

Tom Wood - give things your best shot

[Parramatta District Cricket Club](#) | March 09, 2026



Born in 1948, Tom Wood's cricket journey began in familiar fashion for many Australian cricketers of his generation. His first game came in 1957 for Blaxcell Street Primary School, played on a concrete pitch outside Lidcombe Oval. Even then he made an impression, taking a couple of wickets and discovering a game that would become a lifelong part of who he was.

From those early school days, Tom's cricket progressed quickly. He continued playing throughout his time at Granville Boys High School, where his talent earned selection for the NSW Combined High Schools teams in 1964 and 1965. In 1964 he was awarded a Cricket Blue. Those school sides included several notable players of the era, among them Bruce Francis, Peter Leslie, Jack Wilson and Marshall Rosen.

Tom's junior club cricket began with North Rocks before he moved to Northmead, where he captained the club to the Parramatta District Junior Cricket Association Under 16 premiership in the 1963/64 season. That same year he also captained Parramatta in the C.S. Watson Shield and Cumberland in the A.W. Green Shield, already showing the leadership qualities that would become a feature of his cricket career.

In 1964/65 Tom was graded into Cumberland's Third Grade side, a team that went on to win the premiership under Alan Cramond. He also made an appearance in Second Grade before eventually making his First Grade debut for Central Cumberland (Parramatta) in 1967.



Central Cumberland District Cricket Club 3rd Grade Premiers 1964-65

Back Row – John Archibald, Brian Heywood, Col Hoschke, Bob McMillan, Road Allen, Bill Lothian

Front Row – Bob Myatt, Dave Timbs, Alan Cramond (Captain), Geoff Newton, **Tom Wood**

Across the next decade and a half Tom established himself as a respected first grade cricketer. Between the 1967/68 and 1983/84 seasons he played twelve seasons of NSW Premier Cricket First Grade for Cumberland/Parramatta and five seasons with Randwick. During that time, he captained both clubs at First Grade level and was part of the Randwick side that won the First Grade premiership in the 1977/78 season.

His performances also earned representative recognition with the NSW Colts, where he played across the 1969/70, 1970/71 and 1971/72 seasons.

After finishing his Premier Cricket career, Tom continued playing in Sydney Shires Cricket with Auburn District Cricket Club. In 1989/90 he captained Auburn to the First-Grade premiership in a side that included his brother Mike. The following season he set a First-Grade bowling record for the club, taking 69 wickets.

Across his NSW Premier Cricket First Grade career Tom compiled 5,429 runs and took 240 wickets. His overall Grade Cricket record across all grades reached 6,414 runs and 324 wickets.



NSW Colts v Queensland Colts at SCG2 October 1970

Back: David Hourn, Ron Crippin, Peter Maloney, Stuart Webster, David Falkenmire

Front: Ian Davis, Alan Anderson, Steve Bernard, Kerry Mackay (Capt.), Gary Gilmour, John Stevens, **Tom Wood**

While his playing career was significant, Tom's contribution to cricket did not stop once he left the field.

At Parramatta District Cricket Club, he went on to serve in several important administrative roles, including eighteen years as Club Treasurer from 2001/02 to 2018/19, the longest serving treasurer in the club's history. He also spent fifteen years on the club's selection panel, mostly as Chairman of Selectors, and continues to serve the club today as Deputy Chair.

Tom is also the club's historian and author of Parramatta District Cricket Club's official history, *A True Blue Tale*. In recognition of his contribution to the club both on and off the field, he was made a Life Member in 2011.

Cricket has remained a constant throughout Tom's life. In 2018 he toured the United Kingdom with the Australian Over 70s team and in 2023 he captained the Australian Over 70s during the Silver Ashes series in Australia before leading the side again on tour in the United Kingdom later that year.

Beyond representative honours, Tom has also invested heavily in the development of young cricketers. During the 1990s he coached Kings Langley in the Parramatta District Cricket Association from Under 10 through to Under 16, including coaching his sons James and Michael who would later go on to play First Grade for Parramatta. During this time, he introduced Mini Cricket to the club and also served several years as Club President, later being recognised as a Life Member.

Few people spend a lifetime in cricket quite like Tom Wood has. As a player, captain, administrator, coach, historian and mentor, his story reflects the deep connection many people build with the game and the communities that surround it.

Let's find out more about Tom's journey and insights in cricket.

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What age did you make your debut in Senior cricket?

It was in Cumberland's Third grade team in 1964/65, I was 16-years of age and claimed 6/59 v. N. Ds in my debut.

What is the highest grade you played, and can you remember your first game in that grade?

First Grade in 1967, I was picked to replace International Barry Shepherd who returned to WA. We played Sutherland (captained by Norm O'Neill) at Cumberland Oval and I made 13 runs.

If you can share with our audience, how would you describe yourself as a cricketer?

I was an allrounder, a right-handed batsman and right- arm leg-spin bowler.

What were your strengths as a player?

I loved the game, trained hard, was competitive and played with determination.

What was your highest score in senior cricket?

My top score was 123 made at Drummoyne Oval in a First Grade match against Balmain, whose attack was headed by Test fast bowler Dave Renneberg and State allrounder Ross Collins in 1969, I was playing for Cumberland.

Randwick DCC 1st Grade Premiers 1977-78



Alan Turner (Capt.), Bill Knowles, Graeme Marston, Tim Towers, John Dyson, Gary Bensley, Graham Errington, Philip Siocombe, Mark Butler, Trevor Jay, Tom Wood, David Tink (12th). Peter Devlin (13th)

What were your best bowling figures in senior cricket?

I captured 7/83 v. Waverley (incl. Tony Greig) in a First Grade match at Waverley Oval – I was playing for Randwick, also for Randwick in First grade I took a hat-trick against North Sydney at Coogee Oval (all LBW) in 1976/77.

Who were the best three fast bowlers you have played against?

Jeff Thomson and Len Pascoe – for their sheer express pace and hostility, interesting propositions on the uncovered wickets of my playing days. Garry Gilmour - a brilliant swing bowler; closely followed by Dave Renneberg – he was tall, swung the ball away at sharp pace and extracted steep bounce and David Chardon from Petersham was another paceman I really rated highly for his consistency and skill.



Jeff Thomson and Len Pascoe

Who were the best three spin bowlers you have played against?

Mick Pawley I thought was the best left-arm orthodox bowler I ever faced – he was highly competitive, possessed plenty of variety (arm ball, spun the ball and had clever flight). Peter Philpott was a leg-spin guru and possessed all the fundamentals of that art. David Hourn, was a very classy left-arm chinaman bowler, he spun the ball hard and possessed a cagey wrong-un and I enjoyed batting against him.



Mike Pawley

Who were the best three batsmen you have played against?

Norman O'Neill – I was in awe of his power and authority off both feet. Bobby Simpson – for his water-tight technique, brilliant running between the wickets and absolute thirst for runs. Brian Booth – for his class as a man, and his effort less stroke-play, he was a joy to play against.



Norm O'Neill

Who played the best innings you've seen firsthand playing with or against?

Graham Thomas made a brilliant 130 odd for Manly against us at Merrylands Oval in 1967/68. We batted on day 1 and made 4-293 (Bob Aitken and I put on 144 for the 4th wicket). On day 2 Manly took to the crease on a wet wicket, Thomas's footwork and his all-round-the wicket driving of Cumbo's off-spinners Bob Aitken and Ross shepherd was something I never forgot.

Was there any bowler in particular who for whatever reason always caused you a few problems?

Lots of bowlers caused me problems but season in season out the two bowlers who always made me very watchful were Mick Pawley (Sydney University and Manly) and Dave Chardon (Petersham).

Can you recall a time when you thought, wow, this a step or two up from what you were used to in grade?

That moment occurred against Balmain in 1967; I had been batting around number 8 in my initial games in First grade and was promoted to number 3 and came up against Test Fast bowler Dave Renneberg and couldn't believe his pace and bounce. The experience showed me what First grade was like in those days when the Test and State player regularly played for their clubs.

Who was the best Wicketkeeper you've seen firsthand playing with or against?

Playing against it was probably Brian Taber, the NSW and Australian keeper who was polished in his glovework. Playing with: Allen Turrell (Parramatta) and Graham Errington (Randwick) were accomplished glovemen. Tony Ross for Auburn Shires was a very talented wicketkeeper and it's a shame he never ventured into NSW Premier (Grade) Cricket.



Brain Taber

Who are the two players you admired the most in terms of skills and competitive spirit in the competitions you played with?

Probably, Cumberland paceman Billy Lothian and Off-spinner Bobby Aitken – they were highly competitive and prolific wicket-takers.

Who was the best captain you had the good fortune to play with? And if you could add a few words to why?

Richie and John Benaud, for their understanding of the game and their attacking approach to the job. Ross Shepherd (Cumb) and Alan Turner (Randwick) were also fine captains.

Who has been your funniest teammate?

In 1974, early in my first season with Randwick we played Western Suburbs at Coogee Oval. I was bowling OK and Wests just lost a wicket and their Test allrounder Garry Gilmour was next in. Our skipper Ron Crippin said have a spell, I was surprised to say the least when he replaced me with Geoff ‘Ernie’ Crittenden – who was a natural funny bloke, he was a milkman by trade and got his nickname from the Benny Hill song ‘Ernie the fastest Milkman in West.’ Geoff was a fine batsman but no bowler, but he was also a cousin of Gilmore. The skipper then told me, “I’m offering Gilmour a bait, he’ll either hit Ernie out of Coogee Oval first ball or get out.” Low and behold that’s what happened Ernie tossed up a very, very slow log and Garry hit it straight up in the air and was caught at mid-on, Job done Ernie was immediately taken off and normal business was resumed. I’ve never forgotten that cricketing moment – great and daring captaincy by Ronny Crippin.

Who was your childhood hero?

I had two Richie Benaud (who I got to play with) and Norman O’Neill (who I played against in my maiden First grade game).



Tom Wood and Richie Benaud

Who are the three sports people in the world you'd most like to meet?

Unfortunately, they have all passed on: Victor Trumper, Arthur Mailey and Ken Thornett.

What was your favourite ground to play?

Hurstville Oval.

Was there a particular team you especially looked forward to playing against?

St. George at Hurstville Oval. In my era they were very strong, had playing rosters full of Test and State players – Warren Saunders, Brian Booth, Willie Watson, Ray Flockton, Kerry O'Keefe, John Martin, Peter Leslie, Steve Bernard, Mark Clues, Johnny Rogers, Ray Tozer, Murray Bennett, Jackie Wilson to name a few – they were always top contenders for the Belvidere Cup. It was a great challenge to play the dragons and if you had a 'good day' you felt proud of your performance.

What's been your most memorable moments in cricket?

There's been many, but three I treasure are:

(a) – In 1967 as a young leg-spinner bowling my initial over in First grade for Cumberland against Northern District at Cumberland Oval, off my fourth delivery, my cricketing hero Richie Benaud snapped up a catch at slip.

(b) – in 2023 I captained the Australian Over 70s team against England in Brisbane at Peter Burge Oval, we won the match and I scored 90 to boot.

(c) – In 2002/03 watching my sons (James and Michael) put on a 120 run partnership to help defeat a strong St. George team in First grade at Hurstville Oval.

What's the best win you've been involved with?

In 1976/77 I captained Randwick in match against Gordon at Chatswood Oval. The Gordon team contained players such Test players Barry Knight and Graeme Watson, and NSW opener Marshall Rosen. Randwick batted first making a modest 112. Gordon openers Rosen and Watson 'got off' to a quick start and it looked grim when Gordon got to 1/60, but to our delight suddenly wickets began to fall. Eventually Gordon reached the target of 112 with two wickets in hand, but incredibly they lost both of those wickets for no runs, and the match was tied (Tim Towers 5/43, Trevor Jay 3/23).

What are your hobbies?

Travel with my wife of 52 years Dian, interacting with my children and grandchildren, reading, Parramatta District Cricket Club, and playing veterans' cricket.



What's the best advise you've received?

'Feint heart never won fair maiden' from my father – meaning give things your best shot.

What was your occupation?

I've been retired since 2006; I was the Financial Controller of the Smith's Snackfood Company.

Are you still involved in cricket and if so, in what capacity?

I'm currently the Deputy Chair of the Parramatta District Cricket, Club historian – wrote the Club's history, A True Blue Tale, and was still playing Over 60s cricket until I suffered a stroke in September 2025.

If you were running a state cricket association what would your 2 priorities ensure cricket in the state remained strong and successful on and off the field?

Make these clubs a genuine stepping stone to first-class cricket.

A) Ensure that all the Sydney Premier Cricket Clubs are financially viable, and that their playing and training facilities are at a uniform modern standard; and [b] – Junior Cricket: the quality of junior cricket all over Sydney has dropped markedly, reorganise Junior Associations as follows:

In each age group up to U16 have a division 1 that plays cricket in the traditional way. Youngsters learn to make 50s, 100s and take 5 wickets etc. Play the matches over 50 or 60 overs per innings over two Saturdays. Attract the genuine or serious cricketers, the kids that want to play traditional style cricket.

Also have division 2 in each age group – it could be T20 / T15 or T10 – fun cricket to enable participation for the casual youngsters to enjoy.