

Parramatta's First A.W. Green Shield Title Win

In the 1937/38 season the NSW Cricket Association expanded its range of competition options by introducing the A.W. Green Shield – an under 16 competition to be played as a series of matches during the Christmas school holidays, each grade club entered a team to cater for youngsters from within their residential boundaries.

The new competition was named in honour A.W. Green, who died during the 1935/36 season, who, apart from being a long time President of the NSWCA was for a dozen years a Cumberland Club delegate to the NSWCA and Club Secretary in 1901/02.

Despite sketchy information on the team's performances Parramatta's (Cumberland) first venture into A.W. Green Shield in **1937/38** had its standout moments – skipper Bill Anderson (Club Secretary in the late 1960s / early 1970s) and Noel Webb each scored a century in the same innings in one of the matches; and Geoff Simmons captured the first AWG **hat-trick** for Cumberland when he took 3/21 v. Western Suburbs.

In 1940/41 amidst the escalating background of World War II Cumberland enjoyed a successful Green Shield season being undefeated in winning their division but finishing **Runners-up** to St. George – the Saints were in the other division and gathered more competition points due having won more games outright – unfortunately the usual Final played between the two division winners wasn't staged and St. George took the shield – the prolific future 1st grade batsman Bert Alderson was a key member of the Cumberland team.

Eventually the impact of World War II on the Sydney community saw the A.W. Green Shield competition suspended in 1941/42 and put in mothballs until the 1944/45 season, and on the resumption the Cumberland team was captained by the G.P.S. schoolboy sporting star Bruce Ritchie and had in its ranks the future Australian Test captain Richie Benaud. Despite some devastating all-round performances by Benaud over the next couple seasons, Cumberland didn't really cause too much of a ripple in the Green Shield competition.

In 1949/50 medium-paced swing bowler Allan Cash established a record that still stands to this day – he played the first of his five seasons of A.W. Green Shield at the tender age of **11.5 years**, the youngest player from any club to ever appear in this Under 16 tournament.

Despite fielding teams that contained some outstanding young individual cricketers Cumberland still hadn't achieved serious success in the A.W.G Shield - that grew in stature each season - until '*Pay Dirt was struck*' in the **1960/61** season when gifted left-arm orthodox spinner **Brian Woolmer** captained the 'Two-Blues' to the Club's first **Premiership** in this blue-chip junior comp.

CUMBERLAND IN CRICKET FINAL

Cumberland last week defeated Illawarra to become the premier of the South Division of the A. W. Green Shield cricket competition.

Cumberland went through the season undefeated. Cumberland today meets Illawarra, also undefeated in the north division, in the final at Marrickville Oval.

Rival managers of the two teams are former first grade players. Lou Benaud, father of test captain Richie Benaud, manages Cumberland. Cliff Winning is the Balmain manager. Both are teachers, and they unstintingly give their time in the interests of young cricketers.

Cumberland's team is: Barry Hegarty, 15 (Arthur Phillip High); Brian Follett, 15 (Blacktown High); Peter Collins, 15 (Patrician Bros, Fairfield); Brian Woolmer, 15 (Fairfield High); Douglas Mackay, 15 (Blacktown High); Garry Gunton, 15 (Macquarie High); John Phippin, 15 (Penrith High); Alan Doak, 14 (St. Mary's High).

Cumberland's two promising young bowlers should play first grade in the not too distant future. They are Brian Woolmer, a capable left-hand spinner who took 25 wickets at an average of six runs in the Green Shield. The other is fast opening...

who also took 25 wickets at an average of six runs. Woolmer plays four grade district for Cumberland. Collins, in addition to school cricket, plays in junior district competition. The most promising batsman on the side is Alan Doak, a year-old "baby" of the side. Alan, a consistent batsman...

Cumberland A.W. Green Shield Premiers 1960/61



Standing: Gary Gunton, Barry Hegarty, John Penman, Bernard Pippen, Peter Collins, Brian Woolmer (capt).

Kneeling: Alan Doak, John Pryme, Allan Morrison, Frank Hession, and Brian Follett. **Absent:** Doug McKay & Graham Gunton.

The team managed by Lou Benaud and Frank Flindt finally broke through the barrier and grabbed the Premiership that had proved most elusive to Cumberland teams since the A.W. Green Shield's inception in 1937/38.

A powerful bowling attack paved the way to victory by dismissing the opposition for moderate totals (e.g. Waverley 46 & 6/66, St. George 94, Randwick 108, Western Suburbs 46 & 6/78), and this in turn eased the pressure on the team's batting resources.

The **Final** against Balmain was a hard fought contest with the all-round skill of Brian Woolmer and some brilliant Cumberland catching '*carrying the day*' - **Cumberland - 155** (Gary Gunton 37, B. Woolmer 36, P. Collins 34) defeated **Balmain - 124** (B. Woolmer **6/18** off 17 overs).

Brian Woolmer's left-arm orthodox spinners were extraordinarily productive - **31 wickets @ 5.70** (best - **6/18** v. Balmain [F], 2/0 & 4/14 v. Waverley, **5/31** v. Bankstown, 4/44 v. Illawarra, 3/9 v. Wests); and the pace bowling spearhead Peter Collins proved equally damaging and he displayed great stamina to capture a bag of **28 wickets @ 9.50** (best - **5/15** v. Waverley, **5/22** v. Wests, 4/49 v. St. George, **7/41** v. Randwick, 4/51 v. Illawarra). Opening bowler John Penman revealed a good '*turn of speed*' and provided great back-up to the two front-liners with 11 wickets @ 12.40 (best - 3/8 v. Waverley, 4/28 v. St. George); and medium-pacer Doug McKay bowled well in the few matches he played taking 6 wickets @ 9.00 (best - 3/27 v. Bankstown). The pick of the batsmen were the '*team baby*' Alan Doak the determined left-handed opener whose consistency brought him 216 runs @ 21.60 (best - 42 v. Waverley, 36 v. Bankstown, 23 v. St. George, 33 v. Illawarra); strong right-hander Gary Gunton produced some punishing digs to finish with 190 runs @ 23.70 (best - 25* v. Wests, 29 v. Bankstown, 38 v. Randwick, 51 v. Illawarra, 37 v. Balmain (F)); and opener Brian Follett batted solidly to register 130 runs @ 16.20 (best - 20 v. Wests, 30 v. Randwick).

Representative:

- Alan Doak - Combined A.W. Green Shield 2nds; and Peter Collins - Combined A.W. Green Shield 2nds at SCG No2 v. Country.

Since that breakthrough title win in 1960/61 the Parramatta District Cricket Club (formerly Central Cumberland) have enjoyed many more productive seasons in this prestigious age competition:

Premierships –

1. – 1975/76 (Joint Premiers) – Greg Matthews (captain).
2. – 1997/98 – Trent Marsh (captain).
3. – 2000/01 – Ben Crawley (captain).
4. – 2007/08 – Sean Abbott (captain).
5. – 2017/18 – Harry King (captain).
6. – 2022/23 – Nilaathan Kulendran (captain).

Runners-Up –

1. – 1982/83 – Ian Matthews (captain).
2. – 1996/97 – Michael A. Wood (captain).
3. – 2023/24 – Blake Noorbergen (captain).
4. – 2024/25 – Advik Ajithkumar (captain).
5. – 2025/26 – Ethan Natkunanamanickam

[By Tom Wood – Parramatta District Cricket Club Historian]