

# Cricket greats set to farewell Goffet after innings ends

By STEWART ROACH

SOME of Australia's top former cricketers are expected in Newcastle on Wednesday to honour Gordon Goffet, who lost his battle with cancer and died on Thursday.

They include lifetime friend and former Australian wicketkeeper Brian Taber, NSWCA chairman Bob Horsell, Warren Saunders, Barry Rothwell, Peter Philpott, former Newcastle Test fast bowler Grahame Corling and former Newcastle state teammates Michael Hill and Les Ellis.

The funeral for Goffet, 63, will be held at Christ Church Cathedral at 10am.

Goffet, from The Junction, was born at Speers Point in 1941 and educated at Newcastle Boys High School, where he showed promise at cricket, tennis and soccer.

He won numerous junior district tennis doubles titles before his coach, Jim O'Ryan, made him decide between the two sports. Cricket won, and Goffet went on to represent NSW after starting with West Lakes, where he was possibly the youngest player to score a first-grade century.

But he continued his love for tennis, returning to the Newcastle competition in the winter competition then veterans divisions until a few years ago, when his wife, Jan, died in 2000.

Goffet played 17 matches for NSW between 1965 and 1969 and represented against England in 1965 with fellow Novocastrian Hill.

He opened the batting with Australian captain Bobby Simpson, his teammate at Sydney club Western Suburbs, where he played after stints with Waverley and West Lakes in the Newcastle competition.

He made 1036 runs in 31 first-class innings, including 122 against Western Australia, and averaged 33.41. He also took two wickets with his right-arm off breaks.

Cricket historian Ross Dundas said Goffet had the distinction of scoring the most runs on SCG No.2, which was

used for only one Shield match, against Western Australia in November 1966.

"He scored 53 in the first innings and 122 in the second in the drawn match, which boasted some of the greats of the time, including Norm O'Neill, his captain Brian Booth, Corling and Tony Lock, Colin Milburn, Tony Mann and Ian Brayshaw for the opposition," Dundas recalled.

"He was dropped six times in his innings and a remarkable three times in four balls, which is also probably something of a record."

Goffet returned to Newcastle with Cardiff-Boolaroo and represented Northern NSW against the

Rest of the World side at No.1 Sportsground in 1972, when he made an unbeaten 84 before rain stopped the match. Hill, who captained Northern NSW, recalled Goffet being hit for one of the biggest sixes at the ground.

"Gordon bowled lollipop off breaks, and Col Stephenson, who was an astute judge, mentioned that South African Graham Pollock had a tendency to lob the ball to mid-wicket," Hill recalled yesterday.

"I gave Gordon the ball first over after lunch and told him to drop it short and I would have a man on the mid-wicket boundary.

"Gordon did his part and Pollock hit it over the

fieldsman, over the press box and into the drain between the two grounds."

But Goffet's spin was good enough to take the NDCA bowling average in 1973-74.

He then became a vice-president of the NDCA from 1974-1979.

Goffet worked for the Rural Bank after leaving school, then for solicitors Hill and Turnbull when he returned to Newcastle and for Reid and Reid as a conveyancing clerk.

Goffet also took up golf late in life and was a member of Waratah and Newcastle clubs.

Goffet is survived by his son, Neil, daughter, Jennifer, and two grandchildren, Chad and Samantha.