

CAPTAIN ARTHUR WESNEY

Tribute From 4YZ

(Captain Arthur Wesney, who was killed in action in Libya three or four weeks ago, was one of the most popular of Southland's younger sportsmen. Here is a tribute broadcast from Station 4YZ, Invercargill.)

MOST of you will have heard of the death of Captain Arthur Wesney, who was killed in action last month. The news was a "knockout" to Southland sportsmen. Arthur Wesney was one of the most popular boys ever to put on a jersey, and his passing is hard to take. He was a hero on the football field, and now he has proved himself a hero on the battlefield. Rugby in Southland, and New Zealand, for that matter, will be a big loser.

A session of the length of this talk would be much too little to detail the deeds of "Artie" Wesney on the playing fields. It may not be generally known that he was an "all-rounder" of outstanding ability. His interests covered boxing, swimming, cricket and Rugby, and although he reached the top in all classes, it was the game of Rugby which wrote his name large on the scroll of champions.

Who of the 35,000 spectators at Carisbrook (Dunedin) in 1937 will forget his wonderful play in that memorable Shield match in which Southland gained victory by 12 points to 7? Wesney was a reserve choice in that Southland team, but when his services were sought half way through the first spell (when "Brushy" Mitchell's leg gave out) he proved his worth. He was no reserve player. He was the finished article, and his name will ever be remembered for the great part he played in that game. It was Arthur Wesney's match.

But he was also a match-winner on many other occasions. Two games which stand out were the Wellington and Auckland games when the Southland team was on tour in 1939. At Wellington it was Wesney's great goal kicking in a tricky wind which helped to beat Wellington at Wellington for the first time in 44 years! And at Auckland, also a first-winning performance, Wesney was the man who kicked the goal which brought victory by two points. That goal, it will be remembered, caused a controversy throughout New Zealand.

Arthur Wesney represented Southland at cricket, Rugby and swimming, and he was a champion at boxing at the Southland Boys' High School. He played Rugby for the South Island in 1938 and 1939 and he was a member of the All Blacks team which toured Australia in 1938. He was in his prime as an athlete, and had he been able to return to New Zealand he would have been of great service to Southland sport. The man is gone, but his deeds will live. He was one of Nature's gentlemen.—("The Sportsman," in a Budget of Sport, December 5.)

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