

Harold Britt (Donc. Heights, Doncaster, East Donc., Blackburn)

1923 to 1938

The following is an extract from the East Doncaster CC history

An all time great of the association, Harold Britt always skated close to controversy until it all came to a head in December 1938. For all this, Harold was a dominant figure in the association during the 1930's and played major roles in both Blackburn and East Doncaster securing their inaugural 'A Grade' premierships.

Born in 1911, Harold James Britt started with East Doncaster in 1923–24. He left East Doncaster after playing in the 1924–25 'B Grade' Premiership side and joined his elder brother Dudley at Doncaster Heights. Harold was just fifteen when he trialed with Camberwell and took 7-27 in his first game. He then joined St. Kilda and played first XI district cricket before turning eighteen.

A left-hand batsman and fast-medium bowler, Harold grew quickly and, by 1929, eighteen-year-old Harold was 6' 4" inches. He returned to Doncaster Heights in 1929–30 before joining Doncaster in 1930–31. During his first season at Doncaster, Harold represented the Reporter against Manchester Unity, taking 8-36 and 7-27 during the match. He also played for the VJCU in the under 21 Australian championships which were held in Adelaide. Harold took 10 wickets against South Australia and was named player of the tournament.

Despite overtures from district clubs, Harold remained with Doncaster in 1931–32, making 598 runs and taking 31 wickets for the season. He made 128 not out against Balwyn, 102 not out against Mont Albert, and made 67 and took 9 wickets for the match against Surrey Hills Methodists. Harold won the 'A Grade' Reporter batting average with an average of 66.44.

Harold joined Blackburn in 1932–33 and was a key player in their first ever 'A Grade' Premiership. He made 576 runs and took 26 wickets, with 126 against Surrey Hills Methodists, and 89 and 4-17 in the Grand Final against Mitcham. Harold continued with Blackburn in 1933–34 and made 456 runs, including 135 against Balwyn.

In 1934–35, Harold took the plunge back into district cricket and joined Collingwood. Such was his impact, he quickly found himself in the Victorian side, playing against Tasmania in February 1935 on the Melbourne Cricket Ground. In this game, Harold made 37 out of a 78-run, ninth-wicket partnership with S.A.J. Smith. He also took 2-58 in Tasmania's first innings. Harold finished in the top three of Collingwood's bowling averages.

In 1935–36, Harold made his Sheffield Shield debut against Queensland in December 1935, making 18 not out and taking 1-38 with the ball. He then played in the annual Christmas match against New South Wales and scored 5 and 1, being bowled by legendary player turned commentator Alan McGilvray. With the ball, Harold took 1-44 and 2-50. But Harold's promising district and state cricket career was cut short after an incident involving the great Jack Ryder. This occurred in the Collingwood dressing rooms and old Jack did not take kindly to the brash young player, promptly booting him out of the club and out of Victorian selection. In his three first-class games, Harold made 61 runs at 20.33 and took 6 wickets at 35.50.

Harold then joined his brothers, Tom, Les Jnr and Dudley, at East Doncaster for the 1936–37 season. He was a match-winner and made 67 and took 9 wickets in the Grand Final against St. Andrews and won the bowling average with 25 wickets. In 1937–38, Harold made 494 runs and took 30 wickets, followed with a further 32 wickets in the first four games of the 1938-39 season.

But this came to an abrupt end when Harold was suspended for twelve months by the BHRDCA tribunal following an incident between he and umpire Hellenen in a match against Mitcham in December 1938. Initially, his suspension was until the end of the 1938–39 season, but his subsequent behaviour at the tribunal meeting meant that the BHRDCA extended the suspension by a further nine months. This was his final fling with the BHRDCA.

Harold is recorded with 3007 runs and 225 wickets with four BHRDCA clubs. After WWII Harold subsequently played in several ESCA 'A Turf' Premierships with Deepdene and Yarra Falls and only ended his career in 1956.