

## Gerard Price...Briars Mr. Cricket



*Gerard Price is an inspirational example to all Briars members. He embodies all the qualities we would equate with being a true and great Briar. He is universally liked and respected. His team mates and opponents alike note the drive of a man, who is fiercely competitive yet fair, forthright yet friendly, a high achiever yet unassuming.*

*There is nobody in our club's 100-year history who has given more to Briars Cricket...not even close. Please read the following which is based on information noted by Brett Howle when he proposed Gerard for Life Membership to the club and updated from a recent Facebook post. These note only some of the contributions made by Gerard, our Mr. Cricket.*

*Greg McPhee (Feb 2019)*

As a 16-year-old, Gerard first commenced playing senior cricket for Briars during the 1980 I 81 seasons. Competing with his younger brother Paul in 'C' Grade, he won a premiership in his inaugural year. Before that time, he played his junior cricket with the Croydon Briars side. He had set a record for the best batting ever 612 runs for an average of 612, for Croydon-Briars in the Western Suburbs U/16s Competition. Gerard joined the Briars as a tear away young fast bowler and a stylish batsman.

The C grade Annual Report noted that:

"Gerard Price was the find of the season. Great all-rounder and competitor. As a batsman he has a great range of shots and shows great potential both in his batting skills and attitude. As a bowler, he put in several fine performances. His opening over is one of the most accurate of any in the club. Good fielder and team man."



Gerard was fast tracked through the grades and on debut in 1st grade in 1981/82 scored an impressive 91. To this day, some 38 years later, amazingly, that is still Gerard's highest score for the club (and don't we remind him of that!). Gerard won his first 1st grade premiership with the club (again with Paul) back in 1984/85 against Lane Cove in the final.

Injuries aside he has not missed a season or hardly a game since that time and so, is now competing in his 30th consecutive season.

Gerard has also been pretty handy on the field, over the past 38 years he has played in and has won;

- 3 - 1st Grade Premierships-3
- 3 - 2nd Grade Premierships-3
- 2 - 3rd Grade Premierships-2
- 8 - Total Premierships



His stats are fairly impressive too, he is the greatest wicket taker of all time for the Briars (2nd overall in Shires) eclipsing Ted Watt in recent years.

- Runs - 7420

- Wickets - 1153
- Catches – 266

But for people like Gerard it not about the statistics. As a player Gerard continues to be an integral part of any grade in which he plays, as his ability with either bat or ball has allowed him to be a proven match winner, as regularly demonstrated when he gets his side over the line passing the opposition, with our club many wickets down and Gerard remaining not out. The club has lost count of the number of games Gerard has won or saved with both his batting and bowling over the years.

Bowling wise although not as quick as he once was Gerard was never a tear away express bowler but instead relied on subtle variations with the ball, so has never lost the ability to get the better of most batsmen he opposes. However, it now takes him till Thursday for the body to fully recover after a weekend of bowling and 1 chiropractor' and 2 physios have retired early on the strength of Gerard's almost weekly visits. Now known as bowling all-rounder you always get a laugh from the latest generation of players when you tell them that Gerard played as batsman in his early days and never really bowled.

As a player, it would be fair to say that many of Gerard's former and current teammates, together with his many opponents would summarise him as a fiercely skillful and competitive player but always playing within the spirit of the game, as cricket is known for. Due to Gerard's on field performances over a lengthy period of time in conjunction with his amiable personality Gerard is held in high esteem amongst all players that have worn the Briars cap as well as remaining well liked, and highly respected amongst the wider Shires cricket community.



In 1989/90 Gerard took over the Chairman's role, running Briars Cricket. Much to the frustration of his wife Jane (she's given up complaining now) he has held that role now for some 29 years.

Now there's always been an unwritten rule that if you wish to stand down as a sports chairman that you need to find your own replacement. Unfortunately for Gerard no one has been willing or stupid enough to take over the mantle as they could never do a better job than him. Since taking over as cricket chairman Burwood Briars Cricket has enjoyed an unprecedented level of success in terms of club championships and premierships. In recent times Gerard has molded the club into the envy of every other Shires Cricket club due to its on-field successes. Since 1990, the majority of which time has been under Gerard's stewardship, the club has won the following awards;

- 16 club championships
- 6 - 1st grade premierships
- 8 - 2nd grade premierships
- 10 - 3rd grade premierships
- 8 - 4th grade premierships
- 3 - U24s premierships
- 5th grade premierships (Tim Creer Cup) Inaugural Spirit of Cricket Award
- Numerous "ground of the year" awards
- Total Premierships - 36

In 2000, Gerard's 10th season as cricket chairman, the presidents report noted;

*“Cricket had a strong year, congratulations to Gerard Price and his committee on a well performing and organised club with all sides being represented in the final series. Cricket has been the clubs most successful sport over the last decade and its administration is the main reason for its continuing dominance. “*

As Cricket Chairman a significant proportion of Gerard's time during the season is taken up in his role as Chairman of Selectors for 5 sides plus the under 24s team. This involves countless emails and phone calls to ensure that the club fields the most competitive side possible each round. This of course is in addition to the administrative responsibilities of being Chairman and his commitment to training and competing as a current player. In his remaining time Gerard has run a small business and now works for Cricket NSW.

Part of his duties includes:

- Organising and doing the covers religiously every week.
- Organising ground hire and dealing with Canada Bay council
- Buying equipment
- Running Wednesday night training
- Making sure fees come in and running the cricket budget.
- Organising social functions during the year Helping players out at rare judiciary appearances
- Dealing with the Shires cricket subcommittee.
- Going to management meetings to keep the club executive up to date.
- Making sure afternoon tea turns up every week.
- Making sure a good attendance back at the club after each game Organising end of season and annual presentations nights

For anyone that has played cricket understands there are many more things that need to be done but generally get taken for granted as they too would probably be done by Gerard. As you can tell, if Gerard has a fault it's that he doesn't delegate enough.

Even though this recognition is for Gerard it would be remiss to not mention the support & understanding or perhaps the tolerance and disbelief that he continues to play that Gerard receives from his wife Jane and 3 children.

Other contributions that Gerard has been made for the club include;

- As a Hockey player for numerous seasons
- He did once play a game of rugby union for the club
- Was Focus editor for several years in the early 1990's
- Was a Shires subcommittee delegate for 5 years
- Captain of the Shires representative team for two seasons

The majority of the Crickets success has been enjoyed over the most recent 10 years with our club well in front of the next most successful competing club. This success can be significantly attributed to the dedication, perseverance and input of the tremendous personal time performed by Gerard. The only reward Gerard has ever sought for his effort is for Briars cricket to be successful so he can be incredibly satisfied with his efforts.

Gerard was inducted into the Shires Hall of Fame in 2013 and was the David Walker Trophy winner for Services to Briars Cricket in 2007. As we all know he has had his health challenges over the past 5-6 years but its business as usual with him, no fuss, get on with

life, he is the toughest man we know! Gerard has also had the pleasure of playing with his son Damian in recent years and I know that's something he enjoys and treasures.

Through his efforts over almost 3 decades now, Gerard is without peer for his contribution to cricket both on and off the field and how it has formed part of our clubs sporting success. As Gerard has simply shown over this period, actions speak louder than words, so it was only appropriate that he was rewarded with the highest recognition that our club can bestow upon one if it's most deserved members and that of course, is Life Membership in 2010.

### There's only one Gerard Price

