

# Sport 1857 & 1882

## Woggabaliri



**Engraving by Gustav Mützel after a schetch by William Blandowski made during the 1856-7 Murray River expedition. Domestic occupations in the summer season on the Lower Murray River. 1862. Courtesy Haddon Library, Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, UK.**

**In the lower centre part of Mützel engraving six Wiradjuri people are depicted playing Woggabaliri.**

Mathieu Gallois

**W**oggabaliri is a non competitive co-operative kicking volley game played Wiradjuri people. The ball was traditionally made with Bulrush roots

wrapped in Possum fur. Woggabaliri is the Ngunawal word for play. In the lower centre part of Blandowski's engraving six Wiradjuri people are depicted playing Woggabaliri.

The game is similar to the modern game Hacky Sack and Asian and South East Asian games such as Jianzi, Sepak Takraw, Sipa and Chaptch. Wikipedia

states in its summary of the history of soccer: 'Games revolving around the kicking of a ball have been played in many countries throughout history, such as Woggabaliri in Australia, Harpastum in the Roman Empire, and Cuju in China.'

The Australian sports Commission has recognised Woggabaliri and in 2010 it was

referenced by the Football Federation of Australian in its Australian 2022 FIFA World Cup bid as a traditional Aboriginal game that is similar to soccer. Woggabaliri has been reintroduced in some schools across NSW.

## Cricket 1882

**“The dusky sons of the soil marched off triumphantly victorious”**

Mathieu Gallois

D.I.McDonald, in his book, 'They Came to a Valley', which was commissioned by the Wellington Historical Society in 1968 to celebrate Wellington's sesquicentenary, reproduced records of an early cricket match between an Aboriginal team and the local 'white team' (pages 71- 72).

**C**ricket continued to enjoy a measure of popularity, and by the close of the 1870s the town boasted two teams - the Wellington and the Albert. In 1882 an Aboriginal team was formed, and they soon displayed a mastery of the game which embarrassed other players. On 17th February 1883, the local correspondent of the "Town and Country Journal" reported:

'The Gobolion team of Aboriginal cricketers having beaten the Wellington white eleven by 28 runs in the first innings, the Wellington team declined to finish the match. The blacks scored 63 runs against 35 made by the white men.'

'Shortly afterwards a return match was arranged and once more the Aborigines showed their superiority by winning the game by 5 runs.

"The dusky sons of the soil marched off triumphantly victorious", a newspaper report

noted, "quite prepared to beat the English eleven should they come this way.

'The English players did not take up the challenge and the Gobolion team was denied the opportunity to show that the claim was no idle boast.'