
ANGUS HUTCHISON MCDONALD

Constable/Sergeant, 1920-1962 Premiere Track and Field Athlete

*Written & researched by John Burchill
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Angus McDonald was born in Haddington, Scotland, on August 14, 1898. After the death of his father in 1909, he immigrated to Winnipeg with his mother and seven of his siblings.

On August 4, 1915, Angus enlisted with the Canadian Expeditionary Force just 10-days before his 17th birthday. However, he listed his birth year as 1894, making him appear (on paper anyway) as a 22-year old. ¹

At 17, Angus' unit sailed for England on April 24, 1916, where he was transferred to the 8th Battalion CEF and sent into the field in France. On October 4, 1916, he was admitted to the military hospital in Le Harve for a gunshot wound to the groin. ² After he was discharged from the hospital Angus returned to the European theatre and was eventually discharged from the army on May 19, 1919, as part of the general demobilization.

Shortly after his discharge from the army, Angus joined the Regina Police Department in 1919. However, he only remained a short time before joining the Winnipeg Police Department as a probationary constable on August 6, 1920.

On June 18, 1927, Angus married Marie Jeannette Blair, the daughter of retired Winnipeg Police Inspector Walter Blair (1888-1918). Together, Angus and Marie had two children, Ian and Gail.

On January 1, 1939, Angus was promoted to Detective and on May 31, 1944, he was promoted to Detective Sergeant. Angus died while still employed by the Winnipeg Police on October 17, 1962. With just over 42 years of service (23 as a detective), Angus was the longest serving

¹ While militia orders stipulated that recruits were to be between the ages of 18 and 45, overage and underage individuals provided false birth dates to enlist. Although youth under the age of 18 could enlist if they had a parent's consent, that didn't apply in Angus' case as he lied about his age.

² Le Havre, a French port on the English Channel, was used by the British Expeditionary Force throughout the war. Many thousands of British and Commonwealth troops were moved to the front through Le Havre. A number of hospitals were also established in the town.

Winnipeg Police officer still working at the time of his death. He was buried at Thomson in the Park Cemetery.

When I pulled Angus' police service file, it was surprisingly slim. In fact, it only contained two pieces of paper that confirmed his employment and promotions within the police department. However, aside from detective work, where Angus shone was in track and field – something that was not likely to be contained in his employment file in any event.

Starting in 1920 the Winnipeg City Police Athletic Association (WCPAA) became actively involved in promoting sporting events among its own members, as well as the community. As police officers were not allowed to form a trade union after the 1919 Strike, the WCPAA supported its members in other ways – focusing on athletics, amusements and pastimes for its members. As an organization, active involvement in sports made sense for the police department and WPAA members as it promoted job related skills, camaraderie, as well as a sense of community.

In fact, the community was always welcome to participate in WCPAA sanctioned “open” events that were not exclusively for police officers. According to a January 9, 1932, article in the Winnipeg Free Press, “*many athletes that are internationally known gained their first experience in events staged by the WPAA, [including] Cyril Coaffee, Laurie Armstrong, and Brant Little, Olympic runners*”.³



Board of Police Commissioners Cup

The same 1932 article mentions Constable Angus McDonald as having “*an enviable list of track and field championships which total twenty. In his possession are four Dominion championship medals, eight provincial championship medals, six medals from the Board of Police Commissioners for the athlete with the highest aggregate in track and field sports, while in the Scottish Games of 1930 he walked off with the T. Eaton Challenge Cup going to the athlete with the highest aggregate, and also won the Fort Gary Hotel Cup for best aggregate in open events*”.

Probably the highlight of McDonald's track and field games would be when he won the Board of Police Commissioners Cup on August 27, 1927, capturing the 100 yard dash, 16-lb shotput and discus throw, while finishing second in the tripple jump and third in the javalin ... “*Climaxed by the presence of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and H.R.H. Prince George*” (future Kings Edward VIII & George VI).

³ At the 1924 Olympic trials Cyril Coaffee tied the Olympic record with a 10.8 second time in the 100 yard dash and went to the Paris Games as Canada's team captain; Laurie Armstrong also competed in the 1924 Olympics in the 100 and 200 yard dashes and the 4x100 relay; and Brant Little competed in the men's 800 metres at the 1928 Summer Olympics.

Competing in the same events was Ken Aseltine (non-police) who won the WCPAA gold medal for highest aggregate in the open events. Again, showcasing the talent appearing at WCPAA events, Aseltine won gold in men's long jump at the 1924 and 1926 Canadian Championships (outdoor) and gold in the men's triple jump. He was named to the Olympic Team in 1928, but an injury prevented him from going to Amsterdam.

Angus McDonald Wins Police Sports Honors

Captures Cup and Medal For All-Round Work—Ken Aseltine in Form

Champion "Cop"
Captures Trophy and Medal for All-Round Athletic Efficiency at Police Sports

CLIMAXED by the presence of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and H.R.H. Prince George, the eighth annual field day of the Winnipeg City Police Athletic Association at River Park, on Saturday, proved to be a decided success despite the threatening weather.

Old Man Sol failed to do his stuff and only a fair-sized crowd was in attendance. Although no records were broken, due to the soggy field, there were many splendid performances recorded during the meet, which was run off in quick order.

Angus McDonald and Ken Aseltine were two of the leading athletes of the day. McDonald captured the 100 yards handicap, 16-lb. shot, throwing the discus, finished second in the running hop, step and jump and third in the javelin, to annex the Board of Police Commissioners' cup and medal for the member of the W.C.P.A.A. scoring the highest aggregate.

Sharing honors with McDonald was Aseltine, a member of the W.A.A., who romped off with the W.C.P.A.A. gold medal for the highest aggregate score in the open events.

A number of novelty events, such as bolster fights on poles, mounted mop tilts, blindfolded boxing and tilting the bucket competitions, greatly amused the crowd.



ANGUS McDONALD

Winnipeg Tribune, August 29, 1927 ⁴

As Angus competed well into the late 1930s winning the 16-lb shotput in both the closed and open events (Manitoba Championships), the discus, and second in both the 16 and 28-lb hammer throw events in 1937, it is unfortunate there is little to remember his police service or his contribution to sport in Manitoba except what is contained in the newspapers.

⁴ The games were held at River Park, a 130 acre section of land that is now the neighbourhood of Riverview. It was officially opened on June 20, 1891. It grew to include a full-fledged amusement park complete with a midway and boardwalk. It was used for baseball, football, lacrosse, horse racing and even had its own zoo. In 1942 the area was slated for residential development. Churchill Drive park is all that remains of River Park today.



Angus placed first in the Weight, Hammer & Discus throws. Winnipeg Tribune, August 29, 1932



Angus placed first in shotput. Winnipeg Tribune, August 27, 1923



Angus placed first in the Shotput
Winnipeg Tribune, August 24, 1925



Angus McDonald. WCPAA Manitoba Champion 1923, with 16 pound shotput.
Winner of Board of Police Commissioners' Trophy 1924 "Grand Aggregate".

NOTE: Anyone wishing to recognize a police member they feel made a substantial contribution to the world of sport in Winnipeg and its surrounding municipalities is asked to send me their name and a brief description of their accomplishments so we can recognize them during the year.