

Quene Yip

King George High School
Class of 1925



Quene Yip

B.C Sports Hall of Fame

Inducted in
1998

Sport
Soccer
Category
Pioneer

Quene Yip was not only one of Vancouver's best soccer players during the 1920s and 1930s, but through his athletic talents, succeeded in crossing cultural barriers. Quene's soccer abilities were showcased at UBC and in Ontario while attending Queen's University, but he was best known as the star center-forward on the Chinese Students soccer team based in Vancouver's Chinatown.

Yip was born in 1905 at 51 East Pender in Chinatown's historic Wing Sang building and in his last years of high school at King George was the individual champion at the 1925 inter-high school track & field championship. While with the Chinese Students soccer team from the mid 1920s through to the end of the 1930s, Yip was lauded for his speed and sportsmanship and considered by many as "the best centre forward in the province." He was selected to the Lower Mainland All Star Team and on the field would dominate on many occasions.

Yip and his teammates brought pride and esteem to the Chinese community by successfully competing with and besting the "white" soccer competition in the lower mainland. These Chinese teams not only won their share of games and championships (including the 1933 Mainland Cup) but did so with class and dignity in a time when Chinese-Canadians were victims of many indignities.

"He was born here but my father had none of the rights of other Canadians. Soccer was one of the only opportunities he had to compete as an equal," said Quene's son Robert Yip.

Yip however was a pioneer as he attended UBC in 1926 competing for both the track team and varsity soccer team that season. UBC scribes reported, "Yip was everywhere, he drew the plaudits of the crowd with his dazzling footwork, neat passes and his clean and unselfish play." Yip was clearly UBC's most dangerous player, in fact among UBC's best inter-war athletes in addition to being UBC's first Chinese-Canadian sport star.

Yip also played for the "Sons of England" team in Kingston, Ontario while attending Queens University during the late 1920s. His Vancouver reputation had preceded him and he did not disappoint, again breaking barriers playing for an all-white team. A legacy had been created by Yip and his teammates. Together they had boosted the morale of Vancouver's Chinese, created pride and respect through their soccer exploits, unwittingly helping integrate their community with predominantly white Vancouver. Yet there remained some segregation and together with the economic depression still meant hard times for the Chinese community.

Following the passing of Quene Yip in 1994, Tong Louie, himself a Vancouver icon, recalled his boyhood memories of Chinatown's soccer Teams and Yip in particular exclaiming, "Among the Chinese community he was it! A great hero. To me he was a hero!"



Written and researched by Fred Hume for the BC Sports Hall of Fame.