Pat Crawford
1933-2009

Pat Crawford was Petersham-Marrickville's first Test cricketer. He was selected to play for Australia in the Second Test at Lord's while on the 1956 Ashes Tour of England. Although Jack Moroney was the first from the club to actually play Test Cricket when he lined up against West Indies in Melbourne in December 1951, he was originally selected while a member of Marrickville.

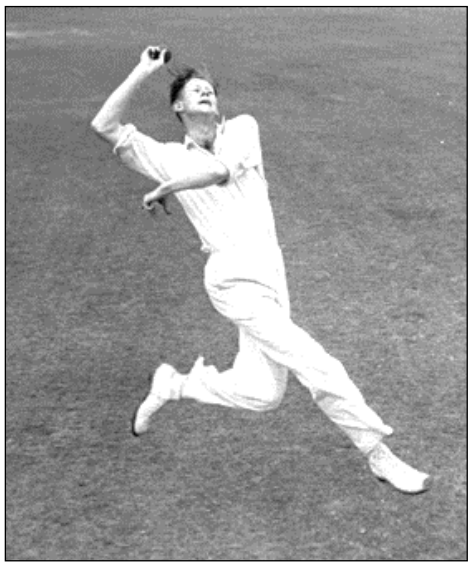
William Patrick Anthony Crawford was born in Dubbo on 3 August 1933 and when the family settled in Sydney, the young Patrick was quick to take an interest in cricket. He was just 11 years of age when he first began with the Petersham Saturday morning coaching classes. His obvious promise prompted selectors to put him in the A W Green Shield side a little earlier than normally may have been the case.

Pat Crawford made his A W Green Shield debut with Petersham in 1947-48 as a 14 year old taking six wickets and hitting a score of 60. In the same competition the following season, he showed outstanding promise as a fast bowler with returns of 6-7 against Randwick, 4-8 against Paddington and 2-5 against St George to end the season with 14 wickets at an average of 5.21. He also played 3rd Grade, 4th Grade and Poidevin-Gray Shield that season finishing with a total of 44 wickets.

It was an interesting selection as the youngster was only 16 years and 52 days old when he debuted in the second game of the 1949-50 1st Grade season against Wests at Pratten Park, a one-day match on the Monday Labour Day holiday. He had little time at the bowling crease however, finishing with 0-10. The remainder of his season was spread across the three lower grades and the Poidevin-Gray Shield competition, taking 22 wickets.

It was a different story the following summer however, with the budding quick split between 1st and 2nd grades where he took 29 wickets in total. However, despite possessing plenty of pace, the tall and lanky tearaway was struggling in the transition to 1st Grade with each of his 11 wickets costing almost 37 runs each. Against St George he went for 121 runs in taking three wickets.

Pat's 1951-52 season was interrupted by his entry into an Army Training Camp and he managed only seven matches in 2nd Grade where he took 33 wickets at just 11.18 apiece. The following summer he was back to spearhead the 1st Grade attack in the final seven games of the season taking 30 wickets at 12.4 which included a 7-55 effort against Paddington and 7-80 playing Waverley.



Two seasons later in 1954-55 Pat Crawford was at his fiery best. Bowling a number of hostile spells he guided Petersham-Marrickville to a 1st Grade Premiership win with 29 wickets. His performance caught the attention of State selectors and at 21 years of age he was named in the NSW team to play the visiting MCC at the SCG. By season's end he was the leading Australian first-class wicket-taker with 25 at 12.96 and played a key role in NSW winning the Sheffield Shield.

The next season, 1955-56, Crawford was part of a history-making bowling partnership at the SCG when NSW played South Australia. Only two bowlers were needed when Keith Miller (7-12 off 7.3 overs) and Pat Crawford (3-14 off 8) skittled the "Crow-eaters" for just 27, the lowest score in Sheffield Shield history. Later that season Crawford, who was considered "the logical successor to Ray Lindwall" was named in the Australian Ashes Test Team to England. Interestingly, during that 1956 tour to England, Crawford was denied permission to have his pregnant wife accompany him on the sea voyage by the Australian Board of Control under its policy against spouses travelling with the team. As a result, Crawford's wife travelled in another boat that sailed to England in parallel with that of the Australian team.

Pat Crawford made his Test debut in the Second Test at Lord's. After 4.5 overs he broke down and took no further part in the match. Unfortunately, that was a sign of things to come. Three Tests followed in India but he again broke down in the third and within a year his first-class career had been ended by injury. With a first-class record of 110 wickets at 21.02 including seven in four Tests, Pat Crawford played his last season with Petersham-Marrickville in 1957-58 aged just 25. He then moved to England where he played in the Lancashire League. With Petersham and Petersham-Marrickville he took 224 wickets in all grades with 124 at an average of just 19.61 in 1st Grade. Pat Crawford died on 21 January 2009 at Bexley aged 75.