

CLASS OF 2019
ATHLETE: FRED USSELMAN



Induction banquet Thursday, Feb. 27
Reception 6 p.m., dinner 7 p.m.

By Grant Granger
Chair, Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame

Tickets: \$85
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Burnaby's Fred Usselman, centre at top, was a key component of the Vancouver Carlings which won the 1964 Mann Cup, emblematic of Canadian men's box lacrosse supremacy. The team was inducted into the BC Sports Hall of Fame in 2005. Usselman will be inducted into the Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame on Feb. 27.

Lacrosse's lanky, lethal sniper

Burnaby's Fred Usselman was a WLA scoring champion, a Minto Cup champ and a multiple Mann Cup winner

Fred Usselman grew up in East Burnaby attending Armstrong elementary, Edmonds junior high and Burnaby South senior high schools eventually sprouting to a height of six-foot-four and evolving into a lethal, sniper on the lacrosse floor.

Usselman played peewee, bantam for South Burnaby minor lacrosse, was on the provincial juvenile champion South Burnaby Salmonbellies in 1954 and the PNE Indians provincial junior A champions the next year.

That's about the time he began playing alongside a couple of other Burnaby boys, Gordie Gimple and Alex Carey, both of whom also went on to become lacrosse legends and members of the Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame, to form one of the most prolific scoring lines of their era.

The next season, 1956, he joined Mount Pleasant Legion 177 with that squad defeating the

Brampton Excelsiors in the Minto Cup final for the Canadian junior lacrosse championship.

The trio kept on scoring when they graduated to the Western Lacrosse Association playing in Vancouver for the Burrards/Carlings which captured Mann Cup senior men's Canadian lacrosse crowns in 1961, 1963 and 1964.

In the '64 Mann Cup final, the Carlings were down 3-1 to Ontario's Brooklin Redmen. But in Game 5, Usselman fired five goals to lead the Carlings to a 13-10 win and the Vancouver squad was back in business.

He was instrumental in the dramatic finish to Vancouver's victory in Game 6. The Carlings had a 12-10 lead in the last minute but Brooklin tied it up with two quick goals. Overtime seemed inevitable. But with 13 seconds left, Usselman won a faceoff, flipped a pass to Gimple who scored the winning goal. That set the stage for the Carlings to win the seventh and deciding game 10-5.

"A long, lanky player, Usselman will always be remembered for his towering shot," said one

chronicler of lacrosse history. "Using his six-foot-four height to greatest advantage, he would begin his stick's descent right from directly over his head and bring it straight down on usually terrified goalkeepers. Adding his height to the length of his lacrosse stick, his shot would come cascading down on a goalkeeper at an awesome speed from ten feet directly up."

Usselman scored 476 goals and 773 points in his 12-season WLA career, including two years when he led the league in goals and one in points (1961, 69 goals, 31 assists, 100 points).

After winning that 1961 WLA scoring title, Usselman told the league it should have a trophy for the scoring leader. The league agreed and created the Denny Huddleston Trophy in 1962, although it turned out to be too late for his name to be engraved on it.

Usselman was inducted into the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1979 and those Mann Cup championship teams have also been inducted into the BC Sports Hall of Fame.