

The Port Noarlunga Cricket Club was formed on 14th March 1933. The first President was Mr Hugh Corpe with Avon Linn as his Treasurer and Secretary. The first captain was voted on and a tie prevailed between Messrs Raynor and Beckman with the latter getting the nod after a toss of the coin (something that would decide a lot of issues as the Club grew older). All that was needed now was a ground and Mr H Jared generously donated the land to which we now play, on the condition that no harm would come to his livestock that grazed the land.

Mr Corpe decided the Club's colours would be chocolate and gold, the same as the re-formed Port Noarlunga Lifesaving Club and local primary school. With the Club finding cricket apparel in chocolate colours hard to find, they settled for black and gold instead.

Games were organised against Noarlunga and Morphett Vale. On 8<sup>th</sup> April 1993 Port Noarlunga Cricket Club had their first game: a loss to Noarlunga. A week later we had our second game, another loss, this time to Morphett Vale. Things did improve in the season proper however, fielding one side initially in the B Grade SCA competition and taking out the Premiership.

After the war, there was a barren spell of success with the Club waiting until the 1959/60 U15s recording the Club's second premiership. That started a very competitive era at the Club at junior level where it wasn't until 1975/76 that the juniors finished lower than 4th.

In 1973/74 the B Grade won a flag and the guys were to step up a level as we won the A Grade the next season. Under the guidance of Jim Curtis, great club people like Mick Fitzgerald, Mark Whyatt, Jim England, Norm Bergman and Peter and Phil McKay, the Club were finals regulars but couldn't quite win the ultimate prize after that success.

Additions of Russell McMillan, Noel Hendy and Andy Owers strengthened the side but it's fair to say the loss of Jim Curtis in 1975/76 was a huge loss. The early to mid-80's were rather disappointing with the odd lower grade success but it wasn't until the appointment of Andy Owers as A Grade captain that things turned around and on two occasions in 87 and 88 the Club was a whisker away from GF appearances.

The explosive batting of Greg Dowsett was a highlight in that period along with the rise of Heath England under Russell McMillan's wing, spin king Mark Whyatt, hard nut Mick Fitzgerald and community stud Noel "woofa" Hendy.

Unfortunately, at the end of Season 1988/89, the Club lost hundreds of games of senior experience and had to rely on several juniors to fill the void. Many would say the Club punched above its weight somewhat for the next couple of seasons as our top grade was very young, but it was valuable experience for many.

As they say, you can't beat experience and this set the Club's progress back many years. With the impressive Paul Vaughan taking over as captain at age 21, and only one other player over that age, we struggled big time and it wasn't until the late 90's that we were a competitive unit again in A Grade.

The start of the 1990/91 Season brought in several players due to the sad demise of the Christies Beach Cricket Club. This brought to the Club more depth and talent. One of those being Rob Taylor who won the SCA Cricketer of the Year in his first Season with us.

There was a sprinkling of lower grade successes, two in a row for the C's and another B Grade win under the great leadership of Simon McKay.

Late in the 90s, Scott Boehm, one of the lads we gratefully welcomed from Christies earlier in the decade, took over as coach and brought a heap of talented youngsters from our footy rivals down the road to play cricket over the next few seasons. Finally our fortunes were going to start to change for the better, but there was much work to be done.

After forming some good foundations towards long awaited success, Scott Boehm retired as senior coach at the end of 2002/2003 season. A Premiership arrived that same year, with Wayne Conlin's dynamite D Grade bringing home the Club's first flag since 1994/95.

2003/2004 saw the appointment of Brad Nicholas as senior coach. An incredible bowler who had joined the Club in 2001/2002 after many years at district level. All Grades continued to show great promise. The A Grade had a good number of young players, Shaun Tanner, Mark Nankervis, Mark Boes and Brad Nicholas who were really making their mark in the SCA.

Another flag, this time the C Grade, came at the conclusion of the 2002/03 season. Bigger things were not far away.

2004/05 saw A Grade make their first appearance in a Grand Final since 1978/1979. Unfortunately they fell just short of ultimate success.

The conclusion of the 2004/05 season saw Club legend, Peter Paterson stand down as Club President after an exceptional six year term. The role was taken over by Russell Jackson.

Player numbers were still impressive, the Club picked up another recruit in Ryan Selkirk, an ex-Second XI cricketer. 2005/06 saw A, B and C Grade make it to the Grand Final with the B Grade walking away with their first flag since 1993/94. This was the beginning of nine consecutive Grand Final appearances for the B Grade.

Mark Boes, Shaun Tanner, Mark Nankervis and Brad Nicholas were in full flight for the 2006/07 season. The Club had also recruited three quality new A Grade players to the Club in David Liston, Anthony (AJ) Burgess and Leon Hanson. On- and off-field the Club was flying, running on a high. 2006/2007 once again saw A, B and C Grade make the Grand Final. D Grade unfortunately went down in the prelim.

Three sides into the Grand Final and each walked away with a Premiership. Without a doubt this was the biggest success in a season for the Club. Celebrations were huge. A Grade had finally got the monkey off the back collecting the Club's second A Grade flag. First since 1973/74.

The conclusion of 2006/07 saw our A Grade captain, Shaun Tanner, leave the Club to pursue higher levels in District Cricket.

The highs continued at the Club with all Grades making finals again and B Grade collecting its third flag in a row in 2007/08.

2008/2009 was a strong and dominant season for all Grades again with all making the Big Dance. Unfortunately no senior side was able to walk away with a premiership.

The remainder of the Noughties continued to bring on field success. This was thanks to the incredible performances of Mark Boes, probably the best A Grade Cricketer the Club has had, Brad Nicholas, our leading A Grade wicket taker, as well as some quality youngsters making a name for themselves: Scott Brown, Ciaran O'Hagan, Kailin Wood, Leon Hanson, AJ Burgess and Luke Holdsworth.

2010/2011 had the A Grade and B Grade win flags again. A Grade completed their season undefeated. This season also saw the retirement of Brad Nicholas as senior coach and player. He has made an incredible contribution to the Club's on field success. The Club's President, Russell Jackson, also stood down after 6 years at the helm with a lot of off field success.

At the conclusion of 2013/2014 the Club had won 12 Premierships, 2 A Grade, 7 B Grade, 2 C Grade and 1 D Grade in the preceding 10 seasons. But as they say all good things must come to an end. And things were about to come crashing down which would see the Club seriously struggle both on and off the field.

Despite having great success the previous 10 years, not having a sustainable and strong junior program was being felt by the Club. Our very talented list was ageing and regular retirements occurred.

But it wasn't just our playing list that was of concern. The Club was in a dire financial position where we almost shut the doors.

A small band of helpers made emergency calls to sponsors asking for an advance of next season's payment, many BBQs were cooked outside Woolworths or Coles on freezing winter mornings just to help raise \$400 and mid-winter golf fundraisers were held to help as well.

Matthew Ray, a young President thrown in the deep end at this point of time did a fantastic job resurrecting the Club and was ably assisted by Chris Birch.

Whilst the Club has obviously survived, it took 7-8 years of very hard work to recover from the condition the Club was in.

The start of the season 2013/14 was business as usual for our players, anticipating another fun season of playing cricket with your mates and hoping for finals action. Little did we know it would be our last in the Southern Cricket Association.

The struggles of the SCA in those times are well known, clubs folding, relocating etc and had been the case for several years which resulted in interest levels of players declining. Our better players were playing elsewhere or not at all and the ones that remained had lost interest. They felt they had remained loyal to the SCA in the hope the Association would improve but decided a move was best for our Club.

An almost unanimous vote was held in favour of approaching the Adelaide and Suburban Cricket Association (ASCA) with a view to affiliation in Season 2014/15.

We were thrilled from the beginning with the positivity from everyone involved with the ASCA regarding our application, gaining a unanimous vote of yes by your existing delegates to which we are thankful for.

Our first Season in ASCA saw our A Grade pitted in Section 2. We went through the Season undefeated, though disappointingly losing the Grand Final to Morphett Vale who had also joined.

Highlight of the Season was AJ Burgess hitting 5 centuries.

The 2015/16 Season saw our A Grade promoted to Section 1 where we finished mid table with Mark Boes hitting a Club record 241.

2016/17 and the A Grade made finals for the first time in Section 1. Playing Coromandel Ramblers on their ground, we made 131 with Kailin Wood top scoring with 46. In reply, Ramblers were no match for Matthew Ray who took 5/6 in dismissing the opposition for 39. A Grand Final against Plympton awaited but history shows that sadly it wouldn't be the first Section 1 Premiership for the boys as we failed to defend 130.

The 2017/18 Season saw Port Noarlunga enter 4 teams for the first time in many years. Round One and all 4 won. The D Grade would primarily be made up of 4-5 seniors and the rest youngsters.

The A Grade lost a semi-final to Ramblers who gained revenge from the previous season and the D Grade finished minor premiers, easily winning their semi-final to host a Grand Final. What happened next will live forever in the minds of those who played in this game. Defending 147, Kenilworth easily mowed down that total in 21 overs. What we discovered later was that the opposition were using false names for several players and had done throughout the season. Port Noarlunga were awarded the Premiership after Kenilworth were found guilty of our accusations.

Young kids were crying, adults were upset, no celebrations after the game or a team photo were taken as we thought we had lost. This will never be forgotten.

Highlights of the season were Scott Woods making 3 centuries and Dennis Kennedy taking two 6fors and a 7for.

2018/19 and Port Noarlunga reverted back to three sides. This was due to quite a few retirements and some players going elsewhere. Our depth was getting severely tested. A positive was former Under 19 Australian player Lain Beckett joining us. It was obvious from the start that Lain was a class player and more than likely a future Team of the Century recipient. Sadly he was lacking the support in depth that we had enjoyed the previous seasons. Our A Grade started Round 1 with only four players who had played in the Grand Final side of 2016/17.

In what can be called a let down from previous seasons, our A Grade narrowly missed relegation, C Grade finished bottom but B Grade did play a semi-final but lost to Belair.

2019/20 was a season to forget. A Grade finished winless and relegated, B Grade finished last and our C Grade forfeited after four games due to lack of players. The Club was rock bottom.

Besides the end of the season, the only highlight was Lain Beckett scoring a century. His season tally of 576 runs was 30% of all runs made in that Grade.

2020/21 is the darkest season the author can remember at the Club. Fielding only two sides, often with father/son, father/daughter combinations, and severely undermanned A Grade teams at times struggling to fill two teams, this was another rock bottom season to forget. A Grade finished second

bottom in Section 2 and B Grade finished bottom in Section 6. Many youngsters were thrown into the deep end in the hope they'll stick by the Club and develop faster than they had wanted to.

2021/22 was a season of real improvements at Port Noarlunga. We really couldn't have sunk any lower so the only way was up. We went back to fielding three sides after we got some players returning.

Kids who were playing seniors were bigger, stronger and better for last season's experience. Our A Grade returned to finals action in Section 2, very nearly pulling off an amazing upset in the Semi Final against eventual premiers Sheidow Park and losing the T20 Semi Final to Mitchell Park.

The B and C Grade didn't play finals but we were starting to fill teams easier and win more games which was promising.

Season 2022/23 saw the resurgence of the Port Noarlunga Cricket Club. Our Club fielded 4 senior teams, a marked recovery from struggling to field two sides only two years earlier. We had a mix of returning players, some who brought a few mates along with them, a predominantly junior development side playing in our C Grade and a couple of exceptional recruits in Tye McIvor and (future Team of the Century player) Luke Goldner.

Our A Grade won the Section 2 Premiership undefeated, guaranteeing a spot back in Section 1, B Grade won the Premiership after finishing the minor Round 4<sup>th</sup>. This side was captained by Jared Rogers who deserves a lot of credit for selling the Club to his mates to come out and play.

The C Grade development side went through the season undefeated but unexpectedly lost the semi-final. Perhaps the kids had nerves in such an important game? The D Grade just missed out in a low scoring semi-final. With a little twist we could have easily had four teams playing in Grand Finals.

Over the years there are several examples of an exodus of players. One thing is certain that the Port Noarlunga Cricket Club is very resilient. For the Club to keep recovering very quickly from these situations is testament to the many good people who have been involved over the years. Many clubs which have bottomed out would look on with envy as to how we have turned the Club around so quickly time and time again.

As touched on earlier, the Club's playing list suffered due to not having a sustainable junior program. It would be remiss not to touch on how that has gone since.

In 2014 the Club held a registration day for juniors... one kid turned up. He was told to come back in 12 months and we will try again... to which he did! (he is now a senior Premiership player). For the 2015/16 Season we went from zero teams to three and the following season we had six teams including an all girls side for the first time in our history.

Since then we have regularly had between 4-7 sides. Since that registration day in 2015, the Club has won seven Premierships in either the T20 format or regular season and produced a huge amount of very talented kids, many of whom are playing seniors for Port Noarlunga or at turf level.

To finish, as the Club has just turned 90 years of age, I'd like to give my team of the 90 in batting order. This is not the Club's opinion and of course will be debatable, but here goes. (min 20 games)

Greg Dowsett  
Anthony Burgess  
Shaun Tanner (Captain)  
Michael Fitzgerald  
Mark Boes (vc)  
Phil McKay (wk)  
Jim Curtis  
Reg Ellis  
Mark Whyatt  
Bradley Nicholas  
Russell McMillan

Peter McKay - 12<sup>th</sup> Man