

Johnny Martin

1931-92

- Born in country NSW and came to Petersham when he was 20
- Left-arm wrist spin bowler
- 8 Tests for Australia taking 17 wickets, best bowling 3/56
- 135 First class games (Australia, NSW) – 445 wickets (best bowling 8/97), 3,970 runs, 114 catches

A product of Burrell Creek near Wingham where he was born on 28 July 1931, John Wesley Martin was 22 years old when he ventured to Sydney by train to take up an invitation to play with the Petersham-Marrickville club in the 1953-54 season.

In his first season the left-arm “chinaman” spin bowler and left-hand bat showed his worth with two centuries as part of his 437 runs while he took 24 wickets with 7-41 against Northern District his best.

In 1956-57 his all-round abilities were recognised by State selectors and he made his first-class debut against Queensland at the ‘G’ in Brisbane. That was the first of 78 matches Martin would play for the State over the following 12 seasons scoring 2,582 runs and taking 293 wickets while holding 83 catches. He took five wickets or more in an innings 12 times.

The following 1957-58 season he set a new Petersham-Marrickville 1st Grade wicket-taking record when he took 47 wickets at just 14.4. He took an amazing 8-59 against Sydney University but surpassed that performance two seasons later with a return of 8-49 off 25 overs against Balmain at the Sydney Cricket Ground. In 1962-63 he took four wickets in five balls against Randwick at Coogee Oval as part of a 7-52 performance while he made his highest score of 114 against Mosman at Mosman Oval.

In 1968-69 Martin recorded one of the greatest all-round performances in the history of Sydney Grade Cricket when he scored 108 and took 6-49 against Sydney University. He took 68 wickets that season which stood as a record until broken by Dave Chardon in 1983-84 with 69. It was that same season he had his best summer with the bat notching up 658 runs with a highest score of 108. Probably his most interesting Grade Cricket statistic is the 200 sixes he hit. He was a prolific six hitter and had publicly declared that he wanted to hit at least one ball over the fence every time he batted! He won the club bowling aggregate six times and the average an amazing 10 times.

John made the trek from Burrell Creek to play with Petersham-Marrickville for 15 seasons, finally calling it a day after the 1968-69 season. In his time with Petersham-Marrickville, he scored 3,073 runs and took 409 wickets in 1st Grade. He hit six centuries and took five wickets or more in an innings on 36 occasions.

In first-class cricket he played eight Tests among his 135 matches. His best Test score was 55 while he hit 101 against Western Australia in Sheffield Shield. His 8-97 against Victoria in 1962-63 at the Sydney Cricket Ground remained his best bowling performance. Overall his first-class career wickets totalled 445 while he scored 3,970 runs and took 114 catches.

