

# TOP THIS, FRED!

While Fred Phillis is grabbing the spotlight with his club record of 827 goals, it is worth remembering the original Glenelg record-maker — Jack Owens.

Jack first played for Glenelg (then a new club to league competition) in 1924 and was to stay for 12 years.

A one-time close friend, Norman Haddrick of Glenelg East, recalls when Jack first made his mark at the Bay.

"Glenelg coach Fred Pincombe recruited four players from Broken Hill in 1923," he said.

"They were Jack Lloyd, the Beck brothers and Jack Owens, the youngest of the quartet.

"Fred once told me he'd be the pick of the four and he was right."

Owens, then only 18, had worked in the mines at Broken Hill where he got dust in his lungs.

Mr. Haddrick said this contributed to his premature death.

Jack kicked 49 goals in his first year with Glenelg and settled down as the team's regular full-forward.

Comparing Jack Owens with Fred Phillis, Mr.

Haddrick said they were very different in their style of play.

"Fred is a strong mark overhead, but Jack relied on his skill in making position," he said.

Mr. Haddrick said Owens was about 9 cm shorter than Fred Phillis.

"In fact the only thing they have in common is they both kick with the left foot," he said.

"A former Glenelg coach Dick Mead said Jack could read the ball from the foot of a team-mate quicker than any man he knew.

"He was not fast, but very quick off the mark."

Jack was a tram conductor so he wasn't always able to train with Glenelg.

So instead he would get the then Glenelg Oval curator Jim Bushell to mark a semi-circle round the ground about 40 metres out from goals.

Jim Bushell told Mr. Haddrick Owens would kick from this spot and often get 48 goals out of 50 shots.

He had two or three lads in the goals to kick the ball back.

Mr. Haddrick said he was the first of the goalkickers, averaging about five goals a game over his 12-year career.

"He wasn't a robust man but easily the best full-forward in SA at that time," he said.

"He had great control of the ball and his acute angle kicking was wonderful.

"I remember one game against Port Adelaide at Alberton when he played against Keel, one of the best defenders in SA.

"He kicked 13 goals and ran rings around this bloke."

Jack Owens' feats were made all the more remarkable by the fact that he played in a team which was bottom for several years.

Jack kicked 102 goals in 1932 after consistently bagging 70 and 80 in preceding years.

His greatest triumph was captaining the 1934 side which won the flag.

Jack captained the side in 1933 and 1934 and represented the State in 1926, 1931 and 1933.

In 1933 he was elected a life member of the SANFL.

In all, he played 177 games and kicked 827 goals.

Mr. Haddrick said unlike the great Ken Farmer who kicked over 1,000 goals, Owens didn't have a "protector" to give him enough space to kick goals.

"A big man called Furler used to protect Farmer while Owens had to do it all by himself," he said.

Mr. Haddrick once played for Glenelg before being injured in his second League game and also played cricket with Owens.

Playing for Glenelg B Grade, Mr. Haddrick said Owens was an excellent fielder but tended to slog when he batted and consequently often got out for low scores.

Although Fred Phillis has played more games and now kicked more goals, Jack Owens is still a legendary figure at the Bay.

His skill and dedication to Australian rules will always be remembered at the Bay and in SA football.