



UMPIRE PROFILE

Greg Rollo



Greg Rollo recently officiated in his 250th Game in the VSDCA as an Umpire.

Greg was born in New Zealand in Christchurch in 1945. His family moved to Australia when he was 12. Greg starting playing junior cricket at Macleod CC on malthoid and synthetic wickets. His biggest regret was that he did not go to the sub-district when he was a teenager, which would have been Ivanhoe in those days, he had mates who did, it still bothers him today.

He continued to play at Macleod until he moved to New Zealand with work.

Why New Zealand?

"I got posted there with Ansett - Pioneer Bus lines, who opened a new office in Auckland. Ansett did not even realize at the time, that I was a Kiwi". Auckland is where he met his wife and played some of his best cricket.

New Zealand does not have any synthetic wickets, and I suddenly found as a bowler I could cut the ball, and swing it and do a lot more than playing on the synthetic wickets in Melbourne.

This leads him to a funny little story about his first game of cricket as a married man. "Immediately after our honeymoon, at a club called Takapuna, I got 8/40, my best-ever bowling figures!

Takapuna CC obviously placed me too low, as the evidence would suggest, and I ended up in the 1st Eleven by the end of the season. I came off the ground to my bride, expecting congratulations and she told me I had batted beautifully and when I queried her, she had watched the wrong game!" His instant reaction was that this marriage is doomed! Well, 40 + years on, Greg is still happily married to Janet.

After 9 years they decided to move back to Australia and Greg began playing for Elsternwick in the Subbies. Greg was a medium-paced opening bowler, and played 3-4 seasons in Elsternwick's 2nd Eleven. His best bowling figures for Elsternwick were 4/not that many. Greg as a bat was a No.10, he was very pleased to have scored a few 50's! Elsternwick has some interesting club history, with some Australian Test players playing there, one was Keith Miller, arguably Australia's premier all-rounder. Greg recalls Keith Miller standing on the embankment having a nostalgic look at the game and was a keen supporter of Elsternwick CC.

"When I was about 35 years of age, I gave cricket away for family reasons, we had, had our first child. I was out of the game for about 20 years, a game I loved".

At age 55 Greg decided to take up umpiring, and it was a commercial reason. "My son was playing for Elsternwick CC and one day I was sitting next to the Elsternwick President, we got chatting, and chatting moved onto golf. I was saying that I would have to give up golf because I could not afford the golf club fees. He suggested I take up cricket umpiring to help pay for the golf, and I did."

After a while, Greg got his first game in the ones, at Monash Uni with Merv Hindson (Merv has recently celebrated his 300th 1st Eleven games). When asked why do you like to umpire cricket?

"I like the tension of the 1st 10 overs, it's nice to think at this stage in life that you can still have the adrenalin rushing through your veins, and you feel like you are part of the game. I always loved cricket and the pocket money is terrific, it still pays my golf fees, my wine cellar and it entertains me".

Away from cricket, Greg loves his golf, he has a handicap of 7 and plays 3 times a week, combined with cricket it keeps him fit. He is a Member of the Southern Golf Club and he has managed to par the course twice. His favourite Golf Course is Cape Schanck on the Mornington Peninsula, where he has shot an 80 off the stick. "Victoria has got the best golf courses in Australia, Commonwealth is my favourite course in Melbourne."

Greg is in a group called the Dad's Army at Southern Golf Club, where he does a variety of volunteer jobs on the golf course, as an example he could be driving an all-terrain vehicle around the golf course picking up fallen branches, raking bunkers, or poisoning Kikuyu grass. Greg has also done voluntary work for the last 5 years at the MCG Sports Museum as a guide.

Greg in his working life spent over 30 years in the Shoe Industry working for Florsheim Shoes as a representative. He travelled all over the southern states of Australia and he still wears Florsheim Shoes to cricket every Saturday.

What are your thoughts on Sub District Cricket?

It's the second-best competition in Melbourne, it has better hours for players and umpires and less travel. We are more professional in the way we appoint people and manage them, than other cricket associations.

What does cricket mean to you?

It's a unique game only the Poms could invent it, I love watching test cricket, I love the serious international competition between countries. My only hope is to have an international standard, for wickets.

A few things that a lot of people would not know about.

Greg has a great fantastic friendship with fellow umpire Matthew Raby. For the last 3 years, Matt stays at Greg's house every Saturday night in Brighton, the trip from Agnes in Southern Gippsland is a long way, they share the love of red wine and enjoy each other's company, and always have a roast dinner every Saturday night cooked by Greg's wife Janet. Matt never comes empty-handed and brings beautiful fresh fruit and vegetable grown in the garden at home.

Greg is a keen bike rider, every Tuesday morning he cycles from his home in Brighton to St Kilda along the Promenade and enjoys a coffee with Ray Stokes at the Sand Bar Beach Cafe.

One final recollection Greg shared was about Paul Edwards, a maths teaching umpire who never carried a clicker, he used his fingers and never got the count wrong. Paul had so much respect from officials and players. This has sat with Greg for a very long time, respect is a critical aspect of a successful game of cricket.

Greg is and always will be a gentleman in the true sense of the word. He won the Matt Harris Award in season 2003-04, was made a Life Member of the VSDCUA in 2013, and joined the VSDCA 200 club in 2018.

He is a terrific guy to umpire with, his great temperament and teamwork certainly make Saturdays enjoyable for his partner. In Greg, we have a bloke who loves cricket and loves life! Well done mate on your 250 game milestone!