



Biography of Dr Vincent Taylor by Nols van Zyl

Vincent Taylor was born in Kimberley on the 3rd June 1945. At a young age his family moved to Jeffreys Bay. He was schooled in Humansdorp and matriculated in 1962. During 1963 he completed his compulsory 9 months national service in the Army.

Vincent the Academic:

1964 – 1966: Graduated at Stellenbosch University - B.A. Degree

1967: University of Port Elizabeth – Teachers Diploma

1968 - 1969: He taught at Graham College School for Boys in Grahamstown.

1969: He married the love of his life Elsa.

1970: Returned to Stellenbosch University. Graduated Honorary Degree in Geography

1971: He taught at Alexandria High School in Port Elizabeth

1972 – 1974: Lecturer at the University of Fort Hare, in a small town called Alice near East London

1974: He accepted a post as lecturer at the University of the Western Cape, bought a house in Somerset West and moved to the Western Cape.

1974- 2002: During this period he completed his Honours and Doctorate in Geography at Stellenbosch University and advanced to the post of Senior Lecturer.

His fishing in the early days, which was mainly during school holidays, was practised in and around all the prime angling areas such as Kabeljou Surf, Paradise Beach, St. Francis Bay, and the famous Cape St Francis “Shark platform.”

As with most anglers, there was always an event or two during the early years, which ignited their angling careers, and lingered on in their memories, for ever.

For Vince, the first instance was when at the age of seven, he caught a 13 lb cob which he had to carry 4 kilometres to their house in order to earn bragging rights with his mom. His second was when at the age of nine, during the Eastern Province Angling Week, he caught a 90lb Ragged Tooth Shark. This catch resulted in his photograph being published in the local newspaper and his angling buddies nicknaming him “Sharky”.

During 1962, at the age of 16 he was selected to represent Eastern Province. He admitted that the merit of his selection was foreign to him, since during this period there were no interclub competitions fished in Eastern Province. However, he did add, with a wry smile, “My Dad was an Eastern Province selector at the time and maybe that had something to do with it”.

In 1968, he once again represented Eastern Province in their home waters. By then organised angling had become much more competitive and the original 8-man heavy tackle teams had been increased

to 12 anglers by the addition of 4 light tackle anglers. Natal won that championship, as they were the only team that were focused on catching sharks.

It was an almost ominous coincidence that the two individuals who separately would have the greatest influence and impact on angling in South Africa and Western Province respectively, arrived simultaneous on the angling scene in 1974.

For South Africa it was Gus Kollner, who was appointed as the first ever Chairman of the newly established South African Rock and Surf Association.

For Western Province it was, Vincent Taylor who having arrived in the Cape, joined False Bay Angling Club, and became a member of Western Province. Here he served as Vice Chairman of Western Province, Vice Chairman of False Bay Angling Club and was later elected to Chairman of Western Province where he served from 1989 until 1994. He is also an Honorary Life member of Western Province.

In the following two decades and beyond, these two names would combine their dedication and passion with their unique but separate skills and talents, to make tremendous changes and improvements that would fast track the growth of Rock and Surf Angling in both South Africa and Western Province.

Vince the Angler:

Vince loved fishing! It did not matter what species, or where! If there was a fish to be caught, Vince was there wanting to catch it. Whether it was Bronze Whalers or Kabeljou on Macassar, Spotted Gully Sharks or Cape White Stump on the Reefs in the Strand (Harmony) or “Vaalies” and Cow Sharks along the mountain past Gordons Bay, he was there.

In addition to rock and surf angling, he was also an avid ski boat angler. He was adept at catching a great variety of available species in False Bay, especially mackerel on a Friday. Some were kept for smoking when he got home, and the rest would be kept on ice to be used fresh bait during Saturday’s interclub.

When the sea got big and unfishable, he would dash off with his boat to the Theewaterskloof or Clainwilliam Dam to fish for “Billy” Black bass.

One day I asked him how he managed to have so much time to fish, and he responded by saying: “If you love angling as much as I do, you have to pick your career accordingly. Make sure you have 4 holidays per annum. Make sure you do not work over weekends and when you compile your roster, make sure to fit all your lectures into 3 days, not 5, easy you see!”

Vince the Competitive Angler:

His results in Western Province leagues were outstanding. He achieved 10 top 5 finishes, including a 1st in Heavy tackle in 1980, as well as a first in 1991, but this time it was Light tackle. Only one other angler could ever achieve this in the history of Western Province, “Long John” van Zyl.

After his arrival in the Cape it did not take long before he earned his first “Navy Blue” jacket to represent Western Province in the 1977 National Championships held in the then South West Africa. There is no better way to start your provincial career than being part of the South African Champion and Gold medal winning team.

During his angling career he represented Western Province at no less than 11 Senior Nationals and during this period shared in 3 gold medals, 1977, 1988 & 1989. He also represented and captained the Western Province Master’s team between 1995 and 1999.

With such and impressive record, and after finishing 2nd overall in South Africa at the 1988 Nationals in South West Africa, it was inevitable that Vince would receive the ultimate reward, the prized Green and Gold colours of South Africa, to compete against a touring Austrian team.

During the early nineties, Vince became an extraordinarily successful and well-respected Team Manager and/or Non-angling Captain for the Protea teams against Namibia.

Vince the “Coach”

Vince was always willing to share. Selfishness was not a word in his vocabulary. He was prepared to share his boat, vehicle, tackle, and bait, but most precious off all his angling skills, experience, and knowledge. There are many False Bay Club anglers that can attribute their angling success and achievements to “Vince’s Academy”.

Wilhelm de Jongh, Barend Ridgeway and Robbie Jansen, all of whom became Springbok/Protea anglers, Werner Vermeulen a regular Western Province team member and his older brother Pietie, who was the South African champion angler in the Southern Cape Nationals in 1986, were all influenced by “Vince’s Academy”.

However, no one explains or expresses it better than one of his “sons”, 5 time Western Province champion angler and South African Junior Protea Manager, Willie van Heerden: “He always used to call me “My son”.

For someone who never had children of his own he surely had a lot of “sons”, and although we all called him Doc, he was very much like a father to all. He was one of my greatest mentors in my life, and that does not only count for fishing.

He always wrote the word THINK on my cooler box in thick black letters. Today I do the same thing with my Juniors. “Always THINK my son, before you bait up and throw”.

Most probably the biggest fishing lesson I have learned from Doc was to CATCH WHAT IS BITING, target a specific species and do not just throw for a “SOMETHING”, because when you fish for a something you fish with luck instead of skill.

As a person, Vince had extremely high morals and values in life. Doc Taylor always gave you a straight answer and he never lied. Not even about fishing. He was the most unselfish person I knew as he had no regard for materialistic things and always taught us to value the things in our lives that cannot be replaced with money. This was also one of the reasons that “Tessie”, his Jack Russell, always accompanied him wherever he went.

Respect! We all had a tremendous amount of respect for and trust in him. If Doc said throw here for a Blue Ray, then you knew you were going to catch a Blue ray. “Always be humble my son as this thing called fishing has a way of turning around and biting you in the butt.”

Doc always spoke about his team’s efforts and never about himself. He was never great, but Barry, Colin and Henry Melville, those guys were great not to mention Wessel and Pautzie. Yes, Doc these guys were and some still are great, but you touched our lives and you molded our love for competitive angling.

Doc Taylor always said that what you know about fishing, you learned from someone else. You did not buy it and therefore you cannot sell it, it does not belong to you and you can only pass it on to the next angler.

Vince the Author:

This unselfish attitude becomes even more evident when you look at all the articles Vince wrote, for a variety of magazines such as Stywe Lyne, angling guides, or the Western Province angling annuals. Each article, whether about bait, how to catch certain species, where to go angling or detailed maps of angling areas was for the education and benefit of the reader and more specifically, the angler. His series of booklets covering the angling areas of the Western Province, the Boland Region, the Southern Cape, Eastern Province and Border areas are well renowned and treasured by those who own them.

Vince the “conservationist”

Vince was a dedicated member of the False Bay Conservation Society, but his greatest contribution to conservation was made due to his relationships and networking ability with a great variety of important angling persona, marine biologists, and businessmen.

In 1983 Colin and Ingrid Tatham of Sedgwick’s old Brown Sherry, Rudi van der Elst from the Oceanographic Research Institute (O.R.I.) and Vincent met for lunch in Stellenbosch and the O.R.I. Tag and Release program was conceived. Vincent realised the value of the volumes and varieties of fish that were caught by competitive anglers, and that this valuable resource could be utilized to record important data for scientific research and analysis.

Vincent and Rudi introduced and proposed the program to Gus Kollner at SARSA, who immediately embraced the concept and very soon most of their member anglers were dying to see who could make it into the “top 10” tagging list. This agreement also resulted in a substantial sponsorship from Sedgwick’s to the SARSAA tournament fund.

During this time, Boland Angling Association organized an annual angling tournament known as the “Mini Nationals” and with Vincent’s enthusiasm and Boland’s agreement this tournament in 1983, became known as the “SEDGWICKS OLD BROWN SHERRY TAG AND RELEASE COMPETITION”. These tournaments achieved a 100% catch and release rate and in October of 2003, the 21st birthday celebration of this tournament was held at Struisbaai. The names of the members of the honorary invitational team made interesting reading: Henry Melville (c); Barry Rebeck; Barry Wareham; Colin Scheepers, Mike Pautz, Willie van Heerden and of course, Vincent Taylor.

It was during one of these annual tournaments that Vince decided that the scoring system should be changed so that no fish will be weighed, but only measured. You had to measure the total length of each catch and add all the measurements to compile your final score. We all laughed at this foreign concept and scoffed, “If you fish extremely well, you could win by a mile”. Completely unheard of in those days as there was only one way to score catches and that was to weigh them, but already then Vincent’s ideas were going in a new and uncharted direction.

The combination of the ORI length to weight conversion tables combined with Vincent’s original theory of purely measuring fish, has today become common practice! Singularly the biggest change that ever took place in Rock and Surf Angling.

Vincent the Pensioner:

During 2002 Vince and Elsa exchanged Somerset West for Langebaan, their chosen retirement village. Vince only managed to retire from working, never from fishing. Now he had the magnificent Langebaan Lagoon at his disposal for boat fishing and the Westcoast Angling Association was in its infant stages, what opportunities. He joined Benguela Angling Club, and with his enthusiasm and experience they soon became serious contenders. Vince then decided to form a new club and Langebaan Angling Club came into being. Unfortunately, it was to the detriment of Benguela Angling Club, as without his leadership and guidance they lost relevance, whilst Langebaan Angling Club went from strength to strength.

In 2010, Vince was instrumental in organising the 1st FIPS World Championships in Langebaan and in 2011 he called on his old friends and sponsors, Sedgewick's to assist with the sponsorship and to add glamour to the inaugural Grand Masters Nationals.

He served on numerous committees in Langebaan, and in between, found time to fish on the lagoon with his small boat named "Tessie". His main catches were Stumpnose and Elf. Later on he bought a bigger boat called "Raptor", which enabled him to fish in greater comfort during those "Langebaan Southeasters".

Terry Boucher, a fellow Springbok Angler and lifelong friend since 1973, said: "With all the angling skills he had, unfortunately when it came to mechanical things, he had 2 left hands"

On the 21st of August 2002, after 18 years of retirement, Vince sadly lost his prolonged battle with cancer and found his way to a place "where conditions are always perfect, the fish bite "flat out" and the "big ones" never get away!

Rest in Peace our Dear Friend!

Acknowledgements:

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