

The best FTGCC performance ever!

The discovery of the summary of the **1st Innings** score sheet from the Round 5 match of the 1922/23 season highlights a cricket feat performed by a Ferntree Gully cricketer that is unlikely to ever be surpassed again.¹

On Dec 2nd, 1922, the club's only team (RDCA 'A Section') commenced its Round 5 match against Wantirna on the old Ferntree Gully (now #2) Oval. Club Captain, W.H. (Bill) Armstrong won the toss and chose to bat; the team compiling a good score of 146 with George McRae (48) & Marley Sellars (30) the best scorers.² The scorecard in order read... W.H. Armstrong (15), L.D. Bear (10), E.T. Clohesy (2), C.E. Exner (13), R. Gill (5), G. McRae (48), G.H. Pickett (0), A.F. Pickett (8), M.A. Sellars (30), L. Thomas (0), T. Williams Jnr. (5 not out), with 10 extras totaling 146.

With time remaining in the day, Wantirna went to the crease and were immediately in trouble as George McRae proceeded to tear their batting line up apart, ending the innings at just 35. The highest score was 11 by A. Counsell, while other Wantirna batsmen included forebears of families synonymous with the district - Ingwersen, Handasyde and Bryant. Although his detailed figures were not published, the local newspaper reported that George had taken the only **nine wickets** to fall to a bowler, with the tenth wicket a run out. Ted Clohesy bowling from the other end had figures of 0/14. George's figures of **9/19** were at that time the second best achieved since the club had commenced competition cricket in 1913/14.³

With just over an hour's play left on the first day, Bill had no hesitation in sending Wantirna in to bat again, but they struck McRae in an even more destructive mood. One would normally assume that if you had taken **9/19** in an innings, you could relax a little and savor the feeling experienced by very few bowlers after such a great haul - not George McRae...

In Wantirna's second Innings George went one better and took all **10 wickets for 11 runs** to dismiss them for just 38 with Number 11 batsman, T. Cross, the highest scorer with 10.⁴ In doing so, George helped his team to an outright victory by an Innings & 73 runs in one Day! An unlucky Ted Clohesy took 0/15 and the teams' normal wicket keeper Marley Sellars 0/9, but the spotlight rightly shone on George's incredible bowling achievement.

His match aggregate of **19 wickets for 30 runs (9/19 and 10/11)** is a truly astonishing bowling performance and probably ranks as the greatest single playing performance in Club history. It places him alongside English cricket "immortal" Jim Laker who achieved the same 19 wicket feat against Australia in the famous 1956 Test match at Old Trafford (Manchester, U.K.)

George won the Club Bowling Average with **37 Wkts @ 5.24** but surprisingly did not win the 1922/23 RDCA Bowling Average because he had not qualified by bowling enough overs! It was won by Gilbert Chandler – later Sir Gilbert Chandler.⁵ His father, A.E. (Alfred Elliott) Chandler, donated the original Chandler Shield which, until it was replaced in the 2000's, was played for in the highest Competition Grade of the Ringwood District Cricket Association.

¹ Discovered by the Club Historian in May 2009 while researching another cricket club's history for a client

² In an era when games at Ferntree Gully were played on rolled dirt, like many other grounds, exceeding 150 was uncommon

³ L.A. (Len) Smith took 9/18 in an innings against Wonga Park at Wonga Park in March 1915

⁴ The Club found, or more accurately, rediscovered this record 10 wicket Innings haul in July 2004

⁵ The 1922/23 RDCA Bowling Average was the first of five 1st Grade Averages won by Gilbert (Gib), later Sir Gilbert Chandler