

Alfred Walter Hall – A Club Asset

Alf Hall provided yeoman service to the Parramatta (Central Cumberland) District Cricket Club to whom he showed great allegiance over a twenty-year period, both on the field and in the administrative ranks.

He was a popular and well-known figure around the Parramatta precinct being well-known as a prominent cricketer, local musician, a competitive snooker and billiard player, and for some years he was President of the Parramatta School of Arts.



As a club Administrator Alf Hall put in many years as a Selector, sat on the Management Committee for several years, served as Chairman of Committees from 1953/54 to 1959/60, and when the reigning Club President and first-grade scorer Ernie Gould died in office in May 1960, he took over the role of Club President for the 1960/61 and 1961/62 seasons.

As a cricketer Alf enjoyed a great degree of success in a career that took on three distinct segments – firstly as a successful higher-grade player, followed by a retirement and then a reappearance as a captain and mentor of the younger generation of players in Third and Fourth grade, and finally another comeback in his mid-fifties to play with the club's City and Suburban team.

He won recognition as an aggressive right-handed bat with a neat correct style, a competent off-spin bowler and brilliant fieldsman who totalled **6,237 runs @ 21.07** in all grades and snapped up **433 wickets @ 15.11**. The first stage of his career with the Parramatta-based club spanned the period **1923/24 to 1931/32**.

It started when Cumberland played a holiday match against Burwood Soldiers (Alf was then a teenage member of the A.I.F.) and he impressed the Cumberland '*powers to be*' with his ability and potential.

A change of residence made him eligible to play with the club in 1923/24 (in that era a player had to physically live within the boundaries of grade club to be allowed to represent it), and Alf was selected in the Cumberland Fourth side that played on concrete wickets in the Parramatta District Junior Association's A Grade competition. In his only match he made **111** and **71** and that saw him leap-frogged into **First grade** against a representative strength Waverley attack, and he replied with a well compiled **58**.

Between **1923/24** and his first retirement **1931/32** he played two-thirds of his cricket in First grade and the remainder in the Seconds. In **First grade** he made **2,012 runs @ 21.40** (H.S. **139**) and claimed **51 wickets @ 27.03** (B.B. **5/23, 5/25**), whilst his Second grade efforts yielded 1,221 runs @ 23.94 (H.S. **110***) and 48 wickets @ 17.31 (B.B. – 5/31 v. Manly).

Alf's standout First grade season occurred in 1925/26 when he was in rare form making **634 runs @ 57.63** (including scores of **139, 113***, **118, 91**). This form earned him a berth in the **NSW 2nd**

X1 against Victoria in Melbourne in which he scored 58 - it proved to be his sole representative appearance.

The second stage of Hall's career materialized at the age of 43 years when he came out of a twelve year retirement in **1943/44** to strengthen the Third grade team, which had been sadly depleted by the demands of World War II military service on the club's younger generation. From 1943/44 through to the 1949/50 season he captained the Thirds and utilised his experience to navigate the team's fortunes during this difficult period for grade cricket and the world in general.

The team achieved a high level of success under Alf's guidance finishing runners-up in 1946/47 and 1948/49, then going a step higher and annexing the **Premiership** in **1947/48** for the first time since the victorious **1899/00** Cumberland Third grade side.

Between 1950/51 and 1952/53 he turned his attention to captaining the Fourth grade team. Again, he achieved great results when the Fourths captured the club's first-ever **Premiership** in that grade in **1952/53**.

Although advanced in age Alf Hall maintained a high standard of personal form contributing – **1,882 runs @ 18.45** (H.S. 87) - and **245 wickets @ 15.48** in Third grade (the 1944/45 season bore witness to his still potent all-round capabilities – 535 runs @ 35.60 and 35 wickets @ 15.00), and **1,074 runs @ 26.80** (H.S. **102**) and **71 wickets @ 12.81** in Fourth grade.

The final phase of his career saw him re-enter the Cumberland ranks to play with other veterans like Lloyd Cadden, Lou Richardson, and Ted Hilley in the City and Suburban team from 1954 to 56, and despite being into his middle-fifties he still was able enough to make **827 runs** and collect **60 wickets**.

[By Tom Wood – Parramatta District Cricket Club Historian]