

HATTON

MARK

COACH / EX-PLAYER



How did you get involved with cricket and what are some of your earliest cricketing memories? I followed by older brother into cricket and was committed to the game by the age of 4. Apart from playing in the backyard with the inevitable arguments and property damage that followed, my earliest memory was following my brother and the now Police Commissioner Jamie Chalker to U12's cricket training and watching the older kids go about their business.

I think I was 7 at the time. It was not until I was 9 that I could be selected in a team and because of my age I was made 12th man for the season except for two games. My first game I scored 2 not out and took two catches. The game was played at the now Essington School.

How long have you been involved at Nightcliff Cricket Club and can you tell us what has been the biggest improvements you've seen over your time with the club? My first season registered as a junior player was 1983 so apart from a few years living interstate, I have maintained a connection since then. Facilities have certainly been the standout but it should also be acknowledged the culture of the club has improved immensely over the past 10-15 years.

Tell us your cricketing journey. Where has cricket taken you and what has been some of your highlights as a player/coach /manager/volunteer? I committed to cricket at a young age and wanted to be involved in Australian cricket in some capacity when I became an adult. I remember watching a Test Match and seeing someone employed to move the sightscreen and figured if I wasn't good enough to play on TV then that job would be enough for me. I was selected in the NT schools sports team in 1985 after being encouraged to bowl spin and kept learning the trade from there on. When selected for the U17's team at age 14 and the coach mentioned to me that my name was mentioned when considering the Australian Team I began to believe in myself more. I successfully made the Australian U19 team on both occasions and in the second year we travelled to NZ for a six week tour. I had a conversation with Shane Lee (Brett Lee's brother) who recommended I consider Tasmania to play as they hadn't secured a front line spin bowler. After a short stint at the AIS in Adelaide I moved to Tassie. I was placed in Burnie for my first season and was not visible to the selectors and moved to Hobart where I made the Sheffield team to play Victoria in November when I was 20. I played in Tassie for four seasons in total with a highlight pre-season tour to Zimbabwe. Highlights of this period are many for such a short timeframe and my stronger performances were against international touring sides rather than state teams. I returned to Darwin for 18 months and worked on my fitness at the NTIS before moving to Canberra to play for the ACT Comets. My intention was to only be in Canberra for a couple of seasons however plans changed and I stayed there for nine years before returning to Darwin permanently. My last season as a player was in 2015 back with my original club and from there I have turned my hand to coaching.

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We have had some memorable players at Nightcliff over the years, who are some of yours and why? Steve Sinclair was an imposing fast bowler and hard hitting batsman who coached me at U16's and was a senior A Grade player as I was starting at that level and he coached my first NT U17's team. He had a greater influence in my cricket than I realised at the time. Peter Sleep as an Australian Test cricketer was amazing and with my father as president of the club at the time we had him over for dinner one night where we hung off every word.

How long have you been coaching/playing/managing/scoring/ committee member and why did you get involved? My first season as a player was in 1983 and last in 2015. I have coached junior and senior teams on and off since I was 21 however have been coaching consistently since 2015. I first joined the Nightcliff CC Committee when I was 18 in 1992 and remained on the committee every year I was in Darwin until 2009. I was on the club committee in Canberra for 5 years also. The highest position I have filled is Vice President with Nightcliff.

What is your coaching philosophy or approach to achieving results for the team? To ensure the greatest participation is provided to players while maintaining an enjoyable and welcoming environment. I firmly believe the more comfortable and welcomed a player is, the easier it is to learn and try new things. The most successful teams are ones where everyone gets along and enjoys each other's company..

Do you have any advice for prospective coaches/managers/volunteers? If ever in doubt there is a wealth of knowledge around you who will assist, you just have to ask..

If there is one thing you've learnt as a player or a coach/ manager that you want to share with our junior players and parents, what would that be? How valuable you are as a volunteer and the road to perfection is never ending.

