



# MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB

BOXING DAY TEST  
DECEMBER 27, 2022

AUSTRALIA VS. SOUTH AFRICA  
LIBRARY FACT SHEET - DAY 2

## “Ten plus” wicket hauls in Australia versus South Africa Tests at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

In the 12 Tests matches between Australia and South Africa at the Melbourne Cricket Ground three bowlers have taken over 10 wickets in a match. Firstly, Bert Ironmonger for Australia with 11 wickets in the 5<sup>th</sup> Test of the 1931/32 series. Then Hugh Tayfield for South Africa taking 13 wickets during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test of the 1952/53 series. Finally, South Africa’s Dale Steyn took 10 wickets in the most recent Test match between the two countries at the MCG, which started on Boxing Day 2008. These feats are recorded on the honour boards in the Australian and visiting teams’ change rooms at the MCG.



### Herbert Ironmonger

Born 1882, died 1971. *In For Club and Country*, Ken Williams wrote that Ironmonger, who was born in 1882 and died in 1971, was “perhaps Australia’s greatest left-arm slow bowler. Bert Ironmonger bowled with exceptional accuracy and his flat trajectory meant that most batsmen could not use their feet to attack him. Having lost the top joint of the index finger of his left hand in a childhood mishap with a chaff cutter, he spun the ball off the stump of that finger, achieving turn on even the hardest of surfaces while on rain affected pitches he was unplayable. He did not make the Test side until 1928-29 when he was 46 years of age. In the 1931/32 series against South Africa, he was deadly with 31 wickets at 9.54, including an extraordinary 5/6 and 6/18 on a rain-affected pitch in the Fifth Test at Melbourne.” Extraordinary achievements by a man aged 49.



### 5/6 and 6/18, 5<sup>th</sup> Test 1931/32 series, February 12, 13 & 15, 1932.

Australia were up 4-0 going into the final Test of the series. In Ray Webster OAM’s *First-Class Cricket in Australia, Volume 1, 1850/51 to 1941/42*, Webster summarised the match,

“Rigg (originally 12th man) replaced Ponsford (flu) in the selected Australian team prior to the start of the match. Bradman twisted his ankle when his sprigs caught in the coir matting of the dressing room as he was going out to field at the start of the game and was unable to field or bat on the first day. Rain, which had badly interrupted the match between Victoria and the tourists, continued intermittently before and during the Test and Ironmonger (11 for 24) extracted full advantage. The pitch was soft on the first day without ever being spiteful, however, the rain which prevented any play on the second day, followed by the sun on the third day, produced the dreaded Australian “sticky” and the South Africans succumbed cheaply for a second time. McMillan, one of four batsmen to suffer a golden duck on the opening day – Woodfull, McCabe, and Christy were the others – became the second batsman after R. Peel in 1894-95 to be dismissed twice for a pair on one Test series in Australia. The highest scorers were Fingleton (40 in 77 minutes, 1 four) and Kippax (42 in 84 minutes, 2 fours) and the match took only 5 hours 53 minutes of playing time to resolve.”

In the *Argus* report on the conclusion of the match, "Old Boy" (R.W.E. Wilmot) noted "Ironmonger again was in his element, and his figures, remarkable as they were, would have been still more extraordinary had the chances offered been accepted. As it was, in making only 36 and 45 in their two innings in reply to the Australian score of 153 the visitors were defeated by an innings and 72 runs. The strange thing was that this happened without Bradman batting or Grimmett being called upon to bowl."<sup>1</sup>

In the First Innings Ironmonger took 5/6 off 7.2 overs. These included 5 maidens, wickets were taken at average of 1.20 and a strike rate of 8.80. His five victims were: KG Viljoen, caught by sub (LS Darling) for 1; DPB Morkel caught LJ Nash for 1; CL Vincent caught LJ Nash for 1; Q McMillan, stumped by WAS Oldfield for a duck; and AJ Bell also stumped by WAS Oldfield for a duck.

For the Second Innings, Ironmonger took 6/18 off 15.3 overs, including 7 maidens. The six wickets were taken at an average of 3.00 and a strike rate of 15.50.

Ironmonger's six wickets were; SH Curnow, caught by JHW Fingleton for 16; B Mitchell, caught by WAS Oldfield for 4; DPB Morkel, caught by KE Rigg for a duck; HW Taylor, caught by DG Bradman for 2; Q McMillan, caught by WAS Oldfield for a duck; and NA Quinn caught by JHW Fingleton for 5.

BATSMEN OUT. FALL OF WKTS.				BATSMEN. RUNS.		BOWLERS. WKTS. RUNS					
CHRISTY	C B 1	0	1	FOR	10	VINCENT	8	1	NASH	1	4
BELL	C 4	6	2	"	12			2	IRONMONGER	6	18
MITCHELL	C 2	4	3	"	25	EXTRAS	4	3	GRIMMETT		
CURNOW	C 2	16	4	"	30	10 OUT FOR	45	4	O'REILLY	3	19
MORKEL	C 2	0	5	"	30	AUSTRALIA	153	6	MCCABE		
CAMERON	C 4	0	6	"	30	2 <sup>ND</sup> INNINGS	53	7	KIPPAX		
TAYLOR	C 2	2	7	"	32	2 <sup>ND</sup> INNINGS	45	5	RIGG		
VILJOEN	C 4	0	8	"	32	1 <sup>ST</sup> INNINGS	36	9	BRADMAN		
McMILLAN	C 2	0	9	"	33	1 <sup>ST</sup> INNINGS	36	9	WOODFULL		
QUINN	C 2	5	10	"	45	2 <sup>ND</sup> INNINGS		0	FINGLETON		

You can view rare footage of Ironmonger bowling on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/SEYAk6FSJ8Q>

## Hugh Tayfield

The obituary to Hugh Tayfield in the 1995 *Wisden*, opened,

*"TAYFIELD, HUGH JOSEPH, who died in hospital at Durban on February 25, 1994, aged 65, was the most successful bowler yet produced by South Africa and one of the greatest off-spinners the game has seen. Between 1949-50 and 1960 he took 170 wickets in Tests at a cost of 25.91 in 37 matches. Tayfield took more wickets per Test match (4.59) than either Jim Laker or Lance Gibbs (4.19 and 3.91), and though he was not in Laker's class as a spinner of the ball, he was exceptionally accurate and could bowl all day without wavering. He preferred to bowl over the wicket, extremely close to the stumps, which gave him the perfect angle for the ball to drift away and break back."*

After detailing his family's background in cricket and the early years of his career, it noted, "It was in Australia, in 1952-53, as the attacking linchpin of Jack Cheatham's young side that stunned Australia by halving the series, that he moved into the front rank. Tayfield took 30 wickets, 13 of them at Melbourne, to secure South Africa's first win over Australia in 42 years."

Tayfield played 37 Tests and his 170 wickets came at 25.91 each; in first-class cricket his total was 864 at 21.86. He scored 862 Test runs at 16.90, and took 26 catches - he was also one of South Africa's best fielders. *Wisden* records that "He was known as Toey because before every delivery he stubbed his toes into the ground, a mannerism that became essential to his rhythm. Before each over, he would also kiss the badge on his cap before handing it to the umpire."



## 6/84 & 7/81, 2<sup>nd</sup> Test 1952/53 series, 24, 26-27, 29-30 December 1952.

Australia won the First Test at the Gabba by 96 runs, thanks to superb bowling by Doug Ring and Ray Lindwall, and batting by Neil Harvey. Melbourne hosted two of the five Tests – the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup>. In an unusual timing, when the Melbourne Test was traditionally held at the New Year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test commenced on Christmas Eve 1952.

In Ray Webster OAM's *First-Class Cricket in Australia, Volume 2, 1945/46 to 1976/77*, Webster summarised the match

<sup>1</sup> 1932 'FIFTH TEST MATCH.', *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957), 16 February, p. 10. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4430565>

*“Lindwall and Miller bowled Australia into a strong position on the first day, despite the efforts of McGlew (46 in 163 minutes, 2 fours, chance at 4) and Murray (51 in 106 minutes, 5 fours). McDonald (82 in 165 minutes, 7 fours) and Morris (43 in 107 minutes, 1 four, consolidated Australia’s position before Tayfield’s diving dismissal of Morris, via Cheetham’s hands at short mid-off, began a day of sensational catching. Endean’s catching of Miller (52 in 101 minutes, 1 six, 5 fours) one-handed above his head with his back against the boundary fence, ranked with the most brilliant seen at the ground while those that dismissed Harvey and Ring ranked little behind. They complemented Tayfield’s “magnificently sustained bowling of high quality and intelligence” (The Sun). His effort was such that the absence of Watkins (back injury) and Murray (fibrositis) was not noticed. As a result, Australia’s lead was restricted to just 16 runs. Endean (chanceless 162 not out in 452 minutes, 9 fours) gave a fine display of determination and concentration, to anchor the South African second innings and earn him the sobriquet of ‘Endless Endean’. Waite (62 in 195 minutes, 5 fours) and McLean (42 in 65 minutes, 6 fours) gave good support. A further seven wickets to Tayfield, giving him 13 for the match, completed a memorable South African victory on the last day – only its second against Australia. Harvey (60 in 94 minutes, 6 fours), Benaud (45 in 176 minutes, 4 fours) and Ring (53 in 81 minutes, 6 fours) batted defiantly in a losing cause.”*

Tayfield’s six wickets in the first innings were: AR Morris, caught and bowled for 43; RN Harvey, caught CJE Cheetham for 11; R Benaud, bowled for 5; DT Ring, caught DJ McGlew for 14; KR Miller, caught WR Endean for 52; and WA Johnston, lbw for a duck. In the second innings his seven wickets were; Australian captain AL Hassett, lbw for 21; RN Harvey, caught JC Watkins for 60; GRA Langley, bowled for 4; KR Miller, bowled for 31; GB Hole, bowled for 25; R Benaud, caught MG Melle, 45; and DT Ring, caught MG Melle 53. Tayfield’s achievement were only the second and third 5+ wicket hauls by a South African at the MCG (after AJ Bell’s 5/69 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Test on the 1931/32 series).

Australia won the 3<sup>rd</sup> Test at the SCG by an innings and 38 runs, and drew the 4<sup>th</sup> Test in Adelaide. Trailing 2-1 by the 5<sup>th</sup> Test at the MCG, the South African’s scored a remarkable victory after appearing to be outplayed for the first four days. In the final innings, with South Africa requiring 295 for victory the disciplined batting from Endean and Watkins established the foundations for victory. A spectacular innings from McLean with support from Keith completed the task just prior to the tea break on the sixth, and final, day to tie the series at 2-2. Tayfield took another six wickets in the match, taking 19 wickets from the two MCG Tests.

<https://youtu.be/JtqTWNp-2fM> shows footage of Tayfield bowling.

## Dale Steyn

Dale Willem Steyn, born 27 June 1983, appeared in 93 Test matches for South Africa, taking 439 wickets, and played his last Test against Sri Lanka in 2019. He also represented the Proteas in 125 one-day internationals and 47 T20Is in a glittering career that saw him take close to 700 international wickets. He was named ICC 2008 Test Cricketer of the Year and Wisden’s Leading Cricketer in the World in 2013 and was the No.1 bowler in the ICC Test rankings for a record 263 weeks between 2008 and 2014.

South Africa didn’t lose a single overseas Test series from October 2007 to November 2015 and a lot of it was due to Dale Steyn. In that period Steyn picked up 351 wickets in 68 tests at an average of 21 and strike rate of 41. It included all five times in his career when he took 10+ wickets in a match. A genuinely fast, if slightly raw, bowler, who moved the ball away from right-handers, by Boxing Day 2008 Dale Steyn was a force to be reckoned with. Recalled to the Test side in April 2006, he responded with his first five-wicket haul, as New Zealand were routed in the first Test at Centurion. He finished the three-Test series with 16 wickets, and made a fine impression throughout. He was the dominant force behind South Africa’s home series wins against New Zealand and West Indies, picking up 40 wickets in five Tests. He followed it up with 14 in two Tests on the tour of Bangladesh, picking up three consecutive Man-of-the-Series awards. He also went past Allan Donald’s record of the quickest South African to 100 Test wickets. In September 2008, Steyn was named the ICC’s Test Player of the Year, taking 86 wickets at an average of just 18.10 in the 14 Test matches he played during the period in consideration.

He capped off a remarkable 2008, during which he finished as the leading Test wicket-taker, with a Man-of-the-Match performance - 10 wickets and an equally-vital first-innings 76 - in the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne, helping South Africa to an unassailable 2-0 lead and their first Test series triumph in Australia.

## 5/87 & 5/67, 2<sup>nd</sup> Test 2008/09 series, 26-30 December 2008.

At MCG, 26 December, 2008: Australia won the toss. **AUSTRALIA 394** (RT Ponting 101, MJ Clarke 88\*, SM Katich 54, BJ Haddin 40; DW Steyn 5/87) **and 247** (RT Ponting 99, MG Johnson 43; DW Steyn 5/67) **lost to SOUTH AFRICA 459** (JP Duminy 166, DW Steyn 6, GC Smith 62, PL Harris 39; PM Siddle 4/81, NM Hauritz 3/98) and **1/183** (GC Smith 75, ND McKenzie 59, HM Amla 30\*) **by nine wickets**. *Player of the Match*: Dale Steyn

The 1<sup>st</sup> Test of the 2008/09 South Africa in Australia series took place at the WACA from December 17-21. Australia set the visitors a target of 414 runs for victory. Which they memorably achieved for the loss of four wickets, and included centuries to the captain Graeme Smith, and AB de Villiers. This remains the second highest Test run chase. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test at MCG in 2008, Steyn took five wickets in each innings to hand Ponting’s Australia their first ever home series defeat in 16 years.

In the first innings Australia were dismissed for 394, and Steyn took 5/87 off his 29 overs (which included six maidens). Steyn bowled SM Katich for 54, had MEK Hussey caught by Boucher for a duck, B Lee caught by Kallis for 21, bowled MG Johnson for a duck, and Smith caught Hauritz for 12. South Africa replied with 459. This included 166 for Jean-Paul Duminy, who completed a 180 run stand for the ninth wicket with Steyn, who scored 76. This would be Steyn's highest score in Test cricket. Australia were all out for 247 in their 2<sup>nd</sup> innings. Steyn took 5/67 starting with ML Hayden caught Duminy for 23, SM Katich caught Boucher for 15, MJ Clarke caught McKenzie for 29, A Symonds caught Kallis for a duck, and PM Siddle caught Boucher for 6. South Africa easily scored 1/183 for victory.



Dale Steyn was quoted as reflecting upon the match by SA Cricket MAG, *"The Boxing Day Test at the MCG ... the 10-wicket haul ... the stand of 180 with JP Duminy, the 76, the first SA series win in Australia after almost 100 years trying. That will forever bring a smile to my face. Every Christmas – at least in South Africa – they love to replay it over and over on TV so I guess if they continue doing that until I'm pretty old, I won't get ever bored of it. It was a great, great series, and a great game."*<sup>2</sup>

Footage of Steyn's 10 wickets can be seen online at [https://youtu.be/v\\_XfQMdv00g](https://youtu.be/v_XfQMdv00g) From the Vault: Sizzling Steyn rips through Aussies and <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4128nk>

## Test Cricket at the MCG

Beginning with the inaugural Test match in March 1877, 114 Tests have been staged at the MCG. South Africa has been involved in 12 of the Tests played here. Australia has won 7 of these contests and South Africa 3, with the other two drawn.

Other sides to play Tests at the MCG are England (57) the West Indies (15), India (14), Pakistan (10), New Zealand (4) and Sri Lanka (2). One Test, scheduled against England in 1970/71, was abandoned without a ball bowled and is not counted in the records.

## Boxing Day Tests at the MCG

Traditionally, the Victoria versus New South Wales Sheffield Shield clash was played at the MCG over Christmas, and prior to the 1968/69 season, only two MCG Tests had included play on Boxing Day: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test against England in 1950/51, which began on Friday December 22 (Boxing Day, a Tuesday, being the third day of the match), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test against South Africa in 1952/53, which commenced on Christmas Eve.

The first Test to **begin** on Boxing Day at the MCG was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test against the West Indies in 1968/69, the 56<sup>th</sup> at the ground, when bleak conditions restricted the attendance to 18,786. During the following decade only two MCG Tests featured play on December 26: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test against England in 1974/75, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test against the West Indies the following season, both of which commenced on that day.

Since 1980/81, only one season has not featured Test cricket at the MCG on Boxing Day. This was in 1989/90 when, owing to the late arrival of the Pakistan team, a One-Day International against Sri Lanka was played instead, the MCG Test involving Pakistan being put back to mid-January.

MCG Tests have begun on Boxing Day in each of the other seasons during this period, apart from 1984/85, when the 4<sup>th</sup> Test against the West Indies started on December 22 and in 1988/89 and 1994/95, when matches against the West Indies and England both commenced on Christmas Eve.

Fact sheet research by MCC Library Volunteers Ray Webster and Ross Perry.

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Thanks to our friends at [Tastats](#) and [Cricket Archive](#).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.crictracker.com/that-will-forever-bring-a-smile-to-my-face-dale-steyn-recalls-career-highlights/>