

Parramatta District Cricket Club – ‘Through the Looking Glass.’

(By Tom Wood – Club Historian)

It can be quite appealing to peer back through ‘*the looking glass*’ into the club’s history vault to view a sample of some of Parramatta District Cricket Club’s battles of the past, it is interesting to note the names and the deeds of days gone by:

Percy’s Match!!! – “The Parramatta Alfred Cricket Club opened the season’s play, on their own ground, on Saturday afternoon last, by the first eleven meeting representatives of the Arundel Cricket Club. The former team took to the wickets first, and when the last wicket had fallen the score had reached 98; **45** of these were made by **Percy Maybury**, who played a very fine innings. Schwartzkoff took second place with 12 to his credit. The visitors then took the crease: but, owing to the splendid bowling of Maybury, who **cleaned bowled 10 wickets** for the small number of **21 runs**, the total only reached 43, F. Barnett and Brown being highest scores with 14 and 13 to their credit respectively. – *Sydney Morning Herald, Wednesday 19th September 1883.*

1895/96 Cumberland v. Burwood –

In a high scoring contest Burwood laid down a real challenge to Cumberland registering a sizable **351** for them to chase up – Parra’s Test batsman Frank Iredale shone with his lively quicks grabbing 4/54 (incl. **hat-trick**) and leg-spinner Les Pye assisted with 3/82. Cumberland faced the task at hand with resolution and claimed the match with ease after a brilliant 2nd wicket partnership of **333** between the gifted Wally Farquhar (**223**) and the polished Iredale (**140**) anchored the team total of **3/485**. Iredale remains the only player in Sydney first grade history to complete the double of a hat-trick & century in the same match.

1912/13 Cumberland v. Sydney University -

The reverse scenario to the above match, University crushed Cumberland. Sent in on a wet deck Cumberland folded for **86** – Les Pye the standout with 43 not out. On dried pitch University had little trouble in replying with **230**. On day 2 Cumberland’s second dig was an absolute disaster – they collapsed so quickly to be **7/22** (Pye 13) with the match completed before three of their players arrived at the ground. During the match the **Cumbos** recorded **10 ducks** – 5 in each visit to the crease.

1918/19 Cumberland v. Paddington –

The 1918/19 season marked the Parramatta club’s re-entry into the first grade competition after a hiatus during World War 1 and this match against the strong Paddington club they must have felt like they were bombarded by heavy artillery. Paddington batted first and unleashed a ‘whirlwind’ smashing an unbelievable **6/636** in an afternoon’s play (2.00 – 6.00 pm) – their No.5 batsman McCloy made a pulverising 236 runs in just 100 minutes – George Best with 2/157 (14 overs) was the bowler treated the harshest. The Cumberland batsmen battled hard on day 2 to total **318** – openers E.L. ‘Gar’ Waddy (**108**) and Sid Thomas started with a 1st wicket stand of **160**. [Paddington’s score was the second highest ever Sydney First grade innings total, only bettered by their 5/726 v. Burwood in 1895/96].

1925/26 Cumberland v. Sydney University –

In a tough season the bright spot was a hard fought win in a high scoring match – the two-blues batting fired to produce a commanding **396** runs, three separate century partnerships underpinned the innings: **134** for the 4th wicket by Len Leabeater & Alf Hall; **107** for 5th wicket by ‘Banner’ Edwards & Alf Hall; and **105** for the 8th wicket by Edwards & Soccer International Charlie Leabeater (Len’s brother) – Len Leabeater made 89 (83 minutes), Alf Hall **76** (70 minutes), Edwards **66** (105 minutes) and Charlie Leabeater **62** (52 minutes). The students pushed Cumberland all the way before succumbing for **358** – Charlie Leabeater 4/65 and Ossie Stenmark 3/112 did the damage.

1935/36 Cumberland v. Randwick (2nd grade) –

An exciting match won by Cumberland after a fine team effort – Randwick was held to a total of **179** by tight bowling by paceman Len Leabeater 3/43 and leggy Brian Bowman 2/40, and in their second dig Randwick were 4/135 at game end. The Cumberland innings of **237** featured enterprising batting, particularly a stand of **134** for 5th wicket by the attacking Bob Newson (82) and determined opener Fred Lawson who succeeded in **carrying his**

bat through the innings (**84***). In the very next match against Manly Newson was at it again adding **155** runs in only 56 minutes with Jack Baker for the 5th wicket.

1946/47 Cumberland v. Petersham –

In another entertaining '*big scoring*' affair Cumberland emerged victors by a margin of a mere 8 runs. Cumberland started proceedings with an impressive **5/356** (decl.) – openers Brian Bowman (56) and George Clarke (59) laid the foundations with a stand of **101**, this set the stage for the elegant left-hander **Ray Rowe** to craft a bright **100**, and the rising teenage champion Richie Benaud (81) to put the '*icing on the cake*' with a 144 run 4th wicket partnership. Undaunted by the task ahead Petersham replied strongly and looked set to win the game – at 5.15 pm they needed just 16 runs with three wickets in the bank, but the Cumberland bowlers led by Lou Benaud (**5/87**) rallied and brought home the bacon when the Petes tumbled for **348**.

1953/54 Cumberland v. Western Suburbs –

Rated the most thrilling match of the season – both teams were littered with First-class players – Cumberland had first use of the crease but Test opening bowler Alan Davidson routed the Parramatta men for lowly **100** (Bert Alderson 22, Norm Lockhart 18). Wests then stumbled to 4/8 but recovered to make **131** (Tom Cooke 3/40). Batting a second time Cumberland – with only 133 minutes left in the match – '*went for a win*' – Richie Benaud and Bert Alderson opened the innings and flayed the attack putting on **50** runs in 14 minutes, **80** then came up in 30 minutes, and then Ron James and Jim Harry carved out a further **62** runs in 28 minutes to facilitate a closure at **3/148**. Wests needed 118 runs in 65 minutes to secure outright victory, and to their credit they accepted the challenge, but were skittled for **101** – to give Cumberland an unlikely outright win, leg-spinners Jack Treanor 3/34 and Richie Benaud **6/44** engineered the win.

1968/69 Cumberland v. Randwick –

The opening match of the season, played on a flat grassless Cumberland oval pitch turned out to be a nerve tingling and see-sawing contest that resulted in a very narrow 4 run victory to the home team, on the back of an amazing bowling effort by paceman Billy Lothian. Cumberland batted first and posted a moderate **188** (Bob Aitken 49, Rex Flindt 26, Wally Clifton 25 & Bill Lothian 24). Randwick commenced their chase by losing an early wicket, but then their two State batsmen Alan Turner and Geoff Davies forged what looked like a match-winning century partnership before they were separated – in stepped **Bill Lothian** and in a devastating spell he scattered the Randwick batsmen claiming **7 wickets for 1 run**. At that point Randwick looked down and out but Davies was still there and partnered by Randwick's last man he guided the total **184**, Lothian then claimed the last wicket and a win for Cumberland - Lothian's **8/57** was typical of the big-hearted performances he achieved over many years in first grade for the club.

2006/07 Parramatta v. Gordon (2nd grade) –

The Parramatta 2nd eleven produced one of the club's best and most unforgettable wins at Killara oval – after being pummelled all over the park by the rampaging Gordon batsmen on day 1 it looked like a daunting task for Parramatta – **Gordon** finally declaring at **3/432**, only part-time leg-spinner Andrew Prior 3/65 made any impression with the ball. Nevertheless day 2 arrived and Parra was "*armed for the fight*", opener Andrew Prior gave the side a sure start with a solid 54, laying the platform for the tall right-hander **John Procajlo** to play the innings of his life a rousing **132** not out to buttress Parramatta's run-chase, and then in the latter stages of the day the free hitting Ben Monaghan blazed a swash-buckling 70 to provide the final impetus towards victory and overhauling of the desired target – Parramatta finished **8/435**.