Geoff Davies

Geoff Davies was without doubt, one of the more gifted cricketers produced by Randwick Cricket Club. That he played 73 games for New South Wales over a seven year period is testimony to his ability, yet an Australian baggy green cap eluded him.

Geoffrey Robert Davies was born at Randwick on 22 July 1946. While still a student at Randwick Boys High and just 13 years of age, he came to Coogee as a Green Shield boy at the start of the 1959-60 season. He also made his Grade Cricket debut that season when given a game in 4th Grade. The following summer he won a place in the Combined Metropolitan Green Shield team after setting a club record for the under 16 years competition when he took 27 wickets at just 9.3 runs apiece with his well-flighted leg spinners.

After impressing with a handful of games in 4s, the following 1961-62 season he was promoted to 3rd Grade where the right-hand all-rounder won the batting aggregate scoring 272 runs while taking 19 wickets. And the transition was complete just three years after he made his Green Shield debut when he was promoted to 1st Grade the following season at the tender age of 16 years and 167 days–the fifth youngest in the club's history. His debut was against St George at Coogee where he made just 3 runs. He wasn't given a bowl however, until the final game of the season against Mosman at Coogee where he returned the imposing figures of 3-3.

And while his debut against Saints did not reflect his ability, the following season playing them at Hurstville, he rattled up a brilliant 96 before being bowled by Australian Test star Norm O'Neill. Frustratingly for the talented youngster, he made 94 against Paddington the following season and was caught for 96 against Wests at Pratten Park a year later when the West Indies Test fast bowler Wesley Hall played a season with the club.

That was 1965-66 and was one of the greatest in Randwick's long history. Crowds flocked to Coogee Oval and other grounds for away games to see the human thunderbolt in action. The presence of Hall in the team and as skipper brought out the best in all players, not the least in young Davies. The side made the semi-finals and while Hall was a prime reason behind the team's success, the performance of Geoff Davies in scoring 401 runs and securing 35 wickets was a feature. His skilful 9-43 against Petersham-Marrickville was a Randwick 1st Grade record and won the attention of State selectors who called him into the NSW Sheffield Shield team. Davies made his first-class debut on 31 December 1965 against Queensland at the SCG. He scored 69 and took 4=51 in NSW's 192 runs win.

In his second season of first-class cricket, Geoff Davies was Australia's leading run-getter. He scored 557 in Sheffield Shield and another 333 on an Australian tour of New Zealand. With the ball he took 32 wickets. He also hit 123 against Queensland and 101 playing South Australia. Strangely, he had to wait until the following 1967-68 season to score his first century for Randwick when he hit 148* against Balmain having returned from a season in the UK Lancashire League. He totalled 598 that season to take the batting honours, a feat complemented by the 503 he scored for NSW while taking 22 wickets.

In 1968-69 the West Indies toured Australia and the moment Geoff had waited for finally arrived. He was selected in the 12 for the 1st Test Match in Brisbane as a replacement for the injured Doug Walters. Unfortunately, he was relegated to 12th man and missed selection for the remainder of the series. Despite continuing as one of Australia's most consistent all-rounders, that was the last and only opportunity Davies had to wear the coveted baggy green. A huge disappointment for Geoff and for his army of supporters in cricket circles, especially in the Randwick ranks. He may well have taken out his frustrations on the hapless Wests attack that season as he hit 124 against them including the last 80 in just 47 minutes.

In 1969-70, Davies had his best first-class season scoring 440 runs for NSW and 351 including a dashing 105* at New Plymouth on his second tour of New Zealand with the Australian team. He also scored 242 in his few Grade Cricket opportunities with Randwick. The following two seasons Geoff was lost to Randwick, taking over as captain of the North Sydney 1st Grade team.

In 1972-73 Davies returned to Randwick for what was to be his final season with the club. It was also his final season of first-class cricket and he retired after seven seasons with NSW scoring 3,903 runs with six centuries. He also took 107 wickets with 6-43 his best. His 12 playing seasons with Randwick had produced a total of 3,776 runs and 222 wickets. Of those, 3,149 runs and 185 wickets were achieved in 1st Grade. In addition, he scored 915 runs and took 80 wickets in the age competitions Poidevin-Gray Shield and the A W Green competition. He scored three centuries, two in 1st Grade and one in Poidevin-Gray against Sydney Uni.

In 1973-74, along with Randwick's captain John Benaud, Geoff joined Nepean, a new club entrant into 1st Grade and won the Sydney-wide Cricketer of the Year Award. He played on for a couple of years before finally hanging up his boots at just 31. In his Grade career covering three clubs, Geoff Davies scored 5,138 runs and took 328 wickets.