

Seychellois chemist reaches 100 game milestone

The boy from the Seychelles Islands Bertrand AhCheen played his 100th game for the Burras at Morton Park, Blackburn on Saturday 21 October 2023. It wasn't an auspicious day as he made a duck. On week two he was immaculate with the keeping gloves and snared the only catch which came his way.

Bert was born December 1978 in the Seychelles, an archipelago of 115 islands which are located in the Indian Ocean off the East Africa Coast. The population in 2022 was 100,600. Coincidentally the capital city is named Victoria.

His parents Bernard and Lydie decided to look for more life opportunities for their family and chose Australia. They packed up their three boys Larry, Bert and Lionel and settled in 1988 in Sunshine, a western suburb of Melbourne.

What's this game of bat and ball

Bert was enrolled at Our Ladies' Primary School of Sunshine in Year 5. At recesses and lunch, he soon joined in a strange sport with bat and ball. With natural eye and ball co-ordination he showed a lot of potential. School-mates soon recruited him to the Sunshine YCW Under-14 cricket team when he was only ten years old, to fill their undermanned team. He established himself as a medium pace bowler for the next four seasons.



Parade College

In 1992 came the big residential move to Mill Park in the northern suburbs. Bert took up studies at Parade College where he finished his secondary education in 1996. His cricketing journey was unabated as he joined Old Paradians Cricket Club. Bert focused on getting the red cherry to curve away and filled one of the last two positions in the batting order. The premierships medallions mounted up with three senior flags and two junior pennants. Whilst not in same echelon of talent like school-mates Adam Dale, Trent Cotchin, Daniel Harford and Blake Caracella, Bert carved out his own niche with a bowling trophy in his final year of 25 wickets at a meagre average of 9.31. He wore the green, gold, purple and blue colours proudly and stayed there until at the age of 25 years when cricket had to take a back-seat in his life to his career.

Tertiary Studies and Work

Entrenched in his grey matter by his parents was the theory - if you wanted to progress in life, an education was required. He accomplished a Bachelor of Science at Monash University with an emphasis on Physiology and Pharmacology. Deciding to specialise on the pharmaceutical fields he studied for a Bachelor of Pharmacy at the University of Tasmania. Waving the certificates of dual degrees, the Chemist Warehouse offered him a role as Managing Partner in the rapidly evolving Cairns branch. So, in 2004 he took off to Queensland with Pam, his girlfriend from Monash University days. The blue skies and heat resembled his childhood days.

With a family on the way the Bert and his now wife Pam decided to move back to Melbourne in 2010 and be closer to their families.

Home in Glen Iris

It was a big year in 2010 for the AhCheens with buying a home in a prestigious neighbourhood of Glen Iris (re-named from Burwood), taking on the Fountain Gate Shopping Centre Chemist Warehouse franchise and the birth of Xander. Flushed with this idyllic lifestyle Bert was wondering how life could be better. With his feet up late one night he flicked the television on to the Ashes Test match series being played in England. Enthralled by the contest, although England won the Ashes 3-1, he was very impressed with Mike Hussey and Brad Haddin. The lightbulb moment came – “gee I miss playing cricket!” He googled to find the closest cricket club to his Alfred Road mansion and up came Burwood District Cricket Club.

Green and Gold of the Burras

Bert settled in well at the Burras, although the runs and wicket tallies were not enormous. His attacking strokes have allowed five fifties to appear on his resume. He remembers being given the opportunity with the wicket-keeping gloves and initiated another passion in his life. More recently he has featured in the Firsts as a polished opening batsman and wicket keeper. In the current season he grabbed 12 catches in three games. He has won three fielding trophies in the first eleven (2013-14, 2021-22 & 2022-23) and achieved the Club Champion award in 2015-16 and 2021-22.

The magical BHRDCA Premiership medallion has not been hung around his neck yet, although he has gone close being in Runners-up teams in the past two seasons – 2021-22 (T20) and 2022-23 (First eleven). A letdown was 2016-17 when he spent a season at Deakin CC after his passion was dented when BDCC was in throes of crumbling. However, he missed a flag as that was the season when, although down to one team, the club lifted and took out the honours.



Xander

Bert's son Xander has exhibited his love for the game. He is ever ready to don his gear as a substitute in any senior teams that his dad is in, to score on the iPad or give some technical advice. He got his taste for the game at a Milo clinic at Camberwell Sports Ground, then at Ashburton Willows before settling at Trinity Willison CC.

BDCC CAREER SUMMARIES

<i>Players</i>	<i>Seasons</i>	<i>Games</i>	<i>Runs</i>	<i>Wkts</i>	<i>Catches/Stp</i>
Bert	2013-2023	106	1,438	20	95/5
Xander	2022-2023	4	19	2	1/0

Ian Scholefield

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