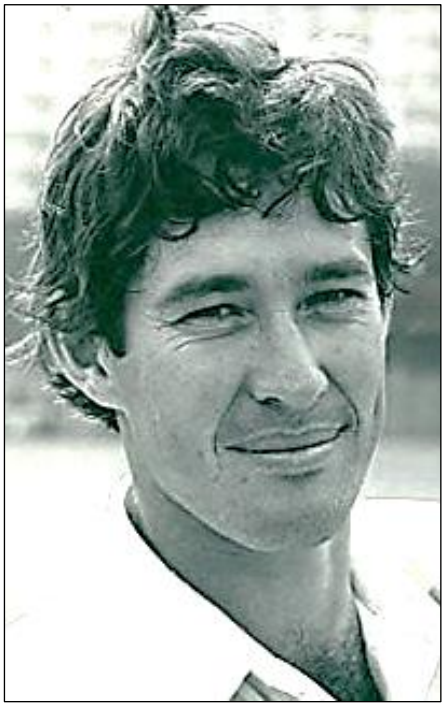
John Dyson



With Coogee Oval undergoing a major redevelopment in 1977-78, securing the use of SCG No. 2 as its 1st Grade ground was a huge bonus for Randwick in attempting to turn around its sagging fortunes. The second ground at the NSW home of cricket was long regarded as the best batting wicket in Sydney. It was hoped the availability of this facility would attract some improved playing strength to the club. And so it proved to be, with opening batsman John Dyson, who was to become Randwick's third Test cricketer, one of the notable new players.

John Dyson was born at Kogarah on 11 June 1954. He had played all his Grade Cricket with Sutherland, making his first-class debut in 1975-76 and playing eight Sheffield Shield matches for NSW before switching to Randwick. He was not an entrenched member of the State side and saw the chance to bat on a perfect batting strip, as an opportunity to further his chances for a more permanent NSW spot.

In his fourth game for Randwick, Dyson scored his first century for his new club hitting 128 against the old Sydney club after scoring a couple of 70s in earlier matches. He was selected for the first Shield game of the season and took his good form into that match at the WACA scoring 102 in the second innings against Western Australia. With the Kerry Packer World Series Cricket in full swing, Dyson received the call-up shortly after from the national selectors and within a month he was back at the WACA scoring 53 in his debut for Australia against India in the Second Test. He played another two Tests that season ending the first-class summer with 607 runs including two centuries.

Despite his first-class cricket commitments, Dyson played seven matches for Randwick in 1977-78 scoring 333 runs and heading the averages at 47.6. Moving to Randwick pursuant to the "Randwick Revival" promotion by club management had paid dividends. John had become a major player in the 1st Grade team which completed the season as undefeated premiers while the Club Championship was won by a massive 261 points.

Two seasons later, Dyson and skipper Alan Turner dominated the Randwick batting scoring 551 and 657 runs, respectively. John scored 106 in the win over Waverley as well as four half-centuries. His 50 in the semi-final against Petersham-Marrickville at Petersham and 52 in the Grand Final playing Penrith at Howell, gave Randwick its second 1st Grade premiership in three years.

In 1980-81 John's first-class commitments allowed him only four innings for Randwick although that was enough to score 103 against Penrith in the second round and a neat 100 playing Manly in the 12th. His average of 82.00 was second only to Alec Marks' 82.13 in 1934-35.

And while his availability was similarly restricted in 1981-82, he was able to average 48 in four completed innings which included another century against Manly, making 121 at Manly Oval. Once again the Randwick team won the premiership and while Dyson was out for 18 in the Grand Final against University of NSW at Coogee Oval, he was able to fill in as wicket-keeper when the regular custodian Alan Campbell was injured while batting. John was able to snare two catches off spinner Trevor Jay in a very tidy display.

During his six seasons with Randwick, John Dyson scored a total of 1,603 runs at an average of 51.72 with six centuries. In that time, he played 27 Test matches for Australia while making three overseas tours including the Ashes tour of England in 1981. While only an average fielder early in his career, John became one of the best outfielders in world cricket. His catch to dismiss West Indies Sylvester Clarke when jumping high in the air near the SCG boundary in 1982 has long been regarded as one of the best snares in Test Cricket. In that match he also scored his second Test century and his first in Australia, making 127*. In Test Cricket he made 1,359 runs and 9,935 in first-class cricket. In all representative matches, he took 122 catches.

In 1983-84 Dyson moved to Sydney University where he took over as club coach before returning to his original club Sutherland three seasons later. After retiring as a player he moved into coaching, taking charge of Sri Lanka in 2003. Four years later he coached the West Indies for two years. In later years, he coached with the NSW team before becoming chairman of the NSW selection panel. In 2011 he was appointed manager of the Sydney Thunder team in the national Twenty 20 Big Bash competition.