

= Jack Verge =

Arthur " Jack " Verge (12 February 1880 ? 8 September 1915) was a rugby union player who represented Australia , New South Wales and Sydney University . Playing as a fullback , Verge won both his caps for Australia in 1904 against a touring team from the British Isles . Although he was relatively light for his position , he was repeatedly praised for his tackling and all @-@ round defensive work , and in attack , he was a fast and deceptive runner . His kicking , on the other hand , was inconsistent .

Verge went to The King 's School , Parramatta , and from 1900 to 1904 , studied medicine at St Paul 's College , University of Sydney . After graduating , he practised as a dermatologist . In 1907 , he won a fellowship at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh . In October 1914 , soon after the start of the First World War , he was commissioned captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps of the First Australian Imperial Force , and was attached as medical officer to the 6th Light Horse Regiment . He embarked for Alexandria , Egypt in December 1914 , and was deployed in May 1915 to Gallipoli , where he contracted dysentery . He was evacuated to Egypt , but died of his illness in September 1915 .

= = Early life and family = =

Arthur " Jack " Verge was the second son of Austral and Matilda Verge of Hampden Hall , Kempsey , New South Wales . He attended the King 's School , Parramatta , which at the time produced many senior rugby players . From 1900 to 1904 , he studied medicine at St Paul 's College , University of Sydney , and after graduating , practised as a dermatologist .

He had two elder siblings , Mary Elizabeth and John . His younger brother , Cuthbert , also played rugby for Sydney University and New South Wales , and went on to become a doctor .

= = Rugby career = =

Jack Verge went to Sydney University in 1900 and for the first two years played fullback for the University second rugby team . In his second year , he began to be noticed by the rugby press , both for his defensive play and kicking skills . In the July 1901 match between University II and Balmain II , Verge scored two tries , and was then selected to play for the New South Wales (NSW) second team .

He also played cricket at University , initially for the second team , and he was considered to be as good a cricketer as he was at rugby . He was a slow @-@ pace bowler , and at one time , he was the most successful bowler at the University . He played in two matches against Melbourne University : in 1903 , he took two wickets for 22 runs in the first innings , and six wickets for 20 in the second ; in 1904 , he took four for 70 and three for 69 .

= = Selection for University XV and NSW XV (1902) = = =

At the start of the 1902 rugby season in May , Verge was up for selection to the University first XV , either at fullback or threequarter , and also for NSW as fullback . He took the place at fullback on the University XV from A. J. McKenzie . By June 1902 , Verge was gaining recognition in the press . The Referee reported : " Verge , as full back , deserves a special word of praise for quickness and all @-@ round ability : he has steadily improved until he now may be compared with any man we have in the position . And he is likely to still further improve . " After a lacklustre performance by John Maund at fullback in the first inter @-@ state match between NSW and Queensland , Verge gained his first cap for NSW in the return match on 19 July 1902 at University Oval , Sydney .

Some 16 @, @ 000 spectators turned out to watch . From the start , both sides had good attacking opportunities . Early on , through the kicking of Verge and Blarney (playing threequarter) , NSW got to within 25 yards of the Queensland try line but the visitors managed to get the ball away . Shortly after , Queensland kicked the ball hard towards Verge , who was back at the NSW goal line , and

the Queensland threequarter ? and captain ? Lonnie Spragg , chased fast after it but Verge kicked the ball away safely . NSW scored the first points with a goal from a mark by Stan Wickham and Queensland responded with a penalty goal before half time . The score at the break was 4 ? 3 to NSW . Verge 's defensive work in the first half was noted by The Sunday Times of Sydney . Straight after the break , Wickham kicked a drop goal for NSW but Queensland scored a try moments later , which was converted and gave Queensland the lead 7 ? 8 . Another penalty and a try for NSW put the home side ahead 13 ? 8 for the victory . The game was considered one of the best between the two states . Verge , according to The Sunday Times , " made a highly creditable debut in representative football , in a match that required the full back to have his wits about him . " The Sydney Morning Herald noted that " Verge on several occasions saved splendidly , generally finding the line with useful punts and never losing his head . " Playing for University against South Sydney soon after , Verge gave a " brilliant exposition ... sure in catching , very quick and tricky on his feet , and excellent in finding the line , he could not have done better work . "

The premiership competition of 1902 was decided in the match between University and Western Suburbs on 27 August 1902 . After the match , Verge and other players from both teams departed for Brisbane with the NSW team , where neither he , nor several others of his teammates , had ever played . Western beat University and one commentator thought that Western 's fullback , Richard Simpson , had outplayed Verge . The first match against Queensland on 30 August was won by the home side , 16 ? 11 . Verge 's performance was less well received than in the previous inter @-@ state match , with comments that his tackling was unreliable , although he kicked well . The following week , on 6 September , NSW played Queensland again and won a hard @-@ fought victory 8 ? 13 , although a man short for the final 20 minutes . According to The Brisbane Courier , Verge " played a game at full back that could not have been improved on " .

Three players were considered for selection to play fullback for NSW in 1903 for the New Zealand tour of Australia : Maund , Verge and Hawthorne . Maund was selected and Verge continued to play for University .

= = = 1904 season = = =

Early in the 1904 season , according to " Rhabdos " writing in The Town and Country Journal , Verge was " showing fine form ... kicking and tackling splendidly , and [was] , in addition , very sure . " The selectors for NSW had a difficult choice at fullback between Maund , who had played in 1903 , Verge , and two or three others . The Sunday Times praised Verge 's handling , kicking and rush @-@ stopping . " Gulliver " writing for The Arrow preferred Verge 's quickness and positioning judgment ahead of Maund 's weight advantage but thought that both were playing a " first @-@ rate " game at fullback . It was Verge , in the end , who was selected to represent NSW on 11 June against Queensland .

A crowd of 22 @, @ 000 spectators gathered at the University Oval for the NSW v Queensland match on 11 June . It was not considered a good game , with the home side 's 11 ? 6 victory coming through stronger defence . The fast pace of the Queensland backs almost resulted in a try early in the first half but the ball was knocked on over the line after the defenders were beaten . Instead it was NSW who got the first points through a converted try . Repeated attacks from Queensland failed to provide points and NSW scored another try for an 8 ? 0 lead at the end of the first half . A further try came for NSW from " some sparkling work " , and Queensland gained two penalty goals , being prevented from scoring any tries by the defensive work of Verge , J. McMahon and Iggy O 'Donnell , the NSW skipper . In the final moments , Pat Walsh , the NSW forward , got close to scoring but lost the ball in the tackle . A scrum ensued and Queensland won the ball and kicked it away . Verge caught the ball running at full pace and went for the corner , but was pushed off the field just before he could score . Verge 's good game at fullback earned him selection for the return match on 15 June .

The match on 15 June was played at the Agricultural Ground in front of 12 @, @ 000 spectators . NSW soon put points on the scoreboard when O 'Donnell marked and Verge kicked a goal . Queensland responded soon after with an unconverted try , and then , after some fast play , scored

a second try , this one converted to put the visitors ahead 4 ? 8 . Verge then kicked a penalty goal to bring the difference to one point . The second half was a demonstration of good attacking play and strong defensive work on both sides . The only points scored were from a try for Queensland , giving them a 7 ? 11 win .

= = = The British Isles tour of Australia = = =

The NSW backs , with the exception of Verge and Wickham , did not play very well in the two inter @-@ state matches , but the forwards , ahead of the match against the British Isles touring team , were seen to be good . The British team , in contrast , led by David Bedell @-@ Sivright , arrived in Australia with a reputation for the excellence of its back line . The tourists ' first game was against NSW on 18 June in front of 35 @,@ 000 spectators at the Sydney Cricket Ground . The game had barely begun when the visitors were already attacking the tryline and NSW was forced to defend . Percy Bush , the British halfback , scored a drop goal within the first ten minutes , and soon after the British scored a try . They were proving to be very quick and aggressive , and the home side had to defend right on its tryline for much of the first half , which ended 0 ? 12 . Another try came for the British within three minutes of the second half . NSW 's chance to score came when Britain was penalised inside its 25 but Wickham missed what should have been an easy goal . Instead the visitors scored another two converted tries and ended victors , 0 ? 27 . It was said by The Sunday Times that it was the best rugby team to have visited Australia , whether from Britain or New Zealand . NSW played well but were " outclassed in every point of play " ; Verge , for his part , did " as well as could be expected " , although his attempt at a drop goal in the second half failed .

For the return match between NSW and the British Isles on 25 June , each side made four changes . In the opening period , the sides were evenly matched but eventually the British scored a try in the corner , which was converted , and a second try soon after took them eight points clear . The visitors were up 13 ? 0 at half time after another converted try : the home side had made numerous attacking attempts but had failed to cross the line . The second half started as the first had ended , with NSW dominating , but they failed to score ; instead , the British managed to counter @-@ attack to score another converted try . NSW then managed to score a try but Verge failed to convert . The tourists then scored another three tries , one of them converted . With Britain leading 3 ? 29 in the closing minutes , NSW scored a second try ; this time Wickham missed the conversion . The final score was 6 ? 29 .

After the first match between NSW and the tourists , the Metropolitan Union made its selection for the team to play the tourists on 29 June , Verge amongst them ; some of the other eligible NSW players were not picked . On the day , however , it was Maund , not Verge , who played at fullback .

Verge was selected to play fullback for Australia against the British team in the first of the three test matches , on 2 July 1904 at the Sydney Cricket Ground . With 35 @,@ 000 spectators , the first half was dominated by the home team . Britain was forced to defend , and prevented Australia from scoring . Britain gained the upper hand after halftime , scoring 17 points with no response from Australia . The Australians played the second half with a man short after Charlie White , the threequarter , broke a rib towards the end of the first half . The Sunday Times reported that it was a " very fast and excellent contest with Britishers very little superior . " Verge was active in preventing the British scoring , making a try @-@ saving tackle early in the first half , and numerous crucial defensive plays throughout the game . Although his tackling was commended , his kicking game received some criticism .

The second test match , on 23 July at the Exhibition Ground in Brisbane , started well for Australia . In the first quarter , a kick from Wickham towards the British corner was picked up by Pat McEvedy , the New Zealand @-@ born winger playing for Britain , and he was tackled into touch by the Australian forward Alec Burdon . The ball then came to Verge , who kicked towards the British halfback Bush , and Burdon took it and ran over the tryline for the opening score , with no conversion . The British levelled the score at the start of the second half with an unconverted try by Bush , and then immediately after , he scored a drop goal to put the visitors 3 ? 7 ahead . The British added a further ten points to their tally , and won the match 3 ? 17 . Verge kicked well in this

game , according to The Sunday Times . Verge was not selected to play in the third test , and returned to play for the University team .

= = = End of rugby career = = =

At the end of the 1904 season , after passing his final medical examinations , Verge left Sydney University and stopped playing rugby for the team . A. J. McKenzie , whom he had displaced in 1902 , took over at fullback , although he soon gave way to Verge 's brother , Cuthbert . The older Verge was granted a blue , and was elected a vice @-@ president of the club . However , he returned to the team for the tour of New Zealand in September 1906 . Both Verge and his brother were selected for the tour squad .

The first game was against Otago University on 10 September , which the home side won easily , 21 ? 0 . Jack Verge was the only one of the team to play well , preventing the home side scoring through his tackling . For the return match on 15 September , the younger Verge was brought in at five @-@ eighth , which helped strengthen the team . No points were scored in the first half , although the visitors came close to getting a try but were held up on the line . In the second half , Otago scored six points to Sydney 's three , and again came away the winners . Verge missed scoring from a penalty kick , which hit the crossbar .

Jack Verge departed for England aboard the RMS Mongolia on 25 May 1907 , to spend three years in the UK and Europe undertaking further studies in medicine , while also playing rugby . He was awarded a Fellowship at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh , and played rugby for Edinburgh University in 1908 . Verge 's brother , meanwhile , continued to play for University and also played fullback for Metropolitan against the Anglo @-@ Welsh touring team in Sydney on 15 August 1908 , which the tourists won 13 ? 16 with a try in the final moments , and against the Ponsonby team on tour from New Zealand in August 1909 . On his return from Europe , Verge practised as a doctor in Macquarie Street before joining the army , and did not play competitive rugby again .

= = = International appearances = = =

= = Military service = =

On 2 October 1914 , shortly after the outbreak of the First World War , Verge enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force as a captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps . He was subsequently attached to the 6th Light Horse Regiment as its medical officer . After completing rudimentary training in Sydney , his regiment embarked on HMAT A29 Suevic on 21 December , reaching Egypt on 1 February 1915 . When the light horse regiments were sent to Gallipoli as reinforcements following the initial landing , Verge was attached to the 1st Australian Division . The reinforcements landed on 20 May , just after the failed Turkish attack on Anzac Cove . The 6th Light Horse Regiment was tasked with securing the right hand flank of the Allied lodgement , and during the months that followed undertook mainly defensive duties around the beachhead . The conditions on the peninsula were very harsh , and sanitation was poor . Several months after landing , Verge contracted dysentery and was evacuated to No. 17 British General Hospital in Alexandria , Egypt . He died on 8 September 1915 , and was buried at the Chatby War Memorial Cemetery (Row Q , Grave No. 523) in Alexandria .