

The authoritative book on the life of Tom Wills: a great Australian story

TOM WILLS: FIRST WILD MAN OF AUSTRALIAN SPORT Greg de Moore

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MEDIA RELEASE

First wild man of Australian sport or genius? Champion cricketer or rabble-rouser? Charismatic leader of men or drunken scoundrel? Tom Wills was all of these things.

As Australian Rules football celebrates over 150 years of existence, we look at the real life story of one of the game's creators.

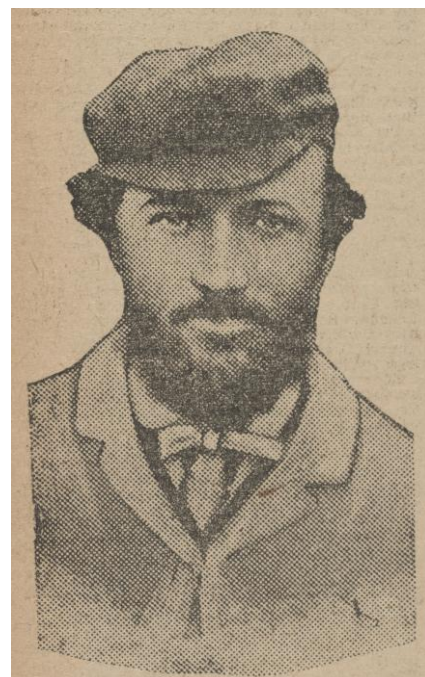
There are many versions of the origins of our indigenous game, but all of them include T.W. Wills in some way. A champion cricketer, he had been exposed to the game of rugby when he was at Rugby School in England. In Melbourne in 1858, with several other men, he organised the first football match, thinking the sport was a great way to keep fit between cricket seasons. The rest is history.

But the Tom Wills story goes way beyond the sporting field. His father was killed in outback Queensland during the largest massacre of Europeans by Aborigines. Yet five years later, Wills was coaching Aboriginal cricketers who became the first Australian cricket team to tour England. He seemed fearless, strong-willed and indestructible, a man who had it all.

At 44 years of age, Tom Wills took his own life. He had nothing left to live for. Greg de Moore's meticulous research provides a completely new perspective on the dramatic life of this extraordinary man.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg de Moore is a consultant psychiatrist at Sydney's Westmead Hospital. His ten years of research has unearthed original medical records, letters, text books and notes that were previously believed to have been lost or destroyed.



from Allen & Unwin

Tom Wills is recognised as Australia's first multi-sports superstar, for he dominated cricket and was the primary catalyst behind the sport of Australian rules football.[1][2] Born in 1835 in the British colony of New South Wales and raised in Victoria, Wills was sent to England in 1850 to attend Rugby School, where he became captain of the school cricket team and played a nascent form of rugby football.[3][4] Returning home in 1856, Wills revolutionised Australian cricket and captained Victoria to repeated victories in intercolonial matches.[4] In 1858 he called for the formation of a &...Â de Moore, Greg (2011). Tom Wills: First Wild Man of Australian Sport. Allen & Unwin.