



**UNSW
CRICKET CLUB**

University of NSW Cricket Club Life Member Profiles.

John MacFarlane



1978

Roles and Honours

Chairman of Selectors	1977-80
Team Captain	5th Grade 1977-78
UNSW Sports Recognition Award	1981

Individual Profile

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born in Sydney and grew up in Watsons Bay (0-9 years). Attended Vaucluse Public School and that's where I have my first memories of playing cricket. Lunchtime with wickets painted on the western wall of the school; Friday afternoon at Christison Park (took a hat trick when in 3rd or 4th class) and after school with a couple of friends in Russell Street (nearly opposite what years later was the home of Tony Greig and then Chappo's parents). As my Dad was a banker, we moved (4 years in Adelaide) and I then finished school in Brisbane where I was lucky to spend 3 years at one of the best sporting schools in the country. As I was young for my class, I never got beyond the Under 16s as somehow I gained a year in moving between States and was only 16 when I went to Uni in 1970.



Where did you play your junior/local cricket or become interested in cricket?

Played at school in age teams. I was young for my year at school so played inter-school cricket with kids in the year behind me. In Adelaide, we practised after school in the parklands just beyond South Terrace. An old guy used to come and watch us and give pointers especially to the bowlers. We didn't have a clue who he was, but it turned out to be a 75-year-old Clarrie Grimmett!!

When I left school, I started playing grade cricket with my local club, Brisbane Easts. They were a strong and well-organised club. Peter Burge was a key figure in the club (then recently retired) with internationals in Rusi Surti (ex-India), Tony Dell and Bob Paulsen. I had my best season there in 1972-73 playing as keeper in third grade with 40 catches and 4 stumpings – mainly seamers in the team!

When and why did you become involved with UNSWCC?

Returned to Sydney at the beginning of 1974 and, with good experiences playing in Brisbane with my local grade club, signed up with Waverley. Didn't find them well organised but was called up to play a PG game as a replacement for Steve Rixon. Chappo was the captain, plus the Rheinberger brothers!?

Thought UNSWCC might be a better run club (what was I thinking??) and started there for the 1974-75 season – our second season in Grade.

What did you like about UNSW Cricket?

It was simply a great club!! Egalitarian, with a healthy mixture of "old heads" from the Shire days and many good young players. The club practised as one – and not as separate teams as happens in many other clubs – and that gave the players a special bond. Even more so with drinks after most practices (the 'Regent' or sometimes the 'Royal' or 'Doncaster') and gatherings after games at the "Sam Crack" (pre drink-driving laws).

What is your Club nickname (Explain who gave it to you and why – if not obvious

"Johnny Mac" or, sometimes, just "Macca". There was a good trotter with this name around that time as Jungle was always keen to tell me!

The Table above outlines some of your Club achievements, roles, and honours. Can you give us an insight into how you saw your contribution to UNSW Cricket, which do you consider the most important?

I enjoyed my time as “Teams’ Secretary” as this was really the role rather than “Chairman of Selectors”. I can remember one of my first meetings as Chair (always on a Tuesday evening at the Sam Crack after practice) trying to introduce a little formality into the proceedings and being laughed at by Terry Buddin. Thereafter, we were never too formal but, I think, very effective. We operated by consensus with each Captain having the major say in the make-up of the team – sometimes with a bit of prodding to recognise the good performances in lower grades.

The other critical part of the job was organising replacements when someone dropped out of a higher-grade team on a Friday night. This was the pre-mobile phone, pre-Facebook era! Never easy tracking people down!! However, I can’t recall any occasions we didn’t field a full complement of 11 players.

Christmas break was always a challenge with country players going home for harvest/Xmas. One great advance was putting a team in the City and Suburban competition pre-Christmas (that was grades 1 to 4, 2 teams in 5th grade plus C&S every Saturday afternoon). In this, we were helped out by a few old boys returning to play C&S while keeping non-graded players in the club to fill the gaps when they were needed.

What did it mean to you to be awarded life membership?

I was simply staggered!! I had played in district clubs and thought you needed to contribute for 40+ years for such recognition. It was typical of UNSWCC and I felt very humbled to be recognised in this way by my fellow club members.

What is your greatest memory or memories of UNSW Cricket?

I am still amazed at the success we had over that 6-year period in the late 70s and early 80s. Looking back, I think we were a bit blasé and did not appreciate just how special those successes were. I thank St George CC for steering John Rogers in our direction. As an ex-Shield player, JR brought a much more professional approach to everything we did – especially a focus on fielding – and his enthusiasm and belief in players was incredibly positive and infectious. Coming from someone with such pedigree had a phenomenal impact throughout the Club right from the start. The results flowed from there!

My greatest memory, though, is the crowd at DP North watching Third Grade in the gloom at 9 wickets down (Hanger and Ingleson holding the fort) and taking the bad light decision at two minutes to six to win us the Club Championship in 1979. Although winning first grade twice was an incredible achievement, winning the Club Championship was something everyone had a stake in.

In what profession or area of work are/were you mainly involved? What are your main interests outside cricket?

I was a student and then staff member at UNSW from 1974 to 1980. I trained as a statistician and was a Stats lecturer in the School of Maths before going to Western Sydney Uni (then Hawkesbury Ag College) to develop the quantitative subjects in their new Property degree. I have worked in this area ever since (ie the financial/quantitative aspects of property – especially commercial real estate). I was for many years a consultant to the NSW Valuer General implementing quality assurance standards for their statutory mass valuation systems.

I was never a great watcher of cricket nor particularly interested in cricket stats. As a statistician, it's not so much the stats themselves I like but rather the story they reveal. In cricket, I was never convinced that the stats do tell the real story (or, at least, the full story). Baseball is a simpler game (more static fielding positions, for example) but I have been fascinated by the rise of saber-metrics over the last 30 years that I have been involved in that game.

Other interests are family, cycling and I have returned to chess since moving back to Sydney (played in one Australian Championship in the 1970s).

Where are you now?

After living for 35 years on small acreage (hobby farms) in the Hawkesbury area (Ebenezer and Kurrajong), my wife and I have done a reverse tree change and now live in a town house in Mosman. We are both retired academics (now Adjuncts) and enjoy the fact that we are reasonably close to our married children and our grandchildren.

I do a moderate amount of consulting work on valuing large portfolios (Department of Housing (LAHC), Teacher Housing, Crown Lands and Museum collections) but Covid has had an impact on the anticipated travel we would do in retirement.

Anything else you would like to add

I feel rather guilty that I have played just 2 games of cricket since I retired in 1983 – these being two of Orca’s Old-Boys games.

Our son started playing baseball in 1995 and I took up playing and coaching (juniors) as a 40-year old. I retired (largely due to the impact of Covid) last year but ended up playing more seasons of baseball than I did of cricket (mainly winters but there are 2 baseball seasons a year in Sydney). Played in and coached some quite good teams and won more premierships than in cricket and rugby! My most successful junior went on to be the catcher for the Australian Women’s team for 10 years.

Playing Record

John MacFarlane										
Years Played			Grade		1974-83					
			Shires		N/A					
BATTING										
Grade	Games	Inn.	NO	Total	Ave.	Highest	Caught	Stumpings	50's	100's
2	9	7	1	74	12.3	24	13	1		
3	24	28	3	237	9.5	31	19	6		
4	25	26	3	241	10.5	37	23	3		
5	52	60	8	881	16.9	62	70	8	4	
6	4	4	1	32	10.7	26	8	1		
CS	7	7	1	104	17.3	53	6	3	1	
Totals	121	132	17	1569	13.6	62	139	22	5	
BOWLING										
Grade	Games	Overs	Maidens	Wickets	Runs	Average	5WI	Best		
2	9	1.3	0	1	6	6.0		1 for 6		
4	25	42	5	4	163	40.8				
5	52	150	39	28	394	14.1	1	5 for 58		
CS	7	24	3	9	103	11.4	1	Unav.		
Totals		217.3	47	42	666	15.9	2			

UNSW Cricket Club

5th Grade finalists 1977/78 – V Balmain, Drummoyne Oval



Back: Ralph Merrell, John Bolton, Harold Bundy, Patrick Thompson, Michael Clarke, Tony Epstein
 Front: Mick Burden, Ian Anderson, Bill Hetherington, John MacFarlane, Keith Madden, Jeff Cutler