

## AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL BLAIR 2023



**Holding the over 50s World Cup 2018**

**What year you were born?**

I was born in 1962 in Melbourne, Victoria.

**Can you remember your first game of cricket?**

My first club was located across the road from where I lived; Balmoral CC at the age of 10 for the Under 14s. Batted 9 and made 38.

**Tell us briefly about your cricketing journey?**

**a) At school**

Played at Brunswick South West Primary. We won the Championship in Grade 6 where I was captain (opened the bowling and batting).

**b) after school**

Played senior cricket with Balmoral, where I was First XI Captain at the age of 19, before moving to North Melbourne CC (Premier) at 21 where I played for 6 seasons. Then moved to Melton CC (Sub District) as captain/coach and in my first year we won the club's first Subbies Premiership.

**c) With Qantas**

Had the opportunity to play in several World Airline Tournaments. Playing in such places as, New Zealand, Trinidad & Tobago, Antigua and Dubai. Played also with a Qantas team in Canada “6 Aside” competition led by Wayne Walters. Played in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur as well.

**d) English Club Cricket**

In 1988, played a season for Old Stacians in Kent UK.

**In which grade and at what age did you make your debut in senior Grade cricket and can you remember how you performed in debut?**

I was 14 when I played in my first senior cricket game for Balmoral. Sadly can't recall how well I performed.

**How did the standard compare with English Club Cricket?**

English cricket was good but not to the standard I was playing in the Premier league here. But so glad I was given the opportunity to play and have since formed many lifelong friendships.

**When and why did you start playing with CCNSW?**

It was in 1996, Wayne Walters invited Cheryl and I to join the CCNSW on their UK tour the following year. We accepted the offer in 1997 to join the CCNSW team with Wayne, however about a month before the tour Wayne smashed his finger, and had to pull out of the tour. We went over to the UK not knowing anybody, but we met some fantastic people and had a damn good time playing cricket. I've been a member ever since, and now my son is a member too.

**How would you describe yourself as a cricketer?**

I considered myself to be a bowling allrounder with some pace, good control and consistency. I believe I can bat to a decent level.

**What were your strengths as a player?**

I'm a bowler with good pace that can move the ball both ways, and I have good control with consistency and accuracy. I feel that I can bat reasonably well and I feel I am an asset in the field with my catching, leg speed and throwing arm.

**What were your best bowling figures in senior cricket?**

My best bowling figure was 10 for 22 in First X1.

**What was your highest score in senior cricket?**

From memory, I made 112 and in the same game formed a 100 partnership with my son.



**Batting with son Will in 100 run partnership**

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

The best innings I have seen was when one of our batsmen (Aaron Shellie) in Subbies with Coburg who made 147 before tea out of 2/185. He hit more sixes than fours with just clean hitting.

**Was there any bowler or batsman in particular who for whatever reason always seemed to cause you a few problems?**

There was one bowler by the name of Paul Rieffel that was very hard to lay bat on as he hooped the ball heaps with pace...

**Can you recall a time when you thought, wow, this is a step or two up from what you were used?**

Facing Paul Rieffel (Richmond CC) and Merv Hughes (Footscray CC) and in my first X1 game in Premier cricket against St Kilda, facing Shaun Graff. Experiences, I'll never forget.

**Who was the best wicket keeper you've seen first hand playing with or against?**

John Williams was the best wicket keeper who I played against at Williamstown Sub District before he crossed over to play with us at Coburg Subbies.

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

I admired and respected Richard McCarthy who I played with at North Melbourne Premier CC and when I played with Dennis Lillee in Singapore.

**Who has been your funniest team mate?**

Wayne Walters and David Byrne, enough said.... 😊

**Who's your favourite cricket commentator?**

I always enjoyed listening to Richie Benaud and Bill Lawry.

**What was your favourite ground to play at?**

Playing on the sacred turf of the MCG with the CCNSW, I would consider to be my favourite and where I took 7 for 8.

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

When playing in the Subbies, Brunswick and Werribee were very hard and COMPETITIVE fought games.

**What's the best wins you've been involved with?**

Winning the clubs first Sub District Premiership, as Captain/Coach with Melton from the jaws of defeat. Winning the inaugural Over 50's World Cup (by 3 runs) and winning the National's Over 50's in 2019 in Perth on the WACA (by 5 runs).



**2018 over 50s World Cup**

**What's been your most memorable moment in cricket?**

Taking 10 wickets in an innings on two separate occasions and obviously playing with Dennis Lillee my idol! And also putting on a century partnership with my son, Will.

**You're now playing over 60s cricket, what's the best part of playing veterans cricket and what advice would you offer anyone over 60 who is thinking about playing again?**

I enjoy the team mate, comradery and friendships that you form with people who love the game. I'd tell anyone to stop thinking about it, JUST DO IT! Life is too short (even shorter now).

**What's the best advice you've received?**

My late father once said to me when I was unwell, "son if you don't look after yourself, you can't look after your family".

**What's your occupation?**

I'm currently semi-retired. However, I am doing a driver/customer service role for a couple of days a week.

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

The game needs to be played in a strong, competitive healthy manner and in the right spirit without overstepping the line. And a reminder that you are never too old to play.