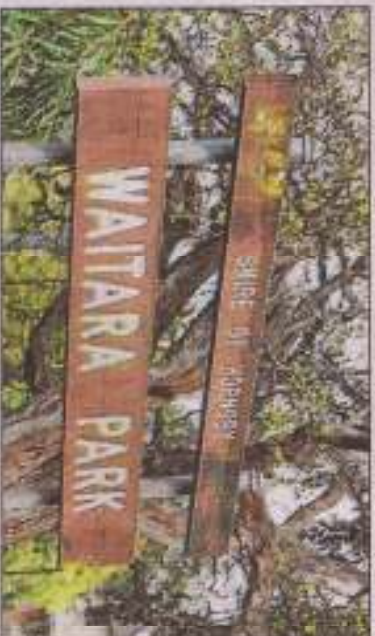


Tub of war over ovals

Former captain goes into bat to keep his word



NAMING RIGHTS: Waitara Park and Drummoyne Oval are jockeying for the Mark Taylor stamp of approval.

Pictures ADAM HOLLOWORTH

By HEATH GILMORE

FORMER Australian captain Mark Taylor is at the centre of a tug of war between a Sydney council and a cricket club over who should name an oval after him.

Hornsby Shire Council and the Sydney Cricket Club (Hornsby UTS Balmain) want to honour the Test great by renaming their main ground Mark Taylor Oval.

The stand-off arose three weeks ago when Cricket Australia director Dr Harry

Harinsh - who is also president of the Sydney Cricket Club - approached Taylor with a proposal to rename Drummoyne Oval after him. Taylor agreed, believing his

profile may assist with an application to the Federal Government for funds to improve the ground, which is being redeveloped as an alternative to the SCG for matches.

The news angered Hornsby mayor Nick Berman because Taylor played Sydney grade cricket for Northern Districts.

Despite being overseas on private business, Mr Berman arranged last Wednesday for his council to fast-track the renaming of Waitara Oval.

Yesterday, Taylor urged Hornsby Council to withdraw from the battle.

"I agreed to the Drummoyne proposal three weeks ago. I won't go back on my word to them," he said. "I'm hopeful Hornsby Council will settle down and speak to me. It would be better if they withdraw

the name change for now. Hornsby had named its scoreboard after me, which was a great honour.

"I was told they couldn't name a ground after me until I was dead - and obviously it wasn't an option I was looking forward to."

Mr Berman said: "Naming Drummoyne Oval after Mark Taylor would be like Gordon Rugby naming Chatswood Oval after Nick Farr-Jones or South Sydney Rugby League naming Redfern Oval after Ray Price or Peter Sterling."

Dr Harinsh intends to press on with the application to rename Drummoyne Oval. It has yet to be approved by Canada Bay Council.

One Mark Taylor Oval exists already - at Leeton, in southern NSW, where the Test great was born.



YOU FIRST: Mark Taylor is at the centre of the stoush.

Picture: HANISH BLAIR/Getty Images