

# Early History of Strathmore Cricket Club

## 1973-74: Everything Left for the Kids

Brian D'Elton decided it was time to step down as President and Len Kelly was (as always) anticipating a transfer back to the bush, so in the absence of our two continuing senior members, Tony Smith was elected President, with Rodney Reddish moving sideways from Treasurer to VP at the ripe old age of 17. The 14 year old prodigy Ron Temminghoff became Secretary, while some balance was added by Joan Thomson, the devoted mother of Michael and favourite late night conversationalist of many club identities, took over as Treasurer.

“Victories for Children’s Lib and Women’s Lib” according to More News.

Brian stayed on the committee where he was joined by Graham Rowe, Benny Rowe, Neil Jones’s father and two time Napier Street Milk Bar proprietor Ted, two parents of Under 12 boys who had afternoon affiliations with other clubs: Frank Fuller (Glenroy YCW) and Norm Pearce (Pascoe Vale CDCA), and Under 16 player Trevor Stevenson.

With Ormond Amateurs and Strathmore Footballers gone their respective ways, we dropped back to two senior teams, Benny Rowe leading the firsts which went straight into “C” Grade while the EBKCA formed an “E” Grade into which to relegate Tony Smith’s team.

Our senior team was made up almost entirely of players from our original Under 16 team two years earlier and their friends, with occasional support from some current Under 16s and ex-President D'Elton whose willingness to play in whatever side wanted him set a standard that a few more could have followed in the early seasons. The new skipper’s recruits included a fiery bowler (and more than handy footballer) in Daryl Schimmelbusch, Ian Binch, Kevin Tripp, Wayne McCarthy and Peter Foo.

In fact it was Brian D'Elton’s recall which played a key role in turning around the season around for the seniors. Having lost their first four in a row, he blasted a half century in our first innings, enabling us to declare ahead of Dousta Stars with no wickets down, and followed up with 35 in the second as we cruised to a seven wicket outright. We then went on to win all remaining games to be clearly the best side out of the four, although with the steady improvement of the EBKCA open age competition it was amazing over the next few years how much effort it would take to do any better.

For many of the early years Brian Last, originally of the “Middle” Napier Street Milk Bar and later with his own Singer Sewing Machine shops, sponsored competitive awards, the votes (football) and points (cricket) for which appeared in Brian’s ads on the back of the More. The cricket award gave a point for each 25 runs in an innings (up to 100), a point for the first

three wickets and one more for each two after that in an innings, and a point for each two stumpings and/or catches, all of which was open equally to performances in all grades of the club. Despite two under age sides getting through to grand finals and some talented juniors playing two matches each Saturday, the dominance of Benny Rowe and Rod Reddish in our open age ranks was clearly shown by them coming first and second in the Brian Last Award.

The second senior team turned a first round outright loss into a second round win over the same team, Keilor, with Under 12 captain Wayne Rowe taking 4/20 off five (still eight ball overs). Then next match against East Keilor a 16 year old leggie from Geelong in his first and only appearance for the season, Geoff Vagg, almost turned a first innings loss into an outright victory in the same game, in which the then President and Secretary both got half centuries and shared a 98 run second wicket partnership.

From there, "E" Grade's performances only got worse, although we did manage to involve a large number of players at various stages of the season, particularly several talented under age recruits. We also got to know our way around the competition a bit more, meeting the likes of the English brothers at Hadfield, who had us all out without bothering their first change, and Des Purcell at St. Christophers.

Of course, by then, Tony Smith was also on the EBKCA Executive and finding his way around the other side of the Association.

As Strathmore sport was a seven day a week (voluntary) job for Tony in those days, almost all year round, it is worth recounting the current concerns of a 1973 that for him had been a tremendous year of change, some of which were reported in his abrasively egotistical style as a "President's New Year Message" in the fourth Cricket Club More News:

The club successfully published, after two previous false starts, nine cricket (and Little Aths, courtesy Ken Pridham) editions of the More that summer, with even an Alec Reddish photo of Under 12 batsman Graeme Stevenson on the front cover.

SFC put Prido and that Club's very successful approach to under age football at the helm of its just relegated senior team which bounced them straight back to a premiership and the prospect of a better planned attack on staying in "A" Grade, at their third attempt in seven years.

The Footy Club had also done some real fund raising, resulting in it putting \$700 (Club Membership cost \$5 in those days) on fixed deposit for the first time in its history. The size of that deposit exactly matched the liabilities SCC inherited from the failed OASFCC, and Tony was thankful independence prevented one swallowing the other while bemoaning a lack of even handedness in parental support for the two clubs.

However, SCC had gained a Women's Auxiliary, headed by Marj Reddish and Shirley D'Elton which was gradually getting on top of the debt, most of which had been carried by Bob Reid's sports store, which Alf Pearce had used as both clubs' primary equipment supplier.

Ron Middleton (who had been responsible for developing more economical supply sources for football equipment) had become SFC President and Jim Slevison had become a Vice-President, while Tony had managed to unload the nominal Secretarial responsibilities to John Redfern, but kept doing just as much work in areas of his own choosing as a member without portfolio of the SFC Executive Committee.

Tony's three year term as Secretary had seen SFC double in size from six teams the year before he took over to twelve the season after he stood down. (And sixteen years on, he still seems to do his most effective work when things are growing rapidly.)

During 1973, he also gave up in disgust on the school system and returned to working with computers, first at Ford Australia and then at the Bureau of Meteorology, the former (along with his club work) bringing his long running part-time studies to a halt, and the latter providing enough reward for him to finally move out of his grandmother's home to a flat in West Brunswick.

And of course, Tony was then at the mid-point of a twenty-one summer holiday involvement at Cumberland River Camping Ground, seven kilometres beyond Lorne, and heavily into skindiving—activities which were throughout those years totally entangled with his friendships at Strathmore, and which much later were to lead to his only respite from Strathmore cricket.

We also looked to 1973-74 to be the culmination of 2 years of building up a strong junior club which had us starting the season hot favourites in all three under age levels.

Rod Reddish moved up to coaching the Under 16 A team with a strong line up drawn from the two premiership teams of the year before. However with Peter Holley getting a game at Essendon and the age old problems of motivation in this age group, it only took until round three for the chinks to show as we were on the receiving end of a shock thrashing from a Pascoe Vale Central side which recorded its first win of the year.

Over Christmas, Holley was captain of an Essendon Dowling Shield team which also included his Strathmore team mates Peter Allanson, Gary Bull and Trevor Stevenson. The wash out before Christmas against Oak Park after our bowlers had failed to show much penetration gave a foretaste of the one day game in February when we went down narrowly to the Parkers.

While John Dodd and Kelvin Tweedley, who also played several games in the seniors, were the stars of the season, the outstanding individual performance was by the forgotten member of the previous year's Under 14 A premiership line up, Paul Walker whose 77 not out in what turned out to be our last home and away game was the one bright spot along the way to a dismal end to the season. Then with Allanson and Stevenson committed to Essendon Grammar School cricket, only six of our players turned up for the last home and home match against top side Glenroy and we conceded a walkover.

Going into the semi-final on such a downer, despite filling up our numbers one round too late from the B team ranks, we faced what looked like the easiest game and the prospect of Holley coming back from Essendon seconds for the grand final. However it was not to be as

we failed to get Hadfield all out on the first day of the then two day semi and then failed in a mad run chase on the second which we had to win from fourth spot to go on.

Our first Under 16 B team was captain-coached by Ron Temminghoff who in attempting to turn a surprise first innings win into an outright in the first round, managed only to turn it into an outright loss—a scoreline that was to be a reasonably regular occurrence but which did not dampen the boys' enthusiasm, especially Ron's recruit bowling twins Geoff De Campo and Peter Marie, batsman Phil Canning and Lindsay Ellis who is much better known for his footballing exploits and his footballer brother John, but who was to be one of our best recruiters in senior ranks over the following seasons.

To make things a bit more practical, in the January match we covered for the whole Under 16 B team with a combined Under 14 and Under 12 team. In that game against West Essendon Youth Club, the opposing score sheet includes an opening batsman by the name of Tim Stapleton who managed 24 not out including only one boundary out of 5/80 declared.

The Under 14 A side contained the best players from our quite strong Under 12 line up of two years previous plus Neil Jones and three Strathmore High School recruits from across the creek: Robert Callegari, Ricky Crump and Wayne Rowe's cousin Craig Purcell. But its real stars were the same as two years earlier: captain and opening bowler Trevor Pearce, late starting batsman-wicketkeeper John Fowler and the inimitable Craig Capdevila. They charged through the home and away games without looking like losing a match and on the way Pearce and Fowler picked up competition trophies and played Hatch Shield for Coburg which made the finals under coach Graeme Marcy, former Strathmore "A" Grade footballer, VFA grand final and VFL umpire and, at time of writing, coach of Taylors Lakes Under 12s.

In the Grand Final against Oak Park we bowled first and by the time Capda and Pearce had finished their allowed six overs, Oak Park were 6/16 with Wayne Harmes and Craig Styles amongst the ducks. Capda finished with 1/4 and Pearce 5/6 before spinner Sam Milligan with 3/4 cleaned up the tail and Oak Park were out for 37. After a solid start by Colin Brown and Callegari it was Strathmore's turn to lose 5 for 4 before Jones and Pearce stopped the rot. Pearce went on to top score, as he had done a few times under pressure during the season, with 26 in what was to be, unbelievably, his last game of competitive cricket, as he found other interests in life at the tender age of 14.

The depth of our Under 14 talent was emphasised by the performance of the B team under coach Peter Slevison which finished a creditable fourth in a grade dominated by one team clubs. Amongst the new players that this team introduced to Strathmore were Ross Pink and Doug Byron, while other well known names to show out included Craig Ashton, Darren Dean, Mark Slevison and Alan Tepper. This team certainly performed its job of supporting the A team as players moved between the teams regularly during the season.

1973-74 was also the first season in which modified rules were introduced to cricket in this area to try to increase participation by limiting the dominance of outstanding players in Under

14 and Under 12. Batsmen had to retire at 50 while bowlers were restricted to four eight ball overs in one day games and six in two day games.

This did not prevent the Under 14 and Under 12 A teams going on a rampage on the 2nd of March.

In their respective games the 12s blasted an amazing 6/263 off the 22 overs of a one day game while the 14s beat that score by one the same morning, both teams having three batsmen retired on 50.

It had looked for some time as though this would also be the season in which we had a very strong Under 12 team with almost all boys likely to come under consideration in their final year in the age group. However before the season even started these expectations were dampened when prospective star fast bowler and then handy bat Michael Thomson decided he wanted to skip his last year in Under 12s and play with his mates in Under 14s, a prospect which was supported by Under 14 A coach Ted Jones who played Thommo in the A team throughout the season.

While Thommo did quite well, especially with the bat, early in the season, in the grand final he made a duck and did not get a bowl, so he certainly made no real difference to the 14s' successful season. Even without Thommo, the 12s still looked a good line up.

But in the second match Oak Park star David Ashen showed us that we would have some competition as his 55 n.o. steered them to a comfortable win while none of our bats got past eleven. That was almost to be the story of the season as we put together a mixture great performances and slack wins against other sides but still could not get Oak Park's measure. The round after the Parkers again destroyed us with Brett Connell taking 6 for 0 off 4 overs, we beat third placed Glenroy outright. Then in the grand final Ashen's lone hand 64 against some excellent bowling and fielding produced a total just ten more than we could make with Michael Kiss top scoring on 21.

In Tony Smith's third and last (for 15 years) season as Under 12 A coach he missed a premiership which he in those days regarded as an important objective but noted in More News that "the lessons learnt by the boys should make them a very tough side in Under 14 in two years time." Every player in that team had an important part in the development of Strathmore Cricket Club: captain Wayne Rowe, Steve McCaffrey, Dale Hamilton, opening bat Michael Lewis who got 5/6 off 3 and 50 ret. without a boundary in the one match, Steve Fuller, Michael Kiss, another Strathmore North Primary School recruit Paul Viney, Steven Knight who had been on the books for 3 years but who only started playing regularly mid-season, Andrew Halse whose father Jack audited our books to help our treasurer, and first year players Andrew Ainsworth and Michael Gale who got into the grand final side because of the loss of Gary Pearce and Graeme Stevenson to Essendon Grammar.

In the third season of Under 12 competition, we were still the only club with two teams, even though the competition had grown large enough to split into two sections. Our B side was in Under 12 South and was coached by Graham Rowe who was happy to leave eldest son

Wayne in the A team and look after Piker and Minna (Gary) in the Bs. After winning their third match by 3 runs against Airport West, they came back to earth against a Doutta Stars line up that included the names Betts, Bradbury, Hicks, Hogan and Slattery.

During the year a lot of well known names appeared in our team too, those who were to make the most impact on the Cricket Club in the following seasons including: Terry Bishop, Alistair Butcher, Colin Dugard and Jason Hamilton. St. Christophers also came in to Under 12 cricket that season with a line up that included A & R Brown, Culhane, Kennedy and Thompson. Come the final round, we faced Airport West for the third time for the season. In the first innings Piker made 37 and Michael Gale took 6 for 13 to spearhead an unexpected outright.

The Club and the Womens Auxiliary in particular introduced all kinds of social and fund raising activities during the season. First off was a double wicket championship with extra contests thrown in for long throwing and six hitting which we called a "Sixathon". While bemoaning the lack of support, More News reported that Graham Rowe won both the six hitting and the senior double wicket—a sure sign of things to come. The women had a successful film night, but a supper dance ran into the age old problem of clashing 21sts and a band which did not quite suit the taste of the mainly older attendees. Then they wound up the season at Carlton Social Club with a dinner dance at Carlton Social Club which was a great financial success thanks to some of our enterprising younger players flogging raffle tickets to a Liberal Party function in the next room.