



## **UMPIRE PROFILE**

### **Frank Fabris**



Francesco Fabris is a man of many talents; the term understated greatness, is a good description of Frank. Please read on, it's a great story.

Frank was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1959 at Cabrini Hospital in Malvern, his parents immigrated to Australia in 1950 from Vicenza in Northern Italy. He is number 6 of 7 children, with four born in Italy and three born in Australia. Vicenza is famous for Grana-Padano, which is a tasty cheese, and the Fabris family were experts!

Frank attend De LaSalle College in Malvern and cricket was his favourite sport and was a talented wicketkeeper and opening batsman. In 1973 he "almost" played for the Malvern Hatch team. The day before the first game, he accidentally tripped and ran/fell through a glass pane window! With 40+ stitches his Hatch career, sadly ended before it began.

On the weekends he played for Malvern City, with his top score being 104 not out at aged 16; progressing into the 1st Eleven at 17 years of age, in those days, they played on mats.

Frank's other passion in life was singing, in 1978, he started competing in singing competitions. (Ballads, Music Theatre, Art Songs, Popular, Leider Songs, Folk Songs, and Opera). "You had to do well in all the sections before you could compete in the 'Opera section'. He ended up winning many Opera sections, over the years, and at 20 years of age, his Opera career began as a Baritone for the 'Victoria State Opera Company'. For the next six years, eight months of the year full-time, he was a member of the 'Opera in Schools Program'. "We Performed 2-3 shows per day, and then I would sing professionally at night at the State Theatre in front of 2,500 people!"

Francesco's favourite opera is La Boheme, which he performed over 100 times, playing the role of 'Marcello' the painter. The setting is in France, the opera is by Puccini, and he has performed this role in both Italian and English.

At 30-years of age, Frank won an 'Australian Opera Singing Competition', the prize being a one-year Scholarship to study Opera in Millan, Italy.

While in Italy, he naturally travelled back to his family village and spent time with his aunt. "Even though I had never been to Vicenza before, the sense of belonging in this village was incredible". He also found out that his extended family in Italy was 181 relatives!

His singing successes took him away from cricket, it is also what got him back into cricket. The Australian Opera sponsor was Esso, and at a function, he met Graeme Vimpani who worked for Esso. Graeme had just signed with Oakleigh CC as the next captain-coach. The Fabris family lived in Oakleigh, and at that time, Frank's sons Miles, 10, and Elliot 7, and he was keen to introduce them to junior cricket. He ended up coaching for 4 years and became Oakleigh Cricket Club's Junior Coordinator for a further 4 years.

At a game in the U13's he was told "it's time for you to take your turn to umpire". Thus, starting his umpiring journey. In the 2007-08 season Frank joined the VSDCA panel and did one year in subbies, and then had a crack at Premier Cricket. "In my first year in Premier Cricket, I did 3's & 4's. The second year, I did 2's. That's the year I was named the top umpire in the 2's and ended up do the 2nd Eleven grand final".

During his time in Premier (10 years) he achieved 161 matches, including 117 first eleven games. One of the highlights of this was the 10-day exchange program in Christchurch NZ, where he umpired 6 one day games. One game was between NSW U19's v Canterbury NZ U19's. NSW won the toss and sent Canterbury into bat. "It was a green top, 55 overs later Canterbury had scored 420 runs. It was as flat and as fast as Eastlink!" Also, during that trip, he umpired a T20 and NZ Test Player and allrounder Chris Harris was the star with bat and ball.

## **Q & A**

Q. Who are the best players you have umpired?

A. Finch, White, Siddle, Pattinson, Maxwell, McGain & Hussey

Q. Do you have any standout moments when umpiring Premier cricket?

A. Aaron Finch scored 160, twice. James Pattinson score 160 in a one-day game, hitting 12 sixes!

Q. Why did you stop umpiring in Premier?

A. I had achieved everything I wanted to do. Umpired at the MCG, Dowling Shield Final, Umpired U18's Final, and umpired the 'Imparja Cup Final' between (NSW Vs Qld) in Alice Springs.

Q. What are your favourite family moments and cricketing highlights?

A. Both Miles & Elliot attended De LaSalle College. Miles was the College Vice-Captain in 2012 and Elliott was College Captain in 2015. (Proud Dad)  
Both boys Captained the College First IX.

A special cricketing moment occurred in the Oakleigh 3rd Eleven when Miles & Elliott put on a record partnership of 196 which is still a club record. Both boys have won multiple premierships at Oakleigh CC, including in the 1st Eleven.

Q. What is something most people would not know about you?

A. Through my heritage, I am a traditional Roman Catholic, and I attend the Latin Mass every week at Saint Aloysius in Caulfield. I also, attend Mass at the same church during the week whenever I am able.

In season 2019-20 Frank re-joined the Sub District Panel after having a year off umpiring. Over the last 2 seasons, Frank umpired grand finals in the 1st & 2nd Eleven. "It took me a while to adapt to Subbies. I love the competition, it's great to see ex-premier and international players displaying their skills. It is also good to see the up-and-coming talent and to meet other umpires who all share the same passion and love for cricket that I have."

Frank is a long-suffering Demon's supporter, and like all Melbourne supporters, he was thrilled to finally celebrate a premiership! "To be honest I was so nervous I could not watch the match on the night, however like every Melbourne supporter I have watched the replay several times over! Ha, ha.

Frank is an accomplished singing teacher and has taught "voice" at De LaSalle College to every year level since 2007. He also teaches private lessons in his studio at his Oakleigh home.

Francesco Fabris is a great umpire and a great man. His knowledge of cricket is vast, he understands the game, his calmness under pressure is amazing and his willingness to improve and coach new umpires is a credit to him.

You know you will have a good game when you are with him.

Understated greatness, he certainly is!

<https://youtu.be/altjclmXb28>