

# The First Graders

## Neil Cohen



### **Randwick Petersham 1st Grade cap number: 35**

Full name: **Neil Philip Cohen**

Date and Place of Birth: **Born 27 October 1981, Sunderland, England**

Secondary School: **Blakehurst High School**

Occupation: **Primary PE Teacher**

Playing role: **wicketkeeper/right hand bat**

| <b>BATTING</b>       |           |           |          |           |            |              |     |    |     |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|--------------|-----|----|-----|
| Season               | Mtch      | Inns      | N.O.     | Best      | Runs       | Ave.         | 100 | 50 | Ct. |
| 2003-04              | 1         | 1         | 0        | 11        | 11         | 11.00        |     |    |     |
| 2005-06              | 12        | 12        | 4        | 48        | 146        | 18.25        |     |    |     |
| <b>Totals</b>        | <b>13</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>157</b> | <b>17.44</b> |     |    |     |
| <b>WICKETKEEPING</b> |           |           |          |           |            |              |     |    |     |
| Season               | Caught    | Stpd.     | Total    | Byes      |            |              |     |    |     |
| 2005-06              | 15        | 1         | 16       | 4         |            |              |     |    |     |



Despite being one of the best all-round wicket-keepers in the club, 22 years old Neil Cohen made his 1st Grade debut as a batsman. The occasion was the match against Hawkesbury at Benson's Lane on 7 February 2004 which the side won by three wickets. Neil's contribution was a nervous 11 runs emphasised by the fact he almost ran out the club's champion bat Richard Chee Quee when he hit his first ball to cover and took off for a quick single. It was surprising that he didn't get a second game in the top grade that season as he topped the 2nd Grade batting with 430 runs making the club's Top 20 for the season.

The playing strength of the club at that time was such that it would be another two seasons before Cohen had the opportunity to again don the baggy green presented to him on his debut. Season 2005-06 was a time of rebuilding for the 1st Grade team following a number of retirements and Neil was called in to take the gloves behind the stumps. Grabbing the chance the agile 'keeper showed why he had won the club wicket-keeping award the previous year while featuring in the club's 2nd Grade premiership win. He had an outstanding season in the top grade effecting 16 dismissals in 12 matches while allowing only four byes. He also showed he was up to 1st Grade batting standard in the match against UTS Balmain at Petersham Oval where he was the only batsman other than Paul Horton who scored 110 to show any fight in chasing a mammoth 341. While the side finished 54 runs short, Cohen's 48, his top score in 1st Grade was full of merit.

Unfortunately for Neil the following season the dashing batsman Matt Taylor took over the gloves in 1st Grade relegating Cohen to 2nd Grade where he dominated the wicket-keeping scene. His 39 dismissals was the best for the club and in the whole of the Sydney Cricket Association 2nd Grade competition. He again took out the annual club wicket-keeping award.

Sadly, that was the last season Neil played with the club as he gave away the cricket scene shortly after. As a player firstly with Randwick in A W Green Shield and subsequently in Grade Cricket with Petersham-Marrickville, Neil Cohen made giant strides in his time in Grade Cricket. He began as a member of the Randwick Petersham first 5th Grade team in 2001-02 but didn't stay long in that side after hitting 128 in the second game of that season. He was thereafter on the move through the grades culminating in a successful albeit brief career in 1st Grade. In his Randwick Petersham career he scored 2,225 runs with two centuries and effected 176 dismissals behind the stumps comprising 142 caught and 34 stumped.

