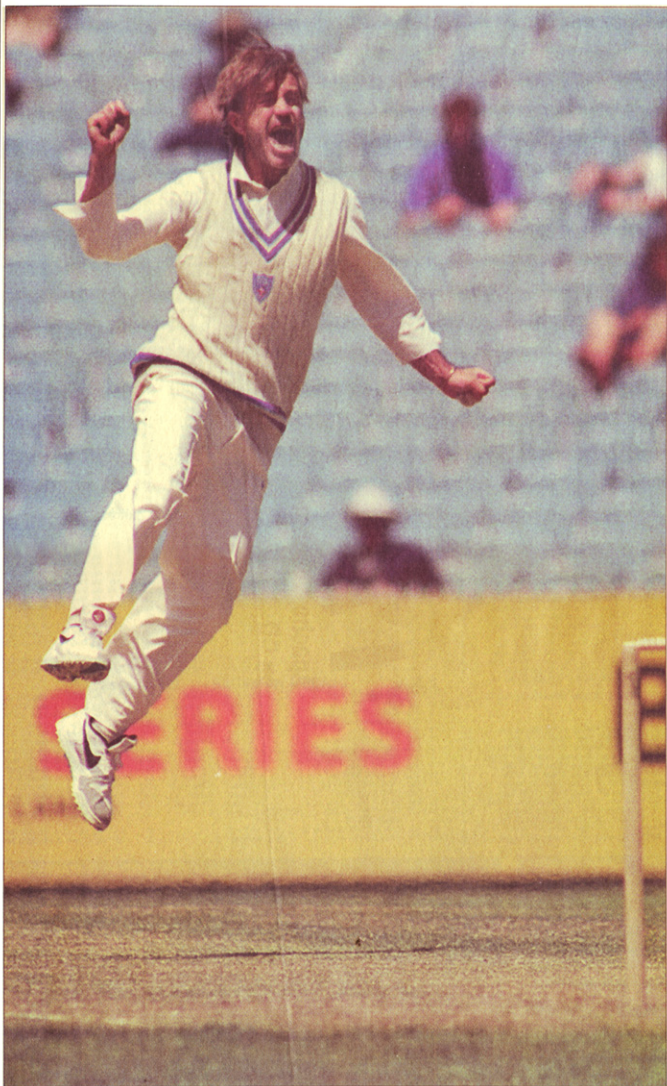


# Can Greg Matthews still cut it? Yeah, yeah



New South Wales all-rounder Greg Matthews jumps for joy after dismissing Dean Jones at the MCG yesterday. Picture: RAY KENNEDY

By MARTIN BLAKE

Greg Matthews read his epigrams, and they hurt. But he never accepted that they might be true, and now he is in the business of haunting those who consigned him to history.

Almost two years after he was bashed outside a Perth nightclub and axed from his beloved New South Wales side, the former Test all-rounder spun out Victoria on an MCG turner yesterday and put the Blues in an almost-impregnable position in their Sheffield Shield match.

Matthews took 4/52 with his off-spinners, combining with left-arm spinner David Freedman (3/19) to flatten Victoria for just 158 after Dean Jones had won the toss and elected to bat. Even by the standards of Victoria's brittle batting in recent years, this was a collapse of substantial proportions, coming against a side that had lost one of its opening bowlers, Simon Cook, to injury in his first over.

Strolling along at 2/114 in the afternoon session, the Bushrangers lost their last eight wickets for 44 runs.

NSW will resume its first innings today at 1/59 with Test captain Mark Taylor (21) still at the crease and an armada of batting talent to come. The Victorians had a woeful day, with new-ball bowler Damien Fleming breaking down and unlikely to bowl again in the match.

Matthews is 35, indefatigable, and one of the game's great survivors. He aims to play until 2000, and on yesterday's form, he has a shot at it. "I just love the game, man. It's my thing," he said last night. "Once big Simon went down we all had to put our hand up, and I think we did that."

Not even in exile, when the selectors declined to choose him at the beginning of last season and he was left to earn a living from endorsing a hair-replacement technique, did he lose hope. "It hurt me immensely, deeply," he said. "It cut me to the bone, especially the thought pattern behind it. But it doesn't matter.

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## SCOREBOARD

Victoria: 1st innings	
M ELLIOTT c Taylor b Matthews	53
S LARSON c Taylor b Lee	2
D JONES c Maxwell (sub) b Matthews	28
J BAKER c Taylor b McGrath	31
B HODGE c Maxwell (sub) b Matthews	5
S PROCTOR c Taylor b Matthews	5
D BERRY not out	11
P REFFEL c Slater b Freedman	0
S WARNE c Taylor b Freedman	0
D FLEMING lb b Freedman	0
B WILLIAMS run out	12
Sundries (4b, 4lb, 1rb)	10
TOTAL	158
FALLS: 8, 69, 114, 128, 128, 134, 135, 135, 135, 158	
BOWLING: G McGrath 17-6-16-1 (1rb); S Cook 0-4-0-0; S Lee 22-2-25-1; M Waugh 52-0-5; S Waugh 7-2-13-0; G Matthews 22-5-5-4; D Freedman 1-1-1-9-3	
BATTING TIME: 272 minutes; OVERS: 73.1	

NSW 1st innings	
M SLATER c Berry b Warne	29
M TAYLOR not out	21
P EMERY not out	8
Sundries (1rb)	1
TOTAL (for one wicket)	59
FALLS: 35	
BOWLING: P Raffell 8-0-15-0; D Fleming 1-3-1-5-0; B Williams 4-3-19-0; B Waugh 7-1-10-1	
BATTING TIME: 80 minutes; OVERS: 21.1	