

Max Notches up Maiden Century

Paul Fink - 13 April 2001

One of Melbourne's finest, most decorated and well-respected sporting characters finally raised his bat to his many adoring fans last Friday, the 13th of April, as he reached his 100th year of life. Max's long and distinguished career has encompassed many achievements in the sports of Athletics and Australian Football, but he will undoubtedly be remembered most admiringly as one of the finest canine *cricketers* of all time.

What more can you say about Max as a cricketer other than "brilliant". His sheer unselfishness was expressed by the virtue that (even as a youngster) he decided he didn't want to play for one team only, and as a testament to his greatness, Max refused to *ever* or bowl - so he *fielded* for both sides. The late best friend of Max – Kugel, was in awe of the 'Guru' and described him as "the fastest, fittest and most talented border collie" he'd ever seen. Of course Max's nickname, the "Guru" only came about during his later, lazier years of life, however if ever there's a case of a nickname befitting a dog's character so perfectly, then surely Max is it.



Max as a keen youngster



Ivan Kalbstein: "I was left stranded by the greatest fieldsman this game has ever seen".

Max's cricketing philosophy was simple – 'never takes your eyes off the ball'. He would run in with the bowler, and then as the ball was bowled, would be already alongside the batsman before the *ball* even got there. His speed and concentration were uncanny, and his fielding skills led to the downfall of many a class batsman - including the great Ivan Kalbstein, who fondly recalls the time Max ran him out at the bowler's end at the Fink's backyard in Doncaster. "I played a good shot about half way back down the pitch... the genius had grabbed the ball in his mouth, swung his head around and whipped the bails off before I was even out of the blocks – I was left stranded by the greatest fieldsman this game has ever seen."

Max, like most Jewish dogs of his era, finally made the move to Caulfield back in the winter of 1991, but not even the hard concrete street wickets challenged him - his career flourished and he went on to become – as we know him today - one of the game's greats. Later in his career as age began to catch up with him, the game moved to the living room and Max became one of the finest *indoor* cricketers of his time. Not even age could distract him – the game actually evolved *around* him as the 'one-bounce' and then later on the 'two-bounce' rules were implemented to compensate for the ageing but still very capable Guru. When he finally reached the twilight of his cricketing career, batsmen finally gave way to the notion 'if it hits him, you're out', such was the respect he commanded on the field.

His skills were endless and magical – and not just in the game of cricket - dogs and owners alike would come from all corners just to catch a glimpse of him dismissing a batsman at silly point, or even taking a chest mark with the football. Indeed, his *footy* skills were unquestionably remarkable - he perfected the chest mark "just for a bit of fun" he used to say.

Max now lives in retirement at his home in Caulfield and still loves the game of cricket immensely. And while his long and spectacular innings will soon draw to a close, it will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the finest knocks of all time.

Well Batted Max!! Every Aussie dips his lid to you...



Now in retirement, Max still loves his cricket.