

Vale – Dennis Cook – 'Cookie'

Cookie was a popular and loyal member of Norths Cricket Club during the late 1960's and early 1970's.

He did his early schooling at the Kennedy State School just south of Tully. Our paths first crossed when Kennedy (about 30 students) took on Tully (about 200 students) in a David and Goliath cricket match in 1960. Kennedy batted first and were bowled out for 10. Our opening bowler, Pentti Kerola, took 9 wickets for 1 run. Cookie always prided himself that he scored that 1 run and top scored with 7 runs. I opened the batting in chase of the 11 to win and was run out for a duck without facing a ball. This was the beginning of a friendship which lasted for 60 years.

Next year, we found ourselves as boarders together at Townsville Grammar School. He walked straight into the Firsts Cricket and Rugby League teams which was unusual for a Form 3 student as usually the Form 5 and 6 students filled the teams. He was versatile and kept wicket in his first year before becoming a medium pace bowler in his second year.

Cookie moved into the workforce with Brown and Broad sawmill, located near where Castletown is now, and continued to play his sport at club level. He played for Past Grammars Cricket Club in A and Reserve Grade and when Grammars folded about 1967 he began playing for Norths. He was responsible for me joining Norths when I came back to Townsville during National Service. We continued to play for Norths together for several seasons, including the 1969/70 Premiership team. Cookie was a great medium pace swing bowler with a terrific outswinger. He love bowling into the wind and this helped his swing. He took many wickets and often took multiple hauls. On 4 October 1969, he took all 10 wickets in an innings for 21 runs against University in Reserve Grade.

Cookie was also a good Rugby League player who represented Townsville in Under 16 and Under 18 competition. He played for West End Athletes in the TRL competition, including the WEAs 1967 A Grade Premiership win.

Off the field, Cookie was always prepared to be involved in Norths fund raising activities like selling "chook raffle" ticket at Bluey Raleigh's Criterion Hotel. He was also a committee member for several years. He also put in hours coaching junior Norths cricketers in the early 1970s.

Work commitments took Cookie to Brisbane and the Gold Coast by the 1980s where he worked and lived. His final job before retirement was as a groundsman at the Bond University which he loved because it was in the outdoors and a reminder of his days on the sporting fields.

Ray Kohn