

Ernie Toshack

1914-2003

- Born in country NSW and came to Marrickville when he was 27
- Tall left-arm medium pace bowler, and member of Bradman's Invincibles
- 12 Tests for Australia – taking 47 wickets, best bowling 6/29
- 48 First class games (Aust, NSW) – 195 wickets, best bowling 7/81

Ernest Raymond Herbert Toshack was born in Cobar, NSW, on 8 December 1914 and played most of his cricket in the bush, first at Cowra and later at Lithgow. Although he batted right-hand, he bowled left-arm medium and spin.

When he was 27 he ventured to Sydney to play grade cricket. Surprisingly, his first choice club Petersham couldn't find a spot for him and it was Marrickville where Ernie made his grade debut – in 4th Grade where he took 7 for 28 in his first match. In 1944-45 he took 10 wickets in a 3rd Grade match for Marrickville.

Within a couple of years of his Grade Cricket debut, Ernie was in Marrickville's 1st Grade line up and by the 1945-46 season, had made the NSW side where he opened the bowling with champion fast bowler Ray Lindwall. His progress was dynamic and he made his Test Match debut that same season against New Zealand in Wellington where he took 4 for 12 and 2 for 6.

Petersham soon discovered the error of their ways and invited Ernie to join their ranks which he did in 1946-47. That season he played against England at Brisbane and returned match figures of 9 wickets for 99, twice gaining the wicket of the great Wally Hammond. The following season he played for Australia against India and had the remarkable figures of 5 for 2 from 19 balls in the first innings and 6 for 29 in the second—match figures of 11 for 31. His first innings performance remains the record for taking 5 wickets in the least number of balls.

It was no surprise that Ernie Toshack was selected in Bradman's 1948 Australian team "The Invincibles" to tour England. He took 50 wickets, including 11 in Tests, at 21.12 on the tour with best figures of 5 for 40 in the Lord's Test. Prior to the fifth Test, Ernie's left knee, which had troubled him for most of his career, finally gave out and brought to an end his Australian career. Interestingly, the 1948 touring team included Marrickville wicketkeeper Ron Siggers and former Marrickville batsman Bill Brown.

The following summer Ernie joined Randwick and won the bowling average in the first of his two seasons with the 'Wicks. He played two first class matches in 1949-50 while he was with Randwick. The second of those was his 48th first class match and his last when he took 4 for 68 against Western Australia in a Sheffield Shield match at the SCG.

Ernie Toshack was a unique cricketer. He regularly opened the bowling for NSW and after the ball had worn, would revert to spin with uncanny accuracy and variety. Whether bowling pace or spin, he used the same eight paces run up. Toshack took 59 wickets for Marrickville, 31 for Petersham and 27 for Randwick. In first-class cricket he took 195 wickets including 47 in 12 Tests for Australia.

