

Greg Davidson – A Cricketer to Remember

Greg Davidson was one of the Parramatta District Cricket Club's memorial characters – a mountain of a man standing 6ft 10inches in the old imperial measurements, armed with an amiable manner and a laconic sense of humour all topped off with a wonderful baritone's speaking voice. It was also ironic that such a large man should trundle down gentle off-spinners and bat in a conservative fashion instead of hurling down thunderbolts from a great height and smiting massive sixes. Answering to the nicknames of 'Davo' or 'Longy', the former Greystanes Cricket Club junior and Merrylands Oval grounds man left behind a legacy of a very rewarding career and plenty of great tales when he retired from playing in 2007/08 to try his hand at Umpiring.



Greg entered the Parramatta ranks as gangly teenager in the **1987/88** season and remained a dedicated Parramatta man until he retired a hardened 1st grade veteran at the close of the **2007/08** – an unbroken 20-year span.

Primarily a bowling all-rounder – he boasted a sound array of cricketing skills – his right-handed off-spin bowling proffered from the bounce generated from his great height and although not a big turner of the ball this bounce and change of flight gained him most of his wickets. With the bat for most of his career Davo played in sound, watchful correct front-footed fashion, based on his grooming as a 2nd grade opener and was always *'up for a fight'*, not sacrificing his wicket easily and he featured in a multitude of lower middle order rescue operations in 1st grade. In his last few seasons, he adopted a revised approach and dished out the long handle with some most effective results. As a fieldsman he developed at his peak into a 'master gully fielder', where his tremendous reach saw him snare some amazing catches, all up he accepted **121 catches in 1st grade**.

Starting off in 5th and 4th grade in his initial 1987/88 season and showing the club selectors plenty of potential he graduated to 2nd grade in the 1988/89 season, and despite

making his 1st grade debut during the **1989/90** season and making a number of intermittent appearances in the top grade over the next few seasons Greg principally honed his skills in 2nd grade, due to the presence of quality spinners Ben Saunders, Steve Moss and Anthony Kershler ahead of him – he finally nailed a permanent 1st grade position 1994/95. The highlight of his 2nd grade apprenticeship period was undoubtedly the key all-rounder role he played in the 1991/92 premiership team; his skipper Allen Turrell had this to say in the Annual Report:

- *"Greg's all-round performances this season were a major factor in our success. Asked to open the batting in the first game to fill a gap, he responded with great determination and held on to the job for the whole season. At all times he valued his wicket, often holding the top-order together after the loss of early wickets.*

*Davo's bowling continued to improve as the season progressed, still very tight but with more turn and variety. He proved the match-winner in the final, taking all six wickets to fall on the final day, finishing with **7/50** from 33.3 overs, including a memorial **hat-trick** which sealed victory, a moment we'll all remember for a long time".*

Once established in 1st grade Davo continued to play at that senior level until his retirement at the conclusion of season 2007/08, and along the way he joined an exclusive batch of only ten bowlers, since grade cricket started in 1893/94, who have captured 300 wickets in 1st Grade for the Parramatta (Cumberland) District Cricket Club. To illustrate his all-round capability as a 1st grade player his total haul was **333 wickets @ 27.45** – this included 3 x 5

wicket hauls: **5/39** v. Eastern Suburbs in 1998/99, **5/45** v. Hawkesbury 2001/02 and **6/57** v. Fairfield-Liverpool 2002/03 – his best season’s wicket harvest was in 1998/99 when he claimed 39 wickets @ 17.33.



In the last half dozen years of his 1st grade career ‘Davo’s’ batting improved out of sight, instead of the dour grinder he exhibited a new array of punishing attacking strokes, typified by strong pulling and lofted drives. This revised approach to his batting made him a very valuable and productive No. 9.

All up he compiled **2,995 runs @ 16.54** in 1st grade, which included five half-centuries. He never scored a century for the club but came mighty close against St. George in 2004/05 – not out overnight on 85 after playing beautifully on the Saturday he resumed on Sunday morning and after hitting a 4 to lift his total to 89 nerves got the better of him and a rare rash shot saw his stumps shattered, along with his hopes for a 1st grade hundred.

One of the era’s most entertaining morsels was watching Davo batting in partnership with his best mate Jacko – their running and calling was terrible and, on several occasions, would lead to a major mix-up and run out dismissal.

A much-respected cricketer around the Sydney grade scene, Davo became a sound leader with great rapport with opposition players and officiating umpires. He captained the Parramatta 1st grade team for 5 years – 2001/02 through to 2004/05 and again in his final year 2007/08 – always engendering good team spirit in the sides he led.

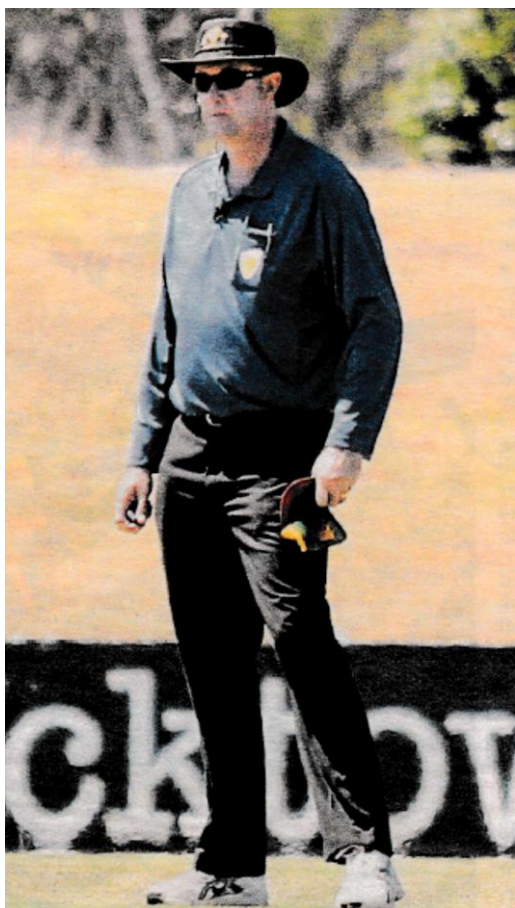
Greg’s dedicated service to the club was formally acknowledged when he was elected a **Life Member**

at the 2006 Annual General Meeting. This was followed with the awarding of a **Testimonial Year** in 2006/07, the first Parramatta player to be so honoured by the club since Test great Doug Walters in 1981/82 – the object of the fund-raising activities was to send Greg to the 2007 World Cup held in the West Indies – the objective was achieved.

Since retirement ‘the Longman’ has stayed involved in cricket and is now a leading 1st grade Umpire and his performances in this sphere of the game have won quick recognition with his appointment to the State Umpiring Panel and the receipt of a fulltime contract with Cricket Australia – the whole Parramatta club is hoping that he follows another former Parramatta player Rodney Tucker into International umpiring.

Greg Davidson was a proud Parramatta player and his complete statistical record for the club is listed below:

Grade	Runs	High Score	Average	Catches	Wickets	Average
P.G.	60	11*	15.00	4	26	24.46
5th grade	88	59	29.33	0	8	11.75
4th grade	47	15*	9.40	5	20	14.50
3rd grade	16	8	16.00	4	16	13.25
2nd grade	703	57*	17.15	32	109	21.34
1st Grade	2,995	89	16.54	121	333	27.45
Total	3,909	89	16.64	166	512	24.81



“Davo the Umpire”-

In 2022 Greg Davidson’s Umpiring career continued to progress and he regularly officiates in the T20 “Big Bash” showpiece competition and in Sheffield Shield matches. He is fulltime contracted to Cricket Australia and great hope is held by former club mates that he will ultimately reach the International Umpiring fraternity.

(By Tom Wood – Parramatta District Cricket Club – Historian)