



GOOLWA CRICKET CLUB



HISTORY

From what we have been able to find the earliest recorded game was on November 9th 1859 recorded in the Adelaide Observer newspaper between Goolwa and Pt Elliot, played at Goolwa and the return match the following week played at Pt Elliot.

This is quite remarkable as by 1872 there were only 5 teams playing cricket in Adelaide and the South Australian Cricket Association was formed in 1871 when 12 acres were allocated for Adelaide oval to be developed. The first interstate cricket match was in 1877.

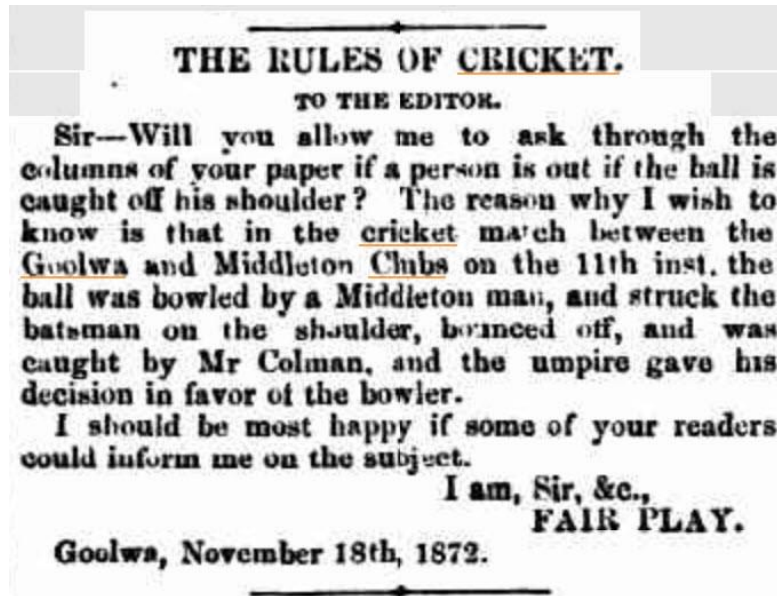
Recordings of initial meetings of the Club first appeared in 1871 (26 members being recorded) and began to be gradually recorded from 1885 and into the 1890s when some well known familiar Goolwa names began to appear.

An interesting letter to the editor in 1872 from the secretary of the Goolwa Cricket Club was posted about overarm bowling being introduced at that time

Sir—The following letter was read at the monthly meeting of the Strathalbyn Cricket Club:

"Dear Sir—On behalf of the members of the Goolwa Cricket Club I beg to notify that overarm bowling will not be allowed at any future match that may be played between the Strathalbyn and Goolwa Clubs, such being the decision of the members at our last meeting. I am, yours truly, "Thos. Carson, Secretary. "

Umpiring decisions were also questioned in this era but in a more gentlemanly way than the on the field manner of the current era, as indicated below.



*Sept 6 1877 Meeting at Goolwa to form Cricket Club.
President: Mr P.T. Hill
Vice President: Mr George Fergusson
Captain: Mr Thomas Curson
Treasurer: Mr W.J. Botten
Secretary: Mr Charles Curson

Other famous names of those responsible for setting up the Club in the early years were Dr Hill, Thomas Goode, H.E. Downer, G. Ritchie (MP).

Also of note was William Henry Byrnes (the first of 10 members of the Byrnes family over 4 generations to play or be involved with the Club)

Another great GCC family connection was the Fergusson family name that appeared first in 1877 with George Arthur Fergusson (GCC Vice President 1877). He was followed in later years through to the 1980s with family members with some classic nicknames

Alan Francis Fergusson ("Hock") (GCC secretary 1921)
John Alexander (Jack) Fergusson - "Satan"
Ronald George Fergusson ("Pat")

Herb ("Punter") Fergusson

Gordon Ray ("Tom") Fergusson

Douglas James ("Ginty") Fergusson

Elsie Fergusson (married Harold Fuller, parents of Mike)

George Jeffrey Fergusson (sec GCC) (George Fergusson married Joylene Bonner)

Grant Fergusson

Anthony (Tony) Fergusson (2 time premiership player Colts 64-65, B Grade81-82)

The marriages led to another generation of Bonners and Fullers that became valued members of the GCC family.

Also recorded around 1872 was a Middleton Cricket Club and in 1895 a Hindmarsh Island Cricket Club which apparently had an oval on Hindmarsh Island on the property called "Vaudon Downs" owned by the Heggerton family, but long since disappeared.

A unique match recorded from 15/11/1903 against Pt Elliot

A correspondent - writing from Port Elliot says : — At a cricket match between Port Elliot and Goolwa played at Port Elliot on Monday 15th. C. H. Bebee, of Port Elliot took the last 5 wickets of the Goolwa team with 5 consecutive balls (and was prepared to continue) — 4 being clean bowled and one caught.

The AGM of 1903 recorded the policy that the committee should decide on the A Grade captain rather than the players.

"And a hearty vote of thanks to the chairman closed an enthusiastic meeting". Just like today!! Mention was also made of the oldest member of the Club Mr T. Godfrey who had been playing since 1884.

By 1911 Goolwa was playing in the Encounter Bay Cricket Association comprising Pt Elliot, Victor Harbor, Goolwa and Hindmarsh Valley.

Our first recorded premiership was in 1913-14 in the Encounter Bay Cricket Association which would have been in A Grade as there were no other teams. Another Premiership was recorded in 1924-25 in the Great Southern Cricket Association that had formed by then.

The first recorded century by a Goolwa player was when J.P Maguire in 1921 scored 101* against the Merridde Hills team (really Currency creek). This was in the first year of the Great Southern Cricket Association that is the current over-riding administrative group controlling cricket in the Fleurieu region, now in its 101st year.

The next recorded century for Goolwa was 126 not out by Jack Lawrence in 1935 who was a grand uncle of Jim Lawrence who is currently playing in the A Grade side of the 2010s era. Another interesting point is that both Jack (in 1931) and Jim (in 2014) have both taken hattricks for the Club.

Great names of that era were J.P Maguire (also a hatrick 1923), Jack Byrnes patriarch of the famous Byrnes family (that played in the 70s and 80s), J.W. Armfield, D.J. Ritchie, W.Eastick, Jack and Gordon Lawrence.

Also recorded around this time was a Currency Creek Cricket Club.

In 1935 the first recorded life member was mentioned in the obituary of James Beevor Rankine a relation of 1981-82 premiership player Peter Rankine. James Rankine had played for the club for 40 years according to the article.

Mr. Rankine (1877-1935) was an enthusiastic sportsman, both with the gun and rifle, and he played cricket with the Goolwa club for 40 years, at the end of which he was made a life member of the club. He was also interested in golf for which he used to manufacture his own golf sticks.

Great names of the post war era were Ernie Wilhelm (9-26 in 1947), Herb Rigney (hatrick 1949), Doug Armfield, John and Brian Skewes, and later Dean and Ray Squires. Perhaps the golden era of the Club occurred during the 1950s "The Ron Skewes era" when Ron dominated for Goolwa and in the Association teams and statistics. Unfortunately at the same time Encounter Bay had a great team and Goolwa could not beat them in finals matches to frustratingly never win an A Grade flag during that time. The only joy was in 1954-55 when the teams that missed out on the A Grade top 4 played off for the B Grade premiership and Goolwa won the "B Grade" premiership.

Unfortunately Ron was doing National Service and didn't play.

Other great names of that era were Brian Grantham (8 five wicket or better hauls), Algy Rudeiger (7 centuries, 11 five wicket or better hauls in only 3 seasons), Alan Fletcher (4 centuries), Ross Eckermann (3 centuries, 5 five wicket or better hauls), Alan Egan.

Although Ron's statistics are not complete he did record 8 centuries, his first as a 17 year old in 1950-51 and probably took over 400 wickets. His best bowling performance was 9-61 taking all wickets to fall as Yankalilla were one batsman short in 1957-58.

Cricket teams to play in Great Southern in that era were Waitpinga, Poltons, Bungala, The Valleys, Victor Harbor Colts, RSL.

During the 1960s and 70s fortunes of the club waned with only a Colts premiership in 1964-65 involving Norwood premiership footballer to be, Glen Rosser and our own Mike Fuller. A B grade flag in 1974-75 was our only other success spearheaded by Dave Spier, Chum Lewis, Barry and Bob Bonner, Keith Michelmore and Tim Lewis who held the Club together in those days where the Goolwa Footy Club held more honours than the cricket club. Another well known cricketing name to play for Goolwa was the Jarman's Frank and his son Bill, Frank being the nephew of the Australian test wicketkeeper Barry Jarman.

A revival began in the mid 1970's as Chum Lewis, Bobby Cuthbert, Bill Height and others made their mark. Then from 1977 onwards the Club re-entered A Grade with the influx of some teachers and their mates (and some of their Goolwa based students) with Geoff Kruger being enticed from Victor Harbor CC and he was joined by fellow teacher Paul Thurlow then Bryn Bridges. They managed to recruit the Kleinig brothers Richard and Charlie in the first year supplemented by footy players such as Steve Ross, Marc Zoldi and a smattering of youngsters like Tony (son of Ron) Skewes, John Easling, Mark Dugmore, Jeff Baggs, Mike McKinlay began to give the Club more depth.

At the same time the Club was honoured to have as its President the famous test cricket Bill Johnston, one of the 'Invincibles' from the Bradman era.

In the first season back in A Grade the Club made the finals but bowed out in the first final. However, it was a good return to A Grade that gave the Great Southern competition a boost particularly with other Clubs relishing the chance to play on the Goolwa Oval which was in its prime with Brian Dugmore in charge of maintaining the Oval.

A successful run ensued in both Senior Grades and the Juniors where many future Goolwa players blossomed. Although performances improved the Club still struggled to get their best 11 on the field at the same time and despite being competitive finals success eluded the Club apart from a B Grade flag in 1981-82 led by Bob Cuthbert and a side that contained Goolwa stalwarts Chum and Ray Lewis, Benny Blom, Brad Reseigh, Tubby Cuthbert, Tony Skewes, Peter Rankine, Norm Gay, Tony Fergusson and David Clarke.

Paul 'Rowdy' Thurlow had taken over as A Grade captain as Geoff Kruger's ever increasing family led him to playing less. The team was always in a state of rebuilding from one year to the next as players drifted in and out of the team with regulars such as Chum Lewis, Ben Blom, youngster Graeme Byrnes and Bill Height holding the Club together.

Some valuable recruits in the mid 80s in Paul Reynolds, Darren Curyer, Jim Giddings, Glenn Gale gave the Club a boost and the introduction of a C Grade team in 1985 saw them taste finals immediately and the first appearance of young Colt Dave Tuckwell made his senior debut. The Cs featured players such as stalwart Garry Crouch but also "youngsters" Steve Averay, Karl Ross, Glen Durbridge, Alan Holding, Colin Coad, Wally Jowett, Dave Gubbins that laid the foundation for the C graders that followed in later years. The A Grade got back into the finals in 1987-88 and hopes were raised in 1989 when Lloyd Bilney joined the club as a highly rated fast bowler from the Alexandria Eastern Hills Association.

A highlight of this era was the building of the GCC clubrooms due to the work of Paul Reynolds and later Jim Giddings that gave the Club a home that we are still the envy of from other clubs with the way we have honoured our history with plaques, photos and memorabilia. Paul also captained the A Grade during this era in a hard hitting and positive way and brought the Club even closer together.

The death in 1991 of Club legend Benny Blom rocked the Club and weighed heavily on all that knew him within our Club and his many friends within the Association. His role in pushing for an Under 12s competition has led to a highly regarded annual Ben Blom memorial match being played since then for the Association.

Highlights of this era was the finals series of 1992-93 when the Under 16s went top led by Luke Giddings and Kingsley Vincent and the A Grade won the first semi against Enc Bay when young player Marty Jolly blazed a fabulous innings in the last 2 overs to win the game. The prelim final was decided off the last ball when Neville Johns got the winning run when the bowler dropped the ball attempting a run out. Unfortunately we came up against the Association powerhouse Willunga and went down in a tight match. During this period another batch of talented youngsters in Mike Dew, Luke Giddings, Kingsley Vincent, Mark Przibilla began to make their mark.

As performances dropped the A Grade dropped back to B Grade from 1994 until 1997 during which time the B's made finals 3 years in a row without winning a flag. Luke Giddings was the dominant player of this era, clearly a cut above the rest of the team in scoring 11 B Grade centuries in 1996,97,98 and then 4 more when we returned to A Grade in 98,99. Dad Jim Giddings had taken on the dual role of President and Captain of the C Grade and he led the Club to back to back premierships in 97-98 and 98-99. He was assisted by the core of those sides in years to come by Dave Carter, Greg Bald, Trevor Annan. Other notable players and features of these 2 years were Steve Pfeiffer, and Lloyd Bilney and son Tom played together in the 98-99 premiership.

Finals success came with an Under 17s premiership in 1999-2000 coached by Dave Carter and featuring captain Leigh Hirst, Brett Mckinlay, Max McCardle, Tom Bilney, Danial Bridges, Dave Carnevale, Bryce Mckee, Rob Casey, Richard Henderson, Robbie Coleshill, Shane Fox.

The Club returned to the A Grade in 1997 with Sandy (Alex) Num in charge but after 2 difficult years the Club was approached by Pt Elliot to try a merger and combine our strengths to win the elusive A Grade flag. A successful period ensued led initially by Gavin Smith and players from both Clubs blended well together but the best result was a runner up in 2005-06 when rain ruined a good chance to go top.

Around this time the Clubrooms got a makeover due to Rob Lose and the floor and bar area looked a treat. Rob also proved one of the most consistent fast bowlers that played for Goolwa and in 16 seasons took 358 wickets to be our leading wicket taker (post Ron Skewes).

It was also a good time for the B grade and C Grade teams who regularly made finals, the B Grade being runners up in 2004-05 (only game to lose was the Grand Final) and 2005-06 in teams featuring Ryan and Danial Bridges (sons of Bryn) Chris Moss, Nigel Mack, Ian Dunbar, Nigel Kies, Mick and Steve Cross, Tom Bilney, Adam Blom (son of Benny).

The C grade finally lived up to their potential winning 2 successive flags in 2003-04 and 2004-05 under Dave Carter's leadership with great contributions from Dave, Greg Bald, Trevor Annan, John Lobb, Paul Thurlow, Dave Tuckwell, Leigh Angus, Andy Conaghty. A hatrick of flags was completed in 2005-06 when a second C Grade side was entered and after getting into the Grand final after a tie in the preliminary final with the 2 time reigning other Goolwa premiership side. Led by Mark McGuinness they went onto defeat Yankalilla with great contributions from Leigh Pope, Travis Griffen, Brett Mckinlay and the next wave of young Goolwa cricketers in Jake Kuss, Peter Elliot, Dale Cuthbert (son of Tubby), Tim Stewart.

By the mid to late 2000s the A grade was a very young side with many of the side just out of Colts and were led by Kingsley Vincent (now a veteran) with Lee Spurling the only other experienced player. As the young team paid their dues wins were hard to come by and both the As and Bs suffered with consistency. The Cs had a chance in 2007-08 but were runners up, Tom Bilney's 4 wickets in 4 balls being a highlight matching Mark Dugmore from 30 years previous. Again in 2009-10 the old C Grade team of veterans led by Dave Carter got back together for one last go at a premiership and despite an up and down season peaked at the right time to come from the first semi to play 2 great finals game to get to the grand final against their traditional rivals Myponga but went down when rain washed out the second day.

Having played in 2009-10 season meant that Paul 'Rowdy' Thurlow finished his career in that Grand Final loss having played for Goolwa in 5 decades the 70s, 80s, 90s, 00s, 10s and scored a century in 4 of those decades. He finished with a total of 9 centuries, 463 games 11734 runs, 218 wickets and 205 catches. He had missed about 6 games in 34 seasons a testament to his dedication to the Club on and off the field. The person most likely to catch his number of games or seasons is the evergreen Dave Tuckwell who has had an outstanding career, and is one of the most popular players in the Club and Association. He is also likely to become the leading wicket taker for the Club soon. A graders Andy Evans and Jim Lawrence are hot on his heels though both passing the 300 wicket milestone.

More success for the juniors came with an Under 16s premiership in 2009-10 under the coaching of Jack Ward and Josh Sheppard's captaincy. Future senior players included Andy Slevac, Frazer Hayward, Jim Fry (a premiership with the B's in 2015-16) and Fred Nissen.

The basis of the A Grade side of the next decade was forming with in the late 2000s with Andy Evans, Jake Kuss, Josh Jones, Jim Lawrence, Jack Ward, Vic Robertson and new recruit and soon to be President Chris Hayward giving the sides some stability and experience so that the wins started to come.

From 2012-13 onwards the team played with confidence and skill and the As played in finals winning a majority of games but were runner ups in 2014-15 and 2015-16 to the strong Enc Bay team despite strong showings in the minor round.

Andy Evans, Vic Robertson, Josh Jones, and Jim Lawrence took over as the premier players in the Club. Andy reached his 200 wickets in only 8 seasons, and seems certain to become our leading wicket taker. He also was our 3rd Association Cricketer of the Year after Lloyd Bilney and Luke Giddings the best player in the Association. Jim Lawrence started as a left hand medium pacer but when he turned to left arm spin found his niche and in one season took 56 wickets in all games to reach his 250 wickets in 2015-16 and 300 in 2018-19. Vic has become the leading batsman in the side already having reached 2000 runs, and getting better every season. Other players the Club hopes to build a successful side around for years to come are Jack Ward, Scott Day, Fred and Harry Nissen, and Cricketer of the Year 2015-16 Jake Ashton-Place.

The B Grade had a memorable finals series in 2015-16 winning the second semi final by 1 wicket after a superb last over from Harry Nissen to win the game and go straight into the Grand Final. The premiership was also won in an exciting finish by 1 wicket when Dave Tuckwell combined with Scott McPhee in a last wicket stand of 14 after losing 3 wickets without score. Jake Kuss with 5 wickets and 76 runs starred over the weekend that also marked Presidents Chris Hayward's retirement.

The mid 2010 era saw our young A Grade side continue to develop and consistently play in the finals being runner up in 2014-15 and 2015-16. The chase for an A Grade flag goes on and the quality of the players in Andy Evans, Vic Robertson, Jim Lawrence, Josh Jones, Jack Ward holds the club in good stead for the future. Success in the B Grade came in 2015-16 with captain Jack Ward leading a side of youth and experience (President Chris Hayward retiring with a premiership). A near miss in the B Grade in 2017-18 when we finished runner ups under the leadership of Harry Nissen and great seasons by him, Dale Cuthbert and Brayden Reade bodes well for further success in the years to come. New recruit to the Club Jayden Crees had a fantastic year taking 43 wickets in Club games and 6 in his 2 Association games. Most recent premiership came in 2020-21 when our C1 Grade led by Harry Nissen won 4 straight games to just get in the finals but go on to win the flag.

The future of the Club looks bright with new clubrooms being built in 2021-22 and new practice facilities ready for the start of the 2023-24 season. Although there have been many individual highlights in the Club's long history, an A Grade Premiership would be the icing on the cake and a great way to honour the many people and players who have put in a lot to keep the Club going through the good and lean times. This was finally achieved in 2025-26 after a 101 year long wait after our first GSCA A grade premiership since 1924-25. Great scenes of jubilation accompanied the win and great support from the Goolwa community, our past and present club members topped it off.