Jack Moroney
1917-99

Opening batsman Jack Moroney was one of Marrickville's three best batsmen, the other two being Bill Brown and Ron Saggers. All three scored centuries for Australia with Moroney and Brown scoring more than one in Test matches.

John Rodger Moroney was born at Macksville on the NSW north coast on 24 July 1917. He attended school in Sydney and was a pupil at St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, where, along with Stan McCabe, he had the reputation of being one of the schools' best-ever cricketers. When he left school he became a teacher pursuing his vocation in country centres before returning to Sydney from Murwillumbah at age 26 for a teaching position at his old school St Joseph's.

Moroney had his first taste of Sydney Grade cricket in 1943-44 when he joined the Marrickville club playing in their 1st Grade premiership winning team. He was the leading batsman in the side scoring 541 runs with a top score of 104 against Cumberland. In the final round of the season both Marrickville and St George were equal on points with the winner of the match taking the premiership. Almost 8,500 people packed Marrickville Oval to watch the clash with both teams allowed two hours and five minutes each to bat. St George finished at 9-150 and Marrickville quickly slumped to 3-19 in reply before Jack Moroney became the hero of the day hitting a fighting 55 against the likes of Bill O'Reilly enabling the home team to take the match in the last over and win the premiership. It was the Marrickville club's only 1st Grade premiership.

In those days Moroney was somewhat of a dasher batting in the middle order. In 1943-44 he was involved in a number of fast-scoring partnerships such as 142 in 80 minutes with Ron Saggers; 170 in 80 minutes with Harry Lenertz; and 105 in 64 minutes with George Debnam. However, switching to open the innings a couple of seasons later he quite often got bogged down and lapsed into long periods of defence.

In 1945-46 Jack was at his best scoring a magnificent double century hitting 203* with 25 fours and one six against Petersham at Marrickville Oval. It was the highest score recorded by the club in any grade and was the best in Sydney Grade cricket that season. His score was also part of a 243 runs partnership for the third wicket with Col Graham who hit 151 with 20 fours and two sixes. Jack totalled 590 for the season at an average of 59.00 which was the best in the competition. To prove it was no fluke he again won the batting average the following 1946-47 season with 512 runs at 73.12. In his team's 4-360 against Sydney University that season he remained unconquered on 157.

Jack's performances in 1945-46 won him a call-up to the first-class ranks and he represented NSW in Sheffield Shield against Queensland at the 'Gabba scoring 29 in a match where Sid Barnes scored 200. That was the first of 36 matches he played for the State scoring 2,419 runs at an average of 51.46 with a top score of 166* among his five centuries. Moroney was also elected to the Marrickville Management Committee that season, a position he maintained for the next five years.

In 1948-49 he headed the NSW batting figures scoring 897 in eight matches at an average of 81.54 with a top score of 217. That performance won him a place on Lindsay Hassett's 1949-50 tour of South Africa where he made his Test debut at Ellis Park in Johannesburg. Unfortunately he was run out for a duck but returned to the ground for the Fourth Test scoring a century in each innings--118 and 101*. In the first innings he and Arthur Morris (111) put on 214 for the first wicket which remains the best opening stand by Australia against South Africa.

In all, Moroney scored 1,487 runs on the South African tour with six hundreds and seemed set for a long run as Morris's opening partner. But after a pair of ducks in the First Test of the 1950-51 Ashes series on a rain-affected Brisbane "sticky wicket" he was dropped. Despite continuing to score well for NSW he played only one more Test--against John Goddard's West Indies at Melbourne in 1951 where he was dismissed in each innings leg before to the wily leg-spinner Sonny Ramadhin.

Moroney continued to dominate the Marrickville batting in 1950-51 scoring centuries against Petersham (135), Mosman (105) and Waverley (100*) to finish with 395 runs at 56.57. When the merger with Petersham came prior to 1951-52 Jack continued with the new Petersham-Marrickville entity to hit 655 runs at an average of 72.70 with three centuries including 135 against Manly and 134 in just 123 minutes playing Balmain. At 35 years of age he retired from first-class cricket at the end of that season and played one more summer with the Petes' before retiring from Grade Cricket and moving to Newcastle.

In nine seasons in Sydney, Jack Moroney scored 3,973 runs at an average of 51.59 with 12 centuries and 20 fifties. In his first-class career he scored 4,023 runs at the outstanding average of 52.24 with 12 centuries and 22 fifties. In his seven Test Matches he scored 383 runs at 34.82 which included two centuries.

On 1 July 1999 having retired to the country centre of Orange, the man who had the unusual Test record of a duck on debut, a pair of ducks in another match and a pair of centuries in another, passed away. He was 82.

Australia 1st Test Team v England at Brisbane December 1950

Back from left: Jack Iverson, Mr W H Jeanes (Manager), Bill Johnston
Middle: Neil Harvey, Ray Lindwall, Sam Loxton, Ken Archer, Jack Moroney
Front: Don Tallon, Arthur Morris, Lindsay Hassett (Captain), Ian Johnson, Keith Miller