. Heaton (Townsville), D. Bowe (Townsville), G. Weatley (Ayr), J. Noort (Bowen), K. Jurgens (Bowen), K. Bauer (Bowen), J. Potts (Bowen), and a team of Collinsville runners comprising E. Martin, F. Miller, D. Clarke, F. Bird and V. Wilkinson.

Townsville's No. 1 team took the intercity relay. Time for the event was 3.50.

The victorious team comprised N. Wilson, J. Buckley, T. Coleman and J. Edgley. Bowen No. 1: K. Jurgens, K. Bauer, J. Barnard, and L. Woods—was second and Collinsville No. 1—E. Martin, F. Miller, F. Bird and S. Doonan—third.

Collinsville runners entered the events in bare feet. Their shoes were in two bogged cars between Collinsville and Bowen.

They left Collinsville on Friday night in three cars. Several miles from their destination two of the vehicles became hopelessly bogged. One car turned back. The runners abandoned the

other two cars and walked into Bowen. Much of their equipment was left behind.

Seven teams competed in the relay. **ENDPAR: John O'Donoghue sits for the Senior examination this week.**

S. b. 56.

# TORCH RELAY RUN A "GREAT SUCCESS"

The biggest Olympic Torch Relay trial held to date was a "great success," the chairman of the local organising committee (Ald. P. I. Molloy) said after the run on Monday.

Seventy-three runners from Mutarnee, Charters Towers, Ravenswood, Giru, Ayr, Home Hill and Townsville took part in the relay from Townsville to Ayr.

The first runner left the flag staff opposite the Town Hall in Flinders Street at 6 a.m., carry a 2½ pound replica of the Olympic Torch. His white sandshoes, socks, singlet and shorts offered little protection against the cold air.

Officials were present to set the trial off.

Runners were taken to their marks a mile apart by a truck.

## TWO OVER TIME

Only two runners failed to complete the distance in the seven minutes maximum.

One of these was one of the oldest runners in the relay—a 50-year-old Dutchman from Ayr.

Fastest time was registered by Townsville runner D. Sanderford.

Councillor Percy Keane of the Dalrymple Shire did the mile with 10 seconds to spare.

Local swimming star John Donoghue had a blue cattle dog to urge him along. The dog ran out from a house just as John took the torch. Despite all efforts by officials, the dog would not leave the runner's heels, until after he completed the mile. John ran the distance in 5.48.

Another runner was startled by a kangaroo, which bounded across the road just in front of him.

One entrant had to run across a creek that had six inches of water in it.

Conditions generally were good, but the road between Woodstock and Giru was very dusty.

After completing the mile, each runner was picked up by cars.

## AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

The last entrant reached Ayr at 2.15 p.m.—13 minutes ahead of schedule. He handed the torch to the chairman of the Ayr Shire Council (Councillor E. W. Ford).

In an address to the competitors, Councillor Ford congratulated them on their good efforts.

He stressed that the relay was not a race, but that a schedule had to be kept.

Replying, Ald. Molloy thanked the Ayr officials and runners for the co-operation they had extended.

He pointed out that the organising committee had learnt a lot from the trial.

12. 10. 56

# AGED RUNNER WILL CARRY TORCH IN THE FIRST MILE

One of the oldest runners in the Townsville to Pros- erpine section of the Olympic Torch relay will run the first mile of the distance.

He is Mr. P. Kean, of Ravenswood. Mr. Kean does not wish his exact age to be disclosed.

When Mr. Kean began training for the relay he could barely run a mile under 10 minutes, but continuous training has lowered his time for the distance to about six and one half minutes.

The list of runners taking part in the relay was released in Townsville on Friday.

A spokesman for the Torch Relay Committee said on Friday, that each section of the relay team had been allotted a leader. He said that in the event of one of more boys breaking down, or suffering some other mishap, the leader could be called upon to run two or three miles.

He added that strong runners had been especially selected for the position of leader in each section.

The team is: P. Kean (Ravenswood); J. C. Francis, J. M. Torlack, R. D. Maguffin, R. C. Green, R. J. Gavin (Charters Towers); V. Daley, J. O'Donoghue, T. W. O'Brien, R. E. Wass (Townsville); F. Putland (Arcadia); T. G. Coleman, G. K. Elms, G. E. Edgerley (Townsville); L. Hartman, B. Stower (Winton); R. J. Redhead, R. D. Maher (Charters Towers); R. Bayliss (Mutarnee); W. Young, J. H. Aubrey, S. El. Fease, N. E. Sheridan, P. T. De Guesclin, N. J. Green, K. F. Partlett, C. A. Vernon, R. J. Berry, T. R. Fairbrother, R. Fairbrother, D. E. H. Philip (Townsville).

H. C. Paschey (R.A.A.F.); G. A. Power, J. J. Pollard, J. Lynch, A. Binder, J. A. Ramsey, L. Tyrrell, K. Dregburn (Townsville); A. Turner (R.A.A.F.); C. J. Archer (Charters Towers); F. R. Bone, A. G. Greig, T. Butler, (R.A.A.F.); D. A. Hoskin, A. E. Withers, A. Huggan, I. A. Huggan (Townsville); N. U. D. Wust (R.A.A.F.); B. C. Sacri (Giru); F. J. Sawyer (Ayr); C. S. Hungerford (Giru); J. J. McIvor, A. C. Sunn (Pioneer); J. A. Appleyaite, E. W. Anderson, W. J. Anderson, W. D. Kerr, H. Alderdice, K. R. Barrett, J. J. Edwards, C. Dismore, G. V. Govan, K. C. Gray, K. R. Smith, N. McD. Smith, S. A. Smith, D. G. Sandford, A. K. Thomas, V. Dowd, J. K. White, T. Keeskemeti (Townsville).

N. Gulbranson, R. Stephens, W. Yong, C. Eales, E. Genee, S. J. Pearce, J. Nicholls, D. J. Pearce, J. Gist, I. McCubben, L. C. Williamson, W. Lucas, R. L. Lewry, S. J. Day, W. R. Taylor, J. J. Weisber, G. Wigan, B. R. Taylor, K. A. Northwood, A. Tomis, J. M. Edwards, E. J. Lesby, B. J. Norris, G. Weiskley, M. Nugent, R. Horan, D. Lenti, M. R. Ryan, J. J. Peterson (Ayr).

P. T. Pudman (Charters Towers); E. J. Hay, E. J. Startig, H. Houston, D. Guen Chew, H. A. Forsyth, L. Forsyth, D. Howe, R. L. Barrett, H. Spisbury, L. J. Hansen, N. McP. Loncran, F. A. Lane, W. J. Melcher, R. Southee, A. J. Manson, J. L. McMillan, T. J. Ryan, D. J. McVein, G. J. Newman, E. J. Richardson, G. Tooth (Townsville).

N. Gulbranson, R. Stephens, W. Yong, C. Eales, E. Genee, S. J. Pearce, J. Nicholls, D. J. Pearce, J. Gist, I. McCubben, L. C. Williamson, W. Lucas, R. L. Lewry, S. J. Day, W. R. Taylor, J. J. Weisber, G. Wigan, B. R. Taylor, K. A. Northwood, A. Tomis, J. M. Edwards, E. J. Lesby, B. J. Norris, G. Weiskley, M. Nugent, R. Horan, D. Lenti, M. R. Ryan, J. J. Peterson (Ayr).

P. T. Pudman (Charters Towers); E. J. Hay, E. J. Startig, H. Houston, D. Guen Chew, H. A. Forsyth, L. Forsyth, D. Howe, R. L. Barrett, H. Spisbury, L. J. Hansen, N. McP. Loncran, F. A. Lane, W. J. Melcher, R. Southee, A. J. Manson, J. L. McMillan, T. J. Ryan, D. J. McVein, G. J. Newman, E. J. Richardson, G. Tooth (Townsville).

P. T. Pudman (Charters Towers); E. J. Hay, E. J. Startig, H. Houston, D. Guen Chew, H. A. Forsyth, L. Forsyth, D. Howe, R. L. Barrett, H. Spisbury, L. J. Hansen, N. McP. Loncran, F. A. Lane, W. J. Melcher, R. Southee, A. J. Manson, J. L. McMillan, T. J. Ryan, D. J. McVein, G. J. Newman, E. J. Richardson, G. Tooth (Townsville).

P. T. Pudman (Charters Towers); E. J. Hay, E. J. Startig, H. Houston, D. Guen Chew, H. A. Forsyth, L. Forsyth, D. Howe, R. L. Barrett, H. Spisbury, L. J. Hansen, N. McP. Loncran, F. A. Lane, W. J. Melcher, R. Southee, A. J. Manson, J. L. McMillan, T. J. Ryan, D. J. McVein, G. J. Newman, E. J. Richardson, G. Tooth (Townsville).



JOHN O'DONOGHUE PASSES TORCH TO TOM O'BRIEN. 1956.

12. 10. 56

G. W. J. Port (Mt. St. John); E. H. D. Douth, T. F. Paterson, W. J. Whatman, D. E. Wright, R. G. Walker, (Townsville); H. Wilson (R.A.A.F.); D. E. Roberts, E. H. Murray, P. T. McKay, (Townsville); D. McQuade (Mt. Isa); B. C. Steadman, A. J. Smith, N. Cameron, N. D. Campbell, A. Ferns (Hughenden); K. Thompson, D. Reid, J. H. Buckley, N. A. Wilson (Townsville).

G. Stephanos, P. B. Turnbull, R. E. M. Gale, C. Howard, D. L. Merryport, J. Noort, K. Bauer, K. Reygersberg, L. E. Wood, R. Barrett, K. E. Jurgens, J. A. Earnard, L. Barton, Tom Morrell, Toby Morrell, D. Power, N. Case, F. Albietz, J. Pearson, J. Pott, S. Land, A. Bauer, S. Doonan, K. Doonan, F. Miller, L. McGowan, M. Walsh, F. Bird, E. Martin, S. Richards, V. Wilkinson, K. Hiron, S. Hiron, W. Nesbit, A. Stokes, D. Clark, P. Dalton, D. Atto, S. Hathaway, L. Harphanan, D. Robertson, J. Tucenope, W. Miners, R. Auld (Bowen-Collinsville).

12. 56