

Paddy Gilchrist (Blackburn, Mitcham, Ferntree Gully, Ringwood and Doncaster) – 1905 to 1925

Extract of a biography completed by Stephen Flemming

In the Reporter District Cricket Association, Paddy Gilchrist is recorded with 3658 runs at 31.26 and 867 wickets at 6.71 from ~148 games with five different clubs. During this time he played with five Premiership sides, three with Ringwood and two with Mitcham. Arguably, Paddy is the greatest player in Reporter history before WWII, with only Harry Swan having equal impact.

Paddy started with Blackburn in 1905-06 before transferring to Mitcham in October 1906. He returned to Blackburn for one season in 1908-09 before going back to Mitcham where he played in the 1909-10 and 1910-11 premiership sides. Paddy played one season with Ferntree Gully in 1913-14, before moving across to Ringwood where he achieved his greatest performances

With the bat, Gilchrist made two centuries (including a 201 for Ringwood in 1915-16), two 99's, one 98 not out and two other scores of 90; he made 20 fifties in all. He won two 'A Grade' batting averages.

With the ball, Gilchrist won six 'A Grade' bowling averages. He took ten wickets in a match on 29 occasions and five wickets in an inning 88 times. Gilchrist's figures of 10-25 against Doncaster in 1919-20 were the association record until 1957-58 and are still believed to be the best 'A Grade' bowling analysis. His match figures of 16-54 in the same game remained the second best until the early 1960's and he took fourteen or more wickets in a game on six occasions.

Gilchrist's season hauls are worthy of listing: 66 wickets for Blackburn in 1908-09, 72 wickets for Mitcham in 1911-12, 76 wickets for Mitcham in 1912-13 and 74 wickets for Ferntree Gully in 1913-14.

Even his efforts of the previous three seasons paled in comparison to his performances once he joined Ringwood in 1914-15. In his first season Gilchrist made 683 runs and 137 wickets, then 684 runs and 135 wickets in 1915-16 – these individual performances have never been equaled and will probably never be beaten. In the five years from 1911-12 to 1915-16, Gilchrist made 2059 runs and took 486 wickets in the Reporter competition.

Gilchrist returned to Ringwood in 1919-20, after War Service and made 481 runs and took 95 wickets to help Ringwood win their third and final 'A Grade' Premiership. In 1920-21, Gilchrist tried his hand at North Melbourne, where he played 19 matches over the next three seasons. The highlight being his performance of taking all 10 wickets in an innings in a representative match between the North Melbourne Cricket Club and the Reporter Cricket Association represented by players whom Gilchrist had decimated and played alongside on many occasions before WWI. In all, he made 170 runs and took 27 wickets in his short 19 match district career.

Paddy played two seasons with Doncaster before retiring during the 1925-26 season. From only a few games he made 400 runs and took 45 wickets. One Hundred seasons later he still has the distinction of performing the best all around match effort in the history of the competitions first Grade, when in Round 3 of the 1915/16 season for Ringwood (vs East Burwood), he scored 201 and took match figures of 11/57 (5/31 & 6/26) – the only time a double century and 10 wicket haul in a match has been completed in BHRDCA history.

A footballer of note also, Paddy played 37 games for the Collingwood Football Club, including being a member of their successful 1910 VFL Premiership team.